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**IDEAS, BELIEFS, STRATEGIC CULTURE, AND FOREIGN POLICY:  
UNDERSTANDING BRAZIL'S GEOPOLITICAL THOUGHT**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Orlando, Florida

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## **ABSTRACT**

Brazil is an important player both at regional and global levels, figuring prominently in almost all lists of emerging states and regional powers. It is one of the world's largest democracies, the fifth most populous country in the world, the world's seventh-largest economy, and Latin America's largest economy, accounting for approximately 60% of South America's GDP, 47% of South America's territory and 49% of South American population, a G20 member, and an active contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, despite being usually depicted as a "monster country" which would help shape global affairs, Brazil has never been able to match its geographic, territorial and demographic assets with global geostrategic clout, and military, political, and economic power.

This research seeks to explain how a rising power such as Brazil has historically behaved, reacted and constructed a discourse that, at the same time, constrains/motivates its decisions, explains its actions, and legitimizes its behavior. More specifically, the puzzle to be solved is why Brazilian regional policies are not more assertive given Brazil's capabilities? In order to answer this puzzle, this research will seek to analyze how a strategic culture influences a country's geopolitical thought, and consequently its policy choices and outcomes; to identify and qualify the elements of Brazilian strategic culture and its nature, as well as determine the relationship between these elements and Brazilian foreign and security policy decisions; to analyze the influence of Brazilian strategic culture features upon the country's geopolitical thought and grand strategy, and Brazil's geopolitics to South America; and finally to discuss the question of the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the

country's security and foreign policy decision-making process, as well as for its regional neighborhood.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Andressa, and my sons, Arthur and Nicholas, for their endless love, unconditional support, and unfaltering encouragement.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

ABBACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
ABIN	Agência Brasileira de Inteligência (Brazilian Intelligence Agency)
ALALC	Associação Latino-Americana de Livre Comércio (Latin-American Free-Trade Association)
ALBA	Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our Americas
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty
ASA	South America-Africa Summit
ASACOF	South Africa Cooperation Summit
ASPA	Summit of South American-Arab Countries
BNDES	National Bank for Economic and Social Development
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries
CIDE	Center for Research and Teaching in Economics
CPLP	Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries
CRA	Contingent Reserve Arrangement
ECLA	United Nation's Economic Commission for Latin America
END	Estratégia Nacional de Defesa (National Defense Strategy)
ESG	Escola Superior de Guerra (Superior War College)
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FEB	Força Expedicionária Brasileira (Brazilian Expeditionary Force)
FHC	Fernando Henrique Cardoso

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSI	Gabinete de Segurança Institucional (Institutional Security Cabinet)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
IBSA	India, Brazil, and South Africa Dialogue Forum
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	International Relations
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization Process
JBUSMC	Joint Brazil-United States Military Commission
LAFTA	Latin-American Free-Trade Association
LAIA	Latin-American Integration Association
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
Mercosul	Mercado Comum do Sul (Southern Common Market)
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDB	New Development Bank

NDS	National Defense Strategy
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSD	National Security Doctrine
OAS	Organization of American States
PEI	Política Externa Independente (Independent Foreign Policy)
Petrobrás	Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. (Brazilian Petroleum Corporation)
PICE	Programa de Integração e Cooperação Econômica Argentina-Brazil (Argentina-Brazil Economic Integration and Cooperation Program)
PKOs	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
RCI	Rational Choice Institutionalism
SADC	South America Defense Council
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNI	Serviço Nacional de Informações (National Information Service)
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
TIAR	Tratado Interamericano de Assistência Recíproca (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance)
UN	United Nations Organization
UNASUL	Union of South American Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMDs	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization



## INTRODUCTION

Culture has a profound impact in many different fields of human activity, from political and ideological preferences to religious practices and social habits. It influences the way policymakers and strategists think about matters of war and peace, since a greater understanding of cultural questions can prevent failures and promote the achievement of national objectives. Recent events have renewed scholarly interest in the role of culture in international security. Crimea's annexation by Russia, in March 2014, Moscow's support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine, the threat from terrorism and radical Islamic movements, the rise of the BRICS<sup>1</sup> group, and the interventions in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the Syrian civil war, among others, have led analysts, decision-makers and the academic community to try to interpret international issues through the lens of national culture and identity. One of the most interesting angles of that renewed interest in the subject is the "emerging consensus in national security policy studies that culture effects significantly grand strategy and state behavior" (Čmakalová 2011:1). After all, as Colin Gray (1999a:50) suggests, "all strategic behavior is affected by humans who cannot help but be cultural agents".

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<sup>1</sup> The term was initially coined in 2001 by Jim O'Neill, then Goldman Sachs Asset Management Chairman, in a paper entitled "Building Better Global Economic BRICs", as an acronym for the rising global economic power of Brazil, Russia, India and China, the rapidly emerging countries which would be the "strategic pillars" of a renewed international system by 2050. South Africa was incorporated into the group as the "S" of the acronym in April 2011.

In this context, some contemporary scholarship advocates the idea that the strategic culture approach offers highly relevant perspectives on foreign policy decision-making, grand strategy, strategic behavior, preferences and choices, and military doctrine, since, by applying that approach to certain cases, scholars have been trying to explain continuity and change in a country's foreign and national security policies. Duffield (1999), for example, argues that the foreign policy goals that are to be pursued by a state, which reflect its identity and interests, are defined by its strategic culture, while Klein (1988) acknowledges that variable as being a product of historical experience. Since these experiences differ across states, different states create different strategic cultures. In the same line of thinking, Johnston (1995a:34) claims that “[d]ifferent states have different predominant strategic preferences that are rooted in the early or formative experiences of the state, and are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites.”

If that is correct, is it possible to say that there a substantively consistent and temporally persistent Brazilian strategic culture? How did it form and from which sources? How could it be characterized and described? Does it have any influence on the country's security and foreign policy decision-making process? Who are the shapers and keepers of the country's strategic culture? How does the concept of strategic culture relate to the concept of geopolitics, as perceived by Brazilian decision-makers? How has this concept evolved over time?

For the most part of the past two decades, Brazil experienced an outstanding improvement in its international stature thanks in the most part to the economic reforms and financial stability promoted by former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) and the active presidential diplomacy pursued by former president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-

2010), when Brazil's foreign policy shined brightly, despite the controversial results obtained by Lula's foreign policy choices and preferences. During that period, Brazil implemented a multi-pronged foreign policy aimed at increasing the "country's presence in global economic negotiations, multilateral institutions and regional affairs" (Hirst 2009:1). Brazil's growing importance as a global player has sparked a renaissance of scholarly interest in the country, which, although offering insightful contributions, has focused almost exclusively on the most traditional and known aspects of the country's economy and foreign policy. Very little attention, however, has been paid to analyzing the role of strategic culture in shaping Brazil's security and foreign policy behavior, processes and preferences, and how it affects and influences the country's regional and global ambitions.

Brazil is certainly an important player both at regional and global levels, figuring "prominently in almost all lists of emerging states and regional powers" (Hurrell 2008:51). It is one of the world's largest democracies, the fifth most populous country in the world, the world's seventh-largest economy, and Latin America's largest economy, accounting for approximately 60% of South America's GDP, 47% of South America's territory and 49% of South American population, a G20 member, and an active contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, deploying forces to Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. These variables, along with Brazil's strategic geographic position within South America, the absence of border disputes and territorial threats, and its sense of exceptionalism in the region, "have inspired a belief that the country belongs among the global elite" (Brands 2010:6), and that it is destined to greatness and to play a more influential role in global affairs.

However, despite being depicted by George Kennan (1994) as a "monster country" which would help shape global affairs<sup>2</sup> – a qualification that, as Lafer (2000a:63) observes, takes into account not only demographic and geographic characteristics, but also "economic and political data and the magnitude of such countries' problems and challenges" – Brazil has never been able to match its geographic, territorial and demographic assets with global geostrategic clout, and military, political, and economic power (Casarões 2014). International leadership, after all, involves more than self-aggrandizing perceptions of the self, and requires "actions beyond just criticizing imperfections in current international affairs" (Brimmer 2014:135). At any rate, considering Brazil's growing relevance to both the regional and international systems, identifying and analyzing the nature of Brazil's strategic culture becomes therefore vital to understand the logic behind the evolution of the country's geopolitics and military doctrine, its foreign policy preferences, its traditional claims for a greater voice in global affairs, and its quest for greatness. The issue becomes particularly more important when one considers that as rising countries move closer to achieving global player status, their "strategic choices could have game-changing effects on the international system" (Ciorciari 2009:1).

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<sup>2</sup> Keenan considered only four other nations as "monster countries": the United States, Russia, India and China.

## 1. Background and Context: The Strategic Culture Approach and Alternative Explanations

Since this study focuses on security and foreign policy decisions and processes, as opposed to security and foreign policy outcomes, it takes as its starting point the debates on the strategic culture approach, which emphasize decision-making. “Generated at the crossroads of history, capabilities, geopolitics and values, strategic culture is an aggregate level of the most influential voices in terms of attitudes and behaviors” (Toje 2009:4), and a valuable tool of analysis, especially when used as a complement to other theoretical traditions. Strategic culture is more than an alternative way of explaining strategic behavior. It explains what constrains actors from taking certain strategic decisions, seeks to explore causal explanations for regular patterns of state behavior, and attempts to generate generalizations from its conclusions. As Lantis (2006:29) points out, “[i]f one accepts that there are truly different strategic cultural profiles, and that they shape security policy choices around the world, then major powers should tailor their policies to accommodate these cultural differences to the extent possible”. This statement has clear implications for the theoretical field of Security Studies and International Relations (IR).

No theoretical perspective is perfect. Every approach seems to have its strengths and shortcomings. In this context, more traditional and dominant modes of analyzing the strategic behavior of middle powers like Brazil, such as neoliberal institutionalism, offensive realism, and rational choice institutionalism (RCI), among others, might not be the most appropriate ones to analyze the evolution of Brazilian security and foreign policy practices. Although these perspectives may sometimes present a plausible model of reality, based on apparently compelling arguments, they not only tend to be overly deterministic, but they also appear to fall

short of capturing the full gamut of motivations behind the strategic and foreign policy behavior of a state like Brazil, one which appears to defy the narrow boundaries imposed by mainstream international relations theories, as this study argues.

The linear predictions of those rational choice theories of what is to come, for example, which depart from similar assumptions but reach entirely opposite conclusions, are equal in the sense that they turn what would be a possible future into an inevitable future, leaving no room for alternative scenarios. The evolution of the Brazilian security and foreign policy thinking and practices, for example, appears to defy that narrow theoretical pigeon-holing. Strategic culture, on the other hand, suggests but does not determine what should be expected of an actor, what the available options are or what courses of action are appropriate or considered feasible.

Likewise, neither of those major theories seems to be able to account for intangible aspects such as identity, values, and traditions to either predict the future or explain the past. For this reason, this dissertation argues that, in spite of its gaps, the strategic culture approach appears to more adequately explain Brazil's geopolitical thought and, consequently, its foreign policy interests, priorities and behavior, vis-à-vis other competing theoretical approaches. Understanding identity, beliefs, values, traditions, action and discourse allows scholars and policymakers to take account of the issues to which the actors are reacting, as well as the impact of experience on their foreign and security policies.

In that sense, understanding action and discourse allows scholars, analysts, and policymakers to take account of the issues to which the actors are reacting, as well as the impact of experience on their foreign and security policies. Neoliberal institutionalism, offensive realism, and RCI, among other perspectives within the Realist and Liberal schools of

international relations theory, fail to address these issues in a satisfactory manner. We can therefore not entirely rely on rational choice theories, but need to include the strategic culture approach, which examines the cultural elements used to construct strategies of action (Swindler 1986), in order to anticipate and explain changes in a country's foreign policy preferences and behavior.

Therefore, this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 4, also intends to discuss the power of the strategic culture approach vis-à-vis other competing theoretical approaches in explaining Brazil's geopolitical thought and, consequently, its foreign policy interests, priorities and behavior, based on the analysis of key events. Johnston (1995a:41) for example, contends that "all [cultural approaches] take the realist edifice as target, and focus on cases where structural material notions of interest cannot explain a particular strategic choice." Much in the same vein, Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein (1996:33) argue that, "the security environments in which States are embedded are in part cultural and institutional, rather than just material."

Implicitly recognizing that the strategic culture approach can offer substantial room for progressive study of strategic choice, Desch (2005:3) explains that, as a supplement to existing theories, cultural theories have at least three potential contributions to make:

First, cultural variables may explain the lag between structural change and alterations in state behavior. Second, they may account for why some states behave irrationally and suffer the consequences of failing to adapt to the constraints of the international system. Finally, in structurally indeterminate situations, domestic variables such as culture may have a more independent impact.

It can thus be argued that progressive models of strategic culture, which are based upon similar sets of assumptions regarding the sources, influences, and implications of identity, have the potential to be valuable policy instruments, and can “do a much better job of explaining how the world works” (Desch 1998:141) than more traditional theories. In that regard, Lantis (2006) identifies three main groups of potential sources of strategic culture, each one with its own set of variables: physical (geography, climate, natural resources, generational change, and technology), political (historical experience, political system, elite beliefs, and military organizations), and social/cultural (myths and symbols, and defining texts). More succinctly, Gray (1999a) argues that the strategic culture of a country derives from its geographical location, economic and political resources and structure, traditions, and historical experiences. In consequence, states tend to preserve and develop strategic approaches that they found successful in the past, which tend to evolve slowly, though not immutable. That is why

It is no coincidence, for example, that Britain has historically favoured sea power and indirect strategies, or that it has traditionally eschewed the maintenance of a large army. Israel’s lack of geographic depth, its small but educated population, and technological skill have produced a strategic culture that emphasizes strategic preemption, offensive operations, initiative, and – increasingly – advanced technology (Mahnken 2006:3).

In general, the literature presents two distinct approaches to analyze strategic culture. The first one is presented by scholars who tend to define strategic culture almost exclusively as the military strategies adopted by nations in its foreign policies (Booth 1991; Glenn 2009; Jones 1990; Johnston 1995a; Klein 1988; Lantis 2006; Mahnken 2006; Margaras 2004; Snyder 1977). This perspective views strategic culture as a deeply held cultural predisposition for a particular



military behaviour or thinking, derived from, among others, a country's history, geography, resources, historical traditions and political institutions, a concept that includes the "beliefs about the use of force shared by a national community of military and civilian leaders" (Farrel 2005:8). While Glenn (2009:531) identifies the concept as "the preferred military options that states adopt to achieve particular objectives [...] the cultural aspects dealt with are limited to those concerned with strategy rather than encompassing culture in its wider sense", Booth (1991:121) believes that "it has influence on the form in which one state interacts with the others concerning security measures, [...] and the ways of solution of problems face to face to threats or to using of force." Likewise, Johnston (1995a:46) emphasizes the role of military influence and Grand strategy doctrine in the study of culture. He sees strategic culture as an integrated "system of symbols which acts to establish pervasive and long lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs".

However, strategic culture is not a mere consequence of military actions and thought, and its influence is certainly felt in many other areas, like foreign policy. Therefore, the second approach sought to expand its scope and has focused on the "grand strategies of states and include aspects such as economic and diplomatic ways of attaining a state's objectives in addition to military ones" (Howlett 2005:2). Eitelhuber (2009:4-5) contends that "how political power is defined, acquired, legitimized and used and how the outside world is regarded and addressed are thus decisive factors in shaping a state's strategic culture".

As mentioned before, Duffield (1999) argues that the foreign policy goals that are to be pursued by a state are established by its strategic culture. In this vein, the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) understands it as "the combination of internal and external influences

and experiences – geographic, historical, cultural, economic, political, and military – that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world, and how a state will behave in the international community” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:1). This broader second approach seeks to harmonize apparently antagonistic concepts. As Toje recalls (2009:4), strategy traditionally refers “to how hard power can be applied to reach political ends.” This second perspective was adopted in this study, as it seems to perfectly coincide with traditional Brazilian strategic thought. In that regard, Nelson Jobim (2011:3-4), a Brazilian Defense Minister, summarized Brazilian view:

Just by examining the position of our diplomatic body, it is possible to realize that Brazil is in favour of a holistic view of international security. Such view addresses not only the literal military problematics, but also the deep causes of conflicts between human groups: poverty, hopelessness, tribal hatred, ignorance, etc. Brazil believes there is a causal connection between situations of disfavour and violence – whether at national or international level.

