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The sketch of Brazil's grand strategy under the Workers' Party (2003–2016): Domestic and international constraints

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ABSTRACT

After passage of the 1988 Constitution of Brazil, successive democratic governments worked to build bridges between the nation's foreign policy and its defence strategy, thus fostering a dialogue among administrations and constituencies under the aegis of the rule of law. It was under the Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff administrations that Brazil laid out a grand strategy, implementation of which was interrupted by the controversial impeachment proceedings of 2016. The argument unfolds from a consideration of Brazil's development model and domestic politics as key structural variables in analysing the challenges faced in the conception and implementation of its grand strategy. The article is organised into two sections: (1) The sketch of a grand strategy: when Brazil's foreign and defence policies converged; (2) An ambition frustrated? Or, the impact of Brazil's development model and domestic politics on the conception and implementation of its grand strategy.

KEYWORDS

Brazilian foreign policy;
Brazilian defence policy;
systemic constraints;
domestic politics; grand
strategy

Introduction

In general, the analysis of a country's grand strategy may suffer from two main shortcomings: first, a one-dimensional approach to national, regional and global security, exclusively focused on military strength, relations and threats; second, a conception of strategy that separates foreign and defence policies, and does not fully embrace diplomatic, economic, social and cultural matters. In the particular case of Brazil, one must consider the fact that it is a second-tier country in terms of international stratification, and a non-nuclear regional power. In addition, a look at the long history of relations between Brazil's foreign and defence policies in the twentieth century reveals not only a separation between the two policy tracks, thus building a mutual suspicion between the two oldest state bureaucracies, the military and the diplomats (a first divorce), but also a conception of military matters as though they were not of civilian interest (a second divorce). As becomes evident in this article, it was only in the aftermath of the civil-military dictatorship that the Brazilian federal government started to construct a bridge between these two public domains, their bureaucracies and constituencies, under the aegis of the rule of law.

Having this in mind, what is our working definition of 'grand strategy'? In a nutshell, a grand strategy consists of a clear and non-reified interpretation of national interests, and

their articulation with a set of operational plans for advancing and achieving them. A grand strategy is a signalling device that supposes a visionary leadership, but it is not restricted to discourse and rhetoric, since it is matched by consistent actions that drive messages about a country's long-term political intentions both to domestic and foreign audiences. A grand strategy supposes a self-conscious identification and priority-setting in terms of foreign policy, defence goals, international co-operation, and partnerships with national businesses. Nevertheless, a grand strategy also implies material capabilities in the diplomatic, economic, technological and military realms that should enable a country to project its political ambition for graduation.¹

Such a working definition of grand strategy undoubtedly supposes the articulation between foreign policy and defence policy; the interrelations between soft power and hard power; and an improved dialogue between diplomats, the military, the corporate sector, the media, unions, civil society organisations and the academic community. In the wake of the 1988 constitution, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government played a key role aiming to guarantee civilian oversight of the military in a brand new and fragile democracy whose transition from the authoritarian regime had implied compromise and accommodation in terms of transitional justice.² Cardoso created the Ministry of Defence (MD) in 1999, and his foreign policy was rooted in a diplomacy of prestige and international credentials. During his two presidential mandates (1995–2002), Brazil set up an alliance with Western powers and championed human rights, conservation of the global environment and trade multilateralism.

However, arguably it was only under the leadership mandates of Lula da Silva (2003–2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016) that Brazil laid out what can be referred to as 'a sketch of Brazil's grand strategy', which was interrupted by Rousseff's controversial impeachment in 2016. Based on this argument and working definition, this article analyses the main difficulties in the conception (values and goals) and the implementation (ways and means) of a Brazilian grand strategy during the governments of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT), seeking to ascertain to what extent Brazil's development model and its domestic politics both played a key role in its grand strategy. Following this introduction, the argument is developed in two sections: (1) The sketch of a grand strategy: when Brazil's foreign and defence policies converged; and (2) An Ambition frustrated? Or the impact of Brazil's development model and domestic politics on the conception and implementation of a grand strategy.

The sketch of a grand strategy: When Brazil's foreign and defence policies converged

Brazil's foreign and defence policies have not only been instrumental as boundary-producing practices that frame the state and constitute its political order; they have also been fundamental tools for international projection of power, drawing on a national and endogenous geopolitical thought that bears influence on contemporary norms, values, conception and implementation of a grand strategy. Until the 1970s, Brazilian studies on geopolitics have been a quasi-monopoly of the military, especially those linked to the Brazilian War College (*Escola Superior de Guerra*, ESG, founded in 1949) and researchers connected with national security institutions. As in other national traditions, geopolitics was born as a science at the service of the state, and the territory was then exclusively

thought of as a resource of state power. In the 1980s and early 1990s, within the framework of the negotiated transition from military rule to democracy, scholars who were not affiliated with the armed forces started scrutinising geopolitics as a field of expertise.³ This rejuvenated scholarship led to an intellectual shift from more classical conceptions of geopolitics and strategy towards a more pluralistic set of visions on Brazil's international relations, thus preparing the field for institutional changes in the second half of the 1990s.

In 1988 Brazil had a new constitution, whose articles 21 and 84 affirm that the president and the minister of foreign affairs are the primary foreign policy actors. The president is head of state and government; she/he has the central agency in foreign affairs. The scope and degree of autonomy of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (known as Itamaraty) depends on presidential authorisation. Moreover, Itamaraty has the key responsibility for policy co-ordination with 'domestic' ministries (health, education, culture, agriculture, trade, among others) which are very active internationally, and it also dialogues with subnational entities, federal agencies and non-institutional actors such as businesses, non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and social movements. Brazil's foreign policy agenda incorporates a diversified range of actors in its decision-making process and opens the avenue for distinct forms of co-operation in its implementation. The assumption behind this article is that foreign policy is a public policy that is not immune to changes and to the interference of governmental agencies, businesses, media, and civil society.⁴ While some scholars refer to this phenomenon as the pluralisation of Brazilian foreign policy actors, others analyse it as the horizontalisation and verticalisation of the decision-making process.⁵

As far as defence policy is concerned, the president chairs the defence council, whose members are consulted on matters of war, peace and national security.⁶ However, due to the nature of the Brazilian transition from civil-military dictatorship to democracy, the development of openness, transparency and accountability programmes lag behind in the field of defence. In fact, the first defence policy was published in 1996, before the actual creation of the Ministry of Defence in 1999. Two among the ten ministers since 1999 have been diplomats: José Viegas Filho (between January 2003 and November 2004) and Celso Amorim (from August 2011 to December 2014). In February 2018, for the first time since re-democratisation and the actual creation of the ministry, Brazil's president nominated as defence minister not a civilian, but a member of the military.

Under democratic rule, it was only after 2003 that political bridges were built to improve the policy dialogue between defence and foreign affairs, but also between civilians and the military. The second National Defence Policy (NDP) was published in 2005 and resulted in the first National Defence Strategy (NDS) in 2008 and the first white paper on national defence in 2012. The NDS established medium and long-term strategic goals and actions to modernise the country's defence structure and public-private partnerships. It also addressed political-institutional issues that should ensure the means for Brazil's government and society to engage in the nation's building of a grand strategy.⁷

After 2003, Brazil tried to combine soft and hard instruments of power through an active and autonomous foreign policy, along with the increasing of its dissuasive capacity (ie, an emphasis on multilateralism and the reform of global governance structures, stress on regional mechanisms, definition of the geostrategic environment, increase in the defence budget, and a diversification of defence partnerships including France and Sweden). The NDP and the NDS can be seen as evolutionary stages in the formulation

of Brazilian defence policy, each expressing an important convergence between diplomacy and defence to expand and improve Brazil's international relations. Moreover, the ministries of foreign affairs and defence have worked together to consolidate a defence industrial base both at the national and regional levels.⁸ After the 2008 NDS, the ministries of defence and foreign affairs began to strengthen their mutual ties in the field of technical co-operation with South American and African countries. According to the 2012 white paper, foreign and defence policies should join their efforts to maintain regional stability and build a more cooperative international environment. Starting in 2010, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency's partnership with defence's international affairs division sought to enable the participation of military personnel from various South-American and African countries in courses offered by the armed forces, intensifying bilateral and regional relations through policy transfer and capacity-building.

In addition, as an attempt to bridge the gap between defence policy and civil society, graduate programmes and scholars obtained significant support from the federal government to establish the Brazilian Association of Defence Studies (ABED) in 2005. Since its inception ABED has held annual seminars, counting on the participation of military and civilian, senior and younger researchers, from all regions of the country. In 2013, the Ministry of Defence founded the Pandiá Calogeras Institute aiming to fund networks in which both military and university researchers should participate and develop joint projects. Associated with the expansion of the geopolitical thinking previously mentioned, with a worldwide diplomatic network acknowledged for its bridge-building capacities and with Brazil's historical support for multilateralism, these policy decisions in the field of defence were key ingredients of Brazil's grand strategy that was then being set up.

Brazil's sketch of a grand strategy had two main dimensions: regional and global. Regionally, different narratives about Brazil as a 'regional power' recognise that there is an asymmetric context in South America.⁹ In the defence sector, Brazil has the largest number of tanks, artillery pieces, combat ships, as well as submarines and tactical aircraft when it is individually examined in contrast to its neighbours; however, the country does not have military superiority when compared to South American secondary powers put together. In terms of military spending, the comparison between Brazil and its neighbours (especially Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru) expresses a strong asymmetry when each of these countries is taken individually. The Brazilian weakness, however, is revealed in the disaggregated analysis of its military budget. Between 2007 and 2016, on average, the army was responsible for 43.1% of total expenditures; the navy for 25.6%, and the air force for 22.6%. In addition, due to the very high proportion of personnel expenses and charges in the overall budget (on average, 88.2% in the army, 76.9% in the navy, and 75.3% in the air force), the investment rate for the same period was very low (3.7% for the army, 11.4% for the air force and 12.4% in the navy). Such a low investment rate in defence denotes important structural limitations in Brazil's capacity to project power regionally and globally. It is true that in 2008 Brazil signed an agreement with France for the development of the nuclear fast track submarine and that in 2015 Brazil and Sweden signed a contract for building and transferring technology for Saab fighter jets; however, even though Brazil is the largest holder of traditional military capabilities when compared to countries in its immediate and extended strategic environment, it is much less clear whether it has the military capacity to protect and to project itself over the area that it defines as its own strategic environment, which encompasses South

America, the South Atlantic, the African western coast and Antarctica, as well as strategic resources situated in the Green and Blue Amazonia as mentioned in the 2008 NDS.¹⁰

Despite domestic opposition including political parties and main-stream media outlets that tended to reaffirm social representations of South American borders as related to trafficking of weapons and drugs, under the Workers' Party Brazil's foreign policy and the 2012 white paper focused on the need to protect strategic resources and fight against all sorts of trafficking and smuggling through co-operation and policy co-ordination with regional neighbours.¹¹ In addition, PT governments also stressed the centrality of MERCOSUR (the Common Market of the South), which was considered a strategic platform for Brazil since it then absorbed more than 60% of the country's foreign direct investment in South America and approximately 90% of Brazilian manufactured exports to the region.¹²

In 2008, the creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) represented the political dimension of sub-continental integration. UNASUR was expected to work as a forum that should allow its 12 founding members – all South American countries – to co-ordinate shared political stances and to deal with eventual contexts of institutional instability and uncertainty. Moreover, the new organisation encompassed diverse areas of public policy co-operation, such as defence, drug control, education, health and infrastructure. The Brazilian government's decision to institutionalise UNASUR as a regional governance body for conflict resolution revealed its intention to neutralise any US intervention in the event of serious political instability in the region. UNASUR played an active role in Bolivia's internal crisis (2008), the crisis involving Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela (2008), the institutional crisis in Ecuador (2010) and Lugo's downfall in Paraguay (2012). In all these events, Brazil's government fostered the framing of a joint South American response under the auspices of UNASUR. One of UNASUR's instruments, the South American Defence Council (CDS), aimed to consolidate South America as a peace zone, to build a South American identity in the defence area and to foster regional consensus building, thus breaking with the history of US interest-based hemispheric institutions.

Globally, between 2003 and 2014 Brazil's foreign policy was based on a singular framing of international politics and the country's assets to deploy its national strategy: a multipolar world where globalisation and diffusion of power promoted a fundamental structural shift in the world economy, thus resulting in a redistribution of power from the West to the East and from the North to the South. Such a world vision implied opportunities and challenges for Brazil's grand strategy: in a scenario of relative fragmentation of global governance and a clear mismatch between norms and power, Brazil tried to combine the use of classical soft power attributes with the expansion of its aspirations to move beyond the previous boundaries of its diplomatic performance.¹³ The use of presidential diplomacy, introduced in Brazil by President Cardoso and discussed in full below, was intensified under Lula's leadership.¹⁴

Moreover, as part of Brazil's grand strategy, the federal government promoted development co-operation in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Brazil's global governmental expenses including educational, scientific, financial, humanitarian and technical co-operation increased from \$158 million in 2005 to approximately \$923 million in 2010. Official data shows that in nine years, between 2005 and 2013, Brazil's federal government spent approximately \$4.1 billion on international development co-operation. Geographically

speaking, Brazilian co-operation has been concentrated into two main regions: Latin America and Africa (mostly Portuguese-speaking countries).¹⁵

Between 2003 and 2014, even as differences between Lula and Rousseff were evident and growing, Brazil also took an active position affirming its leadership at the United Nations (UN) and in the South Atlantic. On the one hand, Brazil decided to accept the role of force commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in 2004, although this step went directly against the Brazilian traditional position related to UN peacekeeping operations. The Brazilian military troops in Haiti represented the greatest number of soldiers equipped and sent out from Brazil to any UN peacekeeping operation, as well as the greatest transportation of Brazilian troops sent out for a foreign land since the Second World War.¹⁶ At the same time, Brazil aimed to consolidate the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and prosperity. The country devoted special attention, along with its neighbours in West Africa, to the construction of a co-operative environment free of nuclear weapons, under the aegis of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), an initiative launched by Brazilian diplomacy in 1986 and firmly taken up again by Amorim when he was defence minister.¹⁷ Brazilian ties with Africa are not only economic, but also historical, cultural and linguistic. With the purpose to defend its interests in the South Atlantic, Brazil has increased its presence in West and Southern Africa, conducting several bilateral joint exercises with Angola and South Africa, especially naval exercises, and helping to train the coast guards and navies of countries like Cape Verde and Namibia.

Historically, one must recall that the prime objective of the US was security and status as a 'predominant power without rival' in the Americas.¹⁸ According to Hans Morgenthau, within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine, American foreign policy was openly imperialist towards Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and less aggressive towards South American countries.¹⁹ As stated by Roberto Russel and Juan Tokatlian, this is the main reason that the quest for autonomy (and all the academic debate that evolved around it) was more a South American than a Latin American issue.²⁰ Whereas in northern Latin America, the accent was more on the question of sovereignty (given that this region has historically been the object of diverse uses of military force by the US), South America had a relatively greater margin for commercial, cultural and diplomatic manoeuvring with respect to Washington.

After Mexico joined the North American Free Trade Zone (NAFTA) in 1994, Brazil pursued a policy of engagement, both economic and political, with its immediate neighbours in South America.²¹ Particularly during Lula's second mandate, Brazil tried to transform South America into a cohesive region in world politics, thus projecting it as a global pole under Brazil's leadership, even if this leadership was not always acknowledged by neighbours. According to Matias Spektor, 'this was a conscious attempt to counter U.S. hegemony in the region by transforming Brazil's 'near abroad' into a distinctive regional formation where Brazil could exert some degree of international political authority and secure market to its own industries'.²² As far as Brazil-US bilateral relations are concerned, Rousseff's foreign policy took two important decisions that illustrate Brazil's geopolitical vision. In 2013, when Edward Snowden revealed that the US National Security Agency (NSA) had hacked the Brazilian president's mobile phone and personal emails, Rousseff announced her state visit to Washington was cancelled. Then, the Brazilian government decided to join German Prime Minister Angela Merkel, who had also been a victim of

similar spying acts, in proposing a resolution on this issue at the UN General Assembly. Resolution 68/167 called for all countries to guarantee privacy rights to users of the Internet and other forms of electronic communication.²³

In a nutshell, the sketch of a grand strategy under the Workers' Party supposed the emphasis on multipolarity as a powerful normative principle considered by decision-makers as morally superior to any other global power distribution model. Multilaterally-accepted norms seemed to offer the optimal conditions for Brazil to define its interests with autonomy and to carry out a grand strategy that included the goal of a peaceful Brazil that is able to support peace elsewhere.²⁴ Moreover, Brazilian foreign policy was then characterised by a soft revisionist approach, which contrasted with the revisionist approaches of India as well as China.²⁵ Brazil's diplomacy is historically a mix of acceptance *versus* resistance when it comes to international norms, regional *versus* global ambitions, and middle power diplomacy *versus* greater power aspirations. The activist foreign policy of Lula and Rousseff did not imply direct confrontation; rather, it consisted of a more assertive policy pursued through engagement and negotiation. In short, Brazil did not embrace unconditionally the *status quo*, nor did it adopt a deeply revisionist position.²⁶

An ambition frustrated? Or the impact of Brazil's development model and domestic politics on the conception and implementation of a grand strategy

Building on the concept of the 'graduation dilemma',²⁷ in this section we explain why Brazil's sketch of a grand strategy during the period in office of the Workers' Party (2003–2016) has not survived the *coup de théâtre* of Rousseff's impeachment in 2016. The analysis found an increasing influence of political coalitions in foreign policy decision-making and in the linkages between Brazil's foreign policy and its development model.²⁸ The interplay between international relations and domestic politics, which are overlapping but not identical, shapes not only the country's foreign policy but also its general development. Therefore, to explain why and how Brazil's grand strategy emerged and then failed, it is necessary to identify the games and the players, as well as to display the coalitions, bargains and compromises. The analysis considers foreign policy and the sketch of a grand strategy, but not through the prism of a supposedly self-evident and permanent national interest; it is rather argued that foreign policy is a public policy that also presents contingent and transient elements. In addition, the article analyses how and why the grand strategy failed in terms of conception and implementation.²⁹

Until recently, Brazilian foreign policy was perceived as a state policy relatively immune to changes and to the interference of governmental agencies, businesses, unions, media outlets, political parties and civil society actors. This was partly due to Itamaraty's unique historical role. However, in the last twenty years, Brazilian foreign policy has been characterised by the pluralisation of actors, presidential diplomacy and politicisation. Pluralisation involves not only new state actors (federal agencies and ministries, subnational entities), but also non-state actors, social movements, interest groups, and political parties. In a presidential system, the president has a central role in setting up the political agenda and giving the strategic orientations, in addition to his/her power to choose and dismiss the minister according to the 1988 constitution. Lastly, politicisation stems from

internal distributive effects of foreign policy decisions, increasing the influence of domestic politics in the making of foreign policy; it also implies the intensification of the public debate around ideas, interests and values related to policy choices.³⁰ At the same time, there is no consensus within Brazil's strategic elite members about the country's pattern of international relations, which is one of the conditions for a successful navigation of critical dilemmas during major economic and political crisis.

Peter Gourevitch defined critical junctures as moments in which the dominant patterns of domestic development and international integration are exhausted, thus making room for the emergence of a new socio-political coalition, with repercussions for economic policy and foreign policy.³¹ In analysing critical junctures that affected Brazil, Lima and Hirst identified two of them throughout the twentieth century: the first in the 1930s, with the crisis of the agro-exporting economy and the subsequent adoption of the import-substitution industrialisation model (ISI); the second in the 1990s, with the depletion of the ISI model and the advent of a logic of competitive integration in the global economy. Both critical junctures brought about re-articulations involving the domestic and international dimensions.³² We argue that a new critical juncture may be underway in Brazil at present.

Historically, economic and national development considerations have been perceived as the main external priorities by Brazilian diplomatic elites; external military or security threats have not played a key role in their perceptions. Domestically, the threat has always been the emergence of social demands for land reform and basic rights, such as access to education and health, within the framework of a very unequal society and the politics of mass democracy. Therefore, Brazilian foreign policy has often had a strong developmentalist component. The prevalence of the economic objective over geopolitical alliances led Brazilian foreign policy to adopt a more assertive behaviour on trade and development negotiations, in contrast to a more discreet performance on peace and security issues.³³ This was one of the reasons why Brazil joined the G-77 but was only an observer of the Non-Aligned Movement. For instance, after the Second World War a close and virtuous link was established between the objectives of import-substitution industrialisation and the goal of building an autonomous foreign policy. There was a perception that foreign policy should supplement the internal effort of development, displaying a new historical functionality. However, the transition from an agro-export model to an industrial one proved to be politically contentious, as entrenched and emerging factions fought for influence in the new configuration. It was not until the mid-1950s that a political consensus in support of a national industrialisation process began to emerge. This agenda required a new developmentalist and nationalist coalition formed by industrial entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, progressive intellectuals and urban workers. To boost this development effort, president Vargas created the Brazilian National Development Bank (BNDES) in 1952, which became one of the most visible and influential tools of state-managed industrialisation.³⁴

