

**GLOBAL COOPERATION
THROUGH THE LENS OF
THE TREATIES OF
WESTPHALIA (1648) AND
LIBERAL THEORY OF
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS:
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF
STRATEGIC AND CRITICAL
MINERALS**

**A COOPERAÇÃO MUNDIAL SOB A LENTE DOS TRATADOS DE
WESTPHALIA (1648) E DA TEORIA LIBERAL DAS RELAÇÕES
INTERNACIONAIS: CONTRIBUIÇÕES PARA O ATUAL PANORAMA DOS
MINERAIS ESTRATÉGICOS E CRÍTICOS**

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the contributions of global cooperation concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals from the perspective of the Peace of Westphalia and the Liberal Theory of International Relations, considering such cooperation as a means of promoting the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development of nations. It highlights the importance of multilateralism arising from the Westphalian framework, characterizes Liberalism and its main principles, and presents selected bilateral agreements involving Strategic and Critical Minerals. The general objective of this study is to analyze the contributions of the Peace Treaties of Westphalia, of 1648, and the Liberal Theory of International Relations to global cooperation concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals among nations. This research adopted a qualitative approach to analyze the contributions of multilateralism based on historical events of recognized relevance to the global mineral agenda. The methodological procedure consisted of a literature and documentary review involving sources classified into three categories: (1) studies demonstrating the importance of interstate cooperation arising from the Peace Treaties of Westphalia; (2) studies characterizing Liberal Theory and its main principles; and (3) sources presenting selected bilateral agreements concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals. The findings indicate that the Westphalian model and Liberalism contribute to strengthening interstate relations in the mineral sector, providing political, economic, and scientific-technological institutions with greater clarity regarding the benefits and advantages of multilateralism for the trade of Strategic and Critical Minerals in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Strategic Minerals; Critical Minerals; International Relations; Liberalism; Multilateral Cooperation.

RESUMO

Este trabalho aborda as contribuições da cooperação mundial relacionadas aos Minerais Estratégicos e Críticos, sob a perspectiva do Tratado de Westphalia e da Teoria Liberal das Relações Internacionais, como solução para o desenvolvimento econômico, industrial e científico-tecnológico das nações. Demonstra a importância do multilateralismo decorrente de Westphalia; caracteriza o Liberalismo e seus ensinamentos; e apresenta alguns acordos bilaterais envolvendo Minerais Estratégicos e Críticos. O objetivo geral deste trabalho é analisar as contribuições dos Tratados de Paz de Westphalia, de 1648, e da Teoria Liberal das Relações Internacionais para a cooperação mundial em torno dos Minerais Estratégicos e Críticos entre as nações. Esta pesquisa adotou uma abordagem qualitativa para analisar as contribuições do multilateralismo, justificadas por fatos históricos de reconhecida relevância na agenda mineral global. O procedimento utilizado foi a revisão da literatura e documental, que envolveu a consulta a fontes classificadas em três categorias: (1) que demonstrassem a importância da cooperação interestatal decorrente dos Tratados de Westphalia; (2) que caracterizassem a Teoria Liberal e seus ensinamentos; e (3) aquelas que apresentassem alguns acordos bilaterais relacionados aos Minerais Estratégicos e Críticos. Os estudos apontaram o quanto o modelo Westphaliano e o Liberalismo contribuiriam para o fortalecimento das relações interestatais no setor mineral, oferecendo subsídios às instituições políticas, econômicas e científico-tecnológicas ao permitir-lhes maior clareza sobre os benefícios e as vantagens do multilateralismo em proveito da comercialização de Minerais Estratégicos e Críticos no século XXI.

Palavras-chave: Minerais Estratégicos; Minerais Críticos; Relações Internacionais; Liberalismo; Multilateralismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

The peaceful relationship between peoples and nations has been part of human history. Since ancient times, it has been understood that such relationships would be indispensable to the natural and progressive development of societies, generally justified, among other factors, by economic considerations.

As territories expanded or contracted, populations increased, natural resource consumption grew, and commercial activities became more sophisticated, new interests and needs emerged, justifying the strengthening of interstate relations beyond national borders. These relationships were additionally driven by political, diplomatic, industrial, and technological issues, among other areas.