However, critics contend that there are some gaps in the development of the idea of strategic culture that potentially undermine its explanatory power. For example, how to explain how different decision-makers within the same state and belonging to the same elites make completely different decisions over time? How to explain radical changes in behavior or strategic cultures? Desch (1998) argues that scholars face three challenges to assessing the explanatory power of strategic culture. First, due to their vagueness and uncertainty, cultural variables are tricky to define and operationalize; Second, cultural theorists generally believe that cultural variables tend to make every case *sui generis*. Thus, they focus on the particulars of single cases,

rather than on factors common to a number of cases and so their theories are not broadly applicable and testable across a larger number of cases. Finally, because culturalism is actually a cluster of theories, it does not make much sense to assess culturalism *per se*; rather, it would be more useful to test particular culturalist theories. Anyway, although these challenges indicate that further research certainly still needs to be done on the depth and scope of influence of strategic culture, they do not hide the fact that the approach has the potential to be a highly valuable policy and analysis tool.

## 2. Brazil and the Strategic Culture Framework

While the subject of national cultures and particular identities has become increasingly recognized as a key dimension in strategic thought, the impact of culture is important to understanding Brazil's foreign policy, and military and security affairs. Culture is, so it seems, the tool kit that allows actors to articulate strategies of action (Swindler 1986). Within this theoretical framework, how has a rising power such as Brazil, still on the periphery of the international system and on the margins of the global distribution of power, historically behaved, reacted and constructed a discourse that, at the same time, constrains/motivates its decisions, explains its actions, and legitimizes its behavior? More specifically, the puzzle that motivated this study is why Brazilian regional policies are not more assertive given Brazil's capabilities? Consequently, the research question is *does Brazilian strategic culture have an effect on the country's regional policies?* The main independent variable in this study is the country's

strategic culture, while the dependent variable taken into account is Brazil's regional geopolitical thought.

By answering that question, this study sought to bridge an important gap in the literature on the subject. An additional incentive for this research is that the study of the strategic culture approach is limited by a substantial focus on major powers, particularly the American, Russian, and Chinese cases. Thus, by studying this perspective through the experiences that occurred in an emerging country, I hope to contribute to diversify the literature and enrich the understanding of the sources of strategic culture.

For this purpose, I aim to do five things in this dissertation. First, since this research seeks to analyze how a strategic culture influences a country's geopolitical thought, and consequently its policy choices and outcomes, I began by providing a comprehensive literature review on the subject and examining how and why strategic culture can be a determinant of a country's foreign policy. I analyze the origins of the perspective and its possible sources, summarize its contents, and trace some of the main milestones in the evolution of the concept and their implications for the development of this theoretical body, which includes an analysis of the alternative interpretations the term is subject, and the successive generations the conceptual debate on strategic culture has usually been divided into. For illustrative purposes only, and at the risk of oversimplifying extremely rich and complex strategic cultures, this section briefly presents and discusses the main features of the strategic culture of the United States and Russia.

Secondly, considering that the basic unit of analysis is the individual country in connection with specific security and foreign policymaking processes, this dissertation briefly

summarizes Brazil's foreign policy history, focusing on its interests, priorities, and key events which helped to build and characterize the country's international identity, in order to identify and qualify the elements of Brazilian strategic culture and its nature, as well as to determine the relationship between these elements and Brazilian foreign and security policy decisions. Then, it proceeds to discuss the characteristics of Brazilian strategic culture, its evolution, its sources, the institutions that serve as its keepers, and its influence upon the country's foreign policy decision-making process.

This study also examines some significant documents which underscore characteristic traits of Brazilian strategic culture. Archival research was conducted in the Library of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, known as Itamaraty, the Ministry of Defense Archives, the Library of the National Congress, and the National Archives files. Materials included such sources as diplomatic and military reports, strategic documents, meeting minutes, governmental official statements and speeches, national plans and projects, international treaties, analyses from the mass media, and bibliographic databases, among many others. Likewise, using primary data generated for and by this research, this study details, discusses, and assesses the results and the findings of a series of interviews conducted with Brazilian diplomats, military officers, policymakers and academics about the existence and the nature of the Brazilian strategic culture.

Thirdly, after delineating the main features of Brazilian strategic culture, the dissertation analyzes their influence upon Brazilian geopolitical thought and grand strategy, and Brazil's geopolitics relative to South America. It also seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of how the country perceives its regional and global role and implements security policy decisions, and discusses their implications to past and current integration projects in South America, as well as

to future prospects for regional integration. For this purpose, this study provides some theoretical background on the concepts of grand strategy and geopolitics. Also, for illustrative and comparative purposes, a brief discussion about how strategic culture influences geopolitical thought in the United States and Argentina will be provided.

Fourth, this research also assesses the strength of the strategic culture approach in explaining the evolution of Brazilian security and foreign policy thinking and practices in comparison to other more traditional theoretical perspectives, particularly offensive realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and rational choice institutionalism.

Finally, the dissertation discusses the idea that in strategic culture one is discerning tendencies, not determinants of behaviors or preferences. Traditionally, the focus has been on continuity or at least semi-permanence in strategic culture, as foreign policy strategies and behavior are mediated through a set of core ideas, beliefs and doctrines that the country's decision-makers use to justify preferences and actions. Although those ideas, beliefs and doctrines - which are embedded in the "collective memories, national symbols, government procedures, education systems, and rhetoric of statecraft" (Legro 2007:522) - may undergo changes throughout the years, consequently leading to changes in the country's intentions, those changes tend to evolve very slowly, making those variables semi-permanent features of the national character and identity (Mahnken 2006). To a large extent, this relative continuity allows a country to articulate a coherent grand strategy which reflects its world views, enabling it to decide what kind of world it wishes to build and which international system is more conducive to its interests, to define and implement its foreign policy priorities, and to identify and allocate all instruments of power available to pursue its international objectives in an integrated manner.

However, strategic cultures can and do change, sometimes radically. Those changes can be caused, among other factors, by external shocks – which might serve as a catalyst for a reevaluation of a number of common assumptions regarding a country’s security environment and foreign policy preferences – and/or by the behavior of competing groupings or elites within a state that affects strategic cultural identities. These variables can affect security and foreign policy in unprecedented ways and generate what Lantis (2006) calls “strategic cultural dilemmas” regarding possible ways to best react to new situations.

In that context, the dissertation then focuses on the question of the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the country’s security and foreign policy decision-making process, as well as for its regional neighborhood. Therefore, examining how Brazil understands the concept of security and the security scenario with which the country operates, both regionally and globally, is a *sine qua non* condition to assessing Brazil’s positioning as a regional and global security actor and to understanding Brazil’s national defense policies, military strategies, and the changes in its strategic culture.

### 3. The Predictive Power of the Strategic Culture Approach

This dissertation is about the role of strategic culture in helping to shape a country’s foreign and security policies. Within this general framework, this study proposes that there is a Brazilian strategic culture, which derives from geographic, historical, political, economic, and other variables, influences, and circumstances, and which helps explain why Brazilian policymakers have made the decisions they have. It argues, therefore, that Brazilian strategic

culture has traditionally provided the milieu within which strategic thoughts, foreign policy and security concerns are debated, plans are formulated, and decisions are executed. Thus, if strategic culture really impacts a country's geopolitical thought and international behavior, then we will see Brazilian foreign policies conditioned by the national strategic culture. In this context, it might turn out that Brazilian strategic culture has been causing a non-rational pursuit of great power status, expressed in a security and foreign policy behavior marked by tensions and contradictions.

Offensive Realism, for example, cannot explain why Brazil, which was once in the verge of acquiring nuclear military capabilities, expressly renounced its nuclear ambitions, as discussed in Chapter 4. Offensive Realism understands power primarily as military capabilities and, to a lesser extent, as the concentration of resources – particularly economic and demographic assets – necessary to produce those capabilities. As Carranza (2014:3) points out, from a realist perspective, “a state can claim great-power status, but it is unlikely to join the great-power club unless it meets the requirements of economic and military strength that grant admission to the club.” Therefore, a power-maximizing behavior could increase a state's security and status.

The strategic culture approach, however, would predict that Brazil will remain faithful to its traditions and values – particularly, in this case, its strong preference for peaceful settlement of disputes between states and the repudiation of the use of force in international relations – even if that security and foreign policy behavior were not conducive to the fulfillment of its longstanding dream of becoming a major power and achieving a greater degree of influence in international affairs. Likewise, the abandonment of the nuclear program would represent the adoption of a non-rational policy, as it was not only at odds with the power-maximizing behavior



sustained by that Offensive Realism, but it could also be eventually translated into a decrease in a country's level of security and status.

This study will also seek to discuss why Neoliberal Institutionalism seems not to be the more suitable approach to explain Brazil's security and foreign policy thinking and practice. Through two case studies, Brazil's participation in the League of Nations and Brazil's stance towards the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the dissertation argues that the strategic culture approach can more adequately explain and predict Brazilian security and foreign policy behavior. As explained in Chapter 4, Neoliberal Institutionalism would predict that a country would join international organizations and regimes to build a more transparent, predictable, monitored, norms-based, and stable international system. However, based on its strategic culture features, Brazil tends to become more integrated into the international system, institutions, and regimes when it most serves its purposes, and to confront or reform the international system when that stance is needed to favor its own interests.

Likewise, in order to assess the strength of RCI in predicting and explaining Brazil's foreign policy behavior towards regional integration, this dissertation will initially present a discussion on the concepts of geopolitics and grand strategy, in Chapter 5, which are central to understand Brazilian regional foreign policy. Subsequently, Chapter 6, particularly subsections 6.4 and 6.5, will discuss why Brazil's behavior towards regional integration appears not to be consistent with the four main assumptions of the RCI approach explained in Chapter 4. Rather, it is more compatible with an alternative explanation, the reason why this study argues that Brazil's regional behavior regarding integrations processes can be best explained by the strategic culture approach.

Following this line of reasoning, this study also suggests that Brazilian strategic culture and the country's global ambitions have led Brazilian decision-makers to historically neglect the role of Brazil in South America as an important regional player, in spite of the fact that – at least in the realm of rhetoric – “Brazilian diplomats and academics alike have long regarded regional leadership as a springboard to global recognition and influence” (Malamud 2011:1). Consequently, it is possible to clearly delineate a growing mismatch between the regional and global performance of Brazilian foreign and security policies, a paradox which has deep implications not only to Brazil's efforts to become a global player, but also to South American integration prospects.

Likewise, as part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, Brazil traditionally vehemently rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership, which has led the country to neglect the development of military capabilities. However, what happens when a country's traditional strategic culture conflicts with what has been increasingly seen as an aspiring great power identity? This study proposes that in spite of Brazil's traditional preference for strategies that deploy non-material aspects of power, such as consensus building, diplomacy and persuasion (Hamann 2012), a recent and very slow but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign policy objectives, “away from the more traditional strategies used in Brazilian foreign policy and towards hard power” (Valença e Carvalho 2014:68). Recent Brazilian defense and foreign policies seem to be gradually relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone.

It must be noted that this gradual shift does not necessarily represent an alteration in the country's strategic culture, and might indeed merely represent a conjunctural change or adaptation to temporary situations and circumstances. However, it appears to mirror a growing perception among Brazilian decision-makers, which is far from being consensual, as it goes against the country's traditional strategic culture, that if Brazil wants to achieve global power status and eventually become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, or at least to increase its standing in international politics, it must be able to flex its muscles and display military and power projection capabilities and resolve. As the Brazilian National Strategy of Defense (Estratégia Nacional de Defesa – END) clearly states, “in order to dissuade, it is necessary to be ready to fight” (END 2008:11). Former Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim (2011:6) also expressed the “new” stance adopted by the Brazilian government:

In brief, there is no reason to believe that the world is destined to Kantian universal peace. The balance of power and the dynamics of global alliances will be closely followed by the country. Because of its evident impact on our nation's autonomy and interests, we have to build a dissuasive display that safeguards us against possible international developments that may limit our freedom of action or even our sovereignty. This dissuasive display will also allow us to broaden the range of options of Brazilian foreign policy

In this context, the development of its nuclear submarine program, the more active participation in UN peacekeeping missions in recent years – Brazil is currently participating in 9 of the 17 PKO's conducted by the UN, and its military is in charge of three of those missions, in Haiti, Lebanon and Congo, which seems to be in stark contrast with the country's steadfast

defense of the non-intervention principle –, the purchase of 36 new combat aircraft, with prospects of acquiring another 72 in the short-term, and the ongoing process of modernization of its armed forces fit within the framework of a country that, although deeply tied to its historical traditions, is gradually recognizing that it must develop its military capabilities if it wants to one day be considered a major power.

It must be noted, however, that, as a major limitation, since this dissertation is not intended to be a comparative study, it is not possible to rule out the possibility that some characteristics, features, practices and preferences that help to explain Brazilian security and foreign policy behavior, and that might be considered unique attributes of the Brazilian strategic culture in a certain politico-historical context, could in fact be explicable by other variables and factors that would affect all rising powers – and provoke the same kind of responses/behaviors – under similar circumstances. Likewise, this study is not intended to explain similarities in strategic behavior across completely different strategic cultures.

# CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1 Introduction

Although cultural approaches to strategic studies may have existed in several forms for thousands of years and the argument that culture influences and shapes national security policy may be grounded in the classic writings of Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz (Lantis 2006), among others, Margaras (2004) traces the emergence of the development of the modern idea of strategic culture back to the 1970s, when scholars such as Jack Snyder, Collin Gray and David Jones analyzed Soviet nuclear deterrence policy and reached the conclusion that American experts, taking for granted that the Soviets had the same strategic behavior and would react the same way as the Americans, failed to predict Soviet reactions. As a result of this failure, “a number of scholars came to the conclusion that each country had its own way to interpret, analyze and react to international events” (Margaras 2004:1). This conclusion was not only responsible for bringing national culture issues back to the academic and political agenda, but also gave rise to the development of a new analysis tool to understanding and explaining how countries see the world, why they behave the way they do, and what drives their foreign policies practices and preferences.

According to Margaras (2004:2), “one of the main ideas behind the notion of strategic culture was to explain actions and ideas which seemed to be at odds with what would be ‘rational’ for a state to do”. It does not mean that the strategic culture approach rejects rationality. Indeed, Johnston (1995I:34-35) argues that

[S]trategic culture is compatible with notions of limited rationality (where strategic culture simplifies reality), with process rationality (where strategic culture defines ranked preferences or narrow options), and with adaptive rationality (where historical choices, analogies, metaphors, and precedents are invoked to guide choice). [...] Rather than rejecting rationality *per se* as a factor in strategic choice, the strategic culture approach challenges the ahistorical, non-cultural neorealist framework for analyzing strategic choices.

Jones (1990) identified the existence of three levels of inputs into a country's strategic culture, which not only delimited strategic options, but also "pervaded all levels of choice from grand strategies down to tactics" (Johnston 1995I:37). First, there is a macro-environmental level, which involves a country's history, geographic conditions and ethno-cultural characteristics. Then, there is a societal level, which is formed by, and arises from, the political, economic, and social structures of a given society. Finally, there is a micro level, which encompasses military institutions and their relations with civil society.

Toje (2009:6-7) argues that "the introduction of the term was part of the reaction seen in the late 1970s against the primacy of game theory and rational actor models in strategic studies", and that "[t]he critique brought about a shift towards a diachronic, narrative-orientated approach where the past is seen to influence the present and the future". In this same line of reasoning, Barnett (1999:11) emphasizes that

[T]he narrative of the national identity provides an understanding of the past, present and future, events are symbolic and constitutive of, and subjectively linked to, that identity, and a particular construction of the past will be the umbilical cord to the present and the

future. This narrative of the national identity is not given, but rather is a social construct, and actors will reconstruct the past as they debate the future, and as they act toward the future they are likely to (re)remember the past.

The conceptual debate on strategic culture has usually been divided into three generations (Johnston 1995a), although the emergence of a fourth generation is discernible, as diffuse as it might be. The analysis of these generations in the study of strategic culture will be the subject of the next sections of this chapter.

## 1.2 The First Generation – Ambiguous Definitions

First generation scholars were mainly concerned with the superpower–nuclear strategy nexus and concentrated for the most part on explaining why the Americans and the Soviets had different perceptions about the strategic role of nuclear weapons. Its intellectual origins can be attributed to Jack Snyder’s 1977 pioneering work on Soviet nuclear strategy (*The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*), which focused on the link between strategic choice and political and military culture. According to Lantis (2006:6)

Jack Snyder brought the political cultural argument into the realm of modern security studies by developing a theory of strategic culture to interpret Soviet nuclear strategy. Snyder suggested that elites articulate a unique strategic culture related to security-military affairs that is a wider manifestation of public opinion, socialized into a distinctive mode of strategic thinking.

Snyder (1977) defined strategic culture as ‘the sum total of ideals, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of the national strategic community

have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to [nuclear] strategy”. He claimed that elites formulate a singular strategic culture related to security-military issues that is a broader manifestation of public opinion, socialized into a peculiar mode of strategic thinking. Snyder (1977:8) suggests that, “as a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of ‘cultural’ rather than mere policy.” By applying this strategic cultural framework to examine and interpret the development of American and Soviet nuclear doctrines as resulting from different historical and political traditions, as well as distinct geographical and organizational contexts, Snyder reached the conclusion that the American military exhibited a preference for “a sporadic, messianic, and crusading use of force that was deeply rooted in the moralism of the early republic and in a fundamental belief that warfare was an aberration in human relations” (Johnston 1995I:32), while the Soviets “exhibited a preference for the preemptive, offensive use of force and the origins for this could be found rooted in a Russian history of insecurity and authoritarian control” (Lantis 2006:6-7).

In short, the first-generation work on strategic culture offered a conceptual link between weapons of mass destruction policy and strategic culture, and portrayed culture as a “semi-permanent influence on policy shaped by elites and socialized into distinctive modes of thought” (Lantis 2006:7). The result of this new analysis tool was that the nuclear strategy of potential adversaries could be predicted. In fact, Johnston (1995a) believes that the strength of the first generation can be found in their predictive and explanatory power. To Toje (2009:6), “[i]f strategic cultures evolve gradually and permeate all levels of security policy from war and peace



issues to geopolitics, then strategic culture is clearly a helpful concept for scholars and decision-makers when analysing strategic behavior”.

As would be expected, the new approach was not immune to criticism. Johnston (1995I:36-39), for example, identified a number of shortcomings in the first-generation approach, whose main weakness was a “mechanical determinism” regarding the relationship between behavior and culture, which implied that a given strategic culture would consistently lead to one type of behavior. Since cultures are unique attributes of states and vary greatly across them, how then to explain similarities in strategic behavior across completely different strategic cultures? Conversely, does one specific behavior always reveal a set of distinct patterns of strategic assumptions? Or how can one examine and assess a given strategic culture in a situation in which behavior and thought appear to be inconsistent with each other?

While Margaras (2004:3) states that “much of the work produced by the first generation lacked much of the necessary cohesion and methodological rigour”, Lantis (2006:7) argues that “critics asserted that the operationalization of strategic culture was problematic and subjective. They suggested that strategic cultural models were tautological, as it would be nearly impossible to separate independent and dependent variables in a reliable way.” Critics tend to agree that there was a definitional problem, as the concept of strategic culture was unwieldy, an “amorphous” concept that was too inclusive and hardly falsifiable. After all, as Johnston (1995a:37) puts it, if strategic culture is a product of almost every relevant explanatory variable, such as history, geography, technology, political and organization culture, ideology, symbols and traditions – each of which could by itself offer a plausible explanation for strategic choice –

“then there is little conceptual space for a non-strategic culture explanation of strategic choice. This makes valid tests of a strategic culture-based model of choice extremely difficult.”

Finally, critics reject the argument regarding the time invariance of strategic culture, which neglects the dynamic nature of culture, its potential for development and adjustment to changing reality. Furthermore, they argue that the first generation also failed to address or answer some important questions, such as how is strategic culture transmitted over time, which institutions are repositories or representations of a strategic culture, and which time periods are considered formative sources of strategic culture, among other questions. Despite its shortcomings, it seems that first-generation conceptualizations and research dominate the literature on strategic culture at this moment.

### 1.3 The Second Generation – Speech and Action

During the 1980s and early 1990s the research on strategic culture progressed very much from its initial ‘nuclear’ field of study. Second generation theorists tried to solve the puzzle between strategic culture and behavior and focused on the role played by political elites in, simultaneously, keeping and shaping a country’s strategic culture. Toje (2009:6) contends that the “focus of the debate shifted from cultural predispositions and restraints to the analysis of manifest, communicated security doctrine, seeking to decipher ‘coded messages’ in the strategic studies discourse”, what, according to Klein (1988), meant that there was a clear distinction between “declaratory” and “uncommunicated” doctrine, a gap between rhetoric and intent. Likewise, Johnston (1995a:39) claims that the second generation approach was based on the

premise that there was “a vast difference between what leaders think or say they are doing and the deeper motives for what in fact they do”.

Consequently, Johnston (1995a) believes that second generation scholars saw strategic culture as an instrument of political hegemony incorporated into the strategic decision-making sphere, while Klein (1988:136) believes it provides “widely available orientations to violence and to ways in which the state can legitimately use violence against putative enemies”. Johnston (1995a) interprets this statement as an acknowledgement of the existence of two distinct though complimentary strategies: a declaratory strategy, which has an instrumental nature and whose aim is to legitimize the authority of those responsible for strategic decision-making, and an operational strategy, which would reflect the specific interests of those decision-makers. Klein (1988) illustrates this distinction by arguing that the arguably defensive nature of the US military doctrine, as portrayed by the first generation, was a decoy, whose aim was twofold. First, as part of the declaratory strategy, it should provide a rationale for America’s strategic posture, a culturally acceptable justification for operational strategy. Second, it was intended to mislead enemies or potential challengers. Actual operational strategy, on the other hand, was far more pragmatic and prone to employ force in defense of American global interests and hegemony.

This distinction between declaratory and operational strategy was intended to avoid some of the shortcomings of the first-generation concepts, as strategic culture and behavior belong to completely different realms. To second-generation scholars, strategic choice is not constrained by strategic culture, but by the interests of the ruling elites or of hegemonistic groups. In this context, it is quite possible that states exhibit completely different declaratory strategies while pursuing operational doctrines that are similar in their essence. Unlike first-generation scholars,

second-generation theorists see strategic culture in terms of the interests and preferences of power elites and consider it as an instrument that has no real impact on state policies and behavior. Paradoxically, Klein suggests that in spite of its instrumental nature, strategic culture is to some extent shaped by the historic legacy and experience of the state.

This issue is particularly problematic. It seems that the nature of the relationship between culture and behavior was not a sufficiently addressed issue, as it has received most criticism, especially the question of whether the declaratory strategy influences behavior. Johnston (1995a:40) believes that second-generation scholars appear to ignore the fact that policymakers are probably influenced by the same strategic culture that they want to shape, because

Instrumentality implies that decision-making elites can rise above strategic cultural constraints which they manipulate. Yet, recent scholarship on leadership suggests a dialectical relationship between strategic culture and operational behavior: elites, too, are socialized in the strategic culture they produce and thus can be constrained by the symbolic myths their predecessors created. This raises the possibility that elites cannot escape the symbolic discourses they manipulate.

This line of reasoning emphasizes the idea that the dialectical relationship between ruling elites and strategic culture cannot be underestimated. Likewise, since second-generation approach suggests that political elites in most countries appear to share realpolitik interests and face several external threats in similar ways, it does not make it clear whether cross-national differences in elites' motivations and, consequently, behavior should be expected.

#### 1.4 The Third Generation – Strategic Culture as an Intervening Variable

The unexpected end of the Cold War in the early 1980's led to a renewed wave of interest in the search for cultural explanations for state behavior in the international system. In consequence, the 1990's saw the emergence of a new wave of strategic culture studies, which, influenced by the rise of Constructivism, corroborated the usefulness of cultural interpretations. Lantis (2006:8-9) suggests that as "the constructivist research program devotes particular attention to identity formation, with connections to organizational process, history, tradition, and culture... [its rise] has clearly energized a new wave of strategic cultural research". In fact, both perspectives share some basic assumptions, although constructivists focus primarily on social structures at the systems level, rather than at the state level, as strategic culture theorists do. Hudson (1997:28-29), for example, explains that constructivism understands culture as an "evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions". Culture, thus, contributes decisively to shape behavior. "At the moment of action", notes Hudson, "culture provides the elements of grammar that define the situation, that reveal motives, and that set forth a strategy for success".

Enriched and strengthened by the contributions from constructivism, to an extent that strategic culture opponents argue that "the strategic culture literature, as it is traditionally conceived, has inappropriately gained legitimacy from the successes of similarly situated work on military-organizational cultures and constructivist national identity" (Twomey 2008: 340), the third wave of strategic culture studies sought to adopt a more rigorous approach by tightening the definition and conceptualization of ideational independent variables, while more narrowly focused on particular strategic decisions as dependent variables (Johnston 1995a). Third-

generation scholars “attempted to make the concept of strategic culture ‘falsifiable’ in a near-positivist sense” (Toje 2009:6), and, in order not to incur the same methodological flaws of the first generation, their definitions of strategic culture tended to exclude behavior as a constitutive element. In fact, scholars such as Jeffrey Legro, Elizabeth Kier, Alastair Iain Johnston, and others interpret strategic culture as an intervening variable. Third-generation theorists question the plausibility of realpolitik arguments and attempt to explain strategic behavior primarily through political-military and organizational cultures.

Desch (1998:143-144) maintains that four strands of cultural theorizing, namely organizational, political, strategic, and global, dominate the third generation. These strands arguably share a common thread, which is “dissatisfaction with realist explanations for state behavior in the realm of national security.” It is worth citing at length Desch’s masterful synthesis of these third-generation approaches:

Jeffrey Legro holds that militaries have different organizational cultures that will lead them to fight differently. Elizabeth Kier argues that different domestic political cultures will adopt divergent means of controlling their militaries based on domestic political considerations, not external strategic concerns. Similarly, Peter Katzenstein and Noburo Okawara, and Thomas Berger, maintain that domestic political attitudes toward the use of force vary significantly among states similarly situated in the international system. Stephen Rosen argues that societies with different domestic social structures will produce different levels of military power. Iain Johnston suggests that domestic strategic culture, rather than international systemic imperatives, best explains a state's grand strategy. Martha Finnemore argues that global cultural norms, rather than domestic state interests,

determine patterns of great power intervention. Likewise, Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald claim that global cultural norms proscribing the use of particular weapons best account for why they are not used. Robert Herman argues that the Soviet Union bowed out of the Cold War because it was attracted to the norms and culture of the West. Thomas Risse-Kappen argues that alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalesce around global norms rather than responding to mutual threats. In a similar vein, Michael Barnett maintains that common identity, rather than shared threat, best explains alliance patterns. Finally, Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman argue that all states will acquire similar sorts of high-technology conventional weaponry, not because they need them, but because these weapons epitomize "stateness."

Anyway, Johnston's *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (1995b) is considered the seminal third generation work on strategic culture. Based on the idea that strategic culture consists of a set of assumptions about "the role of war in human affairs" and about 'the efficacy of the use of force' which reveals itself through a "limited, ranked set of grand-strategic preferences over actions that are consistent across the objects of analysis and persistent across time", Johnston examines the existence, nature and characteristics of a Chinese strategic culture, and the causal mechanisms that would link it to the use of force against what is perceived as an external threat. By clearly separating military strategy, the dependent variable, and culture, the independent variable, Johnston (1995b:1) proposes that although China's strategic culture can be sub-divided into symbolic and operational ones, as second-generation scholars would argue, over the course of the years the country has shown a "tendency for the controlled, politically driven defensive and minimalist use of force that is

deeply rooted in the statecraft of ancient strategists and a worldview of relatively complacent superiority.”

Johnston and other third-generation scholars share the first generation’s belief that ideational variables have an observable effect on behavior and that strategic culture is an ideational milieu that limits behavioral choices, from which it is possible to formulate predictions about strategic choices. Therefore, they reject the second-generation premise that suggests declaratory/symbolic strategy may not have any influence on operational strategy. However, in spite of the aforementioned conclusion, Johnston (1995a:41) believes that the sources of these cultural values are “less deeply rooted in history, and more clearly, the product of recent practice and experience”. Legro (1995) appears to agree with this idea, by conceptualizing culture in such a way as to allow it to vary, due to the fact that culture is rooted in recent experience, rather than in deeply historical practice.

In fact, the third generation interprets strategic culture as a dynamic phenomenon capable of changing over time. Longhurst (2000) notes that a particular strategic culture is persistent over time, with a strong tendency to outlast the period of its emergence. However, this should not be considered a static feature, as it can be altered, either fundamentally or piecemeal, at critical junctures. In the same vein, Kier (1999) remarks that political-military culture results from changing domestic political contexts, hence varying as domestic politics varies.

Likewise, Duffield (1999) and Lantis (2006) believe that there are a number of reasons that might be responsible for this dynamism. First, wars, revolutions, economic catastrophes and other “dramatic events” might take place, discrediting core values and beliefs and undermining past historical narratives, leading to a deep change in a country’s strategic culture. Second, since



strategic culture can be a highly “institutionalized” concept and thus susceptible to be dependent on the power of political elites and the “negotiated reality” they are able to forge, policy-makers are presented with several opportunities for balancing widely-accepted values and norms with recently introduced ones. Finally, “external shocks” or dramatic changes in the international scenario can lead to changes in foreign policy preferences and political-military strategy. However, if most third-generation analysts address the question of what can cause changes in strategic culture, most of them fail to address the question of how strategic culture is transformed, how those “dramatic events” manage to transform strategic culture over time, and under what conditions strategic culture change. However, it has not been indicated how these potential sources of change might provide reconstruction of historical narratives that form the basis of a country’s strategic culture.

### 1.5 The Emergence of a Fourth Generation?

As previously mentioned, a series of dramatic recent events in the international scenario have led to a renewed interest in the role of strategic culture in international security, in a context where a “‘fourth generation’ – to continue with Johnston’s terminology – has cultivated a rich flora of ‘strategic culture’ research” (Toje 2009:7). However, it seems that in spite of its growing importance as an analytical tool to understand and explain international relations and security issues, the field of strategic culture remains under-theorized. Lack of methodological rigor has led analysts and academics to use different concepts of the term and, consequently, reach an entirely different conclusion about the explanatory and predictive power of strategic culture.

Toje (2009) maintains that this is the main reason why, in spite of the regular flow of papers and article, the field still enjoys little cumulative research tradition. Likewise, Johnston (1995I:63) notes that there is still a lot of confusion about what strategic culture is supposed to explain, how it is supposed to explain, and how much it really explains, “with some work hewing to an extreme determinism, while others implying that strategic culture will not have much effect on behavior at all.”

However, the progressive study of strategic culture presents huge potential for development. In this regard, Lantis (2009:29) claims that “[p]rogressive models of strategic culture operating from similar sets of assumptions about the sources, influences, and implications of identity have the potential to be highly valuable policy tools.” Similarly, Johnston (1995a:63) believes that

Done well, the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policymakers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played, reducing uncertainty and other information problems in strategic choice. Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about the strategic predispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures.

Research certainly still needs to be done on the depth and scope of influence of strategic culture. However, perhaps the first step to bringing strategic culture definitely back to the study of national security policy is to provide a more precise and rigorous concept of the term. Likewise, since scholars in the strategic culture tradition focus their work on areas as distinct as military culture and operational effects, grand strategy, and national identity and interests, its

object of analysis should be more narrowly defined. Addressing these questions can represent an extremely important theoretical advancement for the field of strategic culture, contributing to rescue culture from its status as a residual variable.

### 1.6 The United States' Strategic Culture

This dissertation does not intend to discuss in detail the characteristic features of the rich and complex American strategic culture. For this reason, at the risk of oversimplifying, this section will briefly present only what is usually considered its main traits, for illustrative purposes.

At the national and strategic levels, history and geography have largely contributed to shape American strategic culture. The country's privileged geographic position, flanked on its east and west by two vast oceans, the existence of only two (and much less powerful) neighbors, to the north and the south, and relatively peaceful borders allowed the United States not to have to worry about serious challenges to its territorial integrity, security and hemispheric leadership for a long time. This situation created a favorable environment for the economic and territorial expansion of the country and the building up of its political institutions, which enjoy a remarkable degree of stability and legitimacy, especially when compared with other major powers, such as Russia, Germany, and even England, all of which underwent deep crises of legitimacy and revolutions at some point in their history.

Insularity, free security, political stability, political legitimacy, territorial expansion and growing economic power – variables that would later be translated into unrivaled political and

military power – not only influenced how the U.S. saw the world, but shaped how the country perceived itself. Many scholars agree that these elements combined to create the idea of an American “exceptionalism”, the belief that “the United States represents the highest stage of civilization achieved by humanity [...] and that it uniquely embodies the values of freedom and democracy” (Saito 2009:78). Lee (2008:276), for example, argues that those features, particularly its sense of territorial security, “interacted with their sense of moral superiority to the rest of the world to create the foundation of a strategic culture that was fundamentally isolationist”. Those scholars also believe that this exceptionalism, based on the concept of “predestination”, gave rise to a “messianism”, according to which the American mission was to spread its values and to bring freedom, democracy, peace, and civilization to the world. The willingness to transform the international system according to its liberal democratic values and ideals is a feature that has always been present throughout American history.

Since the founding fathers, Americans seem to have always believed that interstate wars are not a continuation of policy, but a symptom of its rupture. Mahnken (2006:6) observes that “American insularity and the existence of free security bred the view that war is a deviation from the norm of peace”, which should be restored by all possible means. For this reason, the generational conflicts that punctuated the long periods of peace which shaped American strategic culture – the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War I, and World War II – tended to be cast as crusades of good versus evil. In the same vein, Huntington (1957:152) observes that “[f]or the American a war is not a war unless it is a crusade.” This “crusading spirit” means that Americans tend to conceive war in absolute terms in which the “enemy was demonized, the fight was to the finish, and absolute victory was the ultimate objective” (Howard 2013:7).

As contradictory as these tenets may appear, the promotion of liberal democratic values seems to coexist with a typically American way of war, which consists in the overwhelming defeat of the enemy. While Weigley (1973), asserts that obtaining a “crushing” military victory over an adversary, which could be achieved “either through a strategy of attrition or one of annihilation,” is the American way of war, Howard (2013:8) claims that

Traditional American strategic culture is easy to understand: we take a straight shot to the chops, pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, mobilize by maximizing all of the elements of the national power, deploy and dominate, prevail, celebrate with a parade, and then demobilize – that is America’s way of war. The ability to maximize all elements of power – military, economic, diplomatic and communications – has been America’s comparative advantage and very much a part of its strategic culture.

The complete destruction of an adversary’s military capability represents not only the end of war and the beginning of postwar negotiations, but also serves to forward America agenda and values. As Schroeder stresses (1958:202), America’s resort to war oftentimes reflects “not a sinister design [...], but a sincere and uncompromising adherence to moral principles and liberal doctrines”, while Saito (2009:73) notes that “such actions are justified by the greater good of bringing freedom, and civilization to the planet.”

That does not mean that the military and policymakers are prisoners of America’s liberal ideology, that they always have to stand up for their moral beliefs, and that they are incapable of conducting a policy based on geopolitical and strategic calculations. These principles and values certainly inform and guide doctrinal choices and the decision-making process, but they do not

impose absolute limits and constraints on this process. Rather, they are used to give greater legitimacy to the decision-making process, as policy makers tend to have a strong incentive to frame their decisions and policies in a way that reflects the set of belief and values that their political culture advocates and officially embraces.

Gray (1994:594) observes that another historical trend of the American strategic culture has been to manifest a clear preference for a direct approach to strategy over an indirect one, as “Americans have favored the quest for swift victory through the hazards of decisive battle rather than the slower approach of maritime encirclement.” Likewise, Mahnken (2006:10) remarks that the “U.S. military has throughout its history sought to close with and destroy the enemy at the earliest opportunity”. Three other characteristics are intimately associated with this preference for a direct approach to strategy: an industrial approach to war, which means a remarkable ability to develop new arms, produce large quantities of military equipment and to deploy troops worldwide in a very short time span; a massive use of firepower; and a large emphasis on technology. Kuehn (2010:78) believes that all these variables reflect another characteristic of American Strategic culture: the “tendency towards strategic impatience”.

For these reasons, Rees & Aldrich (2005:908) contend that the U.S. belief in American “exceptionalism” has been intimately linked to strategies that seek to leverage its huge material and technological resources. The consequence is that American policymakers have been predisposed towards a national security culture that privileges a military response. As a superpower, the U.S. sees the use of force as an important signal of resolve within the international community. In fact, the U.S. is by far the major military spender in the world, historically accounting for nearly fifty percent of all military expenditures. Although its military

spending is down from a year ago, its military budget reached US\$ 640 billion in 2013<sup>3</sup>, which accounts for nearly 39% of the global military expenditures, a number that is similar to the combined military investment made by the next 15 countries. The U.S. also helps to decisively shape global military expenditures since, as the most important donor of foreign military assistance, it provides aid to approximately 150 countries every year<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.7 Russia's Strategic Culture

The annexation of the territory of Crimea into the Russian Federation, in March 2014, and the Russian military incursion into Ukraine raised speculations about President Putin's real intentions. As Degaut (2014a:2) observes, "fears have grown that an imperialistic Russia is taking an even harder foreign policy stance aimed at rebuilding its empire, in order to achieve some kind of strategic superiority over the West or acquire greater political clout in international arena."

A closer look, however, suggests that Putin might not be interested in reviving a new Cold War, as Russia

lacks not only the political, economic and military means to do so, but also the willingness, since it has more to lose than to gain in pursuing a policy of confrontation with the world's major powers. Actually, what is seen as an irrational aggression against

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<sup>3</sup> Sipri Yearbook 2013. Retrieved from [www.sipri.org/yearbook/2013].

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. spent around \$14 billion in fiscal 2013 for foreign military assistance. Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

Ukraine is only one more chapter in the long history of Western misperceptions and failures to understand the driving forces behind Russian foreign policy behavior, which can be explained by the enduring nature of Russia's strategic culture (Degaut 2014a:2).

In that context, while the specifics of those events were surprising, they were not unpredictable. As a matter of fact, it seems that Russia has displayed a historical tendency to resort to force to pursue its strategic interests. While some scholars believe that Russia's strategic culture is essentially "stable with respect to the prevailing threat perception and Russia's quest for great power status" (Eitelhuber 2009:2), a number of changes are noticeable after the demise of the former Soviet Union, in December 1991. Most specifically, the importance assigned to military power as the sole source of strength decreased, while the relevance of economic power has increased.

Certainly, Russia has not repudiated the use of force in its foreign affairs. Military power is still the chief institutional foundation of Russian statehood. However, economic development can also be considered one of the main driving forces behind its foreign policy. After abandoning its ambitions to spread Communist revolution around the world, Russia appears to exhibit a behavior in its foreign affairs that is not different from what would be expected from a country that once was a superpower, declined sharply, and is now, after recovering some strength and influence, trying to find its place in the international order

It must not be forgotten, however, that by its own nature, Russia is a revisionist country and is extremely sensitive to Western actions aimed at promoting liberal democratic principles and forging military alliances in what it still perceives as its regional "sphere of influence". As Degaut (2014a:5) notes



The Russian state was born and expanded in a state of semi-permanent warfare. Over the course of the country's history, from Imperial times to the Soviet era, the notion that its territory and resources were the object of neighboring and enemy states' expansionist and bellicose ambitions not only shaped Russian threat perceptions, but also contributed to forge a strong nationalism, which is part and parcel of the Russian national identity.

Russia's ambitions to greatness and its strategic culture appear to be based on "an almost obsessive perception of a general threat towards Russian sovereignty and territorial integrity" (Eitelhuber 2009:27), and a deep-rooted nationalism, focused on the achievement of its objectives: security influence. This line of action had already been stated in July 2008 when President Medvedev promulgated a new *Foreign Policy Concept* "to ensure national security, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity, [and] to achieve strong positions of authority in the world..."<sup>5</sup>.

The nature of the political culture in the country, associated to an authoritarian leadership style, help to influence its strategic culture. According to Ermarth (2006:6),

Russian political culture has been a major contributor to strategic culture, especially to its militarization. Political culture is itself very "martial" or harmonious with military values in that it is grounded on the principle of *kto-kovo* (literally "who-whom), i.e., who dominates over whom by virtue of coercive power or status imparted by higher authority.

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<sup>5</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. Available at [[www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38?OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38?OpenDocument)].

Russian political elites tend to see the characteristic traits of democracy, such as freedom of political expression, political pluralism, freedom of speech, and the due process of law “not as the enabling conditions of a legitimate polity, but as instruments to be manipulated, controlled or combated for the benefit of the central authority” (Ermarth 2006:6). This particular feature has important implications for Russian foreign policy. After overcoming the chaos that ensued the fragmentation of the USSR, Russian policymakers have expressed their intentions to “restore their nation back to its former great power status, which is a major driving factor in Russian foreign policy. The country not only wants to increase and project its influence and power in its geographic region, but also aims to be a more significant actor in the international arena” (Degaut 2014a:7).

Russian leaders view the international system fundamentally through a Realist perspective, according to which the need for a balance of power is a central pillar. In this environment, it is necessary to limit and counterbalance the political influence of the United States, considered as the main threat to Russia’s ambitions.

Russian foreign policy appears to reflect its political culture. The *who-whom* tradition impacts Russia’s international relations, since it might be translated as a propensity to consider “foreign states or actors as either enemies, or subjects, or transient allies, or useful fools to be manipulated” (Ermarth 2006:6). That tradition may be the reason why Russian leaders prefer to implement multipolar strategies

on the level of other major powers, be it through bilateral agreements or through forming a variety of coalitions, rather than through the framework of international institutions. This perspective also explains Russia’s increasing pressure on Armenia, Azerbaijan,

Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and also Ukraine to join the Eurasian Union, a trading bloc designed by Moscow to link Russia and its closest neighbors and meant to counterbalance the economic influence of the European Union in the region (Degaut 2014a:7).

That is also why Russia highly values its BRICS membership, for example, especially because the bloc's approach coincides perfectly with Russia's vision of a multipolar world. The group can provide Russia with a geopolitical cover, as it is considered not only another instrument to help counterbalance U.S. power, while avoiding a direct confrontation, but also as a platform to advance other Russian geostrategic interests, such as balancing China's rise. This is even more evident now that Russia has been excluded from the G8 after the invasion of Crimea, and might feel tempted to use the BRICS as an indication that it did not become isolated internationally. There is, however, a clear mismatch between Russia's intentions and the immediate aims of the other members. Contrary to their expectations and interests, Russia has pushed for further integration and wants to provide the bloc with a more defined institutional structure and even a defense council, but it has not been successful so far.

## CHAPTER 2 - BRAZIL'S FOREIGN POLICY HISTORY

### 2.1 Introduction

With an area of more than 3 million square miles, Brazil (Fig. 1) is a continental nation, occupying nearly half of the South American territory and bordering on all the other South American Nations, except Ecuador and Peru. Accounting for approximately 49% of South American population<sup>6</sup>, 60% of South America's GDP, and abounding in natural resources, Brazil, the “sleeping giant” has long been regarded as a potential world power. Like the other “monster countries”, Brazil has exhibited a remarkable measure of continuity in preserving its international identity. The country's continental scale, which comes not only from its size, but also from its political, diplomatic, and economic importance, is one of the main elements of its international identity. This section will briefly analyze the evolution of Brazil's foreign policy and examine how the country came to attain such continental scale.

A nation of immigrants, Brazil presents a population which is a mix of native indigenous Amerindians, descendents of slaves captured in Africa, and European families, particularly, Portuguese, Spanish, Germans, and Italians, as well as Lebanese and Japanese. According to Chaffee (2012:397), “Brazil is second only to Nigeria in terms of persons of African ancestry, and has the largest Japanese population outside of Japan”. Likewise, according to the

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<sup>6</sup> According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the current population of Brazil is estimated at a little over 204 million people. Retrieved from [<http://www.ibge.gov.br/apps/populacao/projecao/>]. Accessed August 25, 2015.

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Brazil has the largest concentration of Arabs outside the Middle East and North Africa<sup>7</sup> (MENA<sup>8</sup>). Of the estimated ten million Arabs or people of Arab ancestry living in Brazil, nearly seven million are descendant of Lebanese immigrants, which is a population greater than that of Lebanon itself. Most other Brazilians of Arab descent are mainly Syrian.

## 2.2 Colonial Times

Brazil, however, started as a small group of semiautonomous colonies originating from Portugal's overseas exploration, after seaman Pedro Álvares Cabral reached the Coroa Vermelha Bay, in today's state of Bahia, in April 22, 1500. Brazil's first contact with Europe through Portuguese settlers gave it a significantly distinct political, economic and social make-up when compared to the Spanish America. In contrast with the colonizing philosophy of the Spaniards, the first Portuguese settlers in Brazil were less focused on conquering, controlling, and developing the new colony. Most newcomers were far more interested in establishing profitable trade relations with the Portuguese metropolis and developing subsistence agriculture along the coastal areas, particularly in the Northeast region, "the territory that bulges east toward Africa"

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<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from [[http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Brazil\\_Profile2009.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Brazil_Profile2009.pdf)]. Accessed August 26, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The term MENA is an acronym referring to the Middle East and North Africa region, which encompasses 22 countries.

(Chaffee 2012:398), than in promoting territorial expansion. As a result, the country's vast interior remained largely unexplored during the first two centuries after discovery. However, even though most colonists established themselves along the coastal zones (a preference that continues to this day), a few brave men decided to venture into the hinterlands. Among them were Jesuit missionaries, who marched inland in search of native Indians to convert and “catequize”, and the *bandeirantes* (flag bearers), who marched inland in search of gold, silver, precious gemstones, and Indians to enslave.

The new colony immediately began to face internal and external challenges. In the wrong belief that the new land was devoid of mineral wealth and other riches, the Portuguese Crown initially seemed unwilling to establish a strong central government in the territory. Spain had found abundant silver and gold in its American possessions. However, since neither silver nor gold were found in Brazil, its economy was based on agricultural products, which were subsequently exported to Portugal. Likewise, the Portuguese had difficulties in colonizing Brazil, as not many people wanted to leave a thriving empire and start a new life in a place that apparently had nothing to offer. The first Portuguese settlement, São Vicente, in today's São Paulo state, was founded only in 1532. The task of colonization was delegated to low ranking nobles and rich merchants, called Captains or Donataries, who were bestowed full authority to administer huge extensions of land, often bigger than Portugal itself, called Capitánias Hereditárias (Hereditary Captaincies).

By 1549, it had already become evident that the Captaincies system (Fig. 2) was failing for a number of reasons. Some of the Captains never even set their feet in Brazil to explore their lands. Others, who did so, faced systematic attacks from hostile natives. Furthermore, the

Portuguese Crown not only never provided any kind of financial support to the Captains, but also levied heavy taxes on the donataries and their local production. In consequence, only two out of the 15 established Captaincies managed to thrive, thanks to the extensive cultivation of sugar cane, which adapted well to Brazilian soils, soon becoming its most important product: the previously mentioned São Vicente and Pernambuco, which gave rise to today's Pernambuco state.

Lisbon then decided to send a Governor-General, Tomé de Sousa, to oversee the Captains and to establish a central government in the territory. Supported by soldiers, priests, and craftspeople, Tomé de Sousa founded in 1549 the first colonial capital of Brazil, São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos (Holy Savior of the Bay of All Saints), one of the oldest colonial cities in the Americas, and known colloquially as Salvador, in today's Bahia state. Despite the new administrative structure, political power in the Brazilian colony was centered in the Captaincies and its municipalities.

Trade and communications among the Captaincies varied from scarce to non-existent. The Portuguese monarch also created a series of rules and laws, defined by a Colonial Pact, which established Brazilian complete submission to the metropolis. Traders in Brazil could only purchase and sell products from and to Portugal and to some of its economic partners if and when allowed by the Crown. That economic exclusivism/commercial monopoly sought to ensure that most Brazilian wealth would end up with in Lisbon or its creditors.

For nearly two centuries after Cabral's arrival, the Portuguese also had to periodically fight foreign powers which coveted the new territory. Although Portugal and Spain had signed

the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, the guidelines were excessively vague, causing occasional territory disputes. To make things worse, England, France, and Holland did not recognize the validity of the treaty, made by Papal decree, and aggressively sought to stage incursions to conquest parts of the Portuguese colony and to plunder the coast. The French were able to found a settlement in Rio de Janeiro, in 1555, known as *France Antarctique*, and another one in São Luís do Maranhão, in the North of Brazil, known as *France Équinoxiale*, in 1612. In both cases, the French were expelled by the Portuguese, in 1560 and 1614, respectively. Likewise, the Dutch managed to invade and control a long stretch of the Brazilian Northeastern coast, which accounted for almost half of Brazil's areas at the time, from 1630 to 1654, when Portuguese troops, supported by native Indians, black slaves, and Brazilians, finally defeated and expelled them. The Dutch only recognized the loss of its territories in Brazil in 1661 when a peace treaty was signed by both countries in The Hague. Finally, in 1669, the Dutch received from Portugal some 8 million florins, which was equivalent to 63 tons of gold, as compensation for the loss of the lands. Such territorial disputes made the Portuguese foothold in the New World tenuous at times. Anyway, to Lafer (2000b:211)

By means of such negotiations, Portugal reestablished diplomatically the monolithic character of its dominion in South America, which for a quarter of a century had been broken by the Dutch presence in Pernambuco. This foreign policy development had great importance for preserving what was to become the future of Brazilian territorial unity.

The initiatives of the *bandeirantes* finally proved successful, in a moment when efforts to penetrate the country's interior resulted in the massive discovery of gold in the early 1690s – and, afterwards, precious gemstones – in the south-central part of the country, which began to export



30,000 pounds of gold a year to Portugal. Brazil was the largest world's gold producer, accounting for nearly 40% of the global volume produced between 1701 and 1800 (Skidmore & Smith 1997), on average. As a result of the discoveries of the *bandeirantes*, over 2 million km<sup>2</sup> of Brazil's wilderness began to be colonized. In fact, as Burns (1967) observes, their relatively rapid and deep penetration into the unknown heartland of South America is considered one of the most epic chapters of Brazilian history.

Another consequence of that expansion, when the Luso-Brazilian occupation greatly exceeded their legal titles to land tracts, was the signature of the Treaty of Madrid, in 1750, by Portugal and Spain, which redrew, in a concrete way, the borders of their possessions in America. That agreement represented the end of the imaginary and uncertain lines of demarcation proposed by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. The treaty stipulated that boundaries would be determined by natural limits offered by geographic accidents such as rivers and mountains, and that each country should keep control of what it held thus far. In other words, the treaty promoted the concept that actual possession of the land takes precedence over simply having the title to the land. Commenting on the originality of the Luso-Brazilian approach to the successful diplomatic negotiations, Lafer (200b:212) explains that

In enshrining the principle of *uti possidetis*<sup>9</sup> as the title for acquisition of territory in South America, Luso-Brazilian diplomacy legitimized and allowed for the legalization, at

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<sup>9</sup> *Uti possidetis* (Latin for "as you possess") is an international law principle which states that a territory should remain with its possessor at the end of a conflict, unless otherwise provided for by treaty.

the international level, of the occupation of the territory that is now Brazil. This Portuguese heritage provided a continuous link with the past that Brazilian diplomacy would successfully explore<sup>10</sup>.

The Portuguese crown sought to ensure that the largest part of this newfound wealth would remain in its coffers, charging extremely high tributes and taxes over the amounts discovered and imposing severe rules over its exploration and trade. To best exert control over this new economic activity, and for a number of other political and administrative reasons, the colonial capital was transferred to Rio de Janeiro in 1763.

### *2.2.1 The Royal Family in Brazil*

So far, Portugal had successfully staved off invasions by other countries, allowing its main overseas colony to roughly take its current shape. Local producers and traders managed to add cotton and tobacco to sugar and mineral wealth on its list of exports. As the interior frontiers gradually opened so did the opportunities for cattle ranching. Still, the Crown's policies insisted on depriving Brazil of its resources rather than trying to developing a truly local economy. The

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<sup>10</sup> In that regard, Burns (1967:198) comments that “the Spaniards realized too late that they had forfeited half of the continent to the more restless Luso-Brazilians. In a rare moment of fraternal Iberian sentiment, they agreed in the Treaty of Madrid, 1750, to the principle of *uti possidetis*, thereby conceding to Brazil a frontier similar in its broad outlines to the modern one.

arrival of the Portuguese royal family in 1808, as a result of Napoleon's invasion and conquest of Portugal, gave rise to changes that radically transformed the economic, social and political outlook of Brazil.

Chased out of Portugal by Napoleon's army in 1808, the Prince Regent of Portugal Dom João and the royal family, followed by members of the Portuguese aristocracy, the bureaucratic elite, and some 15,000 people of the mainland establishment fled from Lisbon to the capital of its main overseas colony. The Portuguese Court was officially transferred to Rio de Janeiro, which was elevated to the status of new capital of the Lusitanian Empire (1808-1821). The transfer of the Court to a colony – a fact never before known in Western history – is usually considered the first step towards Brazil's independence in 1822. In fact, Brazilian historiography has consistently developed the idea that the arrival of the Portuguese Court gave rise to a political and economic split which concluded with the founding of the Empire of Brazil.

The arrival of Dom João and his entourage entirely transformed the new capital. New buildings were projected, roads were built, universities, military academies, banks, and appropriate bureaucratic/administrative/judicial institutions were founded, technical schools were established, massive investments were made to upgrade the city's infrastructure and its cultural life in keeping with a royal capital, and printing presses were brought in. Most importantly, the ports were opened to trade with other nations, particularly Great Britain, which represented the end of the so-called Colonial Pact and the economic exclusivism with the metropolis. To all effects, Brazil was then, in practice, an independent – and prosperous – country.

Subsequently, the colony was elevated, in 1815, to the rank of a United Kingdom along with Portugal, and Algarve, which meant that it was given equal standing with Portugal, as a kingdom in its own right. The former Captaincies become provinces, subject to a central authority. For the first time in Brazilian history, national politics and political power were truly centralized, which allowed the Crown to conserve the whole Brazilian territory united around a central government, thus avoiding the same fate of the Spanish empire in the Americas, whose four dominions<sup>11</sup> broke up into several independent countries. In that regard, Alencastro (2004:99) observes that “the implantation in America of a European national bureaucracy reinforced the role of Rio de Janeiro, endowing the Brazilian imperial capital with a state system and a trading centre capable of supervising the territory and population of the old Portuguese dominion”. In fact, the virtual transplantation of the metropolitan bureaucracy into Brazil provided the new capital of the empire with a political and administrative structure capable of uniting and incorporating all the regions of the Brazilian territory. The new situation also contributed to forge a sense of nationhood unknown until then, after all, Rio de Janeiro was the center of the Portuguese empire.

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<sup>11</sup> These four dominions were the Viceroyalty of New Spain, which gave rise to modern-day Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Cuba, among others; the Viceroyalty of New Granada and the viceroyalty of Peru, which led to the formation of the modern-day countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Venezuela, Peru, Chile, and Nicaragua; and the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata, which originated Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and, to some extent, Uruguay (which was, for a long time, a Brazilian province).

## 2.3 The Brazilian Empire

After Napoleon's defeat, the royal family was urged by Portuguese nationalists to return to Lisbon, which Dom João VI, now king of Portugal, did somewhat unwillingly in 1821, but not without first leaving the crown prince, Dom Pedro, in charge of Brazil as regent. Wisely, Dom João VI instructed his son to assume the leadership of an independence process, should it become inevitable. When the Portuguese parliament threatened to return Brazil to its previous subordinate state as a colony, the prince regent declared Brazil's independence from Portugal on September 1822, being proclaimed its first emperor, Dom Pedro I. Organized in the form of a constitutional empire, Brazil came to be the only monarchy – which lasted from 1822 to 1889 – in the New World. Nine years later, in 1831, following a period of internal political instability, social unrest, and a costly foreign war<sup>12</sup>, the emperor abdicated in favor of his five-year-old son, Dom Pedro II, which contributed to a further prolonged period of internal conflict. The country was ruled by a series of interim regents, of varying structure and composition, until 1840, when a

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<sup>12</sup> The Cisplatine Province (which corresponds to modern-day Uruguay) had been annexed to the Brazilian territory in 1821. In 1825, Local insurgents proclaimed its union to the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata (modern-day Argentina), which declared war against Brazil. The conflict ended in 1828, when a treaty intermediated by the Great Britain created Uruguay, which would serve as a buffer state between Brazil and Argentina. Anyway, “[t]his setback to Brazilian ambitions in the Rio de la Plata basin was financially and politically expensive for the emperor” (Skidmore & Smith 1997:150).

political maneuver in the Brazilian Parliament decreed Dom Pedro II, who was at the age of 14, “of age”, and thus able to assume full imperial powers.

During the next 40 years, “Dom Pedro II reigned rather than ruled” (Chaffee 2012:399). The young and beloved emperor appeared to encompass all the virtues of a constitutional monarchy. Able to minimize and overcome divergences between the two political parties of the time, the Liberal and the Conservative, Pedro II ushered the country into an era of relative political harmony and prosperity. The two first decades after he took power, particularly, were considered the golden years of the Second Empire.

The War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870), also known as the Paraguayan War, and the situation in the Rio de la Plata basin represented the empire’s most important foreign policy test. Although Uruguay was now an independent state, both Brazil and Argentina systematically sought to exert influence on the political life of that small border country. In the mid-1860s, Brazil and Argentina sought to replace the government in Montevideo, led by the National Party<sup>13</sup> (the “Blancos”) with a regime of their preference, formed by the Liberal Party (the “Colorados”). The Blancos decided to appeal to Paraguayan dictator Francisco Solano López (1862-70) for help, as Paraguay, with 64,000 soldiers, possessed by far the largest, better trained, and better equipped armed forces in the region, especially considering the meager 18,000 men of the Brazilian army.

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<sup>13</sup> The National Party, or the “Blancos”, was a conservative, nationalist party.

Ruling a small landlocked country, López not only seemed to harbor his own fears of the two neighboring and much larger countries, considering a threat to Uruguay as a potential threat to Paraguay's own survival, but also saw a political and military alliance with the Blancos as an opportunity to expand Paraguay's territory – by conquering Brazilian provinces of Rio Grande do Sul and Mato Grosso, and Argentinean provinces of Corrientes and Entre Ríos –, and eventually get an exit to the Atlantic ocean, through the rivers of the la Plata basin. In 1864, the governments of Brazil and Argentina, aware of their military disadvantage, secretly agreed to act together in case López were to intervene militarily in Uruguay to support the Blancos. In September of that year, Brazil sent troops into Uruguay to put the Colorados in power. Paraguay reacted by attacking the province of Mato Grosso and by seizing Brazilian vessels in the region. López also invaded Corrientes, in Argentinean territory, to reach Rio Grande do Sul. On 1 May 1865, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, now led by the Colorados, signed a military alliance to fight Paraguay and to remove López from power.

Due to fierce internal opposition to his war policy, Argentina's President Bartolomé Mitre was forced to take most of his troops back home, leaving the Brazilian army almost entirely alone in what seemed to be an unequal war which offered nothing but prospects for failure, defeat, and misery. At first, the Brazilians did suffer humiliating defeats. Despite all odds, however, and with stubborn determination after greatly increasing and improving its army – and also due to a massive and costly war effort –, Brazilian troops were finally able to defeat

the Paraguayan army and to chase dictator López until Asunción<sup>14</sup>, where he was cornered and killed. Paraguay ended the war as a country in ruins.

The Triple Alliance War had several important consequences for Brazil and the Southern Cone. It ensured free access to the Rio de Plata basin, pleasing European investors and traders, particularly the French and the British. It gave rise to a short period of close relations between Brazil and Argentina. However, the structural weakness of both Paraguay and Uruguay and their political, financial, and economic dependence on the region's major powers, particularly Brazil, cemented an enduring Brazilian-Argentine rivalry which, not rarely, assumed warlike postures<sup>15</sup>.

To Brazil, the conflict provided “the first real focus of nationalism, a national military hero, the Duke of Caxias, and the first counterweight to the extreme federalism of Brazil in the form of an active national military” (Chaffee 2012:399). In fact, the war – which had exposed Brazil's lack of economic and productive infrastructure, as well as of military personnel, equipment, professionalism, training, and organization – brought the military firmly into the political scenario. The war also contributed to the increased power of the central government, and “provoked the emperor into unprecedented steps in asserting his authority” (Skidmore & Smith 1997:153). Military officers blamed these shortcomings on Dom Pedro II and his civilian Cabinet. Discontented and reformist officers, eager to modernize the country and the army,

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<sup>14</sup> Brazilian troops remained in occupied Asunción until 1876, in part to prevent the annexation of more Paraguayan territory by Argentina.

<sup>15</sup> However, the Paraguayan War was the last time that both Brazil and Argentina took such an open interventionist role in Paraguay and Uruguay's internal political life.



began to criticize Brazilian political structure as an insurmountable obstacle to modernization. As Chaffee (2012:399) points out, “[t]he need for national economic development, as a result, came from the military, which saw itself as the only force really interested in the good of the nation as a whole”.

#### 2.4 The Republican Era: The First Republic (1889-1930)

The final years of the Brazilian monarchy were dominated by discussions about the legitimacy of the monarchical system. In its final decade, the empire was experiencing “a crisis in each of the three pillars of the imperial regime – the church, the military, and the slaveholding system [...]. In the end, the empire fell because the elites did not need it to protect their interests” (McCann 1998:50). Taking advantage of successive cabinet crises in 1888 and 1889 – caused in part by the Emperor’s increasingly centralizing and conservative measures – and of rising discontentment in the military ranks, republican leaders, headed reluctantly by Field Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca<sup>16</sup>, engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow the monarchy. What began as an ultimatum followed by military protests demanding replacement of a conservative cabinet turned within a few hours into an entirely peaceful coup d’état, with no popular participation and little

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<sup>16</sup> An old monarchist and a personal friend to Emperor Dom Pedro II, Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca originally intended only to demand the new cabinet’s resignation. He was, however, manipulated by the republicans “into fathering a republic”, as McCann (1998:55) correctly observes.

upheaval, which deposed Emperor Pedro II and proclaimed the republic, on 15 November 1889, at 8:30 in the morning. As a whole, Brazilian people were mere bystanders to the dramatic events that would radically transform the country's political and social life and shape the course of their history.

Not surprisingly, the first decade of republican life was one of turmoil, marked by civil uprisings throughout the country, political instability, financial crisis, and economic depression. As the country had very few people experienced in representative government, the 1891 republican constitution was almost entirely modeled on the constitution of the United States, seen as a nation in which the new Brazilian republic should mirror itself to achieve economic development, due to a set of perceived similar features, such as size, economic needs, and political ideologies. One of the first tasks facing the new government was therefore to “knot the scattered threads of Brazilian-American relations and to fortify a friendship which dated from Brazil's first years as an independent state” (Ganzert 1942:432).

#### *2.4.1 New Foreign Policy Priorities*

In an attempt to entirely disassociate itself from the old political regime, the republican government sought to break with the country's imperial past and implement a new diplomatic strategy, based on a new set of foreign policy priorities. Burns (1967) identifies four main foreign policy goals to be achieved by the fledgling republic, eager to play a new role on the international scenario. First, the country should seek to ensure that the new government would be recognized and, simultaneously – desirous of emerging in the concert of nations as a modern

country –, work to increase the country’s international prestige. For that reason, Brazil began to actively take part in international conferences, eventually becoming one of the founding members of many early international organizations, such as the Permanent Court of Arbitration, established in 1902, and the League of Nations, established in 1920. Brazil also not only sent a large delegation to the Second Peace Conference of The Hague, held in 1907, but also presided over the important commission responsible for international arbitration. Brazil also took part in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, which, following the end of the First World War I, would draft the peace agreements regarding the defeated Central Powers (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire). Likewise, many other events contributed to give the Brazilian government the impression that this policy was indeed being effective, and that the prestige of the country abroad was on the rise: the archbishop of Rio de Janeiro was honored by the Vatican with the first cardinalate in Latin America (1905); American legation in Brazil was elevated to embassy rank, which made Rio de Janeiro receive the only United States ambassador accredited in South America, the same happening to the Brazilian legation in Washington (1904); and Rio de Janeiro hosted the Third Pan-American Conference (1906).

Second, aware of its resources and capabilities – especially when compared to most of its regional neighbors –, Brazil sought to exercise a leadership role in Latin America, particularly in South America. The defense of what would be Brazil’s *lebensraum*<sup>17</sup> included the consolidation

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<sup>17</sup> In broad lines, the German term *lebensraum* is a reference to a country’s “vital space”, or the territory necessary for national survival. The concept will be discussed in further details in chapters 4 and 5.

of the national territory, the immediate resolution, always in favoring and peaceful terms, of pending boundary disputes with neighboring countries, and a more prominent role in regional affairs. As Lafer (2014b:214) states, “it is not easy to find, in the history of international relations, a negotiating performance and an exclusively peaceful pattern similar to the Brazilian one in the establishment of national borders”. In fact, although Brazil is one of the countries with the largest numbers of neighbors – ten –, its modern map was drawn in an overwhelmingly predominantly peaceful way, as opposed to the United States, for example, whose borders were changed, to a significant extent, at the expense of the Mexican territory.

Third, the government promoted a geostrategic reorientation of the main axis of its foreign policy from Europe – particularly London – towards the United States. Burns (1967:198) remembers that “[t]hroughout the nineteenth century Great Britain enjoyed a commercial and financial monopoly over Brazil, and the English government served as the unofficial model for the Second Empire”. That assumption was not valid anymore. Now, the United States would become not only Brazil’s main political partner<sup>18</sup>, but would also serve as a role model the young republic could observe and emulate. As Cervo & Bueno (2008:165) noted, “this Americanism marked the flourishing republic almost as in opposition to the Europeism with which the monarchy was identified”.

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<sup>18</sup> By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the United States already was Brazil’s main trading partner (Cervo & Bueno 2008), taking half of Brazil's total exports by 1926. Likewise, by the late 1920s, United States banks held nearly 35 percent of Brazilian foreign debt (McCann 1998).

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs never missed an opportunity to underscore the political affinities and the deep ties of friendship which existed between the two countries. Baron of Rio Branco, the first minister of foreign affairs of the new regime, for example, used to repeat that not only the United States was the first country to set up a diplomatic mission in Brazil in 1808, in Rio de Janeiro, after the transfer of the Portuguese royal court to Brazil, but also that Brazil was the first Latin American nation to accept the Monroe Doctrine<sup>19</sup>, recognizing it as an “element for the territorial defense of the continent” (Cervo & Bueno 2008:178), which should be supported, through cooperative and joint action, by the main republics in the Americas. Brazilian jurist and historian Clóvis Bevilacqua (1910:171), author of the Brazilian Civil Code of 1916 and one of the most respected lawmakers of the time, perfectly summarized the elite’s perception of the issue:

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<sup>19</sup> The Monroe Doctrine was formulated in U.S. President James Monroe's seventh annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823. According to Monroe, European countries should not interfere in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. Assertive, the doctrine warns European powers that the United States would not tolerate further attempts of colonization or recolonization of any territories in the Americas or the installation of puppet monarchs. Probably the best known U.S. policy toward the Western Hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine was primarily conceived to meet major concerns of the moment. However, it did not take long to become a major watchword of U.S. policy in the region. Information excerpted from *Milestone Documents* (1995), Washington, DC: The National Archives and Records Administration, pp. 26–29.

[T]he Monroe Doctrine [...] is an expression of the consciousness of its [hemispheric] unity, revealed by the continent, and the affirmation that the nations of this hemisphere ought to be considered as equally free and sovereign by the powers of the Old World; that their territory cannot, therefore, be acquired by them by any title, nor even temporarily occupied.

It seems that that perception had actually been long cultivated in Brazilian political thinking. In fact, Dom Pedro I's emissaries even got to propose to the American government to enter into a convention with the purpose of creating an offensive and defensive alliance to protect Brazil against eventual colonizing attempts of Portugal. Obviously also thinking in its own benefit, Brazil was ready to sacrifice men and money to encourage the cause of liberty in the hemisphere. According to Ganzert (1942:437), the offer was declined by the American government, "ostensibly because of the improbability of Portugal's attempting to regain Brazil, but actually because of the reluctance of the Washington government to depart from its policy of formal diplomatic isolation".

Fourth, aware that this informal "unwritten alliance" between the most important countries in the hemisphere might generate suspicious reactions on the part of its Spanish-speaking neighbors, Brazil also sought to reduce frictions and points of divergence with Latin countries by engaging more actively in an emerging Pan-Americanist movement, which presented as its most important objective to establish a political platform to discuss issues of common defense and commercial cooperation (Salvatore 2013). As Burns (1967:199) remembered, "the visit of Elihu Root to Rio de Janeiro in 1906, the first visit of a secretary of state abroad, climaxed the growing entente between the two giant republics and served notice to

the rest of the hemisphere of the special relationship existing between them”. Alsina Jr. (2014) pointed out another reason for this new and less contentious approach: the lack of significant military resources led Brazil to try not to antagonize its neighbors, particularly Argentina, which was then experiencing an unprecedented economic growth. Anyway, in order to avoid becoming more isolated in its own neighborhood, it then became fundamental for Brazil to propose and implement confidence-building measures and build on points of convergence with the suspicious Latin republics. In this context, the Pan-American movement – “a doctrine that promoted a systematic and persistent effort in economic, intellectual, and cultural integration within the Western Hemisphere” (Salvatore 2013:28) – seemed to provide an adequate platform to dissipate enmities and to further collective regional projects.

The ideal of Pan-Americanism grew out of the pioneering First International Conference of American States, organized by the United States and held in Washington in 1889–1890, which counted with the participation of delegates from most of the countries in the hemisphere. Initially, however, Brazil did not want take part, as Brazilian diplomats, still predominantly monarchists, believed that the United States were trying to consolidate a sphere of influence in the continent, and thus reacted unfavorably to any initiatives that might somehow contribute to reduce Brazil’s margins of maneuver abroad (Cervo & Bueno 2008). Likewise, politically separated from the rest of the continent for over one hundred and sixty years due to its unique monarchical institutions, the Brazilian Empire tended to harbor deep suspicions of its republican neighbors, which expressed the same feelings towards Brazil.

With the advent of the republic, however, that stance was radically altered. In fact, the founding of the republic was received with reservation in Europe, especially in England, but was

enthusiastically hailed in South America, particularly in Argentina (Fausto 2014). Brazil not only adopted a more cooperative approach towards Latin American countries, now seen as “sister republics” (Burns 1967:198) – particularly Argentina and Chile –, but also hosted the successful Third Pan-American Conference, in 1906, from July 21 to August 26<sup>20</sup>. While the original project of a hemispheric customs union, proposed by the American government, was soon forgotten, cooperation in a broad range of issues, including trade, finances, defense, and the arbitration of inter-American disputes, made substantial progress. This new stance can be clearly seen in the farewell speech to the Rio de Janeiro Conference, delivered by the Baron of Rio Branco, Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs on 27 August 1906<sup>21</sup>:

Brazilian patriotism has nothing aggressive, and [...] faithful to the traditions of our foreign policy, we shall ever labor to strengthen our good relations with the countries of our continent, and particularly with those nearest us. Neither can a dense population, nor any hardships of material life, render Brazil an object of suspicion to the other nations who occupy our American Continent. What we wish for the border Republics and for every one of the nations of America is only peace, intelligent initiatives and fruitful endeavors [...]”.

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<sup>20</sup> The Second Pan-American Conference was held in Mexico City, from October 22, 1901, to January 31, 1902.

<sup>21</sup> Source: International American Conference, 1906: Acts, Resolutions, Documents. (1907). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Imprensa Nacional, pp. 405.



Considered in a broader context, these four main axes of a renewed foreign policy pursued by the fledgling Brazilian republic – which, in general lines, would remain untouched until the end of the so-called First Republic (1889-1930) – can also be understood as an attempt to diffuse the country's relative dependency among the most powerful countries of the time, extracting potential benefits from all of them, so that none could seek to establish a sphere of influence in Brazil without being checked by another powerful nation. So, for example, financial dependency on the United Kingdom would be balanced by increasing economic and commercial ties with the United States; likewise, the growing political alliance with the American government would be balanced by strong military ties with France, which remained as a major cultural model for the country's elites, and, increasingly, Germany.

#### *2.4.2 The World War I*

The “war to end all wars” has incomprehensibly deserved little attention in Brazilian historiography. Brazil's small military contribution does not diminish the high political significance of its role in the armed conflict, nor does it hide the fact that Brazil was the only South American nation to declare war on Germany and the Central countries, as well as the only Latin American country to engage militarily in the conflict. On the contrary, the war may have represented a turning point for Brazil, serving as a wake-up call that made it clear to Brazilian leaders that the country not only needed to play a more substantial role in global politics, but also needed to rally domestic support around that national project, which included driving domestic economic reforms and military modernization.

At the beginning of the conflict, Brazil had initially declared its neutrality, on 4 August 1914, a stance that was in line with the position adopted by Latin American countries and the United States, and in fact Brazil had no great reason to involve itself. On the contrary, Brazil had every reason not to get involved: it had strong economic and political ties with the British and the American, cultural ties with the French, and growing and important economic and military ties with the German. The immediate cause of Brazil's entry into the war, however, was the repeated sinking of a number of Brazilian merchant vessels by German submarines, consequence of the all-out submarine warfare unleashed by the German High Command in January 1917. A few months later, on April 11, 1917, Brazil decided to break diplomatic relations with Germany. Finally, on October 26, the Brazilian government declared war on the Central Powers.

Although Brazil was unprepared economically, militarily and technologically to engage in a major armed conflict, the country's modest participation in the war effort included sending a medical mission and a small expeditionary mission to France, to fight alongside British and French forces. The country was also charged with patrolling the South Atlantic and sweeping mines off the West African coast.

As limited as Brazil's role in the conflict might have been, it brought some positive consequences for the country. From a military standpoint, the armed forces drew on the experience acquired during the First World War. Brazil signed a number of military cooperation projects with Italy, France, the United States, and Great Britain. French and Italian troops were drafted to train Brazilian troops, particularly pilots, which would eventually give birth to a newly created Air Force in 1942. France sent a military aviation mission to Brazil, along with the first tanks of the Brazilian army. The United States established a naval mission in Brazil, while the

British proposed to create a military industrial park in the country, able to build war and merchant ships, airplanes, weapons and ammunitions, as well as iron and steel products. Increasingly professionalized and well-trained, Brazilian armed forces experienced a growth from some 18,000 men in 1917 to over 175,000 by the end of the Second World War, conflict to which Brazil sent a much larger Expeditionary Force (FEB)<sup>22</sup> of some 25,000 men (Cervo & Bueno 2008).

Economically, Brazil also benefited from the disruption of traditional international trade flows, caused by the war. As Brazil became one of the main suppliers of agricultural and mineral products to Europe, particularly meat, fish, and iron ore, its trade balance posted repeated surpluses not only during the period of the war, but also during the first half of the 1920s. Most importantly, Brazil was forced to reduce its dependency on imported goods, creating an economic environment that initially merely sought to stimulate domestic industries, but which would later give rise to an import substitution industrialization process<sup>23</sup> (ISI) which would last for the next decades, resulting in one of the largest and most diversified industrial complexes in the developing world.

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<sup>22</sup> Brazilian Expeditionary Force

<sup>23</sup> Basically, an import substitution industrialization process refers to a set of trade and economic policies which advocates replacing foreign imports with domestic production. It is based on the premise that a country should seek to reduce its dependency on imported goods through the local production of industrialized products.

The Brazilian government also hoped to reap a number of benefits in the political realm. Immediately after the war, the British and Italian legations in Rio de Janeiro were elevated to the rank of embassy. Likewise, Brazil's active role in the 1919 Conference of Paris, the international peace talks which led to the creation of the League of Nations – the predecessor to the United Nations – boosted the country's image in terms of its international standing and involvement in global diplomacy.

## 2.5 The Vargas Era

One of the most important Brazilian politicians of all times, Getúlio Vargas ruled Brazil as the head of a Provisional Government from 1930 to 1934, as president elected by the National Congress from 1934 to 1937, as dictator from 1937 to 1945<sup>24</sup>, and as president elected by popular vote from 1951 to 1954. Under Vargas, the country not only experienced a major military modernization, but also sought to effectively turn its foreign policy into an instrument to promote and strengthen national socio-economic development. Although keeping the general lines of the First Republic's foreign policy, Vargas sought to pursue a more pragmatic approach to Brazil's international relations. Foreign trade, particularly, was of paramount economic and

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<sup>24</sup> The new authoritarian regime installed by Vargas was called *Estado Novo* (New State). According to Conniff (1991:557), “Vargas's New State was milder than most European fascist regimes, though it was harsher than anything Brazilians had experienced for several generations”.

political significance, given that Brazil was experiencing a fledgling industrialization process and needed to import the machines, equipment, material, and the basic infrastructure and know-how necessary to reorient its economy away from the production of primary goods. The domestic and external circumstances that led to Brazil's participation in the Second World War should be seen within the context of this pragmatic approach.

With the impending war just over the horizon, Vargas sought to maneuver between Nazi Germany and the Western countries, especially the United States, in an attempt to maximize potential benefits that Brazil might obtain from a new global confrontation. More specifically, by conducting his "pendulum" policy of swinging deftly from the USA to Germany and back again, Vargas was determined to find out which partner was potentially more willing to help Brazil to equip and modernize its armed forces, as well as which one was better prepared to offer the most favorable terms and conditions in foreign trade, reasons why he actively sought to explore the best possible opportunities created by a renewed competition for influence in Brazil between the United States and Germany. In that regard, Moura (2013:68) asserts that

On the whole, Brazil foreign policy in the thirties can be best described as an oscillation between one great power and the other in terms of commercial, political and military issues. This policy of pragmatic equilibrium between the USA and Germany produced a number of commercial benefits and increased Brazil's bargaining power in the years ahead.

In that context, the Germans had already identified Brazil as a first-class economic and trading partner<sup>25</sup>, endeavoring to exercise leverage over this bilateral relationship. The Nazi regime, however, seemed to be interested in more than trade. As Skidmore (1999:119) notes, “[t]hey also wanted to draw Brazil into the German politico-military sphere. They systematically cultivated Brazilian army officers known to be admirers of German military prowess. They also offered Brazil arms and technical training”. The American government expressed its concerns about the German strategy and the growing extent of its penetration into Brazilian governmental institutions.

In fact, it was widely known that many high ranking public officials and military officers, such as the Minister of War, General Eurico Gaspar Dutra, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Góis Monteiro, sympathized with the fascist regimes in Europe, particularly the Nazi regime. To deepen Washington’s concerns about which path the country would choose in case a war did break out, Brazil’s Southern region hosted a large colony of German immigrants<sup>26</sup> which could – Washington feared – make the government incline towards favoring Hitler’s regime. Possessing at least two strategic assets that the Allied powers would certainly need, Brazil was regarded by the U.S. government as an important player in the impending conflict:

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<sup>25</sup> By that time, Germany already was the second most important trading partner of Brazil (Skidmore 1999).

<sup>26</sup> After the United States, Brazil has the largest German-Austrian population outside their respective countries. Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). Retrieved from [<http://www.ibge.gov.br/apps/populacao/projecao/>].

First, as a major supplier of raw materials; Second, its strategic geographical location. In fact, its relative proximity to the African coast meant that the country's Northeastern region coastline could not only be used as a main launching base for American forces, but could also serve to effectively control transatlantic air and sea traffic on the Atlantic Ocean.

When the Second World War broke out, Vargas cautiously adopted a position of neutrality, seeking to keep good trade relations with both the Axis powers and the Allied powers. As the war progressed, however, the U.S. intensified its efforts to bring Brazil back into its orbit of influence and to reduce Axis influence on the continent. For example, in March 1941, the American government proposed to “supply the Brazilian Government US\$ 100,000,000 in military and naval material under Lend Lease Bill provisions”<sup>27</sup>. The U.S. not only promised to provide military equipment and training, as well as the construction of a series of military bases along Brazil's Northeastern coastline, but it also promised to finance the construction of Brazil's first large-scale steel mill, located at Volta Redonda, in Rio de Janeiro state. As Skidmore (1999:120) stresses, this situation “set the precedent for American government support of basic industrialization in a Third World country”.

The American political and economic offensive in Brazil proved successful. In late 1941, Vargas revoked the country's neutrality, putting an end to his geopolitical double game. On 22 January 1942, Brazil terminated diplomatic relations with the Axis powers, and on 22 August

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<sup>27</sup> Source: Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty (Historical Archives of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Memos from the American Embassy to Itamaraty, March 19, 1941. AHI/RE/EUA/Notas recebidas.

1942, Brazil joined the Allied and declared war on the Axis powers. Among a number of other important contributions, Brazil sent an Expeditionary Force of some 25,000 men – led by General Mascarenha de Moraes – to Italy, where it fought alongside the U.S. Fifth Army. Brazil was, once again, the only Latin American country to send troops to fight in Europe, along with Mexico

As a whole, the Second World War brought a number of positive results for Brazil, the construction of the Volta Redonda steel mill being probably the most important one. Furthermore, the Army and the navy were fully re-equipped and modernized, and the Air Force was created. The alliance with the United States not only turned Brazil into America's most conspicuous Latin American partner in the war, but also established a cooperative military relationship that lasted into the 1970s<sup>28</sup>. Finally, by figuring among the victorious Allied powers, Brazil had its international prestige – not to mention its national pride –boosted, which was somehow reflected in the negotiations that eventually led to the creation of the United Nations.

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<sup>28</sup> That cooperation was, however, limited, as the United States did not want to encourage a Brazilian preeminence over Latin America. The mere idea of a Brazilian primacy in Latin America was not accepted by the American government, which considered the region as part of its sphere of influence, and thus its own preeminence should be taken for granted. For that reason, the American government advocated the idea of “equality” among Latin countries, which, according to Moura (2013:208), meant “equality in terms of the subordinate position all such countries occupied within the American *power system*. From this arose the need to restrict, as far as possible, the supply of arms to Brazil”.



Although Brazil took active part in the establishment of the new organization since its beginning, as a founding member, it had not realized yet that issues regarding post-war reconstruction and the necessary political arrangements would basically be a matter for the Great Powers (USA, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and, perhaps, France). Once again, Brazil failed to obtain a permanent seat on the new organization's Security Council, having to content itself with a few consolation prizes, such as a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for a two-year mandate, and the "right" to deliver the inaugural speech at the Extraordinary General Assembly, a tradition which has been observed ever since<sup>29</sup>. In spite of what actually appeared to be a resounding humiliation to national diplomacy, Brazilian diplomats hailed these consolation

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<sup>29</sup> Likewise, the Chief of the Brazilian delegation to the United Nations, Oswaldo Aranha, a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former Brazilian ambassador to the United States, was elected as the first Chairman of the Security Council, Chairman of the First Extraordinary General Assembly, and, subsequently, Chairman of the Second General Assembly in September 1947.

prizes as a “significant triumph”<sup>30</sup> and as “brilliant conquests achieved by Brazilian foreign policy”<sup>31</sup>.

## 2.6 The Second Republic (1945-1964)

In late October 1945, a bloodless military coup ended Vargas’s dictatorship. Democratic elections held on December 2 that year gave victory to General Gaspar Dutra, former Minister of war and a close Vargas collaborator in the New State regime. The general lines of Vargas’s foreign policy were kept almost in its entirety, with the exception of the maintenance of diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, established by Vargas and broken off by Dutra, a fervent anticommunist, who ardently supported American initiatives in the initial stages of the Cold War.

Still under the illusion of being a “special ally” to the United States, Dutra promoted an almost unconditional alignment with the American government<sup>32</sup>, whose main political

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<sup>30</sup> Source: Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty (Historical Archives of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Memos from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the delegation at the UN Preparatory Committee, December 1, 1945. AHI/DE/ONU/Telegramas expedidos.

<sup>31</sup> Source: Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty (Historical Archives of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Report from the Brazilian Delegation at the UN to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 13, 1946. AHI/DE/ONU/Ofícios recebidos.

consequence was the signature of the **Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance**, more commonly known as the Rio Treaty, the Rio Pact, or by its Portuguese acronym **TIAR**, from *Tratado Interamericano de Assistência Recíproca*, in 2 September 1947, in Rio de Janeiro. That agreement between American republics enshrined as its basic principles the idea of peaceful settlement of disputes and that any aggression against one American nation was tantamount to an attack on them all. It represented, in its essence, an initiative of the American government to coordinate Latin American military efforts under its leadership in the global struggle against communism. As Moura (2013:260) put it, the agreement “was to constitute a *political façade* for United States-Latin American military collaboration”, aimed to help consolidate the American power system. That objective had already been identified by the Brazilian ambassador in Washington, Carlos Martins, who warned Itamaraty that the Inter-American Military Cooperation Program, launched by the Eisenhower administration in 1945, and the TIAR would serve to “consolidate an anti-Russian front, eliminate centres of anti-American propaganda and politically organize the defence of the hemisphere”<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> In that regard, Moura (2013:242) interestingly observes that “whereas under Vargas alignment with the United States was regarded as an *instrument* of Brazilian foreign policy, under Dutra’s rule this alignment actually became the *objective* of that policy, both in multilateral and bilateral terms”.

<sup>33</sup> Source: Arquivos Históricos do Itamaraty (Historical Archives of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Memos from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington to Itamaraty, August 30, 1946. AHI/MDB/Washington/Cartas-telegramas recebidas.

The same concerns about regional collective security and the threat imposed by an aggressive and expansionist Soviet Union led to the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS), on 30 April 1948, during the Ninth International Conference of the American States held in Bogotá. According to Trask (1977)<sup>34</sup>, the new regional organization summarized America policies to Latin American regarding “security, determination to maintain political and economic hegemony, and the promotion of its own brand of democracy”. Such projects of perpetuation of political and military hegemony would then be disguised under vague promises of economic cooperation with Latin countries and financial assistance for development programs. Moura (2013:273) stresses that, in a melancholy way, the Brazilian delegation to the Bogotá Conference – headed João Neves da Fontoura, a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs – “still motivated by the concept of Brazil as a ‘special ally’, closely adhered to the orientation of the US delegation [and] accepted the economic formulations proposed by the US delegates and were even willing to explain those formulations to the other delegations”.

For Brazil, one of the main products of this “unequal” alliance between the most important countries in the hemisphere was military cooperation. In order to increase its military potential in Latin America, Brazilian military establishment was undergoing a major reorganization and modernization. Following the guidelines provided by the Joint Brazil-United

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<sup>34</sup> Apud Moura, Gerson (2013). *Brazilian foreign relations, 1939-1950: the changing nature of Brazil-United States relations during and after the Second World War*. Brasília, Brazil: FUNAG, p. 271.

States Military Commission (JBUSMC), established in 1942, the Brazilian armed forces, particularly the army, were being reorganized according to the U.S. military model, which included the creation, in August 1949, of the *Escola Superior de Guerra*<sup>35</sup> (ESG), modeled on the U.S. National War College. In a world divided into two increasingly antagonistic blocs, the new *Escola* – to which many American officers were assigned to teach – would have as one of its main theoretical underpinnings the combined notion of national security and hemispheric security. In that context, Brazilian authorities did believe that, although Brazil was essentially a peaceful nation, it had the duty and the military potential to collaborate with the United States for hemispheric defense in case a new global confrontation broke out.

In 1951, Getúlio Vargas came back to power, this time as a democratically elected president, with 49% of the votes, governing Brazil until his suicide in 1954, for political reasons<sup>36</sup>. Vargas had a strong conviction that an unconditional alignment with the United States would not create a “special connection” which would result in major economic, political or military benefits to Brazil. On the contrary, two of the most important characteristics of his foreign policy are the search for autonomy and an increasing nationalism. Vargas truly believed that the United States failed to offer major concrete benefits that Brazil deserved for its loyalty

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<sup>35</sup> Superior War College, in English. The ESG would play a major role in the authoritarian military dictatorship which ruled Brazil from April 1, 1964 to March 15, 1985.

<sup>36</sup> Vargas committed suicide after the High Command of the Armed Forces demanded he resign. Vargas final political act, along with the massive popular protests generated after his death, prevented a probable military coup from taking place.

and for providing bases, natural resources, and troops during World War II. This apparent lack of postwar benefits contributed to lead the Vargas administration to refuse sending troops to fight in the Korean War alongside American troops.

In line with the nationalists, Vargas grew more and more suspicious of foreign nations, and particularly of foreign interests in Brazil. In that context, Brazil should be able to control and exploit its own economic resources, particularly its oil reserves, and to stimulate its own industrial sector. In 1953, encouraged by the nationalist campaign, Vargas created a new state-run petroleum company, the *Petróleo Brasileiro S.A.*<sup>37</sup>, more commonly known as **Petrobrás**, which enjoyed a monopoly over oil exploration and extraction in the country for over forty years, and became one of the largest oil companies in the world.

### *2.6.1 The Post-Vargas Period (1954-1964)*

These two characteristics, search for autonomy and nationalism – which could also be translated as the pursuit of increased development and greater diplomatic independence – were further reinforced in subsequent governments, becoming a “hallmark” of Brazilian foreign policy, and rendering prestige and leadership to the country. These two features, however, were only two of the most conspicuous principles that guided Brazilian external action, which also included the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the rejection of the use of force to resolve disputes between states, international disarmament, decolonization, international cooperation for

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<sup>37</sup> In English, Brazilian Petroleum Corporation.

development, the unconditional defense of the principles of self-determination and non-intervention, and support for the full emancipation of non-autonomous territories. Brazilian diplomacy also “put great hope in the United Nations as an instrument of peace as well as a balance to regional organizations such as the Organization of American States, which they felt to be too much under the influence of the United States” (Burns 1993:203).

In fact, the existence of fissures in the international system, which paved the way to the Conference of Bandung, in 1955, and the Conference of Belgrade, in 1961, and eventually gave rise to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)<sup>38</sup>, also allowed some margin of maneuver for Brazilian diplomacy to pursue a nationalism of ends in a much clearer manner. For example, the Operation Pan-America, proposed by President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) to President Eisenhower in May 1958, to solve Latin America’s disease of underdevelopment, should be understood as an attempt to foster political and economic cooperation within the inter-American system, at a time when relations between the United States and Latin countries had reached one of its lowest historical points, and a strong anti-Americanism was on the rise across the region. With the United States, as the main source of economic support, the Operation Pan-America was intended to serve as a “Marshall Plan” to a neglected Latin America. Its main objective was to unite all countries of the hemisphere around a continental economic and social development

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<sup>38</sup> Created in the 1961 Belgrade Summit, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries sought to establish itself as a forum for political concertation between developing countries, who aimed at the preservation of political independence in an international scenario in which countries were expected to automatically side with one the two contending superpowers.

project aimed at fighting poverty and overcoming underdevelopment, as it can be seen in this *Aide Mémoire sent by the Government of Brazil to Governments of Other American States, on August 9, 1958*<sup>39</sup>:

“The following points might be the basic objectives of the Operation:

1. Reaffirmation of the principles of hemispheric solidarity;
2. Recognition of underdevelopment as a problem of common interest;
3. Adaptation of inter-American organs and agencies, if necessary, to the requirements of more dynamic action to carry on the struggle against underdevelopment;
4. Technical assistance for increased productivity; [...]”.

Although more an intention than a real project, the Operation Pan-America produced positive results. More directly, it led the United States to pay a renewed attention to Latin American development problems. In an indirect manner, it resulted in the creation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), established in 1959, and the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), established in 1960. It also resulted in John F. Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress, in 1961, aimed to improve hemispheric economic cooperation, and through which the United States pledged \$20 billion in assistance to Latin American governments.

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<sup>39</sup> Source: Council of the Organization of American States, Special Committee to Study the Formulation of New Measures for Economic Cooperation, *Volume L, Report and Documents, First Meeting, Washington, D.C., November 17-December 12, 1958* (Washington, D.C.:1959), pp. 29-31.



Unfortunately, the Alliance for Progress did not live up to the expectations and did not achieve its lofty goals. Kennedy himself compared the Alliance to the Marshall Plan, but he was aware that the American Congress was not willing to allocate those funds to a region that was not considered priority without tying them to political anti-Communist initiatives. Furthermore, American business interests seemed to be more interested in the safety of their private investments in Latin America than in promoting any social reform. As a result, many Latin American countries remained deeply skeptical of American motives, eventually rejecting their economic assistance.

The foreign policy pursued by the administrations of Jânio Quadros (January 31-August 25, 1961) and João Goulart (August 1961- March 1964) was based on the same guiding principles and followed the same nationalist line of action. As Cervo and Bueno (2008) observe, the *Política Externa Independente*<sup>40</sup> (PEI), as the Brazilian foreign policy of the time came to be known, was therefore a continuous process, rather than a project conceived in details. This new policy had as one of its main axis the “disengagement” of Brazil from the logic of the Cold War. Brazil thus owed no allegiance, obedience or loyalty to any of the antagonistic ideological blocs headed by the contending global superpowers. Any automatic alignment would fundamentally go against Brazil’s best interests. Burns (1993:204) stresses that, in that context, a “rigid adherence to that [Western] bloc and subservience to the leadership of the United States the nationalists believed inhibited Brazil's scope of action”. Ambassador Araújo Castro (1974), one of the main

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<sup>40</sup> Independent Foreign Policy, in English.

ideologists behind the PEI, thus explained the nationalist component of that foreign policy doctrine:

Nationalism must not be for us a movement towards isolation but, on the contrary, a strong effort towards a greater Brazilian presence in the community of nations. That is how we understand nationalism, as something that can project the country's image in the continent and in the world, and not as something that imprison ourselves within the limits of our own borders.

The PEI was, thus, a policy without any automatic alignments. In a world divided into two opposing blocs, Brazil would seek a third way, given the rigid political discipline and the strict limits imposed by the Cold War. By emphasizing the natural right that every country should have to self-determination, Brazil claimed to itself more freedom of movements and choices in the international scenario, according to its own national interests. Above all, Brazilian authorities believed that the imperative of development demanded the fundamental freedom to trade with whichever country it wanted, as trade knows no political ideology. In that context, it was then necessary to keep traditional markets and partners, while prospecting, opening, and establishing new ones, particularly at a time when the country was not only selling abroad large quantities of traditional agricultural goods, such as coffee, tobacco and sugar, but was also becoming increasingly able to export a wide range of manufactured products.

This new independent foreign policy brought Brazil pragmatically closer to the Communist bloc and was accompanied by an increasing coldness in the bilateral relationship with the United States, as Brazil sought to establish closer diplomatic – and consequently

commercial – relations with China and the Soviet Union. In fact, as McCann (1998:76) asserts, “Goulart's relations with the United States went from uneasy, when he visited President John F. Kennedy and gave a speech to the United States Congress in April 1963, to frigid, when President Lyndon B. Johnson took over in Washington in November 1963”. President Quadros<sup>41</sup> sent a commercial mission, headed by the then Vice-President João Goulart, to China in August 1961, which was followed by a Chinese commercial mission to Rio de Janeiro later that year. Between March and April 1961, Brazil resumed diplomatic relations with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania, countries under the Soviet sphere of influence. And in May that year, a Soviet trade office was opened in Rio de Janeiro.

This more autonomous aspect of the PEI could be clearly seen at the Punta del Este Conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) in January 1962. In the occasion, Brazil advocated a position of neutrality vis-à-vis Cuba, strongly rejecting the hypothesis of an invasion of the island with OAS support, therefore expressly distancing it from the American position. Likewise, Brazil opposed sanctions against Cuba and, along with Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador, abstained from voting on the resolution suspending Cuba from the OAS.

Goulart, who assumed the presidency after Quadros's resignation, gave continuity to his predecessor's foreign policy by establishing, on 23 November 1961, diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, which had been suspended since 1947. According to San Tiago Dantas (1964), Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, these initiatives were not the consequence of

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<sup>41</sup> Quadros resigned on 25 August 1961, after less than seven months in office.

any ideological affinity with the Communist regime, but corresponded to a vast national project to overcome underdevelopment. As Dantas (1964:448) declared, “the rapid enlargement of the external market for our products has become an imperative of the country’s development. Winning markets [must be] the key element of our foreign economic policy”.

Equally important, Brazil had the opportunity to establish closer political and commercial relationships with Asian and African countries, which also suffered with the global bipolarization and experienced similar social and economic problems. Concerned about the unequal structure of the international system, it did not take long for Brazil to build a leadership role in the underdeveloped world, and see its international prestige and reputation increase substantially as a champion of the Third World. Likewise, ties with Latin American nations gained an increased density. If Rio Branco promoted a geostrategic reorientation of Brazilian foreign policy towards the United States, the PEI sought to implement a new geostrategic reorientation, by pursuing the country’s traditional goal of international leadership and prestige through an original southern hemispheric alliance with the newly independent countries and the underdeveloped nations of the world. One of its most important achievements was the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)<sup>42</sup>, in

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<sup>42</sup> UNCTAD is the most important organ of the United Nations General Assembly. It deals with trade, investment, and development issues, and it seeks to maximize trade, investment and development opportunities for developing countries. It also seeks to assist them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy on a more equitable basis. Its primary goal is to formulate

Geneva, on 23 March, 1964. In fact, Brazil was one of the first countries to demand a revision of the international economic order in order to lessen the disadvantages of the so-called Least Developed Countries (LDCs). As Soares de Lima (2013:248) observes, “UNCTAD assumed from the beginning a clear North-South configuration, in which the major contenders were on the one side, the capitalist advanced countries, and on the other, the Third World countries”.

## 2.7 The Military Dictatorship (1964-1985)

After Goulart’s removal, on March 31-April 1, 1964, through a military-led revolutionary movement, Brazil was ruled by a succession of authoritarian regimes, each headed by a four-star general, until March 1985. Although the “Revolution of 1964” marked an abrupt change of direction in Brazilian domestic political life, the general lines of the country’s foreign policy remained relatively untouched, experiencing only a few “course adjustments”. In line with the efforts undertaken by Vargas, Kubitschek, Quadros, and Goulart, the military regime maintained as the central axis of its foreign action internal demands for development and the challenge of modernizing the country. The only exception to that general orientation was the period between 1964, when Marshall Humberto Castelo Branco (15 April 1964 – 15 March 1967) promoted a

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policies relating to all aspects of development including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology. Source: UNCTAD official website at [[www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)].

new short-lived preferential alignment with the United States, an episode that came to be known in Brazilian historiography as “a step out of the rhythm” (Cervo & Bueno 2008).

Nonetheless, “the profound forces of the nationalism of ends, as a strong component of Brazilian national identity, once again came to light” (Lafer 2000b:221) under the administrations of General Artur da Costa e Silva (15 March 1967 – 31 August 1969) and General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (30 October 1969 – 15 March 1974). In fact, President Costa e Silva did not wait one single day to demolish the foreign policy concepts implemented by his predecessor. The new doctrine, dubbed *Diplomacia da Prosperidade*<sup>43</sup>, was presented by Foreign Minister José de Magalhães Pinto during his inauguration speech, on 15 March, 1964. Its main goals were: a) to reformulate the basis of foreign trade strategies and prospecting new markets for Brazilian exports; b) to acquire, through international cooperation, technological resources and know-how needed to the country’s economic independence; and c) to attract international capital, whether as direct investments, loans, or financial assistance (Cervo & Bueno 2008). The Diplomacy of Prosperity thus sought to strengthen bilateral economic relations with African, Asian and Eastern European countries. Likewise, representing the Non-Aligned nations, Brazil strove at the UNCTAD to approve resolutions that would provide better terms of access to industrial products and better terms of exchange on raw materials.

Rejecting the logic of the East-West confrontation, Brazil denounced, in 1971, the collective security approach at the United Nations, advocating instead the idea of “collective economic security”, whose approach had already been used previously to justify the refusal to

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<sup>43</sup> Diplomacy of Prosperity, in English.

sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty<sup>44</sup> (NPT) in 1967. Brazil opted for signing the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco<sup>45</sup>, which turned Latin America and the Caribbean into the first nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the world. A prominent Brazilian diplomat of the time, Ambassador Paulo Nogueira Batista (1967:14), speaking to the commanders of the 11th Military Region in Brasilia, on 26 June 1967, thus explained the government's position on the matter:

The superpowers, in name of the preservation of a peace that they believe is only possible through the conservation of nuclear monopoly, ask us to waive that prerogative [...]. Such an act would represent the acknowledgement of a condition of inferiority, not only technological, but also economic and political. The Brazilian government is not willing to accept that sacrifice [...]. Our Brazilian identity in the world leads us to believe that other fairer arrangements may be possible for the common good of all.

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<sup>44</sup> Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

<sup>45</sup> The Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in Mexico City in 1967, is the conventional name given to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Under its provisions, the states parties agreed to “prohibit and prevent the testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons and the receipt, storage, installation, deployment and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons”. Retrieved from [[http://www.opanal.org/Docs/Desarme/NWFZ/SPNFZ\\_and\\_Protocols\\_Status\\_Report.pdf](http://www.opanal.org/Docs/Desarme/NWFZ/SPNFZ_and_Protocols_Status_Report.pdf)].

### 2.7.1 – *The Responsible Pragmatism*

As important as the Diplomacy of Prosperity might have been, the strongest expression of Brazil's "nationalism of ends" can be found in the foreign policy doctrine implemented by President General Ernesto Geisel (15 March 1974 - 15 March 1979), known as *Pragmatismo Responsável* (Responsible Pragmatism). Geisel's flagship doctrine reinforced the general lines of the PEI, with its aversion for automatic alignments, aiming at transforming Brazil into a global power. Vigevani & Ramanzini Jr. (2010:12) contend that the Responsible Pragmatism "contained a strongly realist fundamental in terms of its understanding of the international dynamic. It represented a deepening of the perception that negated the convenience of an ideological alignment with the United States and emphasized the idea of national autonomy".

In that context, and because Brazil was 80 percent dependent on imported oil, Geisel sought to forge closer ties with Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, and Iraq, exporting primary and manufactured goods in exchange for oil supplies. Likewise, Petrobrás established several joint ventures for oil exploration in the Middle East, while technological and industrial-military agreements and projects were signed with Arab countries. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was allowed to open an office in Brasilia the new capital city, while the Brazilian government abandoned its traditional pro-Israeli stance in the United Nations to support the anti-Zionist vote. Geisel also established diplomatic relations with China, Angola,



and Mozambique. Japan also became a preferential partner: between 1967 and 1979, bilateral trade increased from US\$ 106 million dollars/year to US\$ 2 billion dollars/year<sup>46</sup>.

Aiming to assimilate nuclear technology for peaceful ends, the production of electricity, Brazil endeavored to pursue closer contacts with the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1975, the two countries signed a deal that promised to be a major step toward nuclear independence for Brazil, and envisaged the construction of two nuclear power plants in Angra dos Reis, in Rio de Janeiro State. The nuclear deal – which produced a confrontation with the Carter administration – contemplated the participation of Brazilian industries as well as the establishment of uranium fuel enrichment and plutonium reprocessing facilities, in what was considered one of the largest contract for transfer of nuclear technology in history and one of the most important projects ever undertaken in Brazil.

Technical, bureaucratic, and financial hurdles – as well as a strong U.S. pressure against the deal – delayed the construction of the nuclear power plants in Angra dos Reis. Brazil eventually decided to pursue a different path towards achieving mastery of the nuclear fuel cycle. In 1978, through secret cooperation agreements with other developing countries, such as China, Iraq, and Argentina, Brazil initiated its autonomous nuclear program, developing its own indigenous uranium enrichment process, as well as designing plans to build a nuclear powered-submarine and nuclear devices. Eventually, the American opposition to Brazil's nuclear plans and its refusal to cooperate with the modernization of the Brazilian armed forces led President

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<sup>46</sup> Source: Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade. Available at [<http://www.desenvolvimento.gov.br/sitio/interna/interna.php?area=5&menu=576>].

Geisel to formally renounce, in April 1977, the military alliance with the United States, which dated back to the early 1940s.

General João Batista Figueiredo, chosen by Geisel to succeed him in 1979, kept untouched the nationalist component, the search for autonomy, and the universalism of the Brazilian foreign policy. The imperative of development continued to be the main axis of the country's external action, reason why the North-South dialogue was emphasized. As Vigevani and Cepaluni (2007:1311) remark, "the search for autonomy during the period of the Independent Foreign Policy and some military governments [...] was undertaken by distancing the country from the international power centres".

However, the continuing deterioration of the economy, with slowed growth, rising inflation, massive drop in foreign investments, and the increasing cost of servicing Brazil's foreign debt<sup>47</sup> led to an economic recession that severely constrained the country's ability to pursue a pro-active diplomacy during the first half of the 1980s. In fact, with the second "oil shock" in 1979 and the 1982 international debt crises, Brazil had to redefine its international agenda. Now, economic and financial concerns governed Brazil's foreign relations, rather than traditional diplomacy and geopolitics. In consequence, the main foreign policy goal was to establish ties with any nation that might help rescue Brazil from its dire economic situation. Once again, the U.S. was kept at a certain distance.

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<sup>47</sup> Brazil displayed the dubious honor of having the largest foreign debt in the world, estimated at the time in something between US\$ 87 and 100 billion dollars (Skidmore & Smith 1997).

## 2.8 The “New Republic” (1985-Present)

On January 15, 1985, the National Congress elected Tancredo Neves, Vargas's Minister of Justice in the 1950s<sup>48</sup>, as the first civilian president after 21 years of military dictatorship. Neves, however, underwent emergency surgery the night before his inaugural, and vice-president elect José Sarney (1985-1990), a long-time supporter of the military regime, temporarily took over the office, eventually assuming the presidency when Neves died a few days later. Sarney's main foreign policy challenge was perhaps to recover the image of Brazil as a democratic nation, a task which provided the conceptual basis for the country's diplomatic action.

These efforts towards democratization contributed to changing the pattern of distrust and distance characterizing Brazilian diplomatic relations with South American countries, particularly Argentina, which, under President Raúl Alfonsín<sup>49</sup>, was then also experiencing a process of democratization. On 29 November, 1985, presidents Sarney and Alfonsín signed the Declaration of Iguazu, committing their respective countries to pursue the integration of their economies, and expressing the acknowledgement that nuclear science and technology should

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<sup>48</sup> Tancredo Neves had also previously served as a member of the federal House of Representatives, as senator, and as prime minister.

<sup>49</sup> Democratically elected, Alfonsín was President between December 1983 and July 1989, succeeding a military regime that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983. The military regime which began in 1976 was not an isolated experience in the country's political life, but, according to Catoggio (2014) the most extreme expression of a long series of military interventions: 1930-1932, 1943-1946, 1955-1958, 1962-1963, and 1966-1976.

play a major role in promoting economic and social development. The next day, through the Joint Declaration on Nuclear Policy, Sarney and Alfonsín created a joint work group to promote the development of nuclear breakthroughs for peaceful purposes.

On July 29, 1986, Sarney and Alfonsín signed in Buenos Aires the *Programa de Integração e Cooperação Econômica Argentina-Brasil* (Argentina-Brazil Economic Integration and Cooperation Program), more commonly known as **PICE**, which opened up a phase of far-reaching mutual understanding and set the objective of establishing a common economic area within ten years. In 1988, the Treaty of Integration, Cooperation and Development between Argentina and Brazil, more commonly known as the Common Market Treaty, is signed, introducing the concept of a regional common market as an aspiration for a near future, and setting the basis for the creation of Mercosul, in 1991. Equally important, the working group on nuclear cooperation created in 1985 was transformed into a Permanent Committee on Nuclear Policy.

Brazil also sought to adopt a more active stance in Latin American Affairs. Aiming at collaborating with the efforts undertaken by the members of the Contadora Group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) to promote the pacification of Central America during the 1980s and 1990s, Brazil became a member of the Contadora Support Group, along with Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay, created in July 1985, within the context of greater regional unity, to serve as a forum to discuss not only the pacification process in Central America, but also issues linked to foreign debt, poverty, development, and autonomy.

Established in 1983 as a political alliance which advocated an indirect formal involvement by its members to put an end to the military conflicts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, which threatened to destabilize the whole Central America, the Contadora Group sought to encourage a policy of self determination and non-intervention for the peaceful solution of conflicts in the region. The establishment of these political mechanisms represented a very significant development in Brazil-Latin America rapprochement, as the Contadora and Support Group members together represented over 90% of Latin American population and economic resources. Washington saw these political integration initiatives as a threat, as it can be seen in the words of former American Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Elliot Abrams, in a September 1985 meeting of high U.S. officials: “It is necessary that we develop an active diplomacy in order to hinder the attempts at Latin American solidarity that could be directed against the U.S. and its allies whether these efforts are initiated by the Support Group, Cuba or Nicaragua” (Sklar 1988:307).

### *2.8.1 The Foreign Policies of Fernando Collor de Mello and Itamar Franco*

The triumph of capitalism and liberalism over Soviet communism in 1989 exerted a decisive influence on the making of a new global order, which had as some of its most important constitutive pillars the idea of supremacy of the market and the acceleration of Globalization. As more liberal ideas gained strength in the international agenda, these features engendered a new political and economic reality, based on the increased volume and speed of international financial flows, convergence of productive processes, increased economic and commercial

integration, improved communications and transportation systems, among others. These historical tendencies were complemented by two other processes: the formation of economic blocs and the growing economic asymmetry between the core of global capitalism and its periphery.

Brazilian diplomacy had difficulty reacting to the challenges posed by the new international scenario. The Itamaraty seemed to have lost track of the principles that for nearly sixty years had guided – and provided rationality to – the country’s foreign policy, which were now essentially passive and reactive in nature. As Vigevani & Cepaluni (2009:36) observe, although setting as foreign policy priorities the modernization of the country, its competitive insertion in the global economy, and the quest for major power status, the administrations of Fernando Collor de Mello (15 March 1990 – 2 October 1992) and Itamar Franco (29 December 1992 – 1 January 1995) “were unable to establish a clear and coherent foreign policy because they faced very significant political and economic instability and were both characterized by the brevity of their tenure and the high turnover of their foreign ministers”. In fact, between 1990 and 1995, Brazil had 5 different ministers of Foreign Affairs, which denoted an absence of strategic thinking.

The Collor de Mello administration, for example, presented two clearly distinct foreign policy phases in less than two years. At first, Collor sought to distance its government from the foreign policy general principles established since Vargas. In that context, Brazil not only endeavored to establish closer relations with the more developed nations, but fundamentally also “sought to align itself with the views and values of developed countries” (Vigevani & Cepaluni 2012:35). Collor’s foreign policy then presented three main goals: i) to establish a renewed

strategic partnership with the United States; ii) to “deconstruct” its third-worldist profile and to distance itself from the Third-World rhetoric; and iii) to participate more actively in world affairs through the modernization of its international agenda, which tended to give more emphasis to themes and issues related to human and social rights, democracy, environment, and intellectual property (Hirst & Pinheiro 1995). In this new context, as Fonseca (1998:368 explained) the search for autonomy did not mean “distance from controversial international issues in order to protect the country against undesirable alignments [...]. Autonomy means participation, means the wish to influence the open [international] agenda [...]”.

The second phase, initiated with the appointment of Celso Lafer as Minister of Foreign Affairs in April 1992, sought to refocus Brazil’s strategic thinking and resume the search for autonomy in the international scenario, paying greater attention to regional integration, while also emphasizing Brazil’s multilateral insertion, “as a means to avoid the excessive centrality of relations with the United States in Brazil’s agenda” (Vigevani & Cepaluni 2012:42). In fact, the first concrete step towards regional integration was the creation of the Southern Cone Common Market, more commonly known as Mercosul<sup>50</sup>, on March 26, 1991. Though the Treaty of Asunción, signed in Asunción, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay agreed to form a customs union, although it was only a free trade area in its initial days. Afterwards, already during Franco’s administration, another major step was taken in the integration process: The Protocol of Ouro Preto was signed in Brazil, On December 16, 1994, amending the Treaty of Asunción with regard to Mercosul’s institutional structures, transforming the economic bloc

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<sup>50</sup> Or Mercosur, in Spanish.

from a mere free trade area into a customs union<sup>51</sup>. The creation of Mercosul became the predominant theme in the international relations of Brazil and the region. As Lafer (1993:279) noted,

It seemed to me to be evident that Latin America in general, and the Mercosur in particular, were our circumstance, our life, our destiny. Right from the start I saw in the Mercosur a platform for Brazil's competitive insertion, which was important due to the opportunities it generated and for what it represented in terms of interlocution at the world level.

Equally important, the Brazil-Argentina nuclear cooperation was not abandoned. Since the initial contacts between Sarney and Alfonsín in the late 1980s, several mechanisms for political and technical cooperation were created. Eventually, on July 18, 1991, Brazil and Argentina signed the bilateral agreement known as Guadalajara Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy. Among other important confidence-building measures, that treaty created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), the only binational safeguards organization in the world, whose mission is to oversee the joint application and management of the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. Once the ABACC was effectively installed, on December 13, 1991, a new Agreement was signed between both countries, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

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<sup>51</sup> A customs union is a type of trade bloc composed of a free trade area associated with a common external tariff. Consequently, member-countries need to set up a common external trade policy.



and the ABACC, with the purpose of implementing and consolidating a system for the application of safeguards.

### *2.8.2 The Foreign Policies of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luís Inácio Lula da Silva*

Cervo (2010:7) contends that in the course of their sixteen years in office, “Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), also known as FHC, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) were two statesmen who defined the pattern of Brazil’s integration into the international scene at the turn from the 20th into the 21st century”. In a context of accelerating globalization and increasing domestic economic stability, Cardoso endeavored to implement a substantive change in the general orientation of Brazilian foreign policy, replacing the reactive foreign policy of his predecessors with a proactive international agenda.

During Cardoso’s administration, Brazil became a vigorous advocate of multilateralism, abandoning the logic of “autonomy through distance”<sup>52</sup> and adopting the logic of “autonomy

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<sup>52</sup> Brazil’s search for autonomy through distance can be characterized by a strong belief in partial autarchy and the refusal of multilateralism as a strategy of foreign relations. In fact, participation in international institutions is not particularly encouraged. The domestic market and the national economy should be firmly protected, reasons why the adoption of protectionist measures are stimulated, while liberalizing agendas are rejected. The logic of autonomy through distance sought to resist the consolidation of institutions and regimes, which, in the Brazilian perception, would inevitably lead to the freezing of the cold-war hierarchy of power.

through participation”, an initiative which constitutes a “major break with historical patterns of Brazilian foreign policy making” (Cason & Power 2009:119). Aligned with the canons of Neoliberalism, and intending to undermine the use of unilateralism by more powerful nations, FHC sought not only to actively adhere to liberal international regimes and norms, but also to influence the formulation of rules in the international arena as much as possible, in the belief that a more institutionalized international scenario would be favorable to Brazilian interests. As Vigevani and Oliveira (2009:59) point out,

In a new international environment dominated by a single great power – an environment in which the relative power of the Brazilian state had diminished – an institutionalist perspective [...] promoted respect for the rules of the international game, rules that once established would have to be observed by all parties, including the more powerful.

As significant examples of this new commitment to international regimes and norms, FHC decided, in 1997, to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which Brazil had been refusing since 1967, and adhered to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)<sup>53</sup> in 1995.

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<sup>53</sup> Established in April 1987, the voluntary Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) seeks to limit the spread of ballistic missiles and other unmanned delivery systems that could be used for chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks. Currently with 34 members, including most of the world's key missile manufacturers, it aims to restrict their exports of missiles and related technologies capable of carrying a 500-kilogram payload at least 300 kilometers or delivering any type of weapon of mass destruction.

Anyway, from the Brazