

Lusophone Sea on a high tide?

The current role of maritime discourse in public governmental speeches from Brazil, Cabo Verde, and Portugal

Working paper for the “Verão em Ciência” Project by CEI-IUL

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Abstract: The sea has always had an important impact on international relations. In the last few years, the interest in researching sea-related topics has still been growing. Lusophone countries advocate for a special relationship to the sea and have been promoting national and international initiatives. This paper will analyse the current role of maritime discourse in public governmental speeches in the cases of Brazil, Cabo Verde, and Portugal through the lens of five categories: international relations, ecology and research, culture, defence, and economy. The major conclusions highlight a joint interest, yet with some individual differences in the current discourse.

Key Words: Sea, Discourse, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Portugal

For all the land conflicts, trade and challenges that exist in the world, it is easy to forget that over 70% of the world is covered by water. Historically, these bodies separated some and connected other civilizations, brought important nutrition through fishing, and permitted longer and faster travel. With the mastering of the sea, mankind pursued its aspirations of a connected world. Today, as in most of human history, the seas are an essential part of everyday life and is one of the most mythicized areas of imagination in human rhetoric. There is, therefore, ample space to study the discourse that mankind has created through these waves of connection.

Today, with growing climate struggles and the changes the international system is facing, the sea continues to be an entity with immense potential, especially when it comes to the Exclusive Economic Zones of some states. Certain countries have therefore seen a spike of interest in the pursuit of the development in maritime affairs. On the international stage, this can be observed through various initiatives originating from different types of actors. The United Nations have recently called the decade of the 2020's the ocean decade (United Nations 2020a), signalling the great importance of its preservation and care.

However, not only global organizations find interests regarding the oceans: many states have their own agendas, from more regional international agreements regarding fishing quotas or bilateral cooperation treaties for the continued scientific exploration of the deep sea, that as a bonus, might have some resources worth exploiting, as well as strictly national projects without cooperation. Indeed, the competition for resources has found, with the improvement of technology, a new field for more extractions and planning, at the same time as it is more and more important to protect parts of the oceans to insure its ecological survival.

One of the group of countries that has significant interest in these areas are the Lusophone countries. All of them have significant coast lines – most of them in the Atlantic Ocean – and in a combination of geographic positioning, historical roots and economic interests, recognize some reason to pursue maritime development, either as a main focus or alongside other projects. Indeed, the main organization that joins these countries together, the Community for Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade de Países de Língua oficial Portuguesa, CPLP), was in the last few years a stage for some important meetings, such as the Mindelo declaration, which tried to articulate economic interest with the protection of the maritime climate (CPLP 2019). At the same time, the maritime territories belonging to the CPLP member states, which could be called the Lusophone sea, has attracted the attention of some major players in international relations, as evidenced by China's interest (Alves 2008) in investing in the maritime silk route on Lusophone ports and ways (Martínez-Galán and Leando Forthcoming). In a similar sense, Portugal is committed, together with Nigeria, to host in Lisbon the Ocean's Conference, an initiative that is integrated in the United Nation's plan of the Ocean Decade. The conference itself was postponed to 2021 or later due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (United Nations 2020b).

Considering the importance of the Lusophone sea, this paper will analyse the current speech discourse on the sea on three selected cases. Governmental public speeches from Portugal, Brazil and Cabo Verde will be studied to identify the role of the maritime discourse in these states. Before considering the cases however, it is important to access how academia has been reflecting and researching the importance of the sea in international politics. As a second step, the methodology used on the discursive analysis will be presented, scrutinizing criteria for the selection of material and the limits deriving from there. A brief overview of the context relating to the three cases follows before the discourse analysis of the speeches is provided. To conclude, the general results of the analysis will be highlighted, as well as showing some further research opportunities by tackling this paper's limitations.

The importance of the sea

The possibilities of justifying the importance of the sea in international politics are as vast and deep as the sea itself. As seen above, the United Nations recently decided to focus its agenda in the next decade on the issues concerning the oceans. The relevance of the sea, however, significantly predates any current problems. Indeed, one can trace the overseas endeavours of various societies as the first step of globalisation (Bosa 2014). It is therefore obvious, that for centuries, the human culture has had an important relationship with the oceans, from its resources to the possibilities it provides. From the 16th century on, European, and later global history is impossible to think without the connection of landmasses via oceanic travel and control. These had clear cultural reflections on society then and today (Carol-Dekker 2018; Mathieson 2016), from quiet fishing areas to buzzing cosmopolitan ports growing in number. Portuguese expansionism especially is connected to limited land control, rather than to the domination of the seas, similar to what the Dutch Empire and, of course, the British Empire did to a greater extent. It is therefore not surprising that in these countries, the sea has an important role in cultural and national understanding.

