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When Hunger meets Diplomacy: Food Security in Brazilian Foreign Policy

Quando a fome encontra a diplomacia: a segurança alimentar na Política Externa Brasileira

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Abstract

In the literature on Foreign Policy Analysis, there is a flourishing debate on whether the administration of the Workers' Party represented a discontinuity in Brazil's foreign policy. By examining how food security was allocated in the external agenda, this paper claims that the rise of the Workers' Party did represented a rupture. Secondly, that social gains in reducing hunger were used as a tool to boost Brazil's soft power.

Resumo

A literatura de Análise de Política Externa tem fértil debate sobre o impacto da política externa do Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) na tradição diplomática brasileira. Este artigo argumenta que a alocação da temática de segurança alimentar representou uma ruptura na linha de ação externa do país. Em segundo lugar, defende que os ganhos sociais na redução da fome foram instrumentalizados para impulsionar o soft power do Brasil.

Keywords: Food Security; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Diplomacy

Palavras Chaves: Segurança Alimentar; Política Externa Brasileira; Diplomacia.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades, the ever more significant impact of emerging powers on global governance has been receiving increased attention from scholars and practitioners alike.¹ As the largest country in South America, Brazil seems to present an intriguing case study for observers seeking to understand how it has sought to play a greater role in international institutions and

¹ See, for instance, works of Stuenkel, 2016; Khaler, 2013: p. 711-729; Narlikar, 2010; Alexandroff and Cooper, 2010; Hurrell, 2006; p. 1-19.

in the world at large.² Its longstanding claim to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council is an example of Brazil's latent desire to have a say in global decision-making. The credentials it claims, however, do not arise from the classic hard sources of power. Known for not possessing significant military strength, Brazil strengthened its influence through what Joseph Nye Jr and others call soft power.

During the 2000s, the boom of commodity prices fostered by the rapidly expanding Chinese economy led to increasing commercial revenues in exporting nations. In Brazil, this favorable external condition was met by the intensification of social programs and the integration of workers to the labor market, which boosted employment rates and expanded middle classes (De Negri and Cavalcanti, 2014). These conditions helped Brazil to drastically reduce the share of its population in extreme poverty and to leave the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s map of hunger in 2014.

Internationally, these social achievements enhanced Brazil's status on the world scene and increased its legitimacy as a global actor. Moreover, public policies in the field of food security were important not only to boost its international prestige, but also to motivate significant growth in the cooperation projects undertaken by the government.

This paper aims to contribute to the literature of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and its assumption that the domestic policy variables cannot be brushed aside to understand foreign policy (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013). It adds to the FPA debate about the extent to which the administration of the Workers' Party ('Partido dos Trabalhadores' – PT) represented a period of rupture or continuity in Brazil's foreign policy. By examining the impact of allocating food security in Brazil's international agenda, this paper claims that the rise of PT did represent a major change in the issues traditionally dealt with by the Brazilian diplomacy. Secondly, it claims that social gains in reducing hunger were instrumentally used as a tool to boost Brazil's soft power.

This work adopts the concept of food security accepted by FAO (2006): A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. Despite the fact that food security encompasses more dimensions than hunger alleviation, in this paper these terms will be used interchangeably, since both concepts are deeply intertwined: Food security policies necessarily address the issue of hunger, and fighting hunger always reduces food insecurity.

This article mainly covers the span of the governments of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), a period characterized by two concomitant phenomena: The intensification of public policies towards the reduction of hunger, and the internationalization of this social agenda. Although the following presidencies of Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer are not the primary focus of this paper (due to limitations in length and to avoid a superficial analysis), it is worth mentioning the shift which happened after Lulas' terms. The global financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 and the end of the international boom of commodity prices resulted in the deterioration of Brazil's political and economic scenario. One key reason for this is found in Brazil's inability to increase its

2 Some of the scholars interested on this subject are Burges, 2017; Mares and Trinkunas, 2016; Gardini, 2016: p. 5–19; Kenkel, Michael and Cunliffe, 2016; and Stuenkel and Taylor, 2015.

competitiveness and productivity, both of which have declining since at least the last quarter of the twentieth century (De Negri and Cavalcanti, 2014).

Change or continuity?

Foreign policy analysts have different views on their evaluation of the international agenda of the administration of the Workers' Party (PT) in relation to the one of its predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso, from the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). Since its creation in 1980 until the presidential election of 2001, the ideological and programmatic differences between the PT and the PSDB were notorious. Lula was one of the main antagonists of Cardoso's government and based his campaign on the need to change the policies implemented by Cardoso's presidency (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007). However, a series of constraints and adaptations made Lula's administration be quite different from the expected, assuming a more moderate line of action. Thus, there is no consensus on Foreign Policy Analysis literature as to whether there was a prevalence of changes or continuities in the international policies conducted by these presidents during their respective mandates (Vilela and Neiva, 2011; Lessa et al., 2009).