In seeking to meet these aspirations, demands, and expectations, history, particularly from the sixteenth century onward, during the formation of Modern States, witnessed a wide range of rapprochements and/or divergences among countries. Such relationships could lead to partnerships, mutual collaboration, and integration or, in the absence of peaceful solutions to disputes, to conflicts, crises, instability, and wars.

Over the centuries, the emergence of globalization within the International System would ultimately contribute to the intensification of these relationships, to the extent that, today, no country could remain independent or autonomous without relying on the participation and contribution of other countries.

More specifically, in the twenty-first century, as a result of scientific and technological transformations and the energy and digital transitions, this interrelationship would intensify due to the

extraordinary consumption of mineral resources used as inputs in the production of high-value-added goods and services. These minerals, both ferrous and non-ferrous, would be used in low-carbon technologies, sustainable mobility, and green energy. Following difficult, complex, and costly industrialization processes, they would be incorporated into wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, electric vehicle batteries, medical equipment, electronic materials, and defense components.

The high demand for these minerals, simultaneously associated with their unequal geographical availability and reduced supply in international markets, led several countries to classify them as strategic and critical. It is within this global context of the “twenty-first-century gold rush” that the imperative need to establish alliances and partnerships among States would become increasingly evident, so that, within this economic-industrial-technological context, international cooperation could serve as a means of promoting national development.

A question therefore arises, which this research sought to answer: would it be possible to establish connections between recognized historical events and international relations theory and certain economic and commercial realities associated with mining and cooperation among nations?

Regarding the methodology employed, a qualitative approach was adopted. Concerning the means of investigation, the study was bibliographic and documentary, based on national and international publications, scientific articles, Brazilian government agencies, international organizations, multinational institutions, and websites. Through the consultation and consolidation of these sources, it was

possible to identify the most relevant issues addressed in the present study.

Thus, the general objective of this study is to analyze the contributions of the Treaties of Peace of *Westphalia*, of 1648, and Liberal Theory of International Relations to global cooperation concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals among nations. Based on this analysis, the study also seeks to provide political, economic, and scientific-technological institutions with resources that may enable them to develop a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and advantages of multilateralism in promoting the commercialization of these valuable minerals in the twenty-first century.

To achieve the aforementioned purpose, the specific objectives were to: demonstrate the importance of multilateral cooperation and international relations arising from the Treaties of Peace of *Westphalia*, of 1648; characterize Liberal Theory of International Relations and its contemporary lessons; and present selected bilateral agreements and commercial relations involving Strategic and Critical Minerals, with implications for the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development of nations.

To this end, this article is structured into four sections that provide a comprehensive analysis of the applicability of *Westphalian* and Liberal teachings and contributions within the concert of nations concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals. The first section, Introduction, presents the central theme of the study. The second section, Methodology, describes the approach adopted for the research, including data collection and analysis strategies. The third section, Theoretical Framework, demonstrates the importance of

multilateralism arising from the Treaties of *Westphalia*, characterizes Liberalism in International Relations and its teachings, and presents selected bilateral agreements and commercial relations involving Strategic and Critical Minerals that would foster the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development of nations.

The Final Considerations section summarizes the main findings of the research, providing political, economic, and scientific-technological institutions with resources that would enable a better understanding of the benefits and advantages of multilateralism in favor of nations when commercializing these indispensable mineral resources in the twenty-first century.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical framework was organized into three topics. The first demonstrates the importance of multilateral cooperation and international relations arising from the influence of the Treaties of Peace of *Westphalia*. The second aims to characterize Liberal Theory of International Relations and its teachings that have endured to the present day, influencing international trade, economic interdependence, and stability among nations. The third and final topic presents selected bilateral agreements and commercial relations involving mineral resources that are indispensable to the technological transformation and energy and digital transitions of nations.

2.1. Importance Of Multilateral Cooperation And International Relations Arising From The Treaties Of Peace Of *Westphalia*, Of 1648

Relations among States, regardless of their size and the distances separating them, would be inherent to a globalized world. In the twenty-first century, marked by numerous geopolitical, climatic, technological, and energy challenges, the most diverse national and international actors would have a clear awareness that mutual cooperation would be indispensable for resolving disputes and pursuing opportunities, thereby directly contributing to human progress.

