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**“Ecuador and the Czech Republic: Analysis for strengthening the
formal diplomatic relation between both States”**

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DEDICATION

To God, for being my Father, The Light, and The Truth.

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To the rest of my family, for teaching me to give my all, regardless of the
circumstances.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify common aspects of the foreign policy of Ecuador and the Czech Republic that would motivate them to strengthen their diplomatic relation. First, in order to carry this out, an analysis of the historical evolution of relations between States was made, with an emphasis on diplomacy, moving then to the doctrinal and normative aspects of diplomatic relations. In addition, the classical theories of International Relations —realism and liberalism— were examined, as well as what determines the global pattern of diplomatic representation. Second, an analysis was conducted focused on foreign policy, both in Ecuador and in the Czech Republic, in a double time focus: 10 years ago, and in the present time. Finally, the political situation between both States was explained, along with their common foreign policy axes, and the proposal of specific actions for their formal diplomatic relation.

INTRODUCTION

The present research aims to understand how and why a State can engage with another one via diplomatic means. Given the cruciality of this to the analysis of International Relations (hereafter known as IR) in a holistic way, the reasons for the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between two States, therefore, are decisive. And this not only for a country's perception on another, but also for implementing policies, cooperation, trade, tourism, military alliances, and many more, depending on the IR theory being used.

With the purpose of basing these concepts, two important questions arise. First, it is necessary to create a framework or structure to interpret the reasons to strengthen the formal diplomatic relations among countries. Second, a study case regarding the formal diplomatic relation between Ecuador and the Czech Republic will be applied.

With regard to methodology, two strategies will be used for this research: the historical method, and hermeneutics. The historical method will be used to produce a historiography from the general evolution of the relations between States and from the foreign policy of the two States being studied (Ecuador and the Czech Republic). Hermeneutics, on the other side, will be used to interpret the bases of the secondary sources.

The structure of the present research consists of three chapters. The first one synthesizes the theoretical, doctrinal, and normative about the motivations States have to participate in formal diplomatic relations. The second one explains what regards to the foreign policy of the States from the case study: Ecuador and the Czech Republic. This will be focused on two perspectives: foreign policy since 10 years ago, and the current foreign policy. Finally, the third chapter will show an analysis of the strengthening of the formal diplomatic relation between both States.

CHAPTER I

What motivates States to engage in formal diplomatic relations

1.1 Historical evolution of relations among States

Modern international order is considered a product of several events that took place in 17th century Europe, besides the influence of the ideas and forces that shaped said events. With this, one of the most important ones is the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 (Lawson, 2017, p. 41). Because of this event, it is necessary to explain the forces that made it possible and, consequently, why has it influenced the notion of the modern nation-state.

The Peace of Westphalia is the result of two treaties signed in the cities of Osnabrück and Münster —modern-day Germany— with the purpose of ending two armed conflicts: the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) within the Holy Roman Empire; and the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), also called Dutch War of Independence (Boundless, n.d.). On the one hand, the Thirty Years' War started as a conflict between Catholic and Protestant State, although later it evolved into something more complex —that did not necessarily have to do with the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent Catholic Counter-Reformation— when the rest of the kingdoms of Europe got involved (Boundless, n.d.).

Therefore, what are considered the most relevant characteristics of both treaties are, likewise, two: the notion of peace achieved through a Diplomatic Congress¹; and the start of a new political system based on the concept of sovereign, coexistent States (Boundless, n.d.). Because of this second characteristic, the Westphalian principle of a State recognizing another one's sovereignty and its right to decide over its own fate, this originates one of the foundations of modern International Law (Boundless, n.d.).

Despite this, the Westphalian narrative is not free of criticisms for being considered the basis for sovereignty and the rest of the attributes of the modern-day international system. Lawson (2017, p. 40) mentions three of these criticisms that are

¹ This being understood not as a congress of legislators, but rather as a gathering to treat specific issues regarding peace.

worth considering. First, it was not an agreement that encompassed all of Europe. It was an internal issue within the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, the impact of Westphalia on the international relations of Europe, and much less of the world, is not as large as imagined. Second, even with its limited space, the gains of Westphalia were relatively mild. Although it is recognized that German principalities acquired more control over their own affairs after 1648, this was within the framework of a dualist constitutional system in which there was still an emphasis on loyalty towards the Emperor, and it was sustained in a structure of courts that adjudicated both interstate disputes, as well as internal affairs (a kind of European Union in the 17th century). And, thirdly, Westphalia establishes the limits to the principle of sovereignty agreed in another document: the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 —also called Peace of the religions. In summary, Westphalia decreed that the concerning territories were to retain the religion that they professed as of January 1st, 1624² (Lawson, 2017, p. 40).

Even with all these criticisms, Europe remained as a mosaic of imperial rivalries, hereditary successions, and religious armed conflicts until the 20th century. Although Westphalia is considered to be the basis for the ‘modern’ international order, it is not the sole starting point to think about these issues. This begins with analyzing what constitutes the most important elements of an international order; and, from there, a date can be assigned to the start of said international order (Lawson, 2017, p. 41). For this reason, it is believed that this order is the product of the past two centuries —19th and 20th— for several reasons, which will be explained in the following subsection.

1.1.1 The modern international order

An international order is defined as “regularized practices of exchange between political, discrete units that recognize each other as independent” (Lawson, 2017, p. 40). With this, the following question arises: what makes the past two centuries candidates for the emergence of this modern international order? This

² A more in-depth reading of the document of the treaty of the Peace of Westphalia is necessary, specifically the one signed at Münster. A reliable, complete translation can be found at Yale Law School’s website at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp. Another version, in this abridged, was translated by David M. Luebke and can be found at <https://pages.uoregon.edu/dluebke/301ModernEurope/Treaty%20of%20Westphalia%20%5BExcerpts%5D.pdf>.

period is usually known as the ‘great transformation’, in which there is a replacement of multiple *regional* international systems with one characterized by a *global* international order (Lawson, 2017, p. 41). For this, in several Western States three forces or dynamics arose that made this possible: industrialization, the emergence of ‘rational’ States, and imperialism.

Regarding industrialization, it is worth noting that it helped produce the dramatic expansion of a global market (Lawson, 2017, p. 43), besides all the technological inventions that, until today, are an essential part of the majority of humans. On the other hand, the rise of ‘rational’ States changed the way in which the government of a nation-state is managed. As a summary, this term refers to the ways States started to organize themselves less through interpersonal relations and family ties, and more through abstract bureaucracies, such as civil and military service (Lawson, 2017, p. 44). Finally, european imperialism brought a drastic change —not to mention a complete transformation³— to the territories under the dominion of European powers on the different places of the planet in which this took place (Lawson, 2017, pp. 44-45). Once the different powers stopped exercising their control over these territories, whether it was by peaceful means (successful negotiations) or violent means (independence wars), these lands took one or another form of organization through this European model of ‘rational’ State. Of the diverse legacies that imperialism and colonialism left, the diffusion of ideas (and their subsequent acceptance and practice) regarding the conducting of a State shows how the world was getting closer to the relatively homogeneous international order that is known today.

1.1.2 What is diplomacy?

Before answering this question, it is necessary to consider how diplomacy relates to what was previously explained. Modern diplomacy is a product of the emergence of these ‘rational’ States managed by an abstract, organized, and, to a certain point, permanent bureaucracy. This does not imply that diplomacy as such arose recently, but rather that the office of diplomacy, as known today, comes from

³ It cannot be made invisible, nor deny the destructive aspects of imperialism or its consequences, given that this form of power and control affected, forever, the lives of whom were subject to subjugation. Nevertheless, the focus of the present research is out of reach of such repercussions.

such ‘rational’ States. This is how diplomacy *per se* is as old as the first forms of human organization. This concept will be expanded immediately after explaining where the term comes from.

‘Diplomacy’ got into the English language directly via the French *diplomatie*. However, an etymological analysis shows that the word comes from the Latin *diplōma* and this, at the same time, comes from the Greek $\delta \iota \pi \lambda \omega \mu \alpha$ (literally *diplōma*) which means “an object folded in two” (Marks & Freeman, 2019). Such an object, that used to be a document, conferred a privilege —usually a permit to travel— to its carrier, and the term came first to denote documents by which rulers granted such favors. Later on, the term was applied to all solemn documents emitted by Chancelleries (the international relations arm of a government), especially those that contained agreements between these rulers. Diplomacy was thereafter identified with International Relations, and the direct tie with documents disappeared. Concerning ‘rational’ States, France, in the 18th century, started using the term *diplomate* (“diplomat”) when referring to a person authorized to negotiate in the name of the State (Marks & Freeman, 2019).

With this established, it is imperative to analyze the different definitions of diplomacy. For Marks & Freeman (2019), it is the “established method of influencing the decisions and the behavior of foreign governments and people through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures that are not war and violence.” On the other hand, Boudreau et al. (2011) explain that it is the art and science of maintaining peaceful relations among nations, groups, or individuals. Finally, McGlinchey (2017, p. 21) defines it as a process between actors (diplomatic ones, usually representing a State) who exist within a system (International Relations) and participate in private and public dialogue (diplomacy) to accomplish their objectives in a peaceful manner. Of the three concepts provided, the last one is the most complete, since it presents actors (who?) in a system (where?) with a purpose (what?).

However, what do all these definitions have in common? Diplomacy is a peaceful process that is above any strategy or style. Due to this, an important distinction must be made to deal with an apparent dichotomy between war and diplomacy: the absence of diplomacy implies that there is war, and vice versa. At first

sight, this seems true, but there are more elements that are not being considered in the analysis and make said dichotomy false:

- The absence of diplomacy implies, in fact, several situations:
 - There is war between the States in question, and these do not have a formal relation.
 - There is peace between the States in question, and these do not have a formal relation.
- The absence of war, on the other hand, implies other situations:
 - There is diplomacy between said States, but these do not have a formal relation.
 - There is diplomacy between said States, and they also have a formal relation.
 - There is no diplomacy nor a formal relation between said States. They simply coexist in the international system.

1.1.3 Historical synthesis of diplomacy

As previously mentioned, diplomacy, as known today, is a product of the past two centuries —19th and 20th— with practices that are spread and accepted through the different legal bodies, such as the two Vienna Conventions, both of Diplomatic Relations (1961), and of Consular Relations (1963).

Nevertheless, diplomacy *per se* has existed, undoubtedly, since civilizations have been present. The oldest records that are available about regular contact between civilizations through emissaries date back to 2,500 years ago (McGlinchey, 2017, p. 20). The largest collection of data about ancient diplomacy is attributed to the civilizations of the Middle East, Mediterranean, China, and India. For this, early societies possessed certain attributes of States, whereas the first notions of International Law arose from intertribal relations (Marks & Freeman, 2019). Although each kingdom and civilization could be analyzed with their diplomacy styles and practices, the following synthesis will focus on the events that have influenced the greatest in modern practices.

The diplomatic practices of Ancient Greece were the ones which inspired post-Renaissance Europe to the construction of modern diplomacy. The alliances among the different *polis*, or city-states, indicate the unions between them based on common interests (such as trade, war, etc.) through episodic emissaries, rather than continuous. Moreover, Greeks developed archives, a common vocabulary, behavior principles, and even the notion of diplomatic immunity. Conversely, Romans expanded these notions to accommodate them to their interests for expanding the empire. What stands out the most from them is the importance of Roman law, which emphasizes the preeminence of contracts, this being the basis for modern treaties (Marks & Freeman, 2019).

Centuries later, the Bizantine Empire would be the first to formalize the office of the diplomat. These professionals were issued written instructions, were given orders to be cordial, but they could also entertain themselves as much as their state funds allowed them. However, their greatest role was to collect information about the condition of their receiving State, for the reason of securing the survival of their own State. In more recent times, the Italian city-states were pioneers in creating permanent missions, given that the common practice until then was to have a mission of a period of 3 months to 2 years. Though it is uncertain which one of them started with the practice, since the 14th and 15th century Venice, Milan, and Mantua would send permanent emissaries to each other, the Popes, and the Holy Roman Emperor. After the year 1500, this became the norm and the practice spread to the rest of Europe (Marks & Freeman, 2019).

Regarding the creation of the first Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this is attributed to France in 1626 thanks to Cardinal Richelieu. Richelieu considered diplomacy as a continuous process of negotiation, stating that the diplomat should have a master and a policy. He created the above-mentioned Ministry of Foreign Affairs to centralize politics and secure the control over diplomats by dedicating themselves to comply with the *raison d'état* (reason of State, or national interest). This is how the notion of politics based on dynastic or sentimental issues became rejected, maintaining that the State transcends the crown, the land, the prince, and the people, since it has interests and needs independently of these four aspects (Marks & Freeman, 2019).