This cultural relationship has also, in a way, a deep economic impact. And today, with the importance of finding new resources in previously unexplored areas due to the high exploitation rate of current human lifestyle, is forcing international actors to look more and more to the sea (Abdenur 2013, Anlar Günes, 2020, Marques 2020). Alongside more traditional activities like fishing, the importance in the maritime economy with offshore drilling and other types of resource gathering is growing. Conceptualizing this phenomenon as maritime economy might be a relatively recent development, but historically it has always been part of societal daily life. With improving technology, more and more resources can and will be a tackle of economic growth.

All these resources need some form of control, and maritime resources are as much of a reason of conflict as “normal” landlocked ones. The 20th century saw the rise of international law, and one of the most important ones has been international maritime law (Anlar Günes, 2020, Houhgtton et all 2010, Monaco and Prouzet 2015; More 2020). Not only does it provide some guideline for the establishment of Exclusive Economic Zones for countries, but also incorporates the possibility of international regulation, as exemplified by the founding of the International Court of the Law of the Sea in Hamburg. But not all international relations on sea

related topics are solvable or are wanted to be solved through international courts, which continue to have a difficult footing in international relations. International agreements continue to be relevant to better understand regional trends on the sea, and many discourses on the sea might reflect the necessity to find allies in that regard, as one will be able to see on the CPLP case.

Nevertheless, one consequence of this resource extraction is the general threat of climate change. The oceans are logically one of the biggest points of concern, from acidification to rising water levels, which will inherently change maritime borders alongside territorial features in the mainland (Houhgton et al. 2010, More 2020). These concerns have been topic of intense international research (Soares 2020, Marcondes 2020), but also conferences and agreements (Lima and Gupta 2013). Thus, attention has to be drawn on how the discourse integrates the phenomena into general political rhetoric, especially on the international stage, since it is ultimately a concern with global risks, effects and already present consequences.

Finally, it is impossible to think the seas without a perspective at military or at least strategic policies. Since this paper regards the Atlantic Ocean, one can immediately think of NATO as the prime example for the sea as conveyor of strategic alliances. With maritime trade come also maritime threats, like contraband or drug trafficking, therefore all states have some form or another to tackle a maritime strategy in terms of defence. It always has been an important point to consider in geopolitics, and with the field of study back on the rise, it is unsurprising to find heirs to the ideas of maritime power, focussing on the importance of the sea in geopolitical struggles (Bueger et al. 2020).

The cases and methodology

This paper will analyse the recent discourse regarding the sea in the countries of Brazil, Cabo Verde, and Portugal. The three cases can be seen as representative of the general trend inside the Lusophone countries. Furthermore, they allow for feasible and rigid selection criteria, considering data collection. While other countries certainly could enrich the analysis in terms of scope, these cases already provide a good understanding of the trends, while also offering some interesting differences. In fact, regarding the Atlantic Ocean, the examples cover all three continents in which to find Portuguese speaking countries: Africa, Europe, and South America. Even if these are the three Lusophone countries that ensure the best availability of sources, there is still some limitation. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, this research is limited to the

discourses provided by the governments online. Since that availability can be unsure or non-existent for previous governments in certain cases, only the speeches from the current government and, if applicable, the current head of state, are analysed. While this certainly does not permit to study a trend, it still allows to present the current situation of the discourse in that sense. It is important to note that this paper will therefore only examine a limited aspect of general political discourse, to ensure comparability. Adding other factors of discourse, such as official documents, would only enlarge the disparity between cases, since it is harder to come by. By comparing the speeches with existing state projects, it is possible to assess if these discourses are reflecting current policy.

There is nonetheless considerable difference on the availability of information: its generally easier to find Portuguese discourses due to the prevalence of official governmental sites, while Cabo Verde proves to have lesser online presence, with Brazil being an intermediate. It is therefore no surprise that from a total N of 31 speeches, over half are from Portuguese sources. In this paper, only oral discourses are considered, since these are the only ones that can be reliably selected in all three cases. The selection criteria for analysing a discourse is the usage of the words sea (mar) or ocean (oceano), as well as any connotation to it, as for example with the word beach (praia). While the availability might be difficult to make a full conclusive claim, a general overview of current interests and concerns might still result from this comparative effort.