Overall, the old developmentalism left behind a contradictory legacy. On one hand, industrialisation projected Brazil beyond the classical agro-exporting model. Between 1947 and 1980, the Brazilian economy had an average economic growth of 7.5% a year. The Brazilian economy was the only one in Latin America that completed the inter-industrial matrix corresponding to the technological paradigm of the second industrial revolution. At the same time, the diversification of agriculture enabled Brazil to reduce food

imports and eventually become a world leader in agricultural production. On the other hand, Brazil amplified its external vulnerability by becoming more dependent on foreign direct investment and foreign technology for industrial production. In addition, economic development did not improve social conditions, as social inequality and regional disparities deepened.³⁵

Mirroring debates on development and external vulnerabilities, international relations scholars reflected on the relationship between autonomy and foreign policy. According to the dominant narrative, the quest for autonomy ('autonomy through distance, autonomy through participation, and autonomy through diversification'³⁶) would have prevailed during most of Brazil's foreign policy trajectory, being occasionally replaced with a more acquiescent pattern, for instance at the end of the Second World War (1946–1950), immediately after the military coup in 1964 (1964–1967), and at the end of the Cold War.³⁷ Nevertheless, some authors defend an opposite argument: the logic of autonomy has never been the rule in Brazil's foreign policy, but an exception. During the national developmentalism period, the combination of a development strategy with a foreign policy of prestige, which was restricted to development and trade issues without challenging the international political *status quo*, contributed to the perception of continuity in Brazilian foreign policy. In Morgenthau's conception, a foreign policy of prestige aims to convince other nations of a country's power, attempting to impress them through exhibition of either military strength or diplomatic ceremony.³⁸ Nowadays, a foreign policy of prestige may aim to guarantee a strong multilateral presence as a soft power instrument for countries which lack hard power.³⁹

According to this view, an autonomous foreign policy presupposes an ambition for international prominence, the claim for a rule-making role in the international order, a geopolitical vision of the South that emphasises a long-term grand strategy, and a commitment to regional integration. These features, which are part and parcel of the graduation concept noted earlier, were present during Brazil's periods of independent foreign policy (1961–1964), responsible pragmatism (1974–1979), and 'assertive and active' foreign policy under PT (2003–2016). More strictly speaking, however, only the first and third periods could be totally classified as autonomous foreign policies, because both tried to combine democracy and social inclusion at the domestic level with a revisionist foreign policy. In the end, however, both were interrupted by institutional ruptures backed by national and transnational conservative social forces.⁴⁰

It is possible to draw a parallel between different political conceptions of autonomy in foreign policy and debates on the country's development model. Since the 1990s, the political-ideological cleavages that have affected Brazilian foreign policy reflect the absence of a national consensus on a new development model. In fact, there are clear differences between Cardoso's foreign policy of prestige (1995–2002) and the ambition for international prominence under Lula and Rousseff. According to Marco Aurélio Garcia, a long-time presidential advisor to PT administrations, 'it is good to eliminate the false idea that foreign policy does not divide. Yes, it can divide and it is good that it be so, as it happens in democracies'.⁴¹

During his presidency, Lula established a close relationship with his main foreign policy advisors: Ambassador Celso Amorim (head of Itamaraty), Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (secretary-general of Itamaraty) and Marco Aurélio Garcia (presidential advisor). The three agreed that a significant world power transition was under way, and

that such a transformation from a US-based hegemony into a multipolar order could benefit Brazil. Some critics believed that the participation of Garcia created some cleavages within the foreign policy ‘team’, generating differences between Itamaraty and the international advisory of the presidency. Others even considered that there were tensions due to a dual track in Brazil’s foreign policy decision-making. According to this perception, Amorim would be in charge of the great world political issues (UN, World Trade Organization), while Garcia would emphasise the relationship between Brazil and its Latin American neighbours. The authors believe this division of tasks was a key component of the grand strategy that was then being sketched.⁴²

Nevertheless, in order to understand the sketch of a grand strategy under PT’s governments and the 2016 critical juncture, two major issues must be taken into consideration. First, there was the linkage between the global economic and political contexts and the country’s domestic developments. Second, there were the different political-ideological preferences of governments, and the degree of cohesion of the partisan coalitions that supported them. At the international level and for dissimilar reasons, Cardoso and Rouseff had to deal with slow-growth economic contexts, whereas Lula benefited from a boom of commodities that helped Brazil to achieve high rates of economic growth.⁴³ Table 1 shows the average growth rates of Brazil’s gross domestic product (GDP) between 1995 and 2014.