According to Amado Luiz Cervo, the changes in the orientation of Brazilian foreign policy were significant, since the presidents were inspired by contradictory 'paradigms' – worldviews that form a foreign policy and that guide the diplomatic action (Cervo and Bueno, 2011: p.525). On the other hand, some scholars adopt an intermediary position, arguing that Lula followed Cardoso's steps in some areas and innovated in others (Vilela and Neiva, 2011; Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007). Thus, elements of continuity are more or less present depending on the theme and on the nature of the analysis.

Finally, others claim Lula's government had more continuities than changes in relation to his predecessor, since there was no unprecedented innovative features or ruptures in the foreign policy priorities defined by Lula. In this sense, the singularity of the PT administration was its willingness to act more assertively and proactively in defending its interests in the international arena, since most of Cardoso's diplomatic initiatives were maintained (Vaz, 2004).

This paper aims to contribute to this FPA discussion by arguing that although in most subjects the distinction between the PT's and the former administration was mainly one of emphasis, not substance, in regard to food security, this was not the case. Thus, it claims that the priority attributed to hunger was a novelty in Brazilian diplomacy. Moreover, it evidences the importance of domestic factors in the conduct of foreign policy, as the fight against hunger was one of Lula da Silva's main mottos when ascended to power.

In the 1950s, Josué de Castro's seminal work 'The Geography of Hunger' (1946) gained international recognition³. Over the following decades, however, the subject lost importance and

3 Castro demonstrated the primacy of socioeconomic above physical-natural factors in the causality of the phenomenon of hunger and the condition of sub-nutrition of the peoples around the world. This work would support the adoption of the first public policies to fight hunger in Brazil as well as the ascent of Castro towards international acknowledgement, which was testified by his nomination as the first president of the Executive Council of the organization of United Nations for Agriculture and Nutrition (FAO).

remained secondary in Brazil's foreign policy agenda. Thus, this paper claims the reemergence of food security as a theme was a noteworthy change in a foreign policy known for its continuity and its aversion to sudden variations. This rise occurred through multiple channels: budgetary, legislative, organizational, participatory and in official discourse, each of them working as a transmission link through which the new domestic orientations were projected onto Brazil's international action and boosted its soft power.

In addition, the reemergence of this theme is intertwined with a rapprochement with Africa. Although Brazil had developed African policies in earlier times, such as the 1960s Independent Foreign Policy ('Política Externa Independente – PEI'), the rise of President Lula resulted in a new approach to bilateral relations between Brazil and African nations, since it brought about an active stance to help tackle African challenges. This contrasts with Cardoso's posture, evident in his statement that the responsibility for removing Africa from the sidelines of international relations fell exclusively upon rich countries (Júnior and Faria, 2015: p.10). The rapprochement with Africa was characterized by an increase in development assistance, and political initiatives (Maluf, Santareli and Prado, 2014). The government also fostered horizontal partnerships, allegedly without any pre-conditions, to boost African development and help overcome social problems present both in Brazil and in the African continent (Saraiva, 2001).

Another sign of Brazil's amplified interest in Africa is found in the inauguration of thirteen diplomatic representations in that continent (Leite, 2011, p. 180). Brazil went from 18 to 30 embassies (and from 1 to 2 general consulates). The number of African ambassadors in Brasília also rose, increasing from 16 to 25 between January 2003 and December 2006. Finally, the intensification of Brazilian presence in Africa is attested by trade. Between 2003 and 2006, exports to Africa increased by 315% and the imports from this continent increased 307%, which represented a growth of US\$ 9 billion – from US\$ 6 billion to 15 billion dollars (Ribeiro, 2007: p. 172).

Measuring resources

Engaging in international aid requires the allocation of human and financial resources, not just rhetoric. One effective way to evaluate changes in Brazilian efforts is to measure resources allocated for these activities, compared to other commitments on the international agenda and to previous administrations. Lula's first mandate involved a transition from a foreign policy in which Food Security was almost absent, to one in which it had ubiquitous presence. This is confirmed by an increase in budget for international cooperation projects, which includes the budget of all institutions executing technical cooperation. The amount went from 1.9 million reais in 2003 to 5.3 million in 2006⁴.

In 2003, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) was engaged in 37 projects, while at the

4 Available at: <http://www.abc.gov.br/Gestao/EvolucaoFinanceira> (accessed April 5, 2016).

end of Lula's first term, these initiatives had increased to 179.⁵ With regards to the annual resources destined to technical cooperation initiatives, although they decreased between 2003 and 2004, they rose by nearly 30% in 2005, and quintupled from 2005 to 2006.⁶

Table 1. ABC's Budgetary Variation during president Lula's first term

Year	Nominal Budget	Absolute Variation in Brazilian currency (Reais)	Relative Variation in Percentage	Participation in MREs Total Budget in Percentage
2003	4.500.000,00	- 151.200,00	- 3,25%	0,43
2004	7.999.914,06	+ 3.499.914,06	77,78%	0,62
2005	37.729.900,00	+29.729.985,94	371,63%	2,40
2006	28.022.187,00	- 9.707.713,00	- 25,73%	1,77

Source: Table available at Puente, 2010: p. 293. Translated by the author.