However, this current worldview, in which multilateralism would constitute part of the response to global problems, was not prevalent until the second half of the sixteenth century. From a historical perspective, the political, diplomatic, and academic community would recognize the Treaties of Peace of *Westphalia*, of 1648, as the origins of cooperation among States.

Figure 1. Oath of Ratification of the Treaty of Münster, oil painting by Gerard Ter Borch, 1648, representing the agreement of the Peace of Westphalia.



Source: Britannica, 2026.

Those treaties brought an end to the eighty-year Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648) and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648),

restoring peace in Europe and establishing, at the time, a new world order (Brito, 2021).

The State System, *a posteriori* of *Westphalia*, established the defense of national interests in the international arena within a “society of States” (Magnoli, 2004). From that point onward, countries would make their own decisions without other States exercising influence over them, thereby establishing the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, while no country would possess greater power than another, thus balancing the distribution of power on the European continent. Furthermore, the principle of “*Pacta Sunt Servanda*,” that is, respect for international commitments, diplomacy, and the promotion of a market economy, would be established (Brito, 2021).

Under the *Westphalian* model, the Nation-State would exercise its sovereignty and recognize equality among countries as constitutional principles governing international relations. It is noteworthy that, in Brazil, this influence was incorporated into Article 4 of the Federal Constitution (1988), which establishes the principles governing the country’s international relations, including national independence, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention, equality among States, defense of peace, peaceful settlement of conflicts, and cooperation among peoples for the progress of humanity (Brasil, 2016; Severino, 2018).

Over the centuries, the leading role of States would gradually be shared with new international actors within the context of interdependence and globalization, thus giving rise to the Contemporary International Society (Bedin, 2001 *apud* Severino, 2018).

Among these actors would be the United Nations (UN), established in 1945, shortly after the Second World War. In the UN Charter, Article 1 describes the purposes of the organization, with particular emphasis on international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian nature (ONU, 1945).

It is therefore recognized that the State would not be the only actor in the international arena. Alongside it, there would be a range of other institutions, such as international organizations, multinational corporations, civil society, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, among many others, which could engage in various forms of diplomacy, promoting their own interests through partnerships with other countries and foreign institutions (Barbosa, 2024).

Not surprisingly, in an increasingly interdependent world, States and other actors would be unable to solve complex problems in isolation. They would therefore require mutual cooperation as a tool to ensure benefits and to develop and share technologies aimed at addressing complex issues (Lee, 2009 *apud* Do Monte; Anastasia; Matos, 2021).

Under these circumstances, the role played by non-governmental entities through cooperation programs would create opportunities for subnational entities to engage in the external relations of their respective countries, enabling them to develop initiatives, actions, and even cooperation policies with actors in the international environment (Sato, 2010).

These bilateral or multilateral relations, without the direct participation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the countries concerned, would be referred to as paradiplomacy.

Thus, it can be partially concluded that the modern State System, characteristic of the Contemporary Era, was strongly influenced by *Westphalian* principles, whereby nations acquired the prerogative to exercise their authority within their domestic sphere, that is, State sovereignty, as well as the duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of third countries, based on the principle of non-intervention. It was also established, as a result of the 1648 treaties, that States, regardless of their size or power, would be equally recognized in terms of sovereignty, thereby affirming the principle of legal equality.

2.2. Liberal Theory Of International Relations And Its Lessons

Given a volatile international scenario, subject to crises, conflicts, wars, and the complexity of interactions among diverse countries, theories of international relations were developed by thinkers, philosophers, politicians, and diplomats who could contribute to understanding how nations would interact with one another according to their respective perceptions. These theories would frequently be used to guide the course that a government or institution might take regarding an international issue. By studying them, professionals in a given field could better discern the motivations and objectives that would drive decisions worldwide (NU, 2026).