Another important aspect was the emergence of conference diplomacy, popularized by the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815 and the subsequent Concert of Europe of 1818. Here, certain diplomatic rules were codified, such as the precedence of States when signing a treaty, four kinds of heads of diplomatic missions, and the fact of gathering periodically to treat common issues. The Concert of Europe of 1818, which took place in the German city of Aachen, was the first conference celebrated during peace times and the first to attract the attention of the press, thus originating the public relations aspect of diplomacy. Although many other reunions were held after Aachen, it would not be after the creation of the League of Nations —and the subsequent UNO— that conference diplomacy was formally established (Marks & Freeman, 2019).

1.2 Diplomatic relations: doctrinal and normative aspects

1.2.1 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) replaced the rules established by the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815 and Aachen of 1818 (Marks & Freeman, 2019). It is considered that the present Convention “has become the cornerstone of modern international relations⁴” (Denza, 2010, p. 5). Thus, the previous historic synthesis gives testimony of how diverse practices have come to the present age via customs and what is codified in the Convention. Regarding this, it is worth noting that this legal body establishes “a framework for the establishment, maintenance, and termination of diplomatic relations based on the consent between sovereign States” (Denza, 2010, p. 3). However, the task of analyzing the entirety of the Convention is an extensive task, given its 53 articles. Therefore, the following are its key aspects in order to understand which are the modern practices that stand out the most in the current context.

⁴ It is also necessary to highlight the existence of the Vienna Conventions on Consular Relations, celebrated on April 24th, 1963, in addition to its two Optional Protocols: Concerning Acquisition of Nationality, and Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes. These legal bodies are essential for maintaining the consular activity of State. Nevertheless, the focus of the present research is out of scope of such a Treaty and its two Optional Protocols.

With the purpose of achieving a common language among the States party to the Convention, article 1 defines several used terms, such as “head of mission,” “members of the mission,” “members of the staff of the mission,” “diplomatic agent,” and “premises of the mission”. Regarding diplomatic agents, according to article 14, these are divided into three classes: a. ambassadors or nuncios accredited to Heads of State, and other heads of mission of equivalent rank; b. envoys, ministers and internuncios accredited to Heads of State; c. chargés d’affaires accredited to Ministers for Foreign Affairs (Vienna Convention, 1961).

Article 2 constitutes mutual consent as the basis for the establishment of diplomatic relations between States and of permanent diplomatic missions. On another note, article 3, numeral 1, letters a-e explains the main functions of a diplomatic mission:

a. representing the sending State in the receiving State; b. protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law; c. negotiating with the Government of the receiving State; d. ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the Government of the sending State; e. promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations. (Vienna Convention, 1961)

On the other hand, the rights and privileges of these diplomatic agents form the basis and the limits of their behavior serving the receiving State and the sending State. In this area, it is worth mentioning the immunity from the civil and criminal jurisdiction that these agents have (article 31), besides the inviolability of his/her person (article 29). The members of his/her family also share this immunity, although with certain exceptions (article 37). In terms of the premises of the diplomatic missions, these also have the characteristic of being inviolable (article 22), as well as the archives and documents of the mission, even when these are outside of its premises (article 24). Other privileges include the exemptions from all dues and taxes (article 34) and the exemption from all customs duties (article 36) (Vienna Convention, 1961).

In addition to the Convention *per se*, there are two Optional Protocols that complement what is set out on the 53 articles and deal with two specific issues: the acquisition of nationality by the members of the diplomatic mission; and the compulsory settlement of disputes of the ICJ —International Court of Justice.

1.2.2 Optional Protocol Concerning Acquisition of Nationality

The key provisions of this Protocol are found in its first two articles. Article 1 defines who are subject to this normative —members of the mission, that is, the head of the mission and the members of the staff of the mission. Conversely, article 2 explains that the “members of the mission not being nationals of the receiving State, and members of their families forming part of their household, shall not, solely by the operation of the law of the receiving State, acquire the nationality of that State” (Optional Protocol, 1961).

1.2.3 Optional Protocol Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes

Finally, the second Optional Protocol decrees the way of proceeding in case of controversies regarding the interpretation or application of the Convention. Article 1 delimits that these types of controversies will submit, compulsorily, to the ICJ. The order of proceeding is clarified on article 2, in which the priority is to resort to an arbitral tribunal in case of any dispute. If this route does not work, the dispute may be brought to the ICJ by an application (Optional Protocol, 1961).

1.3 Theories of International Relations

International Relations, hereafter known as “IR”, have the characteristic of being able to be interpreted through many “lenses” or theories. These make up, precisely, the ‘backbone’ or essence of the discipline. With this established, it is necessary to first define what IR is, to then understand its different approaches. For McClelland and Pfaltzgraff (2019), IR is “the study of relations between States and with international organizations and certain subnational entities (for example, bureaucracies, political parties, and interest groups).” Just as the etymology of the term shows, international relations deal, mainly, between nations —or States. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the term is not necessarily inclusive when

considering the influence of other actors that are not State. For this reason, authors such as Owens et al. (2017, p. 2) prefer the term ‘global politics’ to ‘international relations’ (or even ‘international politics’), given that it encompasses the rest of actors like: multinational corporations, transnational terrorist groups, social classes, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, transnational corporations, and even the governments themselves. Definitely, the present research prefers the usage of the term ‘International Relations’ since the object of the study is, precisely, the relation of two States.

Therefore, the following two subsections will focus on defining the classical theories of IR —realism and liberalism— with the objective of, later on, interpret how State can relate, whether this is with a realist or a liberal foundation⁵.

1.3.1 Realism

Realism has influenced both the practice as well as the academic study of IR. Many argue that, even before there was a subject to study as such, the *de facto* diplomatic and war practices of States were conformed to principles that will later be identified as realism. Therefore, it is possible to establish that the power seeking behaviors of human beings, besides their reasons for fear, honor, and profit exemplify the universality of realism (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, p. 102). With this in mind, the theme that unifies the whole realist thought converges in the fact that States find themselves in a condition of anarchy, thus their security cannot be taken for granted (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, p. 106).

There is not a single way of defining realism. This is due to the fact that there is not a single author who deals with this subject, but rather many. Additionally, there is not a single form of realism, given that, depending on the perspective that is taken, one can analyze this theory under what are considered to be the most relevant features. Currently, there are three kinds of realisms:

⁵ It is important to emphasize that, by using only the two theories that are considered ‘classical’ within IR, this does not disqualifies the use or the validity of the other existent theories, such as social constructivism, Marxist theories, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, or feminism.

- *20th-century classical realism*: politics is governed by laws that are created by human nature. The mechanism that is used to understand international politics is the concept of interests, , defined in terms of power.
- *Neorealism/structural realism*: anarchy leads to a logic of self-help in which States seek to maximize their security. Here, power balances are formed frequently.
- *Neoclassical realism*: the systemic account of global politics provided by structural realism is incomplete. It needs to be supplemented with better accounts of unit-level variables; for example, how power is perceived, and how leadership is exercised. (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, p. 107)

For all the above mentioned, the realist tradition traces its origins to concepts that, ultimately, are found in certain authors such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau. The following table synthesizes the central ideas of each one of them in their key works.

Table 1. Authors of the realist tradition

Autor	Texto clave	Idea central
Thucydides	History of the Peloponnesian War	International politics is driven by an endless struggle for power, which has its roots in human nature.
Machiavelli	The Prince	Political realism recognizes that principles are subordinated to policies; the supreme ability of a State leader is to accept and adapt to changing political and power configurations in world politics.
Hobbes	Leviathan	Human beings have an insatiable lust for power. Life in the state of nature, which is similar to the condition of world politics, is full of fear and worry about violent death.
Rousseau	The State of War	It is not human nature, but the anarchical system that fosters fear, jealousy, suspicion, and insecurity.

Source: Dunne & Schmidt (2017, p. 103)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

Although there is a lack of consensus to visualize realism as a unique, coherent theory, Dunne & Schmidt (2017, p. 109) argue in favor of an ‘essential realism’ in which all realists ascribe to three principles, called the three “Ss”: statism, survival, and self-help.

Regarding statism, realists argue that the State is the main actor in international politics, while sovereignty is its distinctive trait. The meaning of ‘sovereign State’ is tied, inextricably, to the use of force. Nevertheless, what is the State? Realism favors Weber’s definition of it, which is “the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in a given territory” (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, p. 109). And within this territory, sovereignty consists in that the State has the supreme authority to make laws and enforce them. This is the basis for Hobbes’ unwritten contract between individuals and the State, in which we exchange our freedom for the guarantee of our security. Once this happens, civil society can start. Now, moving to an international —and anarchical— plane, States compete with each other for power and security, and the nature of this competition is based on a zero-sum game, in other words, the more for an actor means less to the other. Therefore, all this notion consists in that the State must organize its power domestically, to later on accumulate power internationally (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, p. 110).

In second place, survival explains that all States have a vital interest in surviving. What distinguishes this notion from the other two, is that this one is a precondition for obtaining the different objectives of the State. Although there is discussion about whether the accumulation of power is an end to itself or a means, very few would discredit that survival is the precondition for national interest as a whole. This way, a debate arises on two positions: if States are security maximizers, or power maximizers. According to the first vision, States are profoundly defensive actors and will not seek greater power if this risks their own security. On the other hand, the second vision argues that the decisive end of all States is to achieve a hegemonic position in the international system (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, pp. 110–111).

Finally, the concept of self-help is based upon the fact that there is no supreme authority in the international system that counters the use of force. This is why war is always a possibility, even if this is minimal in peace times. According to

this principle, there is nothing preventing a State from using force against another one. This is how, in this anarchical structure, States must trust in themselves to have security (Dunne & Schmidt, 2017, pp. 110–111).

1.3.2 Liberalism

Despite realism being considered as the dominant theory, liberalism has a strong claim to being the historic alternative. The emergence of a palpable liberalism in the international scope occurred at the end of World War I, under the name of ‘idealism’, with the institutionalization of the Society of Nations (or League of Nations). A second awakening happened at the end of World War II, with the birth of the United Nations Organization, although this was overshadowed by the rise of tensions of the Cold War. Nevertheless, by the end of it in 1991, a third —and current— wave of liberalism was established in the international scope.

Dunne (2017, p. 117) argues that liberalism is a tradition wide to define. However, it is necessary to start the discussion with the exposition of four of its dimensions. First, all citizens are juridically equal and possess certain basic rights. Second, the legislative assembly of the State possesses only the authority invested in it by the people, whose basic rights are not permitted to abuse. Third, a key dimension of the liberty of the individual is the right to property. Fourth, liberalism contends that the most effective system for economic exchange is the one that is market-driven, and not one that is subordinate to bureaucratic control and regulation, whether these are domestic or international (Dunne, 2017, p. 117).

Now, how does this translate to the international sphere? Liberal thought rests on the application of an analogy. Just as individuals, States have different characteristics —some are prone to war, while others are tolerant and peaceful. For this reason, the identity of a State determines its external orientation, establishing a parallelism between individuals and sovereign States (Dunne, 2017, p. 117).

Besides this comparison, liberalism is a theory of both the government within a State, and of governance between States and peoples in the whole world. Unlike realism, which interprets what is ‘international’ as an inherently anarchical kingdom, liberalism seeks to project values of order, liberty, justice, and tolerance in the

international relations. Another key aspect is the importance of both domestic and international institutions, which are required to protect and nurture said liberal values (Dunne, 2017, p. 118).

Despite this, the diverse interpretations of liberalism disagree on fundamental issues, such as the causes of war and what kind of institutions are required to take the liberal values in an international system that is decentralized and multicultural. Regarding these two key aspects, the debate has widened more in recent years due to an increasingly globalized world. On one side, there are those who operate with an activist conception of liberalism, which promotes an interventionist foreign policy and stronger international institutions. On the other side, there are those who prefer a more pragmatic approach, prioritizing tolerance and non-interventionism (Dunne, 2017, p. 118).

Finally, there is the aspect of cooperation. For liberalism, cooperation among States—which are ‘rational egoists’—is possible to achieve if it is appropriately coordinated by regimes and institutions (Dunne, 2017, p. 123). According to Shaver (2019), “rational egoism affirms that I must perform an action if and only if, and because, performing said action maximizes my personal interest.” It is considered that States meet this characteristic given that their national interest is maximized each time they carry out actions in the international plane. For liberalism, these actions take the form of alliances with other States, promotion of conference diplomacy—which was analyzed in the subsection 1.1.3—, promotion and action in the institutions that enact liberal values, and the cooperation itself in several forms.

1.4 Perspectives of realism and liberalism to understand how States can interact with each other

Owens et al. (2017) argue on the different positions of realism and liberalism regarding globalization, while Reus-Smit (2017) analyzes the stances of these theories in the field of International Law. Both foundations give testimony of how States visualize the international realm, which determines how they relate to each other. Additionally, Neumayer (2008, p. 1) theorizes that the current pattern of diplomatic representation is determined by three aspects: the geographical distance between

countries, the power both of the sending and receiving State, and the degree of their ideological affinity.