As the table shows, there was some oscillation in the increase of the ABC's budget during Lula's first mandate, which corroborates the argument that the first administration of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) was a period of adjustment of policies and structures, which only in Lula's second term would reach their peak. This also helps to understand why data from this period is rather scarce. As an illustration, one can mention the case of the General-Coordination for Humanitarian Cooperation and Fight Against Hunger (CGFOME), which, despite being inaugurated in 2003, functioned without proper funding until 2007, when a budgetary stream for humanitarian operations was approved in the Annual Budget Law (LOA).⁷

In the same way, it is difficult to estimate the exact proportion of the growth in Brazilian international cooperation in food security projects, as the data on South-South cooperation from this period only refer to agriculture. This is problematic since it does not distinguish between initiatives related to the fight against hunger itself and those directed to large-scale agribusiness, which does not necessarily focus on reducing food security.

Regarding Lula's second term, Brazil spent around 1.9 billion dollars (in current values)⁸ between 2007 and 2010 with cooperation for international development ('cooperação para o desenvolvimento internacional'), which includes humanitarian assistance, scholarships to foreign nationals to study in Brazil, technical cooperation and voluntary contributions to international organizations (Ipea, 2012: p. 7).

During that period, the ABC conducted projects with transfer of technology for agricultural activities in 30 countries, with a special focus on Portuguese-speaking nations (Goulet and Sabourin,

5 When Lula finished his second term, ABC was working on 737 projects. Available at: <http://www.abc.gov.br/Gestao/QuantitativoProjetos> (accessed April 5, 2016).

6 Available at: <http://www.abc.gov.br/Gestao/EvolucaoFinanceira> (accessed April 5, 2016).

7 Source: interview with Bianca Fadel, ex-employee at the CGFOME, conceded to the author on the November 31, 2016.

8 The information was gathered from Ipea 2013 and 2010 reports listed on this bibliography.

2012). Food security was a central theme within the Brazilian portfolio, especially in the activities in Africa, where agriculture accounts for 20% of technical cooperation (Ipea, 2012).

Legal Framework

The first legal landmark for the social policies under the PT presidency was Law Nº10.683 of May 28, 2003, which reestablished the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) as an advisory body for the President. The law also founded the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Fight against Hunger (MESA)⁹, which would be the central organ for the Zero Hunger Program. José Graziano da Silva, one of those responsible for the elaboration of the Food Security Program – and who eventually became Director-General of FAO in 2012 –, was chosen to lead the new ministry.

Launched on October 16, 2001 (World Food Day), by the Citizenship Institute (coordinated by Lula), the Zero Hunger Program consisted of policies of three types: i) structural, aimed to tackle the fundamental causes of hunger and poverty; ii) specific, directed to social groups in food scarcity situations; and iii) local, implemented directly by municipalities. Profiting from the experience of many previous social programs, Zero Hunger brought the issue of food security to the limelight and earned Brazil broad international recognition.

The Law for Food and Nutritional Security (LOSAN)¹⁰ is another important legal landmark, since it provided Brazil's definition of food security and stipulated policies with the goal of guaranteeing the human right to adequate nutrition. Furthermore, the bill contributed to the international diffusion of social policies to combat hunger: 'the Brazilian state should be engaged in the promotion of technical cooperation with foreign countries, thereby contributing to the realization of human rights and adequate nutrition at the international level'.

Finally, Law Nº11.947 of June 16, 2009 established new guidelines for the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), determining that the National Foundation for Educational Development (FNDE) would be in charge of the coordination of its financial resources. Yet, the major innovation of this law (and one of the key factors for the success of the Brazilian social policies) was defined in Article 14, which states that 30% of the resources of the National Program for School Feeding must come from smallholder agriculture. This is the legislative innovation that most awakened interest of foreign governments and the key aspect that the UN Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil of the World Food Program (WFP) diffuses internationally.¹¹ Therefore, the changes in Brazil's legal

9 The MESA would become extinct the following year, by Law 10.869 of March 13, 2004, and substituted by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) which had a broader working field, comprising of all of the social area of the Lula government.

10 Law Nº 11.346 of September 15, 2006.

11 'The Centre of Excellence against Hunger was launched jointly by the World Food Program and Brazil in 2011 as a powerhouse of solutions for the defeat of hunger and malnutrition. (...) The Centre draws on Brazilian experience to share knowledge and policy innovations among developing countries. Primarily focused on linking school meal systems to local agriculture, it provides technical assistance to national governments to design, improve, expand, and eventually run their own school feeding programs.' Available at: <http://www1.wfp.org/centre-of-excellence-against-hunger>. (accessed August 10, 2017).

framework in the food security area strengthened its domestic policies and allowed them to be used as a soft power tool.