Regarding the analysis itself, the discourses will be studied through three indicators, following the general trends of discourse analysis (Wodak 2004): first, the classification the actor that emits the discourse (and in whose behalf they are doing it), followed by a categorization of the speech's spatial, temporal and relational context. The speeches themselves will be analysed through five general categories, which have been taken from the literature described above: the category of **International Relations** analyses the effort of the usage of the sea as a connecting body, to find allies for certain projects or to generally seek reassurance with other states, but also including the reference to international law. The category **Ecology and Research** tackles the discourse on climate change, as well as the general investigation on sea related topics. The category **Culture** tackles the specific (and mystified) historical relationship that is formed to the sea. **Defence** discourse is the more classic and strategic discourse on international waters as well as the navy as an important facilitator of security. Finally, arguably one of the most important categories, as seen through the bibliography, the category of **Economy** regards all

the activities that might spring from the sea, especially regarding the Exclusive Economic Zone.

As one can see, the five categories can and will have certain sub-categories, that in context of the analysis will be mentioned. As evident in the description, some are implied in the formulation of the category itself. For example, the international politics can be divided into diplomacy and international law, while economy can entail fishing and tourism. The analysis itself will intrinsically be comparative, between countries but also between similar types of actors, as in, for example, the head of state in the three countries, in what way that dialogue is similar or different. To better understand the dialogues considered, a brief context for each country will shortly be presented.

The context of the sea for the selected cases

While what we today call Brazil was already inhabited by native cultures, modern Brazil has little to do with these societies. Historically, the Portuguese arrived in the coastal territories that now are considered Brazil through the sea in 1500, and the region, due to its natural resources and great fertility, quickly became the most important colony in the empire, expanding further and further inland, especially as the east spice trade was being lost to other rivalling countries. It was also the intermediate destination for the Portuguese slaving trade triangle, meaning it was the destination for the African violently abducted from their country, forced to work in mines and plantations alongside the native population, while the trade products continued to European Portugal.

Today, Brazil, with its large Atlantic coast shielding the rest of the country, one of the largest in the world, is the main path for trade through the Atlantic Ocean for entire South America. While Brazil certainly has also a large mass, and agriculture and livestock continue to be a relevant economic driver, it is undeniable that the continued development of a maritime (or blue) economy is an integral part of the still possible rise of Brazil as a stable economic power in the region, trying to justify its continued presence in the category of rising powers, as it did as part of the BRIC-states. It is important to remember that most of the population lives near the coast, a trend that all three cases share. Considering current projects, the most relevant comes from the most active actor in sea related topics: the navy. Its project “Amazônia Azul” (Marinha do Brasil 2020) incorporates the better usage of Brazils Exclusive Economic Zone,

while also accounting for the submittal of the extension of the Zone through the continental shelf (Marroni 2013).

Cabo Verde, an archipelago that previous to Portuguese arrival was uninhabited, on the other hand, was precisely a middle port for the transport of slaves or goods from the continental African coast outposts, and was never an absolute key factor in the Portuguese Empire. However, progressively, it became a somewhat strategic place for the control of the Atlantic Ocean and continued to have some service as a transport hub. Being an archipelago nation, it is no surprise that the main concept that is connected to Cabo Verde's self-understanding is the idea of *insularidade* (Tolentino et al 2019), which in summary argues that each island may keep its distinct individuality, but that nevertheless, the core feeling of being Cabo Verdean is shared across the several islands with a total around half a million inhabitants. This is reflected both in literature, where the topic is often central to national narrative, and in daily life, with fishing being an essential part of it, now more and more sustainably, an effort the government has been promoting (Governo Cabo Verde 2018). Island nations are especially prone to climate change, it is therefore expected that some discourse is directed into that area.

Finally, Portugal and the sea are, in many forms, a coherent narrative that can be, and constantly is, built through the country's history since the 1410's and is the main body of Portuguese nationalism. Literature, architecture, and political decisions reflect a typical Portuguese identity through the conveying of maritime ideas, and it is a topic worth developing further in another research. Until the 1970's, the colonial empire was the main reason of Portuguese existence, both in ideological and economic sense. With the independence of the last African colonies after democratization there is the idea that Portugal abandoned the sea in favour of joining the European Union. In truth, the sea still remained in Portuguese cultural discourse and still is a combination of constraint and opportunity in decision making (Santos 2020). Indeed, the language used during the 2009's onwards economic crisis has already been studied on the usage of vocabulary and expressions that connect Portuguese fate with maritime metaphors (Fonseca and Ferreira 2015). It is important, however, to clarify that this connection is a mystified, simplified version of history. Portuguese involvement in slavery, colonial struggles, or conflict are not present in this view – and in fact are rarely discussed in society in general (Cardina 2016).