In the present research, the theory analyzed was Liberal Theory, one of the most important schools of thought in International Relations. In the economic sphere, for example, it emphasizes the possibility of interdependence among States, arguing that institutions, trade, democracy, and international norms could promote mutual cooperation.

Liberalism maintains that, by acting in this manner, the likelihood of conflict would decrease, since war would be economically disadvantageous for all those involved. The theory also explains that relations among nations would promote economic integration; the development and strengthening of international institutions; the promotion of democracy and human rights; and cooperation on transnational issues (RRE, 2024). Furthermore, it would foster the sharing of collective responsibilities in favor of peace, justice, multilateral institutions, and rules agreed upon among peoples (Castro, 2012).

The German thinker Immanuel Kant was the philosopher who made a significant contribution to Liberal Theory through the publication of *Perpetual Peace* in 1795. He lived during a period of radical transformations in international politics, including the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), the Independence of the United States of America (1776), and the French Revolution (1789), which brought about several transformations in the organization of States in Europe (Miranda, 2012).

Figure 2. Immanuel Kant surrounded by the Ouroboros, an emblematic serpent of ancient Egypt and Greece. Engraving by John Chapman, published in London, 1812.



Source: Britannica
(Bird, 2026).

Considered a classical theory, Liberalism served as a foundation for the development of other schools of thought that sought to explain phenomena within the International System, recognizing cooperation as essential to international political science. Not surprisingly, it was widely discussed in the period following the First World War (1914–1918) and extensively debated with the outbreak of the Second World War, from 1939 to 1945 (Marchiori Neto, 2021).

With the end of the Cold War (1947–1991), Liberalism re-emerged and has gained importance due to the need for cooperation among States, society, institutions, and individuals (Nogueira; Messari, 2005 *apud* Marchiori Neto, 2021). This perspective would be based on the belief that the global system would be capable of generating a peaceful world order. Rather than resorting to direct force, such as military actions, Liberalism would emphasize international cooperation as a means of advancing the interests of each nation.

It is believed that the negative consequences of war, including economic losses and civilian deaths, would far outweigh its purported gains. In today's globalized society, enduring economic relations and international diplomacy could be more effective in advancing political interests than the use of force (NU, 2026).

Thus, Commercial Liberalism posits that economic agreements would generally be the best means of accumulating wealth compared with wars, sanctions, and other coercive instruments. According to this perspective, market competition would not be regarded as conflict, but rather as peaceful cooperation (Navari, 2008 *apud* Dantas, 2014). Therefore, stability would be possible through the strengthening of trade ties among countries until reaching the stage of economic freedom (Dantas, 2014). Under these

circumstances, the central premise is that progress, whether scientific, technological, economic, social, and/or political, would bring well-being to nations (Pereira; Blanco; Pereira, 2020).

Thus, it can be partially concluded that Liberal Theory of International Relations has left a series of lessons that remain important today in an increasingly complex and interconnected International System. Among its legacies, international trade would stand out as a driver of stability through economic interdependence. It would also establish the foundations for the emergence of international actors, such as the UN, to promote peace and stability, based on the premise that these organizations would help States strengthen cooperation, offering a perspective in which multilateralism would constitute a positive-sum game, in which all parties could benefit.

In the field of international cooperation, multilateralism, and diplomacy, within the context of the global mineral agenda, could the *Westphalian* model and Liberalism contribute to the development of nations through Strategic and Critical Minerals?

2.3. Bilateral Agreements And Trade Relations Involving Strategic And Critical Minerals

Strategic and Critical Minerals have been consolidating their role as essential resources in the energy transition, national security, and technological innovation of many countries. Lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, niobium, copper, and rare earth elements, among others, would constitute mineral resources used in the production of batteries, wind turbines, solar panels, electric vehicles, semiconductors, and defense systems (Bezerra, 2025).

According to the International Energy Agency, this interest has been driven by the global urgency surrounding decarbonization and electrification resulting from climate change. However, this demand would encounter a concerning reality: the high geographic concentration of reserves and refining capacity. China, for example, would dominate the refining of 19 of the 20 most important Strategic and Critical Minerals, accounting for approximately 70% of the global market (IEA, 2025).

Nevertheless, attempts to reduce risks in global supply chains by diversifying production and supply sources away from China would likely generate new challenges, including the need for cooperation mechanisms, particularly among countries seeking to lead climate action (WEF, 2023).

Thus, this combination of efforts, currently underway, would be leading several countries to seek different sources of mineral supply. In the race toward a green economic future, critical minerals would be essential for driving the global transition to cleaner energy supported by advanced technologies (Sinh, 2024).

In 2025, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development advocated a new generation of partnerships to ensure that minerals essential to the energy and digital transitions would drive sustainable and inclusive growth throughout the Global South, adding value to critical minerals beyond refining and processing. The international organization also advocates more comprehensive strategies linking mining to other economic sectors (UNCTAD, 2025).

Strategic partnerships would therefore emerge as the main mechanism for addressing the challenges associated with critical

mineral security in an era of increasing geopolitical fragmentation. Traditional multilateral frameworks, although valuable for consensus building, often lack the speed required for supply chain diversification initiatives. Accordingly, the bilateral approach would represent a fundamental shift toward more agile cooperation, potentially accelerating decision-making processes and enabling investment strategies in the mining sector (Hidayat, 2026).

The aforementioned conditions would confirm that international cooperation constitutes one of the most relevant solutions for addressing problems and phenomena that transcend political borders and geographic boundaries and that could generate political, economic, and social consequences at the national, regional, and international levels. It would therefore become evident that the stability of an international *player* would depend on actions and measures adopted by other actors in the international arena (Do Monte; Anastasia; Matos, 2021).

In terms of bilateral agreements, Strategic and Critical Minerals have been driving the establishment of numerous international partnerships involving nations from all continents, given the importance, urgency, and growing demand for mineral resources that are indispensable in the Contemporary Era. The following section presents examples of bilateral agreements that have brought countries together in response to the challenging international geopolitical scenario experienced in the twenty-first century.

South Korea would be redefining its relationship with Nigeria. The two nations would be exploring stronger economic ties, particularly in critical minerals and industrial development. It is worth noting

that South Korea imports more than 95% of its critical mineral requirements, whereas Nigeria would possess significant reserves of lithium, graphite, and other materials essential for electric vehicles and low-carbon energy technologies (Adeyemi, 2026). Critical minerals constitute a crucial component of the partnership between **India** and the United States of America (USA), as embodied in the “Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology” and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (*MoU*) in October 2024. Bilateral cooperation has evolved significantly, seeking to ensure resilient supply chains, foster green technology, and strengthen energy and trade relations (Sinh, 2024).

Figure 3. South Korea–Nigeria Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals



Source: Adeyemi (2026).

In Canada, the development of critical mineral value chains is a long-term objective involving multiple actors, including industries, local governments, Indigenous peoples, and international institutions, thereby guiding the country's development of the mineral sector. Accordingly, Canada seeks to build more resilient global supply chains by working with international partners to promote research and development, encourage investment, and advance other priorities, as specified in Table 1 (Canada, 2026).

Table 1. Main Bilateral Agreements between Canada and Allied Countries

International Cooperation	Objective/Purpose
Strategic Partnership with the European Union .	Promote the security and sustainability of trade and investment involving critical minerals required for the transition to a green and digitalized economy.
Bilateral dialogue with France on critical minerals (2023).	Strengthen cooperation to ensure secure supply chains, foster research and development, and promote high ESG standards.
<i>MoU</i> with Chile on Critical Minerals and the Sustainable Development of Minerals and Metals (2024).	Achieve close collaboration in the areas of critical minerals, value chains, innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable development in support of energy transition goals.
Joint Declaration of Intent with Germany on Critical Minerals (2025).	Deepen cooperation in supply chains, including financing, investment, research and development, risk mitigation, resilience, and policy and regulatory alignment.
Memorandum of Cooperation with Japan on Battery Supply Chains.	Ensure integrated and value-added investments in the battery production, transportation, and distribution sectors, while encouraging and facilitating cooperation among governments, industries, and research agencies.
<i>MoU</i> with South Korea on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains, Clean Energy Transition, and Energy Security.	Increase Korean investment in mining projects in Canada and facilitate technical cooperation to ensure global energy and critical mineral supply chains.