Organizational Dimension

Both within the domestic and the external environments, institutional structures were strengthened and new ones were created with the goal of export Brazil's social policies. This section focuses on the mechanisms responsible for the inclusion of food security's in Brazilian foreign policy. Six main structures can be listed: The General-Coordination for Humanitarian Cooperation and Fight Against Hunger (CGFOME), the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), the IBSA Fund for the Alleviation of Hunger and Poverty, the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Humanitarian Assistance (GTI-AHI), the Brazilian Enterprise for Agricultural Research (Embrapa), and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC).¹²

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)

Institutionalized by Decree Nº 94.973 of 1987, the ABC was subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was granted technical and executive functions, while the political formulation of cooperation remained with Itamaraty. Its main objective was to centralize the responsibilities for the prospection, analysis, approval, and monitoring of the technical cooperation received and provided by Brazil.

Ambassador Lauro Moreira, the ABC's Director from 2003 to 2006, described Brazil's Technical Cooperation with Developing Countries (TCDC) as being without any economic, commercial or lucrative goals, and with no strings attached. His statement reflected the administration's critical posture regarding traditional approaches to cooperation, which tie assistance to donors' economic and political aims. In spite of this rhetoric, Brazil's TCDC promoted, even if indirectly, an increase of Brazilian economic presence in receiving states, opening many African countries to state-owned companies like the energy giant Petrobras and private firms, such as Camargo Corrêa, Andrade Gutierrez, Odebrecht and others.¹³ This argument is supported by the presence of Brazil's mining company Vale in Mozambique, the main recipient of Brazilian technical cooperation in the African continent¹⁴ (Cabral, Vaz and Shankland, 2013).

12 The Center of Excellence in the Fight Against Hunger of the WFP and the FAO-Embrapa Fund were created in 2011 and 2013, respectively, thus they are beyond the temporal delimitation of this study.

13 For more information on the participation of Brazilian companies in the foreign policy see report available at: https://i3gov.planejamento.gov.br/textos/livro6/6.1_Politica_Externa.pdf (accessed September 8, 2016).

14 Available at: <http://fernandorodrigues.blogosfera.uol.com.br/2015/08/03/livro-mostra-como-lula-o-itamaraty-e-bndes-ajudaram-empreiteiras-na-africa/> (accessed September 8, 2016).

The Brazilian Enterprise for Agricultural Research (Embrapa)

Embrapa, founded in 1973 as part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), became a *locus* for excellence in problems related to agriculture in tropical climates. The conversion of the infertile lands of the Cerrado into one of the major global producers of soy earned Embrapa international recognition. This achievement, called by *The Economist* ‘the Cerrado miracle’¹⁵, awoke many countries’ interest in agricultural technical assistance. The likeness between Cerrado’s soil and climate with the African savannahs rendered the Brazilian experience a development model for many countries in Africa, a proposition endorsed by the World Bank (Cabral and Shankland, 2013).

Lula was an advocate of the internationalization of Embrapa and the transfer of technology to African countries. The agency opened its first Regional Office in Ghana in July 2006, and its presence *in locus* allowed to deepen cooperation initiatives, especially in Portuguese speaking countries (Lopes *apud*. Fraundorfer, 2015: p. 124). In addition, the establishment of Embrapa’s virtual laboratories abroad (LABEX) further facilitated the intensification of the exchange of experiences and information on agricultural research¹⁶ (Brasil, 2013: p. 97).

Embrapa’s high efficiency has led it to be a part of 95% of all the cooperation projects within the area of agriculture (Magalhães, 2008 *apud*. Fingerhann, 2014: p. 57). Nevertheless, despite its use as a platform for the dissemination of Brazilian practices and policies in food security, the Workers’ Party (PT) brought new players to cooperation in agriculture, ending Embrapa’s monopoly on the matter. This meant that this agency’s focus on agribusinesses began to suffer competition from smallholder agriculture supported by other agencies, including MAPA itself. Thus, increasingly antagonistic interests began to emerge in Brazil’s food security cooperation policies (Cabral and Shankland, 2013).

It is important to stress that this dualistic approach in relation to agriculture (agribusiness vs. smallholder) precedes Lula’s administration, and for decades it has been the cause of intense domestic debate. The novelty which arose with the PT was the inclusion of the smallholder agenda in international cooperation, with, in opposition to the uncontested hegemony of agribusiness until then. The dichotomist domestic agrarian dynamic thereby was reproduced in the technical cooperation in which Brazil engaged. Even if this fragmentation may have had negative effects, it also amplified the scope of Brazilian cooperation by launching projects that were better tuned to all the pillars of food security, not only gains in productivity.

The General-Coordination for Humanitarian Cooperation and Fight Against Hunger (CGFOME)

Upon taking charge of the Chancellery, Lula’s Foreign Minister Celso Amorim launched an institutional reform which founded the CGFOME¹⁷. Milton Rondó Filho, a career diplomat and former

15 Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/16886442> (accessed September 9, 2016).

16 The first LABEX was implemented in the US in 1998. In 2002 the second LABEX was opened, with its seat in Montpellier, in France, anteceding the Lula government. The third was created in South Korea in 2009. In 2012, two additional representations were opened in China and Japan.