1.4.1 Globalization

There is no single theory that has all the answers when it comes to explaining the international system given that, precisely, each one defines and treats globalization differently. For realism, globalization does not alter the most significant trait of the international system —the territorial division of the world into nation-states. This means that powerful States retain their sovereignty, and globalization does not render obsolete the struggle for political power among those States. Neither does it undermine the importance of the threat of the use of force, nor the balance of power. Although globalization can affect social, cultural, and economical life, this does not transcend to the international political system of States (Owens et al., 2017, p. 10).

Liberalism, on the other hand, interprets this situation differently. Globalization is the final product of a large transformation of world politics. Furthermore, globalization breaks the realist account of world politics, given that it shows that States are not the central actors that they used to be. In their place, there are numerous actors of different importance according to the thematic area in question. The technological revolution and communication, represented by globalization, have increased the interconnectedness among societies, which results in a pattern of relations in world politics very different to the one that there was before. States are no longer sealed units —if they ever were such a thing— and, as a result, the world is seen more as a ‘spider web’ of relations, rather than as the static model of realism (Owens et al., 2017, p. 10).

For all the above exposed, it is considered that realism favors a more bilateral than multilateral vision (even though this is not exclusive nor categorical, given that multilateralism can also arouse). This is due to the fact that, between two States, it is much easier to settle agreements, bridge differences, and strengthen the relation itself. Due to the notion of sovereignty and of the anarchical system (beyond what can be agreed upon on the respective and diverse legal bodies) there is nothing that can stop a State from making decisions that comply with, widen, or create their *raison*

d'état. Put in a common way, for the sake of the argument, the State “can do whatever it wants”. For liberalism, the panorama is partially different, because it favors a more multilateral vision: conference diplomacy (through the institution of the UN and the like), summit diplomacy, and the international organizations all promote the creation, nurture, and spreading of liberal values. This is why States generally focus on searching and foster the relations of those States that also favor such values and institutions.

1.4.2 International Law

There are diverse perspectives that have been formulated to explain the nature, function, and prominence of International Law. For realism, there is great skepticism regarding this type of Law, besides a profound hostility towards the liberal-idealist notion of “peace through law”. The absence of a central authority to legislate, judge, and enforce what is established on the different legal bodies leads realism to doubt even if International Law is Law in itself. Realists like Morgenthau argue that it is a form of ‘primitive Law’, similar to those of pre-literary societies. For realists, legal international obligation is weak, at best. Comparing it with the internal Law of States, citizens are obliged to obey the law, as there are sanctions to punish illegal behaviors. Nevertheless, sanctions in IR have been few, and the mechanisms to enforce them are rudimentary (Reus-Smit, 2017, p. 312).

Much of the liberal discussion shunned International Law up until recently for two specific reasons: much of its inspiration comes from economic theory rather than judicial; and in part because in the realism-dominated field of the Cold War it was less striking to speak the language of regimes and institutions —two key notions of liberalism— that the one of International Law. All in all, at the end of the Cold War, a call has been made for a more productive dialogue between IR and International Law. As explained in the analysis of the theory of liberalism, States are treated as ‘rational egoists’, while the law is seen as a variable that intervenes between the State objectives and their political results. Despite this, the most important thing is that the law is seen as a regulatory institution, and not as one that is normative or constitutive, in other words, it conditions the identity and interests of the State, but does not oblige or determine all of its actions (Reus-Smit, 2017, p. 312).

Thanks to this difference of perspectives, some comments can be made on realism. Although it visualizes International Law as a weak institution, practically all States adhere to one or another international legal body, and very few tend to guide their actions outside of the path established by the different conventions and treaties. Beyond justifying that international norms and their mechanisms to enforce them are weak, it is necessary to give a more profound analysis for the validity of this argument. Do all international institutions and/or their laws are weak or inefficient? In the specific case of relations between States, the norms for proceeding in diplomacy are framed in the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations—which was already analyzed previously. There is no State that does not follow this procedure for relating to another one. In the case that this happens, there is a high probability that the first State might be rejected or tagged as ‘unfamiliar with the method’ by the second one, given that the Convention has become the *lingua franca* for this area.

1.5 What determines the global pattern of diplomatic representation

In the following three subsections —Distance, Ideology, and Power—, these variables will be analyzed to see how they have an overriding role at the moment of analyzing the benefits of diplomatic representation. In other words, these variables respond to the question: what motivates States to relate to each other and establish diplomatic relations?

1.5.1 Distance

Countries that are often located close to each other typically share several interests and are characterized by a high degree of mutual interaction. Usually, there is a high level of economic exchange and travel between geographical close countries. Even if geographical close countries wanted to, it would be very difficult for them to be indifferent to each other. For such reasons, this proximity increases the benefits of diplomatic representation. One of these benefits is the reduction of costs in the relation, since it is more economical to establish and maintain embassies in close countries, besides that it is easier to persuade the diplomatic staff of the nation to move to said job posts. The motive for this last argument is that weather and culture, generally, tend to be similar (Neumayer, 2008, p. 8).

1.5.2 Ideology

This is, probably, the most complex category to define. What is an ideology? Do two States have to share the same political ideology in a holistic way, or only in part? In fact, both scenarios can happen at the moment when States have diplomatic approaches and, eventually, establish formal relations. As Neumayer (2008, p. 8) argues, ideological affinity typically leads to friendly relations due to the fact that sharing a particular worldview, and this generates a sense of belonging to a group. For example, Western countries share similar ideas of democracy and human rights. Communist and ex-Communist countries, on the other side, tend to have similar concepts regarding state property of the means of production. Predominantly Muslim countries, in the same way, will share ideas about the role of religion in politics. Therefore, political affinity increases the benefits of diplomatic representation and promotes their fluid functionality, given the friendly relations that are supposed to be maintained. In consequence, the costs for representation are also reduced (Neumayer, 2008, p. 8).

1.5.3 Power

Finally, Neumayer (2008, pp. 8-9) establishes that the individual power of each State is influential in the same manner. The most powerful countries tend to prioritize being recognized as such by other countries. The key notion of this argument is that, being represented in a large number of foreign countries —as well as hosting a large number of embassies in their own countries— symbolizes and represents power. Nevertheless, diplomatic representation goes beyond the symbolic. If “power” means exercising an influence on political, economical, and military issues of other States, then diplomatic representation is an important vehicle with which the most powerful States transmit, project, and even impose their power on others. On the other side, such States can consider themselves as hosts that are more ‘interesting’ to others, which facilitates the access to who ‘matters’ in international affairs (Neumayer, 2008, pp. 8-9).

Power also relates to the previous variable —Ideology— due to the fact that power determines the impact of the ideological affinity in diplomatic representation. Ideologically close countries share common interests and are more prone to exchange

diplomatic relations. Nevertheless, countries with different visions cannot be simply ignored if they are considered powerful. A clear example of this is the relation between Western and Communist States during the Cold War. Small, Western countries may have not had incentives to send diplomatic relations to small, Communist countries, and vice versa. However, they could not ignore the major players in the other camp. The diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and with China were vital to Western countries, whether the latter were powerful or not, while said relations with the US, the UK, France, and even Germany were important even for the less-powerful Communist countries. In the same manner, the key players in each side of the Cold War needed to maintain diplomatic relations with countries on the other side, whether they are powerful or not, to affirm their power status (Neumayer, 2008, p. 9).

With all the points that have been treated on the present chapter, it is necessary to highlight the five more relevant aspects of it. First, the historic evolution of the relations between States, in which the modern international order was established, governing the system of nation-states today, besides a clear definition of the term ‘diplomacy’, to finally give a historic synthesis of said practice. Second, regarding the doctrinal and normative aspects of diplomatic relations, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is the basis on which the modern diplomatic practices are settled, along with its two Optional Protocols. Third, there are the classical theories of International Relations —realism and liberalism—, with their fundamental differences between them. Fourth, the perspectives of these two theories regarding globalizations and International Law are necessary to understand how States can interact with each other. And, fifth, what determines the global pattern of diplomatic representation is three factors: distance, ideology, and power.

Finally, to respond to the initial question of this chapter —what motivates States to relate between each other and establish diplomatic relations?—, a conclusion could be formulated that simply contains the most basic answer, this is, that States relate to each other based on common interests. Nevertheless, what are these common interests? How to know if they exist? And more importantly, how can they be classified? For this reason, the three factors that determine the global pattern of diplomatic representation are, in fact, these common interests. Even more, any form that a common interest can take between States can be categorized whether as a

characteristic of distance, of ideology, and of power, or as a union of any of these three.

CHAPTER II

Foreign policy of Ecuador and the Czech Republic

When talking about ‘foreign policy’, the need arises for defining this concept prior to explaining how it has developed in the case of Ecuador and the Czech Republic. Foreign policy consists of the general objectives that guide the activities and relations of a State in its interactions with other States. The development of foreign policy is influenced by three aspects: domestic considerations, the politics or behaviors of other States, or the plans to advance specific geopolitical designs. Diplomacy, as a concept that was dealt with in the previous chapter, is the key to foreign policy, whereas war, alliances, and international trade can all be considered as manifestations of said foreign policy (Britannica, 2020).

Apart from that, Calduch (1993) defines foreign policy as “that part of general politics formed by the set of decisions and actions by which objectives are defined and the means of a State are used to generate, modify, or suspend their relations with other actors of international society.” This is how this definition incorporates three key elements:

- *State character*: foreign policy can only be found in the States, due to the fact that they are the only actors in the international system that meet the two requirements that are needed to be able to develop foreign policy fully: internationally-recognized juridical capacity; and fully, autonomous, and effective political capacity.
- *It cannot be dissociated from the internal policy of the State*: to say about this, it is important to mention the inseparability of foreign policy from the internal policy, given that both interfere with each other because, in the end, both are nothing more than two facets of a same political reality —that of the State— in its institutional dimension, as well as in its social basis.
- *Determination of the purposes or objectives that the State seeks to reach*: for it, there has to be an incorporation of the specification and utilization of the means that are more adequate to the achievement of such objectives. A way to visualize this is through a supposition. If the country lacks determination for its purposes and objectives, the State will simply act on the international context by reacting to the circumstances, without being able to speak about a

foreign policy. In the same manner, if the country lacks the necessary means or these are insufficient to achieve the purposes that have been set out, the State will evidence a limited international projection. (Calduch, 1993)

2.1 Foreign policy of Ecuador since 10 years ago

2.1.1 Stages of foreign policy

Before analyzing the foreign policy of Ecuador since 10 years ago, it is necessary to understand which have been the general stages or periods of the country in this area. Muyulema-Allaica et al. (2019) establish three periods:

1) phase where territorial security has been privileged (1830,1942-1998); 2) the transnationalizing agendas have determined the Ecuadorian international politics (1998-2006); and 3) in the last years, Ecuador's foreign policy named "citizen diplomacy" (2007-2016) has given a new momentum to the international relations of Ecuador, anchored in the notions of 21st century Socialism. (p. 19)

In the first stage, from the independence process of the Ecuadorian territory that ended in 1822 and the foundation of the State as such in 1830, the foreign policy of the country had its focus on the different territorial disputes with its southern neighbor —Peru— which launched both countries to several wars: the Battle of Tarqui (1829); the first Ecuadorian-Peruvian War (1858-1860); the second Ecuadorian-Peruvian War (1941-1942); the Paquisha War (1981); and, finally, the Cenepa War (1995). For these reasons, the foreign policy of Ecuador can be defined as one that prioritized the State's own security. This translates to an emphasis on the realist theory of IR, with aspects such as self-help and survival clearly visible.

Nevertheless, in the last decade —which corresponds to the third and current period of Ecuadorian foreign policy—, along with the so-called "Citizen Revolution" (*Revolución Ciudadana* in Spanish), the State boosted a "new model of foreign policy, starting from the adoption of a new agenda based on the defense of the sovereignties and in consonance with the changes that were occurring in Ecuador, in the region, and in the world" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2018, p.

27). Therefore, what was previously explained keeps concordance with the National Plan of Development 2017-2021, proposed by the government of current President Lenín Moreno, which is founded in three axis: 1) Lifelong rights to everybody; 2) Economy at the service of society; and 3) More society, better State (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2018, p. 31).

2.1.2 Guiding lines of foreign policy

In this way, the course that was take by the foreign policy of Ecuador was center in the following guiding lines:

1. Defense of sovereignty and national dignity for peace and human and nature rights
2. Diversification of our international relations according to the country's interests.
3. Boost to the new models of regional integration.
4. Defense of Ecuadorian citizens that are in mobility condition, defense of free human mobility, boost of universal citizenship.
5. Creation of a citizen and inclusive diplomacy starting from institutional strengthening, that includes equality and gender policies, as well as the supply of services that are effective, efficient, quality, transparent, planned, participatory, and in constant evaluation. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2018, p. 27)

2.1.3 Principles governing International Relations

All the above analyzed has its basis on the Constitution of the Republic, specifically on Title VIII (International Relations), Chapter One (Principles governing International Relations). Here, article 416 contains 13 principles that will respond to the interests of the Ecuadorian people, to which those persons in charge of these relations and their executors shall be held accountable (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2018, p. 35):

1. It proclaims the Independence and legal equality of the States, peaceful coexistence, and the self-determination of the people, as well as cooperation, integration, and solidarity.
2. It advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes and international conflicts and rejects the use of threats and force to settle the above.
3. It condemns the interference of States in the domestic affairs of other States and any kind of intervention, whether armed raids, aggression, occupation or economic or military blockade.
4. It promotes peace and universal disarmament; it condemns the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and the imposition of bases or facilities for military purposes by certain States on the territory of others.
5. It recognizes the rights of the various peoples living together in the States, especially the right to promote mechanisms that express, preserve, and protect the diverse character of their societies and rejects racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination.
6. It advocates the principle of universal citizenship, the free movement of all inhabitants of the planet, and the progressive extinction of the status of alien or foreigner as an element to transform the unequal relations between countries, especially those between North and South.
7. It demands observance of human rights, especially the rights of migrant persons, and promotes their full enjoyment by complying with the obligations pledged with the signing of international human rights instruments.
8. It condemns all forms of imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism and recognizes the right of peoples to resist and free themselves from all forms of oppression.
9. It recognizes international law as a standard of conduct and calls for the democratization of international institutions and the equitable participation of States inside these institutions.
10. It promotes the establishment of a multipolar global order with the active participation of regional economic and political blocs and the strengthening of horizontal ties to build a fair, democratic, jointly supportive, diverse and intercultural world.
11. It promotes as a priority the political, cultural, and economic integration of the Andean Region, South America, and Latin America.

12. It fosters a new trade and investment system among States, one that is based on justice, solidarity, complementariness, the creation of international mechanisms to monitor multinational corporations and the establishment of an international financial system that is fair, transparent and equitable. It rejects converting disputes with foreign private companies into conflicts between States.
13. It promotes the creation, ratification, and enforcement of international instruments for the conservation and regeneration of the life cycles of the planet and biosphere. (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008)

It is important to specify that, the inclusion of these Principles governing International Relations in the 2008 Constitution, implies a limitation to the sitting political power on the definition itself of foreign policy, given that the Constitution, as the supreme norm, marks the milestones by which IR must circulate.

2.1.4 Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility

Additionally to this, it is necessary to highlight the existence of the State's IR branch, the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility —also called Chancellery. Since 1830, its tasks have been exercised by the Ministry of the Interior. It became an independent Ministry in 1897, which remains as such to this day (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020). Regarding its structure, it is composed of the following way:

- The different General Coordinations typical of a Ministry;
- Vice Ministry of Foreign Relations;
- Vice Ministry of Human Mobility;
- Diplomatic missions (Embassies, Consular Offices, Permanent Missions); and,
- Zonal Coordinations. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020)

2.1.5 AFESE's role in the Foreign Service

Another important institution for the current foreign policy of Ecuador and of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility is AFESE (*Asociación de*

Funcionarios y Empleados del Servicio Exterior Ecuatoriano in Spanish, or Association of Officials and Employees of the Ecuadorian Foreign Service). Its objective is to be a non-profit, supportive, and private guild organization, and its objectives are: 1) to strengthen the foreign service; 2) to defend the diplomatic career and the auxiliary staff of the foreign service; 3) to evaluate the level of professional and cultural training; and 4) to seek better life conditions for its associates (AFESE, 2020). It was founded in 1968, and its members are diplomatic career officers and the auxiliary staff that is subject to the LOSE (*Ley Orgánica del Servicio Exterior* in Spanish, or Organic Law of Foreign Service) and LOSEP (*Ley Orgánica de Servicio Público* in Spanish, or Organic Law of Public Service) (AFESE, 2020).

2.2 Current foreign policy of Ecuador

Following what was previously expressed, the current foreign policy of Ecuador has been framed in several documents, practices, and events that have shaped the way in which it is presented nowadays. Both the Political Agenda 2017–2021 (that was used as a basis for the previous subsection), and the Accountability Report 2019 (*Informe de Rendición de Cuentas* in Spanish) of the Chancellery—which is the most current one—, give testimony of how foreign policy has been carried out in the last two years.

2.2.1 Most recent actions of foreign policy

Under President Lenín Moreno, three Chancellors have been in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility: María Fernanda Espinosa (2017–2018); José Valencia (2018–2020); and Luis Gallegos (2020–actualidad) (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020). Besides this, the milestone of the last two years in the country's foreign policy is, probably, the reopening of the Diplomatic Academy (*Academia Diplomática*) in 2019, after 8 years of inactivity due to the transferring of its functions to the IAEN (*Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales* in Spanish, or Institute for High National Studies) during the mandate of former President Rafael Correa (Peralta, 2019). As a historical synthesis, the Academy was created in the year 1987 under the administration of ex-president León Febres Cordero⁶, although it was the initiative of diplomat Edwin Johnson, who was

⁶ León Febres Cordero was President of Ecuador between the years 1984 and 1988.

Ecuador's former delegate to the UN and President of AFESE (Peralta, 2019). Briefly stated, the Academy was born out of the necessity for establishing an institution for the training of professional diplomacy in the country, with the challenge of integrating Ecuador not only to the regional scheme, but also to the world scheme (Peralta, 2019).

2.2.2 Strategic axes of the Chancellery

Regarding the current administration of the Chancellery, it advocates a "depoliticization" of the country's diplomacy (El Telégrafo, 2018), which is considered to favor a long-term, efficient work, and not under the ideological conditions of the current government, which may result in a questionable stability for the country's IR. This is a factor that is shared by the Academy, given that the training of diplomatic agents is based on the premise of working under the State's interests, rather than the government's (Peralta, 2019). For this reason, the current strategic axes of the Chancellery frame what is expressed in the following four guidelines:

- To contribute to achieve Latin American integration;
- To define a foreign policy based on multilateralism and the free determination of the people;
- To advance towards the environmental sustainability of the planet based on responsible and supportive international relations;
- To define and articulate bilateral politics in the context of the national plans of development. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020)

2.2.3 Organic Law of Foreign Service

The governing law, not only of the Chancellery of Ecuador, but also of Ecuador's foreign policy as such, is the Organic Law of Foreign Service (*Ley Orgánica del Servicio Exterior* in Spanish). Just as it is explained in its Title I, article 1:

The Foreign Service is in charge of complying with the international management of the State, according to the Political Constitution of the Republic, the laws and international law. The Foreign Service, under the immediate direction of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, executes the

international politics, ensures the respect for the personality, sovereignty, independence, dignity and territorial integrity of the Republic and secures the defense of its rights and the protection of its interests. (Ley Orgánica del Servicio Exterior, 2017)

Regarding the structure of the Foreign Service, Title II, article 3 explains its components: 1) The Ministry of Foreign Relations; 2) The diplomatic missions; and, 3) The consular offices. Meanwhile, in Title III the diplomatic career is established in the context of the civil service as the means to “obtain the highest degree of efficiency in the duties of foreign service, through the implementation of the merit system that guarantees the stability of the suitable officials” (Ley Orgánica del Servicio Exterior, 2017).

This way, the Chancellery’s Accountability Report for the year 2019 —the latest version— is the document where the actions aimed to direct the Foreign Service can be found. This Report gives testimony of what has been accomplished in the foreign policy of Ecuador, year after year. This is how the year 2019 continued with the reinforcement and formalization of changes in the focus and methodology of how the country relates in the international environment. Furthermore, it was a year of “strengthening the ministerial organization and recovering the institutionality in the management of foreign relations” (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 7), which agrees with the actions towards the “depoliticization” that has been carried out.

Besides this, it is important to expand on how Ecuador has inserted itself in the international arena in its many areas: sovereignty, neighbouring relations, bilateral relations with the rest of States, relations with regional integration organizations, and relations with the most transcendent international organizations

2.2.4 Territorial sovereignty

The current territorial sovereignty of Ecuador has been centered around two aspects: the expansion of the continental shelf and the protection of the Galápagos Marine Reserve. For said expansion of the continental shelf, this has been done according to what is established on article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the

Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS), in addition to Annex II of the same document and to the Scientific and Technical Guidelines of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). The State continues progressing toward making this possible through different research to support the proposal. On the other hand, the Galápagos Marine Reserve has been subject to actions and initiatives in pursuit of its conservation, due to the many threats that have arisen, especially with respect to illegal fishing and its protection. This has been done in three fields: reactivate the Interinstitutional Committee on the Sea, ICM (*Comité Interinstitucional del Mar, ICM*); carry out arrangements with the respective international organizations to mobilize the world in the protection of this World Heritage; and monitor the application of agreements related to the elimination of illegal fishing, through dealings with the involved countries (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 15).

To understand the reasons why these decisions have been made regarding national sovereignty, it is necessary to see Ecuador's context in terms of territorial disputes. The country is one of the few in the world that do not have this kind of disputes any more (Von Kessel, 2017), due to the fact that, in one way or another, these have been resolved, whether by diplomatic or military means. Therefore, both actions—the expansion of the continental shelf and the protection of Galápagos Marine Reserve—correspond with the National Development Plan 2017–2021, specifically with Axis 3: “More society, better State” and, within it, Objective 9: “To guarantee sovereignty and peace, and to strategically position the country in the region and the world”. The policy which is referenced in said Objective is 9.5: “To promote neighborly and regional cooperation, the effective control of aquatic, terrestrial, aerial spaces, as well as the defense of maritime interests, maintaining the territorial integrity and the defense of the State's sovereignty” (Consejo Nacional de Planificación, 2017, p. 104). What is more, the Constitution's Principles governing International Relations that agree with this actions are number 1, 2, and 13:

1. It proclaims the Independence and legal equality of the States, peaceful coexistence, and the self-determination of the people, as well as cooperation, integration, and solidarity.
2. It advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes and international conflicts and rejects the use of threats and force to settle the above.

13. It promotes the creation, ratification, and enforcement of international instruments for the conservation and regeneration of the life cycles of the planet and biosphere. (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008)

Based on the above mentioned, it is evident that Ecuador has taken a realist perspective both in paper (this is, its objectives, principles, etc.) and in practice. The country, this way, can compensate for what is considered to be a small size and influence, with actions that maximize other areas that, likewise, promote interest and the national agenda.

2.2.5 Neighboring relations

Ecuador, with regards to its neighboring relations, has seen a favorable management not only in the last year, but for a long time. Such a management has been framed in the following four aspects:

1. *Security*. The existence of illegal activities and criminal organizations tied to drug trafficking, illegal mining, human trafficking, and others, constitute a latent threat in the areas of border integration.
2. *Human mobility*. The increase of migratory flows that are both regular and related to situations of vulnerability in the borders of South America (caused by the Venezuelan migration crisis) have generated strong social, economical, political, and security-related pressures.
3. *Infrastructure and connectivity*. Shortcomings and deficiencies in infrastructure and connectivity of the border area constitute important limitations that affect the life conditions of the inhabitants and the development of communities.
4. *Socioeconomic development*. The improvement of the life conditions of the Ecuadorian people in border areas is the best guarantee of security and territorial control. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 13)

Regarding the relation with Colombia, this has been centered around cooperation and coordination in the border areas with Ecuador, by strengthening the common areas of both States. The transnational risks that are shared are: illegal

mining, crimes in aquatic spaces and its incidence in the binational border, drug trafficking, illegal air traffic, and migration alerts. In addition to this, several meetings, committees, binational forums, presidential meetings, as well as ministerial cabinets have taken place (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 13).

With Peru the relation has developed in a similar fashion. Several mechanisms have contributed to this: binational cabinet meetings, binational border commissions, and many more. Similarly, Ecuador shares with its southern neighbor certain risks: illegal mining and drug trafficking (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 14).

2.2.6 Bilateral relations

The bilateral relations with the rest of the States, beginning with the rest of Latin America, Ecuador strengthened the following areas: with Argentina, the focus was the III Meeting of Political Consultations, where central issues of the bilateral, regional and multilateral agenda were discussed. With Brazil, there was a successful negotiation of a Cooperation and Investment Facilitation Agreement. With Chile, with whom Ecuador maintains one of the closest relations, the Presidential Encounter was held, as well as the meeting of the V Ecuador-Chile Interministerial Council, where two documents were adopted: the Santiago Presidential Declaration and the Action Plan, which contains the matrices of 109 adopted commitments, along with 21 signed agreements. With Mexico, as part of the adherence process to the Pacific Alliance, Ecuador began the negotiations of a trade agreement with that country. With Venezuela, Ecuador recognized Mr. Juan Guaidó as the interim President of that country, besides the fact that Ecuador is part of several groups —along with other States— that seek to accompany the Venezuelan crisis to a peaceful and democratic way out through two means: free elections and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance when required and according to international norms (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, pp. 15-18).

For the bilateral relations with Europe and North America, beginning with Germany, a country which is one of the most important sources of cooperation for Ecuador, both intergovernmental meetings and official visits were held. With Canada,

both States held bilateral dialogues with the Vice Ministers of the Chancellery; in addition, operations for airlines began on direct flights with the Quito-Toronto route. In terms of education, several agreements were signed with the aim of facilitating the participation of Ecuadorian students in higher education and research programs of Canadian universities. Regarding Spain, the diplomatic relations have historically been close, due to cultural proximity, the fact of belonging to the Spanish-speaking community, and the presence of a significant number of Ecuadorian migrants in the European country. During 2019, several authorities held official visits, progress was made with the bilateral agendas, and Spain's support for the request to review the short-term Schengen visa requirement for Ecuadorians was reaffirmed. Finally, with the United States, Ecuador has experienced a 'reinvigoration' of its bilateral relation, due to the fact that this relation is a priority as a strategic alliance in several areas: political-diplomatic, security and defense, economical-commercial, human mobility, and cooperation for development. The conditions in which this approach took place closed an era of diplomatic 'freezing' experienced for nearly 10 years, and this was accomplished by the understanding of both States' pragmatism and independence, leaving aside what the Ecuadorian government considers to be "ideological or partisan conditionings and prioritizing Ecuador's interests to create better opportunities for the sake of the country and its people's development" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, pp. 21-23).

To continue with the rest of the States, at the bilateral level in Africa, Asia and Oceania, relations with Australia, China, and Japan are highlighted. For Australia, Ecuador's focus was the negotiations held for the entry of Ecuadorian products to the Australian market, along with meetings to increase mining investment in Ecuador between representatives of both Australian companies and Ecuadorian authorities. With regards to China, Ecuador considers this relation as one of the most important and strategic ones, after the one with the United States. The peak moment of the relation came last year —2019— with the official visit of Ecuador's former Chancellor, José Valencia, to Beijing and Shanghai, to participate in the VII Meeting of Political Consultations with the State Councillor and the Minister of Foreign Issues of China. This allowed to deepen both the political dialogue and the cooperation, besides monitoring the commitments made during the State visit of President Lenín Moreno to China, and reviewing the relevant areas of the bilateral relations (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, pp. 29-31).

2.2.7 Regional integration organizations

For the relation that Ecuador has recently had with the regional integration organizations, the results have been heterogeneous in the sense that, depending on the specific situation of each institution, two results have arisen: either the organization is on an institutional booming, and it is living according to its principles (which takes not only Ecuador, but also the rest of the States party to be part of its success); or, the organization is in decline, which in several cases generates that said institution may fail and disappear. There are three organizations with which Ecuador has strengthened the relation —CAN, ALADI, and CELAC— whereas there is one —UNASUR— that Ecuador's government considers that will be succeeded by PROSUR by distancing itself from ideological or partisan constraints (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 18).

Regarding CAN (*Comunidad Andina de Naciones* in Spanish, or Andean Community of Nations), an institution that is one of the first course of actions for the Ecuadorian State in the international field, it just celebrated 50 years of institutional life, and this was summarized in the form of a commitment declaration with the strengthening of the organization, along with the advancement of political, economical, infrastructure, and people's integration of the States party (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 20).

Furthermore, ALADI (*Asociación Latinoamericana De Integración* in Spanish, or Latin American Integration Association) has the objective of promoting the expansion of Latin America's integration through social and economical development, and through the establishment, in a gradual and progressive way, of a common Latin American market. Relevant to Ecuador, the Secretary-General of the institution made an official visit to the country, where the Ecuadorian State ratified its support to the initiatives that prompt a broad regional integration. In addition to this, the government uses several of ALADI's trade facilitation mechanisms with the purpose of carrying out different cooperation projects that are related to the markets and products of interest to the country (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, pp. 18–20).

CELAC (*Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* in Spanish, or Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) had, in 2019, the promotion of a reflection on the current mechanisms and aims of the institution, with the objective of achieving the organization's consensus in an effective manner, along with the generation of internal agreement processes —meaning, within the institution— and with third countries, always based on the common interests of member States (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 21).

Finally, with UNASUR (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* in Spanish, or Union of South American Nations) Ecuador made the decision to suspend the application of UNASUR's Constitutive Treaty, which resulted in ceasing to participate in all activities of the institution. Consequently, on September 17th, Ecuador's National Assembly approved the denouncement of the Constitutive Treaty of the organization. Thus, the 30th of the same month, the Chancellery signed the certificate of returning the movable property that Ecuador provided to the Secretary-General of UNASUR. Due to this, and in parallel to these events, the State promoted the creation of PROSUR (*Foro para el Progreso de América del Sur* in Spanish, or Forum for the Progress and Development of South America) along with the rest of South American nations. This institution will have the objective of constituting a space for dialogue and regional collaboration, that will work in pursuit of the benefit of the people, distancing itself from what the Ecuadorian government considers as “ideological stands” (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 20).

2.2.8 International organizations

With respect to the international organizations outside of the region, centered around multilateralism, the actions have focused on the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations (UN). Regarding the EU, the relation between the Ecuadorian State and this organization is at its highest point, with which several areas have been promoted, which include political dialogue, cooperation for development, trade relations, and investments. Specifically, the areas of economics, security, migration, and environmental protection are over the table when dealing with this relation. It is worth noting the official visit of former Chancellor José Valencia to the main headquarters of the Eu in Brussels, where all these topics of interest were discussed. Furthermore, the V Meeting of the Political

Consultation Mechanism between Ecuador and the European Union was held, which is the main space for bilateral dialogue (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, pp. 28-29).

With regard to the OAS, Ecuador participated in the 49th General Assembly of the institution, held in Medellín, Colombia, in the month of June, likewise with a delegation chaired by former Chancellor José Valencia. The relevant issues focused on the situation of Venezuela and Nicaragua, in which Ecuador contributed to the resolutions that originated from the Assembly through the systematization of the 'Quito Process', which is "a mechanism of dialogue, articulation and search for solutions to the Venezuelan migration crisis and its consequences in the region" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 39). Furthermore, the Ecuadorian delegation highlighted the Venezuelan migration crisis and its impacts on the territory, describing this as a humanitarian issue, and not only a migratory one. This way, it was insisted on the design of policies that enable said migration to be embraced on the basis of an orderly, secure, and regularized migration policy.

Finally, for the UN, Ecuador took part in the High-level Week of the 74th period of sessions of the UN's General Assembly in September of 2019, with the delegation led by President Lenín Moreno. The lines of action were centered around the General DEbate, which the President participated in, besides of the several bilateral and multilateral meetings with his counterparts of other States (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2020, p. 32).

2.3 Foreign policy of the Czech Republic since 10 years ago

2.3.1 Stages of foreign policy

Unlike Ecuador, establishing fixed stages or periods in the Czech Republic's foreign policy is, undoubtedly, a more complex task, as it is a State with many more years of existence than the Ecuadorian State. For this reason, it is more feasible to divide the Czech foreign policy by its periods of history, beginning with the establishment of the independent State of Czechoslovakia in 1918. This was followed by a 20-year period of democracy and prosperity, which ended with the occupation of

the country by Hitler's Germany in 1939. After World War II, a short span of "limited" democracy was restored by post-war Soviet influence, which culminated in the definite takeover of power by Communism in 1948. The so-called "Prague Spring", in 1968, was an attempt to change the regime's totalitarianism and weaken the ties to the Soviet Union, although this would not fully come until 1989, with the overthrow of the Communist regime in the context of the "Velvet Revolution". In 1993, the Czechoslovak State was divided in a peaceful manner into two States: the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tripoli, 2020). Consequently, with this last stage, a more defined and clear foreign policy began to take shape, due to the reordering of the identity and internal management of the Czech State.

2.3.2 Priorities of foreign policy since 10 years ago

With this synthesis established, 10 years ago, the Czech Republic published, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the document titled "Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy", which contains the main priorities of its foreign policy:

- To safeguard the Czech Republic's security; to identify, prevent and counter any threats; to contribute to the development of an economically and politically strong EU;
- To maintain and develop the transatlantic link, i.e. the alliance between Europe, the United States and Canada;
- To develop good relations with neighbouring countries and to foster regional cooperation;
- To promote human rights and democracy worldwide by means of transformation and development cooperation;
- To promote the Czech Republic's economic interests abroad;
- To facilitate the European integration of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe; and,
- To promote the Czech Republic's positive image abroad. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011, p. 3)

In addition to this, the Constitution of the Czech Republic establishes, in its article 1, numeral 2, how the State is linked to its obligations emanating from the

different agreements and laws that may occur in the context of foreign policy: “The Czech Republic shall observe its obligations resulting from international law” (Constitution of the Czech Republic, 1992).

2.4 Current foreign policy of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic’s foreign policy, nowadays, is governed by the updated version of its document title “Concept of the Czech Republic’s Foreign Policy” of the year 2014, in which three aspects are explained: the global context where the Czech State is developed; the internal context of the Czech State; and, finally, the objectives of the Czech Foreign Policy. Regarding the global context, the Czech Republic recognizes that the factor that stands out the most in world politics is the shift in the global relations of power towards a world order of multipolar tendency, rather than bipolar, which dominated the Cold War period. Besides from States, the Czech Republic understands that non-State actors are also exercising a growing influence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 1).

The internal context of the Czech State —in other words, the backdrop to Czech Foreign Policy— describes, briefly, how its situation influences the decision-making of its foreign policy. First, an important contrast is made comparing the scale of the country. The Czech Republic is a small country in a global context, whereas it is a medium-sized country in the European context. For this reason, the influence that it has in the EU, NATO, OSCE, and other multilateral institutions not only expand the opportunities to develop plans for the foreign policy, but also expand national security and its prosperity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 2).

By being located in a strategic area —Central Europe—, the Czech State has been subject to the external influence of great powers throughout its existence, and it is only in the last 30 years that it has been able to consolidate itself to the extent that its resources and geopolitics have allowed it. Even so, the country enjoys the warmest relations with its neighbors today, besides being fully integrated to the EU and, for the most part, to NATO (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 3).

2.4.1 Priorities of current foreign policy

Through the above explained, the following are the five objectives that the Czech Republic has to prioritize the actions that it takes in its foreign policy:

1. *Security.* Foreign policy contributes to the security of the Czech Republic, which consists on maintaining the security of the inhabitants of the State, and the protection of their lives, health, liberty, human dignity, and property, besides keeping the security and functionality of the governmental institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 4).
2. *Prosperity and Sustainable Development.* Foreign policy helps to improve the material conditions and the quality of life that Czech citizens enjoy, thanks in particular to the openness of the Czech economy. The broader aim of foreign policy is to contribute to the rising global prosperity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, pp. 6-7).
3. *Human Dignity and Human Rights.* Another overarching objective of foreign policy is to promote global efforts to safeguard a dignified life. This operates on the assumption that, achieving human dignity contributes to international security by avoiding or restricting security threats, such as regional conflicts, terrorism and irregular migration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 9).
4. *Serving Citizens.* One of the results of today's interconnected world is a major global mobility. A rising number of Czech citizens are traveling or establishing roots in other countries, while more and more foreigners are making their way to the Czech Republic. For this reason, international mobility is a great opportunity for Czech society to exchange and absorb new knowledge. Nevertheless, this also poses significant risks. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 11).
5. *Reputation Abroad.* The last objective of the Czech Foreign Policy is to encourage a positive perception of the Czech Republic within the international community. For this, the Czech foreign policy pays particular attention to the Czech Republic's branding in the knowledge that this must be adapted to the target territory and encompass a wide range of topics: historical and cultural links, industrial tradition, innovation potential, transition experience, human

capital, scientific accomplishments, sport, tourist (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, pp. 11-12).

The foreign policy of the Czech Republic, since October 2018, has been under the leadership of Tomáš Petříček. With him, the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has centered, in order of priority, around four areas: 1) the European Union; 2) Central Europe; 3) Eastern Europe and Western Balkans; and, 4) transatlantic relations and security policy. An analysis of each of these areas will be given below:

2.4.2 European Union

The European Union, not only in this last year —2020—, but rather since some time ago, has experienced an internal crisis as a result of Brexit and what is considered to be a ‘lack of leadership’ by the inability to accomplish the objectives that the organization set in its Leaders’ Agenda of 2017 (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 19). As a result of this situation, the ‘traditional leaders’ of the EU, namely Germany and France, have begun to see how this leadership is weakening, even when they are considered as the forefront of European integration.

In the face of these facts, the Czech Republic has taken a rather defensive position in the debate regarding the future of European integration. Although its Prime Minister has always been the link between the Czech Republic–EU policy, he has not been able, along with other relevant actors, to present a consistent vision for the role of the State in the institution respecting key issues.