For some years now, the Portuguese governments have been promoting “strategies on the sea” (e.g. DGPM 2020). According to its own Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the sea and Portugal can be summarized the following way:

For geopolitical, historical, and cultural reasons, the sea is a determining factor in the process of building Portugal's identity, our perception of the world and the role we play in international relations.¹

These strategies, while promoting an idea of Portuguese Maritime Identity, focus on economic and scientific gains in the present, mostly through the own Portuguese initiative, similarly to the Brazilian, of extending the Portuguese Exclusive Economic Zone through the continental shelf, which in this case would enlarge it far more significantly (Salvador 2014, Salvador and Ferreira 2018). Significant optimism in terms of economic return accompany the initiative. Defence issues are another relevant factor to consider in Portuguese discourse. The fact that Portugal holds the oldest continuously serving navy in the world also moulds the decision making in this field. On the international stage, Portuguese diplomacy works closely, as it will be verifiable in the analysis, with the Lusophone countries in the ocean governance (Monaco and Prouzet 2015), especially through the channels of CPLP (Figueira and Rego 2018, Pereira 2011, Ponte e Sousa 2017), as one can see through the Mindelo declaration, that outlines the strategy of the organization regarding the oceans. Many scholars in Portugal reflect this view, some even suggesting focusing the defence mechanism inside the CPLP (Bernardino 2011; Bernardino 2016; Bernadino and Azevedo 2017; Dias and Branco 2011). All in all, Portuguese discourse on the sea is widely established, further justifying the comparison with the other countries in this paper.

Discourse analysis

With these various contexts in mind, it is now possible to analyse the discourses of the three countries. To start with, an answer is needed to the question of authorship (see table 1): Brazil has the least amount of total discourses to be analysed, despite having relatively good accessibility of possible speeches. As far as could be evidenced in this research, the current President, Jair Bolsonaro, has not elaborated any speech related to the sea. Instead, only the

¹ “Por razões geopolíticas, históricas e culturais, o mar constitui um elemento determinante no processo de construção da identidade de Portugal, da nossa percepção do mundo e do lugar que desempenhamos nas relações internacionais” (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros 2020)

Minister of Foreign Affairs, with four separate speeches, and the Minister of Defence, with three, can be analysed as actors in the current government.

Cabo Verde has its head of state, the President of the Republic, speaking about the topic, at three separate occasions, but not the head of government, the Prime Minister (at least in an independent action, more on that further down). Furthermore, the Cabo Verdean government does have, very recently, a Minister for Maritime Economy, who delivered three speeches included here. While the analysis is, due to the absence of an official page of this ministry, and in fact of any ministry of the Cabo Verdean government, be done through the communication of its Facebook page, the speeches examined here nevertheless follow the same criteria as the other, to ensure comparability.

Portugal’s most important actor in this discourse is the current President of the Republic, with five interventions. The Prime Minister does not have a speech on the sea, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs has two, the Minister of Defence did speak on four occasions about the sea, and the Minister of the Sea did, expectably, intervene the most, with six different speeches reported in the official government site. Overall, this is an impressive number of speeches, considering this government has not been in office for much longer than a year.

With this categorization of actors, the first clues of conclusion can already be traced, just by the numbers alone. While Cabo Verde has one less speech than Brazil, Brazil’s offer of speeches in general is much greater, which signifies a quite smaller incidence relatively speaking than Cabo Verde. Portugal’s government, as expected, due to its wider communication through the internet and its ministry of the sea, has the greatest number of speeches.

| Brazil (medium accessibility) | Cabo Verde (less accessibility) | Portugal (more accessibility) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| N: 7 | N:6 | N:18 |
| 4 Foreign Minister | 3 PR | 5 PR |
| 3 Minister of Defence | 3 Minister of Maritime Economy | 2 Foreign Minister |
| | | 7 Sea Minister |
| | | 4 Minister of Defence |

Table 1: Actors (own analysis)

The following assessment of the maritime discourse in the three countries will be conducted case by case. Each of the five categories (international relations, defence, culture, ecology and research, economy) mentioned before will be discussed for each country, followed by a brief comparison. The following table presents an extensive overview of all analysed speeches:

| Discourse | Actor | Context | Category | Purpose |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019a | Foreign Affairs | Inauguration Ceremony of the Minister Jan 2019 | 3x Culture | Historical Evocation (Hope) |
| Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019b | Foreign Affairs | Joint Declaration (USA) Mar 2020 | 1x Ecology/Research | Cooperation |
| Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019c | Foreign Affairs | CPLP (Mindelo) Jul 2019 | 1x International Relations | Support for the Ocean Agenda of the CPLP |
| Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019d | Foreign Affairs | International Project (“Corredor Bioceânico”) Aug 2019 | 1x Economic | Support for the project |
| Brasil Defesa 2019a | Defence | Homage to Admiral Jan 2019 (1) | 1x Defence | Homage to service to the sea |
| Brasil Defesa 2019b | Defence | Homage to Admiral Jan 2019 (2) | 1x Defence | Homage to the service to the sea |
| Brasil Defesa 2020 | Defence | Naval Fusiliers | 1x Ecology/Research | Cleaning of beaches |
| Cabo Verde Presidência 2018a | President | 43 Years Independence Jul 2018 (1) | 1x International Relations 1x Culture 1x Defence 1x E/R 1x Economy | Mentioning important features for CPLP |
| Cabo Verde Presidência 2018b | President | CPLP Opening Jul 2018 Mindelo (2) | 4x International Relations 3x Cultural 1x E/R | Evocation for cooperation with the CPLP Need to protect heritage |
| Cabo Verde Presidência 2018c | President | CPLP Closing Jul 2018 Mindelo (3) | 1x Economic 1x International Relations | Cooperation with the CPLP-benefits |
| Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima 2020a | Maritime Economy | Discourse before Congress on Blue Economy Aug 2020 | 2x Economy 1x E/R | Special Economic Zone Infrastructure “Campus do Mar” |
| Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima 2020b | Maritime Economy, (together with PM, Finances) | Blue Economy 2030 Plan Sep 2020 (1) | 6x Economy 6x E/R | Development |
| Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima 2020c | Maritime Economy | Global Sea Day Sep 2020 (2) | 2x Economy 1x E/R | Development |
| Portugal Presidência. 2016a | President | Inauguration Speech Mar 2016 | 4x Culture 1x Economy | Sea as historic priority |
| Portugal Presidência. 2016b | President | CPLP Mar 2016 | 1x IR | Oceans as important for CPLP |
| Portugal Presidência. 2016c | President | UN General Assembly Sep 2016 | 2x Culture 1x E/R 1x Defence | Oceans as important for Portugal |
| Portugal Presidência. 2020 ^a | President | New Year’s Speech Jan 2020 | 1x Culture 1x IR | Sea Important for Portugal |
| Portugal Presidência. 2020b | President | Carnation Revolution anniversary Apr 2020 | 1x Culture | Historic legacy as inspiration |
| Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros 2019 | Foreign Affairs | Lecture at Nairobi University | 1x Economy 1x IR 1x E/R | Sea as Opportunity |
| P Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros 2020 | Foreign Affairs | UN Human Rights Council | 1x IR 1x E/R | Sea as important for future generations with “Conferência dos Oceanos” |
| Portugal Mar. 2020 ^a | Sea | State Budget Presentation Jan 2020 | 5x Economy 2x E/R 1x Defence | Development |
| Portugal Mar. 2020b | Sea | Parliamentary Commission on Sea and Agriculture May 2020 | 3x Economy 2x E/R | Development |
| Portugal Mar. 2020c | Sea | Parliamentary Commission on Sea and Agriculture Jul 2020 | 3x Economy 1x IR 1x E/R | Development |
| Portugal Mar. 2020d | Sea | Parliamentary Commission on Sea and Agriculture Sep 2020 | 3x E/R 3x Economy | Research and Development |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Portugal Mar. 2020e | Sea | Inauguration of St. Bárbara Radar Sep 2020 (1) | 1x E/R | Better maritime travel at the Azores |
| Portugal Mar. 2020f | Sea | Signing of the “Biodiversity 2030” | 3x E/R 1x culture | Ecology |
| Portugal Mar. 2020g | Sea | Conference on Climate Change | 3x E/R 1x Economy | Ecology |
| Portugal Defesa 2020a | Defence | State Budget Discussion Jan 2020 | 1x E/R | Research the sea (“it deserves”) |
| Portugal Defesa 2020b | Defence | Escola Superior de Guerra in Brazil Feb 2020 | 4x Defence 2x IR | Cooperation |
| Portugal Defesa 2020c | Defence | Inauguration of Safety Coast Guard in Quarteira Sep 2020 (1) | 1x Defence | Protection of Population |
| Portugal Defesa 2020d | Defence | 60 Years Hydrographic Institute Sep 2020 (2) | 3x Culture 2x Economy 2x E/R 2x Defence | Research and Development |

Table 2: Discourse Analysis (own analysis)

Brazilian speeches only include small references to the sea, with most interventions referencing the sea just once. The exception is the inaugural speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who uses metaphors and cultural comparisons to legitimize the new government. There are clear connections between the sea as symbol of love and hope to the country of Brazil itself (Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019a, para. 16), while at the same time creating a metaphoric distinction between the richness of the ocean of Brazil, meaning its people, against an apparent waterless pool of the international order:

*Let us do something for our lives and for our country. Let us dive into the ocean of feeling and the hope of our people. Do not dive into this pool without water which is the global order.*²

Coming from a Minister of Foreign Affairs, even considering it is the first speech in that role, it could be somewhat surprising seeing a message constructed so directed to the electorate, with no regard to diplomatic ties. This is best exemplified further by the comparison of Bolsonaro with D. Sebastião, the Portuguese King whose death motivated the saviour myth known as Sebastianism, coming from the sea to save Brazil (*idem*, para. 32-33). To summarize, this speech alone signalizes best the metaphorical role of the ocean in this government, as symbol of strength and independence of Brazil.

One last speech worth mentioning is the, albeit vague, support of the Brazilian foreign ministry on the Mindelo declaration (Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019c), that declares the South American part of the Atlantic Ocean as an important part of Brazilian international action. In

² “Vamos fazer alguma coisa pelas nossas vidas e pelo nosso país. Mergulhemos no oceano de sentimento e na esperança do nosso povo. Não mergulhemos nessa piscina sem água que é a ordem global” (Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019a, para. 40)

other speeches (Brasil Relações Exteriores 2019b, 2019d) the sea is referenced for cooperation on scientific grounds, as well as economic projects.

The Brazilian Minister of Defence, on the other hand, has a more straight forward discourse to the role he represents, only once referring to the ocean as a matter of ecologic issues, regarding the cleaning of the beaches (Brasil Defesa 2020), the rest remaining in the realm of defence, mostly regarding the navy. A special mention deserves the evocation of the sea as a metaphor of strength (Brazil Defesa 2019b ,1), which also contributes to the overall idea that the current Brazilian government centres its message of the sea mostly on the internal audience, as symbol of independence and perseverance, only once in the CPLP referring it as a connecting body.

Moving on to Cabo Verde, the spectrum of the topics mentioned is widened. Starting at the highest level, the President of the Republic combines the various fields of economic potential, ecologic worries, and international relations in his speech on the Mindelo declaration. His cultural reference to the sea is, contrary to his Brazilian counterpart, looking for allies in the international stage for the protection of the joint heritage: “The oceans unite much more than they separate and as the Brazilian navigator Almyr Klink says, the sea is not an obstacle, but a path.”³

A small nation like Cabo Verde usually has to act this way in hopes to achieve some sort of success, however, even when the speech is not directed at other CPLP member states, the current dialogue does not change, and still remains quite attached to literature, economic growth and sustainability:

*The fact that our sea is more than 182 times the terrestrial dimension of Cape Verde, of all CPLP countries are bathed by the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, which contain priceless economic potential – levers of the blue economy – but also complex challenges related to pollution and safety, indicate the enormous importance that will be given to the theme Oceans.*⁴

This discourse that effectively connects the cultural value of the sea with the global challenges of the oceans is a clear feature in the speeches of all Cabo Verdean members of government.

³ “Os oceanos unem muito mais do que separam e como diz o navegador brasileiro Almyr Klink, o mar não é um obstáculo, mas um caminho” (Cabo Verde Presidência. 2018b, p. 2)

⁴ “O facto de o nosso mar ser mais de 182 vezes superior à dimensão terrestre de Cabo Verde, de todos os países da CPLP serem banhados pelo Atlântico e pelo Índico, que encerram inestimáveis potencialidades económicas-alavancas da economia azul- mas, também, complexos desafios relacionados com a poluição e a segurança, indiciam a importância enorme que será concedida ao tema Oceanos” (Cabo Verde Presidência. 2018a, para. 42)

Most of the interventions made by the Cabo Verdean Minister of Maritime Economy are, as one might rightfully expect, focussed on the economic category. The most relevant possible sub-categories are clearly the practices of daily life, meaning fishery and transportation, which for an island archipelago are essential (Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima 2020a; 2020c), especially since, as the Minister puts it, Cabo Verde is 99% sea (compare Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima 2020b, 10-29s). The development of a new port for cruise ships, more scientific research, some special maritime zones, are all part of the government's efforts to grow economically (*ibidem*).

However, the portraying of economic value of the sea is always accompanied by a reference to the importance of ecological viability. Therefore, the main purpose of the Minister's intervention on the sea is sustainable development. This happens also in presence of the Prime Minister, even if he just mirrors what the Minister of Maritime Economy argued before, therefore this paper does not consider it a separate intervention.

Overall, Cabo Verde, from its geographic position, does not only value the importance of the sea, but also actively, with its modest possibilities, pursues improvement on economic, ecologic, and international grounds. It is no surprise that the Mindelo declaration was signed, as the name hints, in Cabo Verde.