From the domestic political standpoint, Cardoso’s government was supported by a primarily homogeneous centre-right parliamentary coalition, thus benefitting from stable governability conditions. Some even argue that such a coalition provided him the most stable government within the two democratic periods in Brazil (between 1946 and 1964, and from 1985 until the present).⁴⁴ Lula and Rouseff were elected by a centre-left coalition, based on more heterogeneous political parties in a more fragmented parliament. However, the combination of successful social policies and the improvement of economic conditions, on one hand, with a favourable international context, on the other, provided Lula’s government a wide popular support and the means to link domestic change with a moderately revisionist foreign policy. Thus, Lula had the ability to combine *virtù* and *fortune* – two of the Prince’s main attributes – by using the commodities boom to reduce poverty at home and at the same time develop stronger South-South relations, in particular with Latin American and African countries. In the case of China and South Africa, it is important to recall that the PT had cultivated ties with parties and unions in those states since its period in opposition to the federal government in Brazil (1980–2002). Although in general terms the Rouseff administration followed the same path, her government had to face a combination of three crises: the worsening of the international

Table 1. Brazil: average rates of GDP growth (1995–2014).

Government	Period	Average (%)
F H Cardoso	1995–2002	3.2
	1995–1998	3.4
	1999–2002	3.1
Lula da Silva	2003–2010	4.8
	2003–2006	3.6
	2007–2010	6.0
Dilma Rouseff	2011–2014	2.7

Source: IMF, 2015.

economic crisis that started in 2008, the decline of commodities' prices, and increasing economic, political and social problems at home.⁴⁵

During the PT administrations, many analysts considered that Brazil adopted a neo-developmentalism model, especially under Lula's second term (2007–2010) and Rousseff's first term (2011–2014). Different from the old developmentalism, the new version has a considerably less ambitious programme. Neo-developmentalism is conceptualised as a development strategy for middle-income countries based on a moderate state intervention in the economy, the maintenance of a competitive exchange rate and dynamic social policies.⁴⁶ Moreover, it is also conceptualised as the development policy that is possible within the limits of the neoliberal capitalist model.⁴⁷ In this regard, it is worth making a brief comment on the persistence of 'developmentalism' as a concept, and its subtypes (national-developmentalism and associated-dependent), in Brazilian and Latin American economic thinking.⁴⁸ Both subtype strategies were a result of the incapacity of private entrepreneurs to lead an industrialisation process, due either to the non-existence of technological knowledge or low capital levels. In the national-developmentalism model, the state should play a central role, being responsible for strategic investments. Under the associated-dependent model, foreign investment should assume a central place. Despite the retreat of development debates at the end of the twentieth century, neo-developmentalism policy proposals introduced by some centre-leftist governments at the beginning of the twenty-first century suggest that it represents a deep-rooted phenomenon in Latin American societies. Historical conditions that were responsible for its appearance, usually referred to by different terms such as 'under-development', 'structural heterogeneity' or 'dependence', have not yet been overcome.⁴⁹

Under Lula and Rousseff, the association of economic, foreign and social policies contributed to downgrade the centrality of financial international capital within the power bloc. The reorientation of state policies sought to comply with the yearnings of the Brazilian internal *grande bourgeoisie*, which was then distributed throughout many sectors of the economy: commodity-processing industries, construction, mining, shipbuilding and the segment of agribusiness made up of companies that process and export agricultural and ranching products, such as citrus, meat, soy and sugarcane. What unites these different sectors is their demand for favourable treatment and acceptance of state intervention in their competition with international capital. Both Lula and Rousseff strengthened the connections between the internal neo-developmentalism model and Brazilian foreign policy.⁵⁰

After 2007, the Lula administration intensified the use of BNDES capital to promote an active industrial policy aiming to create the so-called 'national champions' (ie, large transnational companies capable of competing and struggling for international markets). BNDES supported their internationalisation strategy, mainly in Latin America and Africa.⁵¹ Despite these governmental efforts, public and private flows were persistently absorbed by traditional sectors (oil and minerals, agribusiness, civil construction, pulp and paper). The BNDES financed mergers in sectors with low technological capacity, and with no ability to foster a path toward the productive transformation necessary to alleviate structural vulnerability. By financing primary sectors rather than high-technology ones, the BNDES weakened the potential of neo-developmentalism and reinforced the path dependence linked to the primary export model, thus condemning Brazil to remain in an intermediate development status.⁵²

Therefore, to understand the political crisis that affected the PT governments and the attempt to sketch a grand strategy, it is necessary to briefly analyse the two opposing coalitions that had been structured in those years: the 'rentist' or 'neoliberal' and the 'productivist' or 'neo-developmental'ist'. On the one hand, the rentist coalition is oriented toward neoliberal orthodoxy, and is mainly represented by the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB). The orthodox neoliberal field encompasses national and international financial capital, some of the large landowners, and the upper middle class of the private and public sectors. On the other hand, the neo-developmental'ist front is characterised by heterogeneity and plagued by contradictions, and is mainly represented by the PT. This front is made up by the internal *grande bourgeoisie*, some organised fractions of the working class, the lower middle class, and the impoverished rural workers. It also encompasses a broad and heterogeneous social sector that includes unemployed and underemployed people. The rentist coalition programme intended to keep Brazil aligned with neoliberal policies, as well as in the orbit of the great international capital and under the geopolitical leadership of the US. By contrast, the productivist coalition programme aimed to accelerate economic growth through state intervention and re-industrialisation.⁵³

Was this programme compatible with the foreign policy emphasis on South-South relations and the priority given to South American integration? To answer such a question, it is important to analyse how recent Brazilian political history evolved. Dilma Rousseff succeeded Lula in 2011 in a completely different global and domestic context, which severely affected her government's 'developmental essay' in support of the country's re-industrialisation effort. Between 2011 and 2012, Rousseff implemented several policies demanded by the most important industrial federations: the reduction of interest rates and bank spreads, tax exemptions, the requirement of national content by the industrial policy, the increase of BNDES's subsidised credit lines, an infrastructure plan, and the devaluation of the exchange rate. However, the combined effects of the international crisis and the growing domestic distributive conflict led to the collapse of the neo-developmental'ist front.⁵⁴ After massive demonstrations in June 2013, the gap between industrialists and workers deepened, ending the 'win-win' game and preparing the conditions that provoked Rousseff's controversial impeachment. In sum, these demonstrations affected Rousseff's popularity, contributed to the polarisation of the 2014 elections and served as a prologue of the impeachment crisis.