The specific situations with regard to the Czech Republic with the EU are: the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) —the organization’s budget—; its position regarding Brexit; and, climate change. For the MFF of the 2021–2027 period, the European Commission proposed a slight increase of it. This was not received with enthusiasm by the Czech Republic, adding the fact that the State will see its share of the received funds reduced, with the argument of the country’s economic growth. Furthermore, the State also focused on introducing a bigger flexibility in the use of the funds that it receives from the organization. All in all, the country’s position, especially transmitted by its Prime Minister, Andrej Babiš, shows that communication between the State and the institution is diffuse and, at best, does not contribute to an

issue of vital importance such as this —European politics— given that there is not a clear vision of the European agenda with the public (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, pp. 20–21)

For the Czech Republic, Brexit meant following the line of the EU's common positioning, which can be appreciated given the rising tension that surrounds this situation. Nevertheless, the Czech laws that regulate the rights of the United Kingdom's citizens are seen as 'generous' and 'favorable' when they are compared to the ones of the rest of the countries in the EU. The United Kingdom, for this reason, has promised to reciprocity, so that the same situation could happen with respect to Czech citizens living in the UK (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 21).

Finally, the question of the action against climate change made the Czech Republic, along with other Central European countries, maintain a relatively conservative posture regarding this. This is due to the fact that, in June 2019, the Czech Republic was one of the countries that prevented the adoption of conclusions that oblige EU's member States to achieve carbon neutrality for the year 2050. In spite of this, certain claims and postures of Prime Minister Babiš changed after meeting with the European Commission's candidate for President, Ursula von der Leyen, a month later, in July 2019 (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 21).

This is how the situation of the Czech Republic with the EU has expressed itself in the context of three situations: 1) the formation of EU institutions after the European Parliament elections; 2) a number of open issues from the past period; and, 3) the weakening of the Franco-German engine at the head of the EU. In the present, likewise, there are three situations: 1) the Prime Minister's conflict of interest case, fundamentally undermining the Czech Republic's position in the EU; 2) the aggressive and polarizing rhetoric of the Czech Republic on issues climate change and migration; and, 3) the government's inadequate communication with the public on EU matters (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 25).

2.4.3 Central Europe

By comparison of past periods, the Czech foreign policy regarding its immediate neighbors is made up of three metaphorical pillars, which are, Germany,

the Austerlitz Format (composed of Austria and Slovakia), and the V₄ —Visegrád Group— (composed of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary) and has been stabilized importantly in recent times. Despite all of this, the region is not in a good situation due to the EU's division in East and West. This 'schism' is deepening and expanding to other areas, given that it is perceived by political actors as something permanent and timely (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 29).

The Austerlitz Format, which is a loose cooperation group composed of Austria, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, remains as the least visible part of foreign policy out of the three pillars. Regarding Austria, there has not been major movements or fluctuations, neither has there been a considerable progress. In the same manner with Slovakia, despite the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Petříček has tried to emphasize the cooperation between both States, this group remains as the least active of the three pillars of the Czech Central European policy. On the part of the Czech Republic, the initiative has always been over the table, due to the many joint meetings between Ministries and legislative functions of Austria, though it is evident that the priorities of Austria lie on Germany and Western Europe (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 32).

On another note, in the Visegrád Group (whose presidency falls under Slovakia), the Czech-Hungarian relations have intensified in the wake of the official visits of Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, to Prague, and of Czech President, Miloš Zeman, to Budapest, which, in addition to the political declarations made in a common focus in a number of issues in the V₄'s plan, they also promised the development of the economic relations. With respect to the Czech-Polish relation, the key event was the joint meeting of delegations of both governments in February 2019. The meeting was not a great progress in any of the problematic areas of the bilateral relation (for example, the border debt or the planned expansion of the Turów brown coal mine), but it was fundamental in keeping the continuity and establishing contact between the new Czech cabinet and the Polish government (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 30).

The Czech-German interaction is, probably, the most important for the Czech Republic. Here, the highlight is in the Czech-German Strategic Dialogue that has continued and has had an important progress in the bilateral relation. The continuous

meetings that have arisen from this Dialogue have generated diverse Working Groups centered around different areas. In the last year, the focus has shifted from approaching long-term challenges to centering in questions related to the European Union and transatlantic relations (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, pp. 30–31).

In summary, the situation of the Czech Republic with its Central European neighbors is composed of the following context: 1) the focus of the Slovak Presidency in the V4 on the negotiation of the multiannual financial framework and on relations with Western European countries instead of migration issues; 2) the deepening the rule of law problems in Hungary and Poland and further responses from the European institutions; and, 3) the growing divide between the western and eastern parts of the EU. Regarding the present situation, the following occurs: 1) continuing and strengthening of the Czech–German Strategic Dialogue; 2) a further development of political and, consequently, economic ties with Hungary; 3) the start of the Czech V4 Presidency, which focuses on the practical agenda and the European dimension of the Visegrad cooperation; and, 4) the development of expert, political and public debate on the benefits of the Czech Republic's membership in the V4 (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 35).

2.4.4 Eastern Europe and Western Balkans

The relations with both regions have had, depending on the country, either a strengthening result, or a conflictive one. Regarding specific States, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina stand out as the most relevant. Despite the fact that, under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Petříček, the Czech Republic may look for ways to be more active in both regions, the way in which the relations in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans are developed depend greatly on the determinations of the European consensus, in other words, the EU's consensus. For this reason, the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo⁷) have had the preeminence on the attention that they have received. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said for Eastern Europe, which is composed of the Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine,

⁷ With respect to Kosovo, the present research maintains the official posture of the European Union regarding this issue, which expresses the following: “This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence” (Comisión Europea, 2020).

Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) and Russia, and has been considered as a region on a crisis regime as a source of critical reflection (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 39).

The Czech-Russian relation holds several conflicts, due to the polarization in the way in which the Czech society sees Russia. In spite of the many forums, bilateral meetings, and ministerial cabinets that have taken place, all these platforms have failed in their objective to add value to the bilateral relation. Certain diplomatic disputes have even arisen concerning the rent of apartments by the Russian embassy in a clear violation of the respective diplomatic conventions, which shows that the relationship has certain fissures (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 39).

On the other hand, with Ukraine, the Czech Republic has seen a renovated interest in the country, both at the multilateral level —with the Eastern Partnership— and at the bilateral one. Nevertheless, Ukraine is still not getting as much attention as it could from the Czech government. On the part of the rest of the Eastern Partnership, Armenia and Moldova have experienced the greatest progress in diplomacy with the Czech Republic, being in the middle of processes of greater democratization of their societies. The diplomacy with these three countries has been listened to and appreciated for its good vision of the internal relations and the support to its internal reforms. In spite of this, with the other States of the organization, the political and diplomatic priorities have lost their importance (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, pp. 40–41).

In parallel, in the Western Balkans, the Czech State has managed itself similarly to how it has done with the Eastern Partnership, this is, it has made progress with specific States, but not with the region as a whole. In this case, the emphasis has been on strengthening the relations with local governments, which represent the most flexible level of decision-making. This is a reality for Bosnia and Herzegovina, with whom the Czech government has had a greater success on its diplomacy. The relation has been built, mainly, with economic diplomacy, which is manifested in the areas of development and cultural cooperation (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 41).

This is how the relation of the Czech Republic with Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans is presented in the following context: 1) the strategic reflection on

the posture of the Eastern Partnership in the Czech State and debate on how it will continue in the next decade; 2) the slow integration of the Western Balkans into the EU; 3) Russia's continued aggressive policy towards the EU and, by extension, for the Czech Republic; and, 4) a Western-oriented Ukraine, continuing reforms despite escalating tensions with Russia. For these reasons, the present period is shaped by these situations: 1) a more active involvement of the Czech Republic in the debate on the future of the Eastern Partnership after 2020; 2) the Czech interests in economic diplomacy and know-how sharing in the Western Balkans; and, 3) the polarized debate on Russia and cooperation with it across the Czech Republic and the EU (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 45).

2.4.5 Transatlantic relations and security policy

Transatlantic cooperation is the foundation for the security of the Czech Republic and, therefore, keeping and strengthening the relations between Europe and the United States continue to be a strategic priority for the policies of these areas. In spite of this, the unilaterality that has characterized the United States under the leadership of President Donald Trump (apart from his style of confrontational diplomacy) keeps the transatlantic relations under pressure with Europe, although the initial uncertainty that existed at the beginning of 2016 due to the start of Mr. Trump's functions has decreased considerably (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 49).

The visit of Prime Minister Babiš to the White House, which focused on security issues, can be considered as the highlight of Czech-American relations in the recent period. After six years of half-hearted relations, the visit has proven to be the sign of recovery for both States (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 49).

All in all, the most relevant challenge that the Czech Republic faces in this area is the modernization of its Armed Forces and the ability to adapt to new security tendencies, especially with respect to growing cyber-threats (Borčany & Janebová, 2019, p. 53).

CHAPTER III

Analysis for strengthening the formal diplomatic relation between Ecuador and the Czech Republic

In the context of a preliminary analysis, in addition to what was done in Chapter II, it is evident that neither Ecuador is the number one diplomatic priority for the Czech Republic, nor is the Czech Republic to Ecuador. Another clear evidence of this is the history of the bilateral relation. Despite this, it is important to highlight the milestones of the relation, which are relevant in their historical context. All this will be discussed in the subsection 3.1. Thus, the following question arises: why must there be a strengthening of the bilateral relation? Moreover, how can it be argued for strengthening when, apparently, the relation is not that strong? Historically, Ecuador has related, first and foremost, with countries that have met the following criteria (whether it is one of them, or both):

1. A country with a considerable presence of Ecuadorians;
2. A country that is a strategic partner relevant to the international panorama, usually in the economic area.

Likewise, the Czech Republic has as a priority its role within the European Union, besides strengthening its neighboring relations: Germany, V4, and the Austerlitz Format.

Despite these arguments —that are still relevant for both countries—, taking an absolute position with respect to them, rather than a relative one, may lead to miss valuable opportunities of bilateral relations in general. In other words, by not strengthening a bilateral alliance due to the country in question not possessing the characteristics that usually lead Ecuador or the Czech Republic to relate, means to overlook benefits that may secure links in other equally important areas, though they may not be considered a priority.

Both Ecuador and the Czech Republic are considered to be ‘medium-sized’ actors in their respective panoramas. Ecuador, in Latin America, as well as in the regional integration organizations that it is part of, is not the leader or the main voice

that the rest of the States follow. Similarly, as it was analyzed on Chapter II, neither is the Czech Republic the main voice that is heard in the European Union —what is more, it depends on those who are considered to be the ‘leaders’ of the institution, this is, Germany and France.

For all the above mentioned, it is necessary to take the liberal perspective of gains (and, by extension, to put the realist perspective on the background) when talking about these strategic alliances that do not involve the most ‘powerful’ actors in the international arena. In other words, the concept of absolute gains⁸ (liberalism) comes to support this argument, where as the concept of relative gains⁹ (realism) can be detrimental for the same purposes.

Thus, this chapter will serve as an analysis for the situation of two countries that maintain formal diplomatic relations, but these have "stalled" or are not considered a priority.

3.1 The political situation between both States

3.1.1 Historical synthesis of the relation between both States

The beginning of diplomatic relations between Ecuador and the Czech Republic dates back to almost a century ago. The official relations were established on January 15th, 1926, when the Czech Republic (along with Slovakia) formed Czechoslovakia¹⁰. Nevertheless, the opening of embassies was not involved in this, so everything was carried out at the level of Honorary Consulates. The next stage in the relation occurred in 1935, when the first Diplomatic Mission of the Czech Republic was established in Ecuador, led by a Charge d'Affaires (Embajada de la República Checa en Lima, 2016).

⁸ Absolute gains are considered a ‘non-zero sum’ game for liberalism, where the total effect is measured, which comprises power, security, economic, and cultural effects of an action (Cai, 2011).

⁹ Relative gains are considered a ‘zero sum’ game for realism, in which states have to compete with each other to increase their own benefits (Cai, 2011).

¹⁰ Czechoslovakia, as an independent State, existed from 1918 to 1992. On January 1st, 1993, it split peacefully to form the current States of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Until this stage, it is necessary to highlight the labor that Czechoslovakia would have in the history of Ecuador in the beginning of the 1940s. In the context of the second Ecuadorian-Peruvian War (1941-1942), the Zbrojovka weapons factory, in the city of Brno, considered this as an opportunity to do business with Ecuador by selling weapons to the State. This is how the company sent a permanent representative, Robert Bartuš¹¹, to Quito, who would very soon adapt to Ecuador and its business environment. By entering the different social circles of the capital, he managed to reach agreements between the representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Army with Zbrojovka for the shipment of considerable quantities of Czech arms and ammunition. Besides, its position allowed him to become the “informal spokesperson of all Czechoslovak citizens in Ecuador in the 1930s and 1940s” (Konečný, 2007, 244).