Finally, we reach the country with the highest number of actors and speeches: Portugal. The head of state does benefit from being comparatively the most time in office from all the positions accounted for in this paper, since the President has been in office since 2016. Nevertheless, there seems to be an acute relevance spike in the importance of the sea during the beginning and the end of his tenure (e.g. Portugal Presidência 2016a and 2020b), reassuring that this topic is, in some way, of great relevance to speak about whenever the focus is targeted to the head of state. The best example can be seen in the inaugural speech, where he considers the land and sea to be the root of all the universal values of the constitution (Portugal Presidência 2016a, para. 34), but also references the sea as the symbol of past and present greatness:

Roots in this land and in this sea, which form a true archipelago with three vertices – Mainland, Azores, and Madeira -, and encompasses the Ocean that made us and makes us great. That is why we can and must continue to make the Sea a national priority.

*Priority born from a geostrategic and, above all, from a universal vocation- as António Lobo Antunes wrote: «if my land is small, I want to die at sea».*⁵

Not only does the President refer to the sea as a national priority, but also declares it as universal vocation to act on its behalf. It is a clear cultural message to the Portuguese population in effort to metaphorically unite them, as he does cite Lobo Antunes. The references to literature continue with the head of state's speech at the general assembly of the United Nations (Portugal Presidência 2016c); this time it is Vergílio Ferreira, but the general trend highlights this actor as a conveyor of cultural relevance of the sea, even when addressing the CPLP (Portugal Presidência 2016b).

The ministers, following their role, concentrate the identified national priority into their own affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs stresses the importance of the ocean conference (Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros 2019) for example, further pushing for a better standing of the ocean in international relations. The sea is seen as opportunity for various cultures and ideas to align together for a better future (Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros 2020). Beside the ocean conference, there are no great palpable effects. Since the Mindelo declaration was signed shortly before the current government, no intervention on that level is found here.

The Minister of Defence, while focusing on the defensive aspects of the sea, as the navy and other sea authorities play an important part in the safety of the citizens (Portugal Defesa 2020c), including into that regard defensive cooperation with Brazil (Portugal Defesa 2020b), also stresses the importance of research, arguing in a response to the parliament that the state budget of 2020 would finally give the sea, in his own words, the expression and priority it deserves (Portugal Defesa 2020a, p. 3) and economic potential (Portugal Defesa 2020d).

Finally, the Ministry of the Sea. Most of the interventions regarded here are communications to the parliament, counting all the projects that are supposed to bring further development, in the economic sense mostly, to the sea (Portugal Mar 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d). Some references are given to research (as in Portugal Mar 2020a or 2020f), and in general all categories appear at least once in overall of the speeches. Nevertheless, the ecologic/research and economic categories (Portugal Mar 2020e, 2020f, 2020g), mostly environmental research

⁵ Raízes nesta terra e neste mar, que formam um verdadeiro arquipélago com três vértices – Continente, Açores e Madeira –, e abarca o Oceano que nos fez e faz grandes. Daí o podermos e devermos continuar a assumir o Mar como prioridade nacional. Prioridade nascida de uma geoestratégica e, sobretudo, de uma vocação universal – como escrevia António Lobo Antunes: «se a minha terra é pequena, eu quero morrer no mar» (Portugal Presidência 2016a, para. 35)

on one hand and trade and fishing on the other, appear as the focus, albeit rarely in joint consideration. In general, the Portuguese government has a more down-to-earth approach to the policies, and the mentioning of the extension of the Exclusive Economic Zone is yet to appear, while the President speaks a more emotional discourse on the sea.

Major findings and conclusion

Comparing the discourse on the sea in the governmental speeches from three countries, this paper can highlight the following outcomes (see table 3).

| Country | Category | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | International Relations | Ecology and Research | Culture | Defence | Economy |
| Brazil | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cabo Verde | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 12 |
| Portugal | 6 | 19 | 12 | 9 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 13 | 29 | 19 | 12 | 32 |

Table 3: Summary (own analysis)

The difference of discourse can sometimes be seen on the word chosen to refer to the body of water. The most consistent are Portuguese actors who use the expression oceans (oceanos) when speaking to an international audience. When speaking of the Exclusive Economic Zone or when speaking directly to a home-based audience, the term used is sea (mar). The other cases apply a similar differentiation, although to a lesser extent. The major reason could be the UN's initiative regarding the oceans, while the expression of sea relates to a more local and individualizing perspective.

Comparing the different types of actors, one can see that the role as head of state pushes the discourse into a cultural level, referencing it as a connection to the nation, especially in the case of the Portuguese President. The ministers generally stick to their own fields, although the economic advantages, that mostly stay vague, are the most important category referenced. Special attention should be given to Cabo Verde's effort to combine economic development with ecological perception, and the general absence of a more extensive Brazilian thought on the sea in speeches by members of the current government. While all subscribe officially to the importance of the sea, especially the categories of economy and ecology and research, it is still noticeable that Cabo Verde's initiatives seem more well-rounded and strategically connected, while Portuguese discourse acknowledges mostly individual projects. While other works

should analyse the discourse in more aspects than just public speeches, this comparison still provides a convincing view of the current situation.