Joint Declaration of Intent with Australia on Cooperation in Critical Minerals.	Address the growing need for secure, diversified, and resilient supply chains that reduce dependence on a single source.
<i>MoU</i> with Indonesia on Cooperation in Critical Minerals.	Establish bilateral dialogue to discuss cooperation on ESG standards, among other areas.
Joint Declaration of Intent with the United Kingdom on Cooperation in Critical Minerals and Critical Raw Materials.	Deepen cooperation in critical mineral supply chain resilience, trade, ESG, and innovation.
Joint Declaration with Italy on Cooperation in Critical Minerals and Critical Raw Materials.	Promote trade, investment, best practices, technical standards, and ESG.
Collaboration Agreement with Argentina on Critical Minerals and Mining Sustainability (2025).	Create economic opportunities, build more resilient supply chains, and increase value-added activities throughout the hemisphere.
<i>MoU</i> with India on Cooperation in Critical Minerals.	Improve cooperation throughout the critical mineral supply chain.

Source: Government of Canada (2026).

Since October 2025, Australia and the United States have taken measures to finance critical mineral projects considered vital. The financing would support supply chains in the defense, manufacturing, and energy sectors and would contribute to the development of a more resilient ecosystem. The countries also committed to promoting investments to secure the supply of critical minerals through cooperation between Australia's *Critical Minerals*

Facility and Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve and the United States' Export-Import Bank and Project Vault (Australia, 2026).

Malaysia and the United States expanded their partnership through two complementary instruments, both signed in October 2024: the “Reciprocal Trade Agreement” and a *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* on “Cooperation in Critical Minerals.” The latter would promote the exploration, extraction, processing, refining, manufacturing, and recycling of mineral resources, as well as the development of critical mineral and rare earth supply chains in both countries (US, 2025).

It is noteworthy that a critical minerals project in Kazakhstan, involving the United States, is advancing with the aim of developing one of the world's largest untapped tungsten reserves, thereby strengthening cooperation between the two countries. The projects would be strategically important because tungsten is widely used in defense, aerospace, industrial manufacturing, and advanced technologies. The United States has identified tungsten as a critical mineral and has sought to diversify its supply chains amid strong global dependence on China (TCA, 2026).

In Europe, Italy has been implementing a series of bilateral partnerships. In May 2025, it joined Kazakhstan in the field of critical minerals and materials. The countries agreed to deepen and strengthen bilateral relations, as Kazakhstan is regarded as a strategic partner for Italy because of its geopolitical role in Central Asia (EFE, 2025).

With Japan, Italy has been deepening economic cooperation, including the strengthening of critical mineral supply chains,

elevating the existing Japanese-Italian partnership from “strategic” to “special strategic” (Nurmaganbetova, 2026). With Germany, the two countries endorsed an agreement on critical raw materials with the European Commission, aiming to mitigate strategic dependencies and build secure supply chains for European companies. The document emphasizes the need for the European Union (EU) to cooperate closely with the United States, G7+ partners, and other countries, particularly in Africa, the Indo-Pacific, and Latin America, that are willing and able to contribute to mutually beneficial partnerships throughout critical raw material supply chains (Italy, 2026).

In Asia, in March 2026, Japan and the United States concluded three documents on critical minerals: the Action Plan for Critical Mineral Supply Chain Resilience, the Memorandum of Cooperation on Deep-Sea Mineral Resource Development, and the Joint Fact Sheet on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Projects. These agreements confirmed the strong strategic relationship between Tokyo and Washington, maintaining U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific region while strengthening Japan's interests in critical minerals. The alliance with the United States would provide Japan with greater autonomy, given that in 2024 the country depended on China for more than 60% of its rare earth supply (Kamisuna, 2026).

In April 2026, the EU and the United States simultaneously signed an *MoU* and an Action Plan, both concerning critical minerals, reflecting their strategic commitment to building secure and sustainable supply chains, increasing resilience, and diversifying supply sources in response to shared geopolitical and economic challenges. They also provide for bilateral cooperation throughout the value chain, encompassing exploration, extraction, processing,

refining, recycling, and recovery, as well as support for innovation, investment, and geological mapping (EC, 2026).

Regarding Brazil, the country has sought to expand dialogue with international partners, in line with the valorization of its geological advantages and the pursuit of its own mineral development strategies. This cooperation would be regarded as an instrument for stimulating innovation, attracting investment, and strengthening national productive and technological capabilities, thereby promoting greater value addition within the national territory (Brazil, 2026a).

In a diversified manner, Brazil's international partnerships, diplomatic, scientific-technological, commercial, industrial, and economic relations would involve several countries, as presented below:

In February 2026, South Korea and Brazil agreed to strengthen cooperation in critical minerals, including rare earth elements, elevating bilateral ties to a strategic partnership through the adoption of a four-year action plan. On that occasion, Brazil stated that it possessed the world's second-largest rare earth reserves and the third-largest nickel reserves, whose potential could attract investment from South Korean companies in the critical minerals sector (Park, 2026).

Subsequently, in March 2026, the Ministry of Mines and Energy participated in a joint activity with the British agency *Innovate UK* (United Kingdom), aimed at strengthening international cooperation in the mineral sector. The initiative brought together representatives of both governments, research institutions,

academia, and the productive sector to discuss opportunities for technological partnerships and the development of projects aimed at strengthening mineral supply chains associated with the energy transition (Brazil, 2026a).

More recently, in April 2026, the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency, an institution linked to the Ministry of Development, Industry, Foreign Trade and Services, held a meeting with authorities, experts, and private-sector representatives from Brazil and the United Kingdom. The initiative sought to bring the two countries closer around a common agenda focused on the exploration, processing, and financing of strategic minerals. On that occasion, emphasis was placed on building more resilient and sustainable supply chains aligned with socio-environmental criteria. On the Brazilian side, the availability of mineral reserves, the potential for expanding processing capacity, and the regulatory environment were highlighted. The United Kingdom, in turn, presented expertise in areas such as geosciences, battery technologies, industrial innovation, and financial instruments aimed at the green economy (Mendes, 2026).

In the same month of April, Brazil and Germany signed, in Hannover, a joint declaration of intent to expand scientific and technological cooperation in the field of strategic and critical minerals. The agreement would establish the basis for intensifying joint activities in research, development, and innovation throughout the entire production chain of these inputs (Vilela, 2026).

Another initiative, also undertaken in April, was the signing of an *MoU* with Spain, which would establish the foundations for expanding bilateral cooperation in the critical minerals sector. The

joint commitment would aim to develop production chains, attract investment, foster technological innovation, and promote sustainable practices. The partnership also provides for cooperation in activities such as exploration, research and development, mining, refining, recycling, and processing of critical minerals, in addition to initiatives related to environmental management. Furthermore, it would include knowledge exchange and incentives for the use of artificial intelligence applied to geological analysis and supply chain management (Brazil, 2026b).

From the perspective of foreign trade, Table 2 presents the five main destinations of Brazilian exports of metallic minerals in 2019 and their respective export values. Although these countries may receive mineral commodities with limited industrial processing, they would constitute strategic partners within the context of mining.

Table 2. Five Main Destinations of Brazilian Mineral Exports

Mineral	China	USA	European Union	Canada	Malay
Iron	X	X	X	X	X
Niobium	X	X	X	X	
Copper	X	X	X	X	
Manganese	X	X	X	X	
Nickel	X	X	X	X	

⚠ Esta tabela possui muitas colunas e foi cortada para impressão. Para visualizá-la completa, acesse o artigo original em: <https://revistatopicos.com.br/artigos/global-cooperation-through-the-lens-of-the-treaties-of-westphalia-1648-and-liberal-theory->

Source: National Mining Agency (2020) *apud* Castro, Peiter, and Góes (2022).

Finally, it can be partially concluded that the current global mineral agenda, particularly concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals, is highly active, demonstrating the interest of various countries in establishing partnerships and alliances within the framework of multilateralism. This scenario reflects the international community's need to advance the energy and digital transition processes, as well as the rapid industrial and technological transformations taking place in the twenty-first century. The studies demonstrated the extent to which this win-win relationship would strengthen interstate relations as a means of fostering mutual economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development among nations.