It would be a short period of time until these arms contracts between Zbrojovka and Ecuador's government became a key piece of the bilateral relations, beyond the evident friendship that was being formed by the help that Czechoslovakia was already providing to Ecuador, military wise. Until this moment, the Ecuadorian State was not paying his debt for the bought weapons, which ascended to millions of korunas (the Czechoslovak currency). Bartuš managed to make a deal between the Ministry of Social Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Zbrojovka, and the Ecuadorian government in which the latter would recognize this non-payment. In return, Quito would compensate its debt opening the doors of the country to several families of political refugees, under special conditions. Among the agreement's benefits, these refugees did not have to pay their respective visas, besides the fact that they were allowed to join the areas of local agriculture and industry. All this happened after the Munich Agreement in the fall of 1938, with what “anti-Semitic airs began to spread in Czech and Slovak society” (Konečný, 2007, 244). As a direct consequence of this Central European crisis, Bartuš acted on it and managed to reach the above-mentioned agreement. This way, hundreds of Czechs and Slovaks of Jewish ancestry arrived in Ecuador after the outbreak of World War II.

Due to World War II, the relations were interrupted on March 15th, 1939. Through the Czech government in exile in London, United Kingdom, the relations

¹¹ Robert Bartuš was the grandfather of the current Honorary Consul of Ecuador in Prague, Eng. Roberto Bartuš, who will be discussed in subsection 3.2.2.

were reestablished in 1943. Because of the military dictatorship that governed Ecuador *de facto* between the years 1963 and 1966, the relations were interrupted from 1964 to 1967. In 1967, a Commercial Mission was established in the country. In November, 1968, the Consulate General of Czechoslovakia was opened in Quito, ascending to the category of Embassy on May 6th, 1969 (Embajada de la República Checa en Lima, 2016).

The relations remained stable for 23 years, until December 31st, 1992, when for financial reasons —apart from the respective adjustments due to Czechoslovakia's split—, both embassies were closed. In other words, both the Embassy of Czechoslovakia in Quito and the Embassy of Ecuador in Prague were closed. Despite this, the two countries that were formed, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, were immediately recognized by Ecuador on January 1st, 1993, which was the day they were established as States. The next action carried out by the Czech Republic and Ecuador was to work, since then, through concurrencies¹². For this reason, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bogotá, Colombia, took the responsibility of representing the Czech Republic to Ecuador. In a similar fashion, Ecuador accredited its Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, to be concurrent to the Czech Republic (Embajada de la República Checa en Lima, 2016).

3.1.2 Current synthesis of the relation between both States

The most recent actions that define the Ecuadorian-Czech bilateral relation began a decade ago, when, in 2010, the Czech Republic closed its Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, so the concurrency with Ecuador was given to the Embassy in Lima, Perú. This dynamic continues to this day. On the part of Ecuador, likewise, in 2012 it redefined its concurrencies in its European embassies, so the concurrency for the Czech Republic was moved from the Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, to the Embassy in Berlin, Germany. In the same fashion, this dynamic is kept to this day (Embajada de la República Checa en Lima, 2016). Despite this, the representations within each country are maintained at the level of Honorary Consulates. Currently, the Czech Republic has two Honorary Consulates in Ecuador: a Honorary General Consulate in Guayaquil,

¹² It is said that an embassy has concurrencies when it represents its State in more than one State. In other words, the same embassy represents its State both in the State where it is located, and in other determined States.

and a Honorary Consulate in Quito (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 2011). On the other hand, Ecuador just opened its Honorary Consulate in Prague, Czech Republic^{13 14}, led by Honorary Consul Eng. Roberto Bartuš (Consulado Honorario del Ecuador en Praga, 2020).

This last event can be considered as the most important event of the Ecuadorian-Czech relation of the last years, due to the fact that it was the product of an important dialogue, negotiation, and agreements between both countries, as expressed by the current Honorary Consul (R. Bartuš, personal communication, November 11, 2020). The opening of this representation in Prague is a step further to continue strengthening ties between both States, after the fact that, historically, the situation between the two has been strong due to their commercial-military alliance (on Czechoslovakia's side) and humanitarian alliance (on Ecuador's side) in the context of both the Second Ecuadorian-Peruvian War and World War II, to later have experienced ups and downs on the part of both States —since Ecuador plunged into a series of pro-Western dictatorships, and Czechoslovakia remained in a socialist regime.

All in all, both States, nowadays, can be considered as dyads¹⁵, although not in the classical sense of the definition. This means that neither Ecuador nor the Czech Republic maintain their diplomatic representations in the other country at the level of embassies. As is evident from the above, both are managed at the level of Honorary Consulates.

It is worth mentioning that the recent opening of the Honorary Consulate of Ecuador in Prague happened thanks to the way prepared by the Czech-Ecuadorian Society of Cooperation (abbreviated as CZECUspol). Founded by Honorary Consul Bartuš and Cristian Rivadeneira¹⁶, CZECUspol served as a platform to promote the

¹³ <https://twitter.com/cecupraga>

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/CECUPraga/>

¹⁵ A 'dyad', according to the Dictionary of the Spanish language, is a "couple of two beings or things close and especially linked to each other" (Real Academia Española, 2020). When this concept is translated to the scope between States, it means that there is, according to Neumayer (2008, p. 9) reciprocity in their diplomatic representation. In other words, a couple of countries are a dyad when each one of them has its diplomatic representation in the other country, or when none of them have this kind of reciprocity.

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/chrisrivm>

Honorary Consulate (R. Bartuš, personal communication, November 11, 2020). The organization constantly publishes topics of interest for the bilateral relation, making it an important online resource, by having a Youtube channel¹⁷, a Facebook page¹⁸, and a Twitter account¹⁹.

3.2 Common axes of the foreign policy between both States

There is not an exhaustive and definitive list of which are the areas that encompass foreign policy. This is due to the fact that some authors may consider an area to be within another area, whereas other authors can consider the same area as separate from the rest. In Chapter I, the three variables of Neumayer were analyzed, which influence when relating two States: Distance, Ideology, and Power. This can function as a first analysis to the bilateral relation; nevertheless, it is necessary to delve into it through the different areas that may exist. The following table synthesizes the macro and micro areas of foreign policy.

Table 2. Macro and micro areas of foreign policy

Macro areas	Micro areas
Policy	Diplomacy
	Treaties
Economics	Trade
	Finances/Investments
Security	External defense
	Internal defense
Culture	Tourism
	Heritage
Health	
Environment	

Author: Mateo Castillo (2020)

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXfbGk7BMAb1mkfqmRO37GA/featured>

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/czecuspol>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/CZECUspol>

As previously explained, the bilateral relation was consolidated with a commercial-military alliance on the part of Czechoslovakia, and a humanitarian alliance on the part of Ecuador. Therefore, the former took a realist perspective of its relation, while the latter took a liberal perspective²⁰. Nevertheless, the following subsections will deal with the different areas in which the bilateral relation shares common interests.

3.2.1 Neumayer's three variables

When analyzing the most common variable, Distance, it is evident that the relationship between Ecuador and the Czech Republic is not based on it. Remembering its definition, established in Chapter I, the interests and mutual interaction of both countries do not correspond to those that are usually located close to each other. Therefore, the location of these countries does not allow Distance to be a determining variable.

Regarding Power, an initial reading could demonstrate that Ecuador, as well as the Czech Republic are considered medium-sized actors in their respective environments, regions, and integration organizations. Therefore, the conclusion would be that none of them would exercise a greater power over the other when relating to it. However, a deeper analysis of exports, imports, and GDP can shed new perspectives to understand this matter. As Table 6 in subsection 3.2.2 shows, the difference in trade between both countries in the last three years shows that Ecuador buys, on average, double of what it sells to the Czech Republic. Furthermore, in terms of GDP, for the year 2019, Ecuador has a value of \$107,435,665.00, while the Czech Republic has a value of \$246,489,245.49 (Banco Mundial, 2020), which demonstrates that even in these economic data a pattern is maintained in which the Czech Republic represents, approximately, double of what Ecuador shows. In a way, for this reason, the Czech Republic exercises relatively more power over Ecuador than vice versa.

The third variable, Ideology, is the most decisive for the Ecuadorian-Czech bilateral relation. The countries that share similar values, principles, and objectives, will tend to relate more naturally. Nevertheless, what happens when two countries

²⁰ Chapter I of the present research deals with the difference between both perspectives.

share, in some way, all of this, but there are still no clear bilateral objectives? First of all, a reevaluation of said relationship must be carried out, understanding what is shared between both States, and working on that to strengthen each of the bilateral areas. Thus, all of the above translates into the following common areas that Ecuador and the Czech Republic have: trade, education, investment, environmental issues, and intergovernmental cooperation.

3.2.2 Trade

Trade is the strongest tie in the Ecuadorian-Czech bilateral relation. Since its inception in the 1930s, the starting point was precisely the import and export between the two countries. Next, Tables 3, 4, and 5 show the record of the historical data of this trade available from 1937 to 1981. Table 6, on the other hand, shows the bilateral trade of the last three years (2017, 2018, 2019). With all this, it is worth highlighting the nature of the products of this exchange for the last year analyzed —2019. On one hand, Ecuador's exports to the Czech Republic comprise the following breakdown: 51% live plants and floricultural products; 45% preparations of meat, fish or crustaceans, molluscs or other aquatic invertebrates; and the remaining 4% other products. On the other hand, Ecuador's imports from the Czech Republic comprise the following breakdown: 36% machines, appliances and mechanical artifacts; 12% machines, appliances and electrical material; 10% motor vehicles; 7% chemicals; and the remaining 35% distributed among many other products.

Table 3. Trade exchange between Ecuador and Czechoslovakia between the years 1937 and 1949 (in thousands of Czechoslovak korunas)²¹

	1937	1946	1947	1948	1949
Ecuador imports from Czechoslovakia	8,404	161	1,340	1,298	1,215
Ecuador exports to Czechoslovakia	10,223	—	80	1,575	40

Source: Opatrný et al. (2015, p. 22)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

Table 4. Trade exchange between Ecuador and Czechoslovakia between the years 1951 and 1955 (in thousands of Czechoslovak korunas)²²

	1951	1953	1954	1955
Ecuador imports from Czechoslovakia	1,822	2,016	1,819	1,645
Ecuador exports to Czechoslovakia	420	360	1,956	795

Source: Opatrný et al. (2015, p. 28, 185)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

Table 5. Exports from Czechoslovakia to Ecuador between the years 1965 and 1981 (in millions of Czechoslovak korunas)²³

	1965	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Value	10.3	33.2	64.9	68.6	81.4	94.2	117.5	66.6	67.9

Source: Opatrný et al. (2015, p. 192)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

²¹ The values presented on this table pose a double drawback: transforming the Czechoslovak koruna to Czech koruna (the current currency of the Czech Republic) by means of an inflation analysis, and transforming this into current US dollars. Although there are resources on the Internet to do this with other currencies and with other periods of time, this specific case of time and currency does not allow for such conversion, so the values are kept in their original state.

²² See footnote 21

²³ See footnote 21.

Table 6. Trade exchange between Ecuador and the Czech Republic between the years 2017 and 2019 (in thousands of United States dollars)

	2017	2018	2019
Ecuador imports from the Czech Republic	20,923	22,147	18,452
Ecuador exports to the Czech Republic	10,869	10,784	12,398

Source: TradeMap (2020)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

The Multiparty Agreement signed and ratified between Ecuador and the European Union in 2016, and its entry into force in 2017, meant a significant advance and a milestone for the relationship between the country and the European organization, which “creates a stable and predictable framework to strengthen trade and investment between both parties” (Delegación de la Unión Europea en Ecuador, 2017). In this context, Ecuadorian–Czech bilateral trade benefits greatly from the agreement. As ProEcuador (2020) shows, Ecuadorian exports to the Czech Republic enter with a 0% tariff. That means that the products of the highest flow with the Central European country (fresh cut roses, skipjack²⁴ in oil, tuna, skipjack in water and salt, and other prepared and preserved fish) do not pay tariffs. Similarly, Czech exports to Ecuador enter the country with a 0% tariff, except for vehicles with a cylinder capacity greater than 1,500 cc (cubic centimeters).

3.2.3 Education

UNESCO’s metrics of the *Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students* show an asymmetry in the bilateral relationship with respect to third-level students (that is, university students) who carry out their studies in the other country. Ecuador, on the one hand, has 19 students in the Czech Republic; while, for the Czech Republic, the number of people who study in Ecuador is negligible or null (UNESCO, 2020). Examples of this are the agreements between Universidad del Azuay in Cuenca, Ecuador, with two universities of the Czech Republic: Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague; and Mendel University, Brno (Relaciones Internacionales UDA, 2020). However, the year 2020 represented a considerable reduction in these

²⁴ A kind of tuna fish.

educational exchanges because of the current COVID-19 global pandemic, due to which in-person classes of most institutions shifted to virtual classes, international flights were reduced, and different countries imposed restrictions to citizen mobility.