This turbulent environment gave Rousseff far less leeway to conduct an activist foreign policy. Her opportunity to implement such a foreign policy further diminished as the internal *grande bourgeoisie* moved toward the rentist coalition. The main industrial federations started to defend the signature of free trade agreements with the US and the European Union, leaving MERCOSUR in second place. In their conception, to break with the country's isolationism, Brazil needed to join plurilateral agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.⁵⁵ These industrial demands coincided with the foreign policy orientation that had been implemented by the new conservative coalition which seized power after having interrupted Rousseff's second presidential term.

Table 2 below highlights the main differences between PT and PSDB governments regarding their domestic bases, and their foreign and defence policies.

Table 2. PT vs PSDB: Domestic coalition, foreign policy and defence policy.

Dimension	PSDB	PT
Domestic coalition	Neoliberal-rentist interests Cosmopolitan/Homogeneous	Productivist-industrial interests Nationalist/Heterogeneous
Foreign policy	Prestige diplomacy World Order (unipolarity) North-South relations (USA, UE) Hemispheric integration (FTAA) and open regionalism in the MERCOSUR	Autonomous foreign policy World Order (multipolarity) South-South relations (BRICS, IBSA, South America-Arab countries, South America-Africa) Regional integration with strong political emphasis (MERCOSUR, UNASUR, CELAC)
Defence policy	Adherence to international regimes (NPT) Emphasis on traditional partners Acceptance of the US regional and global leadership	Reform of global governance structures Diversification of partnerships and emphasis on regional mechanisms Definition of the geostrategic environment (projection of soft and hard power)

Source: The Authors, 2018.

In the defence realm, for the first time in 18 years, the administration of Rousseff's successor, Michel Temer, nominated a military as head of the MD, which affected civil-military relations within the MD system.⁵⁶ Besides, his government has resorted to budgetary cuts that heavily impacted the MD. For instance, in 2016 the MD's planned budget represented half of its nominal value compared to 2014. These reductions affected modernisation programmes such as the Submarine Development Program (PROSUB) and the F-X Project involving the partnership between Brazilian Embraer and Swedish Saab for the acquisition of new jet fighters, which included technology transfer.⁵⁷ In 2018, Temer announced the willingness to transfer Embraer's capital control to Boeing, despite the fact that as a high technology company, whose capital is primarily Brazilian, Embraer is the most important element of the country's military complex. All these measures have the potential to negatively affect the consolidation of a defence industrial base.

The Temer government also placed Brazil in the geopolitical orbit of the US. In March 2017, Brazil and the US signed a military agreement that paved the way for the joint development and sale of defence products. Other military deals and joint exercise in the Amazonia were under discussion, which could pave the way for American use of Brazil's rocket launch site, the Alcantara base. In addition, the use of the armed forces against drug trafficking and in the occupation of Rio de Janeiro's poor urban areas seems to follow the recommendations of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), reproducing the same strategy already used in Colombia and Mexico. Thus, the combined effect of all these policies breaks with UNASUR's attempt to co-ordinate the foreign and defence policies of South American countries.

In sum, the era of PT governments implemented a foreign policy characterised by a soft revisionism, an emphasis in South-South relations and the prioritisation of regional integration. Moreover, these administrations sought to link this foreign policy to a neo-developmental model and inclusive and innovative social policies. However, the confluence between systemic transformations with domestic ruptures has contributed to interrupt the sketch of a grand strategy based on an autonomous foreign policy, an expansion of regional defence programmes and a political ambition for international prominence. The developments affecting the Brazilian democracy show that foreign policy is not only a public policy, but it is also subjected to political and ideological variations of

governments, their coalitions and supporting social forces, as well as their contradictions and shortcomings.

Concluding remarks

In the transition between Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Lula da Silva and then to Dilma Rousseff, Brazil's public policies, democratic development and economic results were praised by the United Nations, the World Bank, world leaders from the West and the South, the NGO community, business and international media outlets. Country representatives were sent to Brazilian cities to learn from the Brazilian experience and get familiar with the preliminary results of social policies aiming to reduce poverty and fight against hunger. Cardoso, Lula and Dilma, even if they were distinct in the way they built domestic and international support coalitions, all agreed on the need to uphold the 1988 constitutional political pact around respect for democratic rule of law, social inclusion and macroeconomic stability. In the aftermath of President Rousseff's controversial impeachment, Brazil's diplomatic dynamism and the sketch of a grand strategy were left behind, and the country plunged into a profound economic, political, institutional and societal crisis.⁵⁸