3. METHODOLOGY

The approach adopted in this research was qualitative in nature, as its main objective was to analyze the contributions of the Treaties of Peace of *Westphalia* and Liberal Theory of International Relations to global cooperation and multilateralism in the context of Strategic and Critical Minerals (Creswell, 2014).

This approach is widely recognized in the scientific community for its ability to provide contextual analyses, enabling an understanding of the applicability of the lessons derived from an important historical event in human history and from an established diplomatic theory that governs relations among nations, as well as their applicability to the current global mineral agenda. Furthermore, qualitative

research focuses on the interpretation and understanding of dynamic phenomena, making it particularly relevant to geopolitical contexts involving mineral resources that would act as catalysts for the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development of nations (Yin, 2016).

Regarding the methodological procedures, the research was classified as bibliographic. This type of procedure is based on the careful analysis of previously published scientific works, which constitutes one of the foundations of the construction of scientific knowledge. According to Pereira *et al.* (2018), bibliographic research would be capable of consolidating theoretical and methodological frameworks, as it brings together and interprets significant contributions on a specific topic. Yin (2016) further argues that this method would enhance the analytical robustness of the research by grounding the discussion in established theories.

To conduct this review, the research sources were selected and classified into three categories: (1) sources demonstrating the importance of multilateral cooperation and international relations influenced by the Treaties of *Westphalia*; (2) sources characterizing Liberal Theory of International Relations and its lessons; and (3) sources presenting bilateral agreements and trade relations involving Strategic and Critical Minerals.

The classification of these sources provided a broader understanding of the *Westphalian* and Liberal contributions to international cooperation concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals. The bibliographic and documentary reviews were conducted using national and international publications, scientific articles, Brazilian government agencies, international organizations, multinational

institutions, and websites, ensuring a broad body of knowledge that reflects the importance of multilateralism in the context of Strategic and Critical Minerals.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were characterized by profound political and social transformations on European soil. Among the historical events that reshaped that period, this research highlighted the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648) and the [Thirty Years' War](#) (1618–1648), two prolonged conflicts whose outcomes would subsequently influence several other countries over the centuries. This process culminated in the signing of the Peace Treaties of *Westphalia*, whose effects enabled the emergence of a State System model. New concepts were incorporated into the governance of nations, along with new approaches to conducting interstate relations. Sovereignty, the principle of non-intervention, and legal equality would constitute *Westphalian* legacies. As cross-border relations intensified in pursuit of the interests and needs of some countries, they were met with varying degrees of agreement or disagreement from others, generating situations ranging from wars and conflicts to the formation of alliances and mutual cooperation.

Within this environment of fluctuation between stability and crisis, the first theories of International Relations emerged, including Liberal Theory, with Immanuel Kant as one of its leading proponents. From a doctrinal perspective, Liberalism advocates mutual collaboration, trade, and international cooperation as means of promoting development and stability among nations. Multilateralism would thus emerge, enabling countries with

common objectives to converge in order to address problems through dialogue and collective responsibility.

It was in this context that this article aimed to analyze the contributions of the Peace Treaties of *Westphalia* and Liberal Theory of International Relations to global cooperation among nations concerning Strategic and Critical Minerals.

It is believed that the research demonstrated numerous partnerships, strategic alliances, and trade agreements among diverse nations that would characterize multilateralism and win-win relations within the current global mineral agenda, providing greater clarity on how historically recognized events could influence the course of societies even centuries later. Additionally, the research provided political, economic, and scientific-technological institutions with insights into the benefits and advantages of trading Strategic and Critical Minerals in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the qualitative approach, through the literature review and documentary analysis, was essential for providing evidence of the extent to which mutual cooperation would be advantageous, strengthening interstate relations as a means of promoting the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological development of nations.

Finally, future research is recommended to consider analyzing the implications of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) Agreement and the European Union (EU), formalized in 2026, particularly with regard to negotiations among countries involving Strategic and Critical Minerals, identifying the commercial, industrial, economic, and scientific-technological advantages in alignment with the global mineral agenda.

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