17 By the Decree Nº 4.759, on the 21st of June, 2003.

advisor of CONSEA and the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), was designated its General-Coordinator on September 10, 2004¹⁸. According to Rondó, CGFOME served as the international interface of the Zero Hunger strategy, and it ‘institutionalized the political will of establishing the fight against hunger as a new line of international action’ (MRE, 2012 *apud*. Brazil, 2013: p.89). The creation of an institutional structure dedicated exclusively to food security symbolized the adjustment of Itamaraty to the new priority created by Lula (Castro and Castro, 2009)¹⁹ and represented a new course of action within the Brazilian diplomacy. It can also be seen as sign of the decrease of the Ministry’s autonomy in establishing the diplomatic agenda, since the new line of action came from the Presidency and initially it did not correspond to a decision taken by the Ministry.

Rondó revised the concepts used by the Chancellery to refer to its partnerships. The term ‘assistance’ was replaced by ‘cooperation’; ‘natural’ disasters became ‘socio-environmental’ (since they were no longer seen as the result of isolated factors, but of a series of elements); ‘South-South’ cooperation became ‘horizontal’ (referring to the manner in which cooperation occurs, not its geographical-hemispheric localization); and that Brazil would not be called a ‘donor’, but a ‘partner’.²⁰ According to Rondó, CGFOME acted in two tracks. The first dealt with socio-environmental emergencies and the second addressed structural deficiencies. It was within the field of long-term structural actions that Brazil went on to export its expertise in methods for eradication of hunger and extreme poverty.²¹

The International Center for Policies of Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Another important mechanism in the international promotion of food security related policies was the IPC-IG. Founded in 2004, it was the result of a partnership between the Brazilian government and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to produce and disseminate studies about public policies and foster exchange of good practices through international cooperation.²² The IPC-IG is essentially theoretical in nature, since it does not focus on the implementation of the cooperation. It is a partner of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), a governmental think-tank recognized for its sound research about poverty and social inequality (Fraundorfer, 2015: p. 110).

18 Source: Service Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 175, 2004.

19 According to Article 40 of the Foreign Service Internal Regime, CGFOME was in charge of issues, such as the human right to nutrition, agrarian development, agrarian reform, smallholder agriculture, dialogue with civil society and humanitarian assistance. Available at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/images/RISE.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2016).

20 Although Milton Rondó stated, in an interview given to the author (on the 19th October, 2016), that these changes of nomenclature have been officially adopted during his time ahead CGFOME, internationally these terms were commonly used since 1978, when the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries replaced the concept of ‘assistance’ for ‘cooperation’ and coined the term ‘horizontal cooperation’. Available at: <http://www.abc.gov.br/CooperacaoTecnica/Historico> (accessed November 18, 2016).

21 However, there is some level of controversy on the role of CGFOME’s due to its somewhat polemic leader. The director of the United Nations Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil of the World Food Program, Daniel Balaban, stated that CGFOME’s Coordinator Milton Rondó refused to be the focal point to the Center for Excellence of the WFP, founded in 2011, as he did not believe in the effectiveness of structural actions and wanted to focus exclusively in emergency aid. Afterwards, the function of providing technical support for cooperation in food security was transferred to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), and CGFOME was closed (2016). Source: Interview with the Director of the Center of Excellence WFP-UN, Daniel Balaban, conceded to the author on November 9, 2016).

22 Available at: <https://nacoesunidas.org/onu-no-brasil/ipc-igpnud/> (accessed November 11, 2016).

The IPC-IG's broad array of publications on the positive results in reducing hunger and poverty contributed to the increase of Brazil's international status. For instance, the work of IPC-IG's researchers on the scientific evidence of the success of *Bolsa Família* (a household cash-transfer program) in reducing hunger drew the attention from various International Organizations, including the World Bank, which modified its initial critical posture in relation to the Brazilian social program towards a positive evaluation (Fraundorfer, 2015: p. 110). Thus, the Center became an important element in Brazil's strategy to broaden other countries' demand for Brazilian technical assistance.

The IBSA Fund

Created in March 2004, the IBSA Fund was another mechanism which reinforced Lula's call to establish new sources of international financing for the fight against hunger and poverty. It was agreed that it would receive annual donations of a million dollars from each of its members, and that the resources would be managed by the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation of the UNDP (Brazil, 2013).

The project selection prioritizes financing ones in the least developed countries. The Fund acts in 10 themes, such as infrastructure and health care, but its main focus is on reduction of poverty and hunger, since 30% of its budget goes to projects on agriculture (the highest percentage for a single area)²³. The IBSA Fund gained considerable international recognition when it won the UN South-South Partnership Award in 2006, and the 'Millennium Development Goals Award' in 2010.²⁴ Its objectives to foster the diffusion of good practices allowed it to be used as a channel for Brazil to share its knowledge and increase its soft power.

The Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Humanitarian Assistance (GTI-AHI)

On June 21, 2006, a presidential decree established the GTI-AHI, coordinated by Itamaraty and with the participation of fifteen ministries. The group sought to render the processing of the petitions for humanitarian assistance received by the Brazilian government more efficient. It thereby became an important instrument to organize the governmental agencies involved in Brazilian cooperation initiatives. In this respect, the GTI guided the elaboration of a legal framework (which is yet to become law) to regulate Brazil's foreign cooperation. Currently, governmental donations require the approval of the Brazilian equivalent to Executive Orders ('Medidas Provisórias') authorizing its concession. This bureaucracy prevents the government from responding quickly to emergency humanitarian aid requests (Amorim, 2007)²⁵

23 The distribution of the Fund's budget is available at: <http://tcdc2.undp.org/IBSA/finance/finances.htm> (accessed September 29, 2017).

24 IBAS homepage. Available at: <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/about-ibsa/ibsa-fund> (accessed November 11, 2016).

25 According to Minister Milton Rondó, the law-draft is presently 'forgotten' at the Presidency of the Republic, with no prevision to be submitted for voting in the Brazilian National Congress. Its dispositions authorize the Executive to 'proceed towards international humanitarian action with the goal of preventing, protecting, preparing, avoiding, reducing, and mitigating suffering and assisting other countries or regions which find themselves, momentarily or not, in situations of emergency' and to, 'employ the necessary and sufficient means in order to implement international humanitarian action' amongst other measures. A minute of the law draft about International Cooperation was made available to the authors by Milton Rondó.

International engagement and Presidential Diplomacy

Brazil's social gains were reflected in its increased participation in international fora in the area of food security.²⁶ Although discussions were broad and cannot all feature in this paper, the main initiatives are here presented. One evidence of this agenda is found in the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Extreme Poverty, championed by the Brazilian Head of State, on January 30, 2004. That meeting resulted in the Geneva Declaration, which established a technical group to create a Fund for the Fight Against Hunger and Poverty. As the French President Jacques Chirac stated in a press conference, Lula was considered the person responsible for the increased attention towards these issues within the international agenda (UN, 2004 *apud.* Fraundorfer, 2015: p.95).

On September 20 that year, once again Brazil, along with the 'quintet against hunger'²⁷, coordinated a summit with more than 50 states which resulted in the New York Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty. Among the measures it proposed were the taxation of arms trade, the collection of funds for social projects through credit cards, and the reduction of taxes on foreign remittances, among others.²⁸ In spite of the international repercussions, the New York Summit ended without major concrete results.

The Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger it is also noteworthy. It was launched by the Brazilian and Guatemalan governments, in 2005, with help from the Regional Office of FAO. The region has been the only one to reach the Millennium Development Goals on food security. The Global Summit on Nutrition became the first to uphold the commitment of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty. The campaign was endorsed by 29 countries and provoked an intense interchange of public policies between participant states. Bolivia, Nicaragua, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico became receivers of bilateral technical cooperation from Brazil and adopted social policies inspired by Zero Hunger (FAO *apud.* Brazil, 2013: p. 114). Thus, regional progress in food security can be traced back to Brazil²⁹ and it served as a platform for the diffusion of Brazilian social strategies and the provision of technical cooperation (Maluf, Santareli and Prado, 2014: p. 20).

26 The most important of these fora were: the Committee on World Food Security (CFA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the Meeting of Ministers and Authorities for Social Development of the Mercosur (RMADS); the Specialized Meeting about Family Agriculture of Mercosur (REAF); the Meeting of High Functionaries regarding Smallholder Agriculture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC); the South American Council for Social Development of the UNASUL; the Council for Food and Nutritional Security of the Community of Lusophone Countries (CONSAN-CPLP), and the Working Group for Social and Productive Integration of the Latin American Association for Integration (ALADI). Available at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/politica-externa/cooperacao/11937-cooperacao-humanitaria-brasileira> (accessed October 19, 2016).

27 Consisting of Jaques Chirac (President of France), José Luiz Rodriguez Zapatero (Prime Minister of Spain), Ricardo Lagos (President of Chile), and Kofi Annan (UN General-Secretary).

28 New York Declaration on action against hunger and poverty New York, 20/09/2004. Available at: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Declaration_de_New_York_sur_l_action_contre_la_faim_et_la_pauvrete_20_septembre_2004.pdf; <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/lula040920.doc.htm>; <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/488922/noticia.htm?sequence=1> (Accessed November 8, 2016).

29 Available at: <http://www.fao.org/americas/perspectivas/apoyo-iniciativa/pt/>. (Accessed November 11, 2016).

According to Brazilian foreign policy expert Antônio Carlos Lessa, presidential travels are indicators of the value given to foreign policy³⁰. Throughout his first mandate, Lula spent 216 days outside the country – an increase of 30% in relation to the first mandate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and 50% more than Dilma Rousseff. Between 2003 and 2006, Lula made four tours in Africa, during which he visited 17 African countries.³¹ His predecessor, Cardoso, only visited three African countries – Angola, South Africa, and Mozambique – during his eight years as President. Furthermore, during this period Brazil received more than 20 visits from African Heads of State (Leite, 2011).

Discussing ‘discourse’

Our intention here is to trace how food security came from almost inexistent to overwhelmingly present in the diplomatic rhetoric, by scrutinizing the political discourse of Lula and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim. However, it should be underlined that the discursive level merely serves as a subsidiary mean in relation to other instances through which a foreign policy is evaluated. It is necessary to keep the inherent limitations of analysis at the purely rhetoric level in mind, which in itself is insufficient in order to outline a precise evaluation of the foreign policy of the period.

Although Brazilian society is marked by a long historic engagement in fighting hunger, the mobilization of social actors was not always reflected at the level of Brazilian international relations. The process of re-democratization paved the way for the reincorporation of social issues within the Brazilian political agenda. The Workers’ Party spearheaded the efforts to combat hunger at the political level. Hence, the issues of extreme poverty and hunger were present in the campaigns undertaken by the then presidential candidate Lula in 1989, 1994, and 2002, although the concern about the fight against hunger was not explicitly present in the PT’s party program (1979), nor in its founding manifesto (PT, 1980).

During his candidature to the presidency in 2002, Lula repeatedly referred to the fight against hunger as a priority of his government. His inaugural speeches in Congress and at the Planalto Palace, made on the 1st and the 2nd of January 2003, respectively, confirm the high degree of importance attributed to this goal, which was referred to as a main national cause (Tomazini and Leite, 2015: p.19). It is interesting to observe that, while this objective was elevated to the status of a ‘mission’ (Lula, 2003: p. 2), the issue was practically absent from the speech given by the Foreign Minister Celso Amorim in his address upon assuming office, on January 2nd, 2003. The Minister limited himself to vaguely declaring that foreign policy would contribute to ‘eliminating poverty’ (Amorim, 2003), the only mention of the issue.

30 SCHREIBER, Mariana. Dilma viaja menos da metade que Lula ao exterior. BBC Brasil, publicado em 21/01/2015. Available at: http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2015/01/150113_dilma_viagens_internacionais_ms_lgb. (Accessed November 12, 2016).

31 The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lula government accompanied the president’s activism, having visited 31 African countries during 67 trips to the continent during his administration (Brazil *apud*. Oliveira, 2015).

This underpins the claim that the fight against hunger and extreme poverty was not one of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' initial concerns and that the rise of Lula was indeed a motivating factor of the incorporation of this issue into the diplomatic agenda. Milton Rondó, the former head of CGFOME, also corroborated to this hypothesis by declaring that besides Amorim, Marco Aurélio Garcia, the International Advisor of the Presidency of the Republic, also did not display interest on the issue.³²

Four months after the Foreign Minister's inaugural speech, in which the social issue was practically absent, his fine-tuning to the priority determined by the President was noticeable. In the magna class for the Rio Branco Institute (Brazil's diplomatic academy), Amorim stated that the domestic priority given to the fight against hunger demanded a corresponding action in foreign policy, in order to spread Lula's message globally (Amorim, 2003). The adjustment of Amorim's speeches to the new guideline coming from the Presidency is an evidence of foreign policy discontinuity: from a state of irrelevance, food security became a frequent issue in the Foreign Minister's discourse.

Though it is not possible to examine all Amorim's³³ speeches, the data from the Secretariat of Diplomatic Planning (MRE, 2007b), which contains 35 speeches, 6 lectures, 22 articles, and 14 interviews, has been selected as the empirical base. The fight against hunger was mentioned by the Foreign Secretary in 13 speeches (a 37% of the total), 4 lectures (66%), 7 articles (31%), and 1 interview (7%). Although the data does not allow a precise deduction of the importance of the issue, its mere presence testifies to its incorporation within foreign policy, considering that, during his time as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cardoso's government, Celso Lafer seldom mentioned this issue (Vilela and Neiva, 2011).

The fight against hunger was present in approximately half of Lula's statements towards foreign audiences. In a sample of 59 speeches, 9 articles, and 17³⁴ interviews given by the President during his first term, the issue was present in 62%, 44% and 47%, respectively. This contrasts with President Cardoso's speeches on foreign policy: 10% of them mentioned social inequality and only 3.8% related this theme to the African region (Vilela and Neiva, 2011: p. 86). Thus, key regions and themes of the PT foreign policy were scarcely represented in the one conducted by the former administration.

It is important to underline that Lula reaffirmed the conclusions which Josué de Castro had drawn half a century earlier, according to which the persistency of hunger should be viewed as a question of lack of political will (Fraundorfer, 2015). Thus, on the rhetorical level, the merit of the former President was not so much related to innovative ideas or solutions for the very well-known problem of hunger; rather, it was to reinvigorate the discussions about the issue internationally, including this issue on the country's diplomatic agenda and using it to amplify Brazil legitimacy as a global player.

32 Rondó also affirmed that Amorim complained about Brazil adopting the concept of Food Security, which would be considered as a European invention in order to create barriers for Brazilian exports. Interview conceded to the author on October 19, 2016, Brasília, Brazil.

33 Amorim was the head of Brazil's diplomacy from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2010.

34 The analysis comprised of all of the pronouncements in the publication of the SPD-MRE (2007) which 'constitute a small and representative sample of the Presidents interventions about issues of foreign policy through his first mandate' (MRE, 2007a: p. 12).

Final Considerations

This paper contributed to the Foreign Policy Analysis debate about the degree of continuity and change in the foreign policy implemented by Cardoso and Lula. It suggests that, despite benefiting from pre-existing social programs, Lula's government expanded and unified them under the aegis of Zero Hunger, and added them to the foreign policy agenda. Therefore, we argue that regarding the issue of food security, initiatives differentiated to the point of causing a rupture in the diplomatic tradition, even if many goals and topics of the previous administration remained.

The novelty of the PT in relation to the previous administration was the insertion and usage of domestic gains on the fight against hunger to boost Brazil's image abroad and diffuse its social policies, further strengthening the country's soft power. In this sense, the rupture in the foreign policy tradition was intertwined with internal variables, which reinforces FPA assumptions on the existence of an inevitable link between domestic and international affairs.

Another conclusion is that these new initiatives in engaging an international fight against hunger brought about new actors to the technical cooperation provided in the area of agriculture, whose practices did not always converge. Besides traditional players such as Embrapa and the ABC, new agents joined in, such as CGFOME, CONSEA, IPC-IG, the IBSA and FAO Funds. This myriad of levels of decision making constituting the diverse range of providers of Brazilian cooperation resulted in sometimes uncoordinated efforts (Maluf, Santareli and Prado, 2014; Cabral & Shankland, 2012). On top of that, the lack of long-term consensual goals guiding foreign assistance is also commonly appointed as a weakness of the cooperation initiatives (Burges, 2017).

While official rhetoric justified expansion of the programs on the basis of solidarity, Brazil surely benefited economically. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, trade between Africa and Brazil grew around 16% per year, losing only to the increase of commercial flows with China (Stolte, 2015: p.99). In Angola, a key partner of Brazil's international cooperation, the construction company Odebrecht became the biggest private employer, with commercial activities in biofuels, diamonds, supermarkets, and many other areas (Stolte, 2015; Fellet 2012a; Fellet 2012b; Vilas-Bôas 2011:5-6).

In addition to the direct spillover effects of development assistance into the economic field, the substantive expansion of Brazilian companies in the African territory was fostered by the establishment of credit lines in the Brazilian National Development Bank (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento – BNDES) (Stolte, 2015:p. 101). Nevertheless, resources given by the BNDES eventually backfired and tarnished Brazil's image. The loans to finance ventures in Angola were considered a relevant factor in supporting the government of José Eduardo dos Santos, thus perpetuating what is considered by some as one of Africa's most enduring authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, Odebrecht's and other firms' involvement in corruption scandals implicating government officials have jeopardized the country's credibility as a cooperation partner.

If, on the one hand, economic interests played an important role in guiding decisions on the allocation of cooperation projects, on the other, they cannot account for all government's priorities. Brazil's development assistance in Africa served as well to political foreign policy goals. It has allowed

Brazil to present itself as a nation that is ready to share know-how and successful policies to foster development beyond its neighborhood region. It has thus underlined Brazil's capability to act on a global scale and to pursue more influence in key global institutions (Maluf, Santareli and Prado, 2014: p. 22). Strengthening partnerships with Africa was also instrumental to acquire more votes to Brazil's diplomatic goals (Stolte, 2015).

However, Brazil's foreign policy ambitions were not grounded on sustainable and structural pillars and they would suffer major setbacks after Lula's era. The end of the commodity-boom represented a lost opportunity for inducing necessary social and economic changes. The significant amount of foreign investment and commercial revenue Brazil received during the first decade of the 2000s, as well as Lula's high popularity, could have been used to implement the long-overdue labor, pension and political reforms. Consequently, Brazil has had low capacity to overcome the global financial and economic crises, whose deleterious effects persist up until today.

The turmoil Brazil faces has damaged Brazil's global prestige and reduced the scope of cooperation it can provide. In 2013, Embrapa announced a reduction of its presence in Africa, decreasing the amount of partner countries on that continent (Fellet 2013). In 2017, the ABC marked its 30-year anniversary, but with little to celebrate, since it has been operating under severe budgetary restrictions, and only a minimum of its operations was actually being carried out.

Although this paper claimed that social gains on food security were used to boost Brazil's soft power, it is worth mentioning that using a nation's assets to increase its relative power in the global arena is not in itself an issue. The spillover effect of foreign aid into the economic field is a common byproduct of such policies, and it should not stain eventual gains the cooperation may promote. The Brazilian discourse of solidarity indeed may have played a role in bringing countries of the Global South closer.

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