While the limitations of the paper, mostly its temporal scope, do not permit to make wide reaching conclusions, one can still outline the trend that, in general, Lusophone countries are paying attention to the potentials that the sea presents. However, the discourse still reflects differences in the visions of each of the countries. In this sense, we notice a relative absence of the sea in Brazilian discourse, a coherent focus on sustainable development in Cabo Verde, and an extensive concentration on cultural importance in the Portuguese case.

Analysed speeches (last accessed 25/10/2020)

Brasil Defesa. 2019a Homenagem ao Almirante de Esquadra Leal Ferreira. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Defesa. 2019b. Homenagem ao Almirante de Esquadra Ademar. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Defesa. 2020. Aniversário 212 Anos do Corpo de Fuzileiros Navais. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Relações Exteriores. 2019a. Discurso do ministro Ernesto Araújo durante cerimônia de Posse no Ministério das Relações Exteriores. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Relações Exteriores. 2019b. Declaração Conjunta entre os Governos do Brasil e dos Estados Unidos da América sobre a 5ª Reunião da Comissão Mista Brasil-EUA de Cooperação Científica e Tecnológica Brasília. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Relações Exteriores. 2019c. Discurso do Senhor Ministro de Estado no “Debate Político Geral” da XXIV Reunião Ordinária do Conselho de Ministros da CPLP – Mindelo. Accessible through [link](#)

Brasil Relações Exteriores. 2019d. Intervenção do Ministro Ernesto Araújo na VIII Reunião do Corredor Rodoviário Bioceânico. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima. 2020a. A perspectiva da implementação da Zona Económica Especial Marítima. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima. 2020b. Governo assume Economia Azul como uma das principais âncoras do desenvolvimento. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Ministério da Economia Marítima. 2020c. Dia Marítimo Mundial. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Presidência. 2018a. Discurso proferido pelo Presidente da República na Sessão Solene da Assembleia Nacional, Comemorativa do XLIII Aniversário da Independência Nacional. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Presidência. 2018b. Discurso de S.E. o Presidente da República, Dr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca- Abertura da XII Conferência dos Chefes de Estado e de Governos da CPLP. Accessible through [link](#)

Cabo Verde Presidência. 2018c. Discurso proferido por S.E. o Presidente da República, Dr. Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca no encerramento da Cimeira dos Chefes de Estado e de Governos da CPLP. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Defesa. 2020a. Intervenção do Ministro da Defesa Nacional, João Gomes Cravinho, na audição no âmbito da apreciação, na especialidade, da Proposta de Lei do Orçamento do Estado. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Defesa. 2020b. Intervenção do Ministro da Defesa Nacional, João Gomes Cravinho, na Escola Superior de Guerra do Brasil. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Defesa. 2020c. Intervenção do Ministro da Defesa Nacional, João Gomes Cravinho, por ocasião da cerimónia de Inauguração da Estação Salva-vidas e do Posto Marítimo de Quarteira. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Defesa. 2020d. Intervenção do Ministro da Defesa Nacional, João Gomes Cravinho, por ocasião da Cerimónia comemorativa dos 60 anos do Instituto Hidrográfico. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020a. OE / 2020 – Debate na Especialidade- Intervenção inicial do Ministro do Mar, Ricardo Serrão Santos. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020b. Audição Regimental 05/05/2020. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020c. Intervenção inicial do Ministro do Mar na Comissão Parlamentar de Agricultura e Mar. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020d. Intervenção inicial do Ministro do Mar, Ricardo Serrão Santos, na audição regimental na Comissão Parlamentar Agricultura e Mar. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020e. Cerimónia de Inauguração do Radar de Santa Bárbara. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020f. Cerimónia de Assinatura do contrato «Biodiversidade 2030». Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Mar. 2020g. Conferência "Ação Climática - Desafios Estratégicos". Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros. 2019. Europe, Africa, and the pivotal role of Portugal. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Negócios Estrangeiros. 2020. 43.^a Sessão do Conselho de Direitos Humanos das Nações Unidas- Intervenção do Ministro de Estado e dos Negócios Estrangeiros no Segmento de Alto Nível. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Presidência. 2016a. Discurso de Tomada de Posse do Presidente da República. Accessible through [link](#)

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Portugal Presidência. 2016c. Discurso de S. Exa. o Presidente da República Portuguesa, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, na 71^a Sessão da Assembleia-Geral das Nações Unidas. Accessible through [link](#)

Portugal Presidência. 2020a. Mensagem de Ano Novo do Presidente da República. Accessible through [link](#)

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