3.2.4 Investments

The most relevant investment in the bilateral relation was also the first to take place between both countries. On July 27th, 2017, the first investment of the Czech Republic in the country was inaugurated in the city of Cuenca, Ecuador, consisting of the construction of the “Czech Brewery Pivovar Cía. Ltda.”, as well as the place for beer consumption named “Golden Prague Pub”²⁵. This was a joint effort between the company formed by seven Czech citizens, among them the General Manager, Martín Smetáček, who stated that the investment amount was \$650,000. The Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Peru, Pavel Bechný, on the occasion of this event, highlighted "the importance of the first Czech investment in Ecuador and expressed his wish that the economic and commercial relations between both countries continue to develop successfully" (Embajada de la República Checa en Lima, 2017). Furthermore, this event opens up new business possibilities in Ecuador for Czech companies interested in the Ecuadorian market.

The rest of the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) of the Czech Republic in the country is divided into two years: 1) 2017, with \$97.9 million in the manufacturing industry; and, 2) 2019, with \$0.4 million in the construction industry (Pro Ecuador, 2020). Apart from these figures, there is no record of other investments from the Czech Republic in Ecuador, or vice versa.

3.2.5 Environmental issues

In a similar way with investments, environmental cooperation presents an asymmetry, that is, the Czech Republic maintains a greater activity in this field than Ecuador. Here it is necessary to highlight the work of the most visible organization in this regard: Bosque Medicinal²⁶, located in the “El Paraíso” Ecological Reserve, which

²⁵ <https://goldenpraguebeer.com/>

²⁶ <https://www.bosquemedicinal.com/inicio>

is part of the “Runahurco” Ecological Area of Municipal Conservation, in the upper area of Tumbes, in the Gualaquiza canton of the Morona Santiago province.

The purpose of Bosque Medicinal is mainly directed towards the preservation of the tropical forest and its biodiversity in the area of the “El Paraíso” Ecological Reserve. The methods for accomplishing this are six: 1) forest protection; 2) conservation of biodiversity of plants and animals; 3) reforestation of “El Paraíso” neighboring deforested areas; 4) support of local communities; 5) promotion and cooperation with the “Runahurco” Reserve management; and, 6) supporting Ecotourism (Bosque Medicinal, 2020). Among its partners, Forest.Ink, Universidad del Azuay (Cuenca, Ecuador), Bosque Medicinal Switzerland, Sklenářka, and UNIDA (United Consortium for the Development of the Amazon) are present (Bosque Medicinal, 2020).

3.2.6 Intergovernmental cooperation

Ecuador has begun to exercise its concept of “active diplomacy” through the approach of its diplomatic corps with different foreign authorities. In the case of cooperation between intermediate and local governments, the most recent action took place on August 7th, 2020 between the Honorary Consulate of Ecuador in Prague (led by Eng. Roberto Bartuš), the Embassy of Ecuador in Germany, concurrent for the Czech Republic (led by H.E. Manuel Mejía Dalmau) and the government of the Czech city of Český Krumlov (led by Mayor Dalibor Carda). Through this meeting, it was proposed to bring the authorities of the Municipalities of the cities of Quito and Cuenca, in Ecuador, closer to those of the Czech town, with the aim of developing cooperation activities at the municipal administration level with respect to sustainable tourism (Consulado Honorario del Ecuador en Praga, República Checa, 2020).

Another important part of this cooperation occurred on the part of the Czech Republic on May 14th, 2019, where a meeting was held between the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Lima, concurrent with Ecuador (led by H.E. Pavel Bechný) and the Foreign Ministry of Ecuador. Thus, both countries “will promote commercial exchange and cooperation in the academic, energy, and mining fields, and will study the possibility of doing so in projects for the insertion of Venezuelan refugees in the

country" (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2019). In this context, Bechný expressed the desire of his Government to support these insertion projects, in accordance with the similar projects that are currently being carried out in Colombia and Peru. In addition, it is necessary to highlight that the interest of both States, with respect to this, focuses on the need to sign an agreement to eliminate double taxation, thus motivating Czech investors to venture in Ecuador.

3.3 Proposal of specific actions for their diplomatic relation

The future axes of the Ecuadorian-Czech relation are not limited to a categorical group of areas, but rather, as Honorary Consul Bartuš explains, the advantage is that there is a 'wide range' on which to work, because of the renewal of the relation due to the recent opening of the Honorary Consulate of Ecuador in Prague (R. Bartuš, personal communication, November 11, 2020). The following is a proposal for specific actions.

3.3.1 Reopening of embassies

For the moment, the opening of embassies —or, rather, the reopening—, at least on the part of Ecuador, does not deserve to be included in the priorities of the bilateral relationship (R. Bartuš, personal communication, November 11, 2020). The budgetary and economic arguments that led to the closure of both representations by the two States remain in force. Today, this is a more evident reality than it was almost 30 years ago when the decision was made, due to the current global landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced a restructuring of public budgets not only in Ecuador and the Czech Republic, but in all countries of the world. Additionally, the various procedures competent to carry out such an action do not represent, for now, a priority. However, Honorary Consul Bartuš maintains that this could be a next macro step in the relationship, by establishing clear and defined bilateral objectives, so that in the future the bilateral relationship will continue to be further strengthened. It is considered that the Czech Republic can hold the same arguments presented in this paragraph with respect to its embassy in Ecuador.

3.3.2 Trade

Bilateral trade, in 2020, has been drastically affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent period for which there is a record (January to April 2020) shows a decrease in exports from Ecuador to the Czech Republic. Even when the pandemic began in March 2020, a negative balance started to appear in January of the same year, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Comparison of exports from Ecuador to the Czech Republic between selected months (in millions of United States dollars)

	2019	2020
January	5.86	2.37
February	11.9	0.507
March	2.39	1.16
April	4.14	1.06

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity (2020)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

On the other hand, exports from the Czech Republic to Ecuador, comparing the same period of 2020 and 2019, shows a different picture. Table 8 explains this situation.

Table 8. Comparison of exports from the Czech Republic to Ecuador between selected months (in millions of United States dollars)

	2019	2020
January	1.8	4.64
February	2.57	0.848
March	1.67	4.46
April	1.71	1.15

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity (2020)

Compiled by: Mateo Castillo (2020)

Although it is evident that Ecuador has been more affected by the global pandemic by COVID-19, compared to the Czech Republic, analyzing the previous

figures, it is imperative that, by 2021, the former reinforces trade with the Czech Republic in the following areas: 1) coffee extracts and preserves; 2) Fresh or dried banana; 3) canned tuna, skipjack or bonito²⁷; 4) fresh roses; 5) fruits and parts of plants, prepared or preserved; and, 6) fresh or dried pineapples. The reason for continuing bilateral trade with these products is twofold: statistically, Ecuador reports higher export figures for them and, furthermore, these are the ones that have favorable projections for potential trade according to Pro Ecuador (2020).

3.3.3 Education

According to the provisions of subsection 3.2.3, for the year 2021, it is premature to say whether the bilateral education programs and exchanges will be restored to their common flow previous the global pandemic by COVID-19. Even so, it can be stated that the year 2021 will suppose a reduction in COVID-19 cases worldwide, due to several factors: 1) availability of vaccines (El Comercio, 2020); 2) reduction of restrictions on human mobility in different countries; and, consequently, 3) normalization of in-person classes in different educational centers. In this way, such bilateral education programs can be strengthened and continued between universities. However, through investments in technology in the same institutions, it is possible that online education projects will be promoted, if this pandemic continues in 2021.

3.3.4 Investments

Czech investments in Ecuador can take a favorable turn if both countries decide to sign an agreement to eliminate double taxation, as proposed at the bilateral meeting of May 14th, 2019. In this way, entrepreneurs would be motivated to invest in Ecuador in a greater way. Among other issues, the construction sector would also be boosted by additional investments through visits from Czech businessmen from that sector, by proposing attractive solutions and products for the Ecuadorian market, such as the use of a material known as basalt, to replace steel (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2019).

²⁷ A kind of fish.

3.3.5 Environmental cooperation

With the current situation of cooperation regarding the “Bosque Medicinal” organization, it is important to reinforce this tie through awareness campaigns about the labor being done at the “El Paraíso” Ecological Reserve, in the Ecuadorian Amazon. This way, both in Ecuador and in the Czech Republic, as well as in the rest of countries, the fundamental task that is being carried out can be made known, as well as the possibility of raising funds to carry out the objectives set out in this private-public alliance.

On a broader level, the Czech Republic has shown an interest in the conservation of Ecuadorian biodiversity. Therefore, it is necessary to create more projects like the one mentioned above, both in other parts of the country, as well as for other scopes, such as declaration and management of protected areas.

3.3.6 Intergovernmental cooperation

In addition to all the bilateral activities that have already been analyzed, it is essential that their flow is maintained, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Through holding these meetings, both States have managed to meet the different objectives set, with the opening of the Honorary Consulate of Ecuador in Prague being the current peak of the relation. In this way, permanent contact with the authorities is guaranteed, which encourages the use of a ‘common language’ to continue with many other goals in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

International Relations are an intrinsic part of what it means to live in a world divided into nation-states. The way in which they are related to each other is what the study of the field of International Relations comprises. The modern international order that emerges from these nation-states can trace its origin to the Westphalian system and its concepts of “sovereignty”; although, in a more current sense, the dynamics between countries is a result of the last two centuries —19th and 20th.

On the other hand, diplomacy and its practices are as old as the earliest forms of human organization. From this it can be concluded that it is a method, as well as an art, a science, and a process that has existed as long as two human groups have desired to have mutual contact, whether in a peaceful or violent way. The modern meaning of diplomacy is a product of various practices that eventually came together over time and across cultures to produce what today governs nation-states in the form of positive law with the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and Consular Relations in the context of Public International Law.

Within International Relations, the discipline rests on the study of its theories, especially the so-called ‘classical’: realism and liberalism. Realism focuses on the role of the nation-state as the main actor in International Relations, who are motivated by national interests to act in an anarchic world, that is, a world where there is no central authority above nation-states. On the other hand, liberalism emphasizes that, in the international system, there are other actors that influence as much or more than nation-states themselves, such as NGOs, multinational companies, and even individuals themselves. In addition, this theory seeks to project values of order, freedom, justice, and tolerance in international relations through domestic and international institutions, which are required to protect and nurture such liberal values. With all this, the notion of cooperation between states is paramount for the theory, since it can be achieved if there is coordination promoted by regimes and institutions.

In this way, the three variables of Neumayer are reached, which contributes to understanding why States establish diplomatic relations with each other, and what motivates them to relate. Beyond giving an immediate response in the form of “States

relate to each other based on common interests”, these three variables help determine the global pattern of diplomatic representation. These are: distance, ideology, and power. For this reason, the form that a common interest takes between States can be categorized either as a characteristic of one of the variables, or as a union of any of the three.

The concept of “foreign policy” is defined as “that part of general policy formed by the set of decisions and actions by which the objectives are defined and the means of a State are used to generate, modify or suspend its relations with other actors of international society.” Thus, this part of general policy has three main elements: state character; it cannot be dissociated from the internal policy of the State; and, determination of the aims or objectives that each State aspires to achieve.

Within the foreign policy of the analyzed case —Ecuador and the Czech Republic—, the following is highlighted: for Ecuador, the recent years have meant a restructuring of its international priorities, of its role in the Latin American region and in the organizations to which it belongs, and finally an emphasis on the reactivation of diplomacy and foreign policy under a framework of “citizen diplomacy”. For the Czech Republic, the first line of action has been and will be its role in the European Union, a priority followed by its neighborly relations in Central Europe and its influence in the transatlantic framework with the United States.

By analyzing the bilateral relationship between Ecuador and the Czech Republic, it is clear that it is not new; rather, it has a history that goes back to 1926, forging itself, in the first instance, under the common interests of commercial-military and humanitarian alliances. Throughout the mid-20th century, however, the relationship was both unstable (due to the military dictatorships in Ecuador and the communist regime of Czechoslovakia) and stable (since in the period between Ecuadorian dictatorships there was the formalization of diplomatic relations with the opening of embassies). The split of Czechoslovakia in 1993 also led to the closure of embassies in both countries, with which the bilateral relationship was transferred to concurrent embassies, leaving, both in Ecuador and in the Czech Republic, only Honorary Consulates, an action that continues to this day.

However, the most important current event for the bilateral relation is the opening of the Honorary Consulate of Ecuador in Prague, which occurred in early 2020. With this, the bilateral political dialogue is solidified, while the commercial part of the relation (that is, imports and exports) remains in an acceptable flow despite the fact that the global COVID-19 pandemic considerably reduced the figures of foreign trade between both countries. In addition to this, areas such as education, investment, environmental issues, and intergovernmental cooperation have been promoted in different instances and at different rates.

This way, the actions presented in this research for the strengthening of the bilateral relation will serve to maintain the open dialogue between Ecuador and the Czech Republic, not only through political consultation meetings, but also through the use of a common language with the constant exchange of goods and services in trade, the expanding of investment opportunities for both countries, the increase of places for tertiary-level higher education (especially with on-line university education), the joint work carried out for environmental matters (with an emphasis on the preservation of the biodiversity of the Ecuadorian Amazon), and, finally, with intergovernmental cooperation through the signing and ratification of agreements and treaties that both States deem necessary.

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