In fact, it was in foreign policy, defence, regional integration and the conception of an autonomous development path that the projects of PSDB and PT differed most clearly. Whereas during the Cardoso era Brazil displayed a diplomacy of prestige and fostered a development model rooted in dependency-association with the West, between 2003 and 2010 Brazil undoubtedly demonstrated political ambition for autonomy and international prominence, boosted by the pre-salt oil discovery announced in 2007. Under Rousseff the effects of the 2008 global economic crisis on the Brazilian economy were clear, and her domestic governmental coalition was not cohesive enough to implement win-win development policies for the poor and for the wealthy. Ambassador Celso Amorim, who had been Lula's minister of foreign affairs for 8 years, then Rousseff's minister of defence for more than 3 years, played an important leadership role in the sketch of Brazil's grand strategy, but history has shown that success for such a strategy would actually have required a much stronger and broader support coalition, including first of all the legislative branch, the judiciary and the military, but also the mass media, civil society organisations, a productive sector with entrepreneurship skills – in short, those associated with the nation's future.⁵⁹

As a matter of fact, the failure in the implementation of Brazil's grand strategy suggests that it suffered from inconsistencies which generated a 'capability-expectations' gap, mainly after the systemic financial crisis and the end of the commodities 'boom'. Moreover, it also suggests that the interests of Brazil's productive sector shifted over time, and were increasingly linked to the financial sector, more oriented towards global markets, and much less prone to accepting the implementation of a neo-developmental socio-economic model. Paraphrasing Steven E Lobell, Jeffrey W Taliaferro and Norrin M Ripsman, the sketch of Brazil's grand strategy, even though it was intentional, did not entail 'a calculated relationship between strategic ends and available means', and did not anticipate 'likely reactions of one or more potential opponents'.⁶⁰

After Rousseff's impeachment, Brazil's new government launched in July 2017 a document about the country's grand strategy and foreign policy. The paper criticises the

Brazilian foreign policy during the PT administrations. It states that in the last years Brazil did not accomplish any of its major foreign policy goals, such as the South American integration, the South-South co-operation and the global role of the BRICS. In sum, the document strongly criticises what it calls the foreign policy's 'ideological and partisanship options' (sic), which would have led to the country's loss of credibility and international influence.⁶¹ However, within Brazil's institutional and political crisis that prevented the country's grand strategy from flourishing, we argue that there is also an international dimension that must not be neglected. As Hal Brands stated, under Lula Brazil's grand strategy had successfully raised the country's profile and increased its diplomatic flexibility, but had also exposed it to economic, social, regional leadership, and global dilemmas that could undermine its ascent – especially one dilemma that was related to the US:⁶²

... while Lula [had] maintained good relations with Washington, his grand strategy unavoidably entail[ed] a growing risk of conflict over issues like Iran, trade policy, and the USA diplomatic and military role in Latin America. Looking ahead, the efficacy of Brazilian grand strategy and its consequences for American interests will be contingent on how Lula's successors address these dilemmas.

It seems clear that the debate on Brazil-US bilateral relations is of great relevance in view of the country's agency to implement a more autonomous foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, but also to sketch a grand strategy and therefore to show through practices and behaviour its clear political ambition for graduation. As we have demonstrated in this article, the graduation dilemma is associated with a cleavage within Brazil's strategic elite members (cosmopolitan/globalists *versus* sovereign-based nationalists) from both the public and private sectors. In 2003, Brazil's foreign policy moved away from the US tutelage in security and development issues. Under Lula's leadership (and to a lesser extent under Rousseff's) foreign policy principles were based on the defence of a multipolar world order and Brazil's political autonomy in shaping its own national development, but also on a diffused notion of the country's self-esteem.⁶³ After August 2016, these foreign policy frames and grand strategy values, ways and means have been set aside. Recent political events show that there is no consensus within Brazil's strategic elite members about the country's pattern of international relations, which is one of the key conditions for a successful negotiation of critical dilemmas during economic and political crises. The interruption of the PT governments' cycle meant the dismantling of an autonomist foreign policy and the interruption of a grand strategy rooted in regional co-operation and institution building. The current deep political turmoil contributes to confirm the hypothesis that foreign policy is a public policy subjected to power struggles and ideological variation by different governments: foreign policy decisions produce domestic redistributive conflicts that affect the political stability of support coalitions. In addition, the crisis also highlights the fragility of Brazil's democracy, as well as the very low commitment of the Brazilian ruling classes to democratic values.

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25. A revisionist state is here defined as a state which is geopolitically dissatisfied, thus aiming to revise rules of the international game by investing in military power, participating in international institutions, resuming a norm-making role, deploying a global diplomacy, etc. There are variations on the states' international revisionist behaviour; therefore, we consider revisionism within a political continuum from soft to strong revisionism, depending on level of dissatisfaction and the material/immaterial capacities of the state actor. Hurrell A, 'Hegemony, liberalism and global order: What space for would-be great powers?', *International Affairs*, 82, 1, 2006, pp. 1–19; Kastner SL & Saunders PC, 'Is China a status quo or revisionist state? Leadership travel as an empirical indicator of foreign policy priorities', *International Studies Quarterly*, 56, 1, 2012, pp. 163–177; Schweller RL, 'Bandwagining for profit. Bringing the revisionist state back in', *International Security*, 19, 1, 1994, pp.72–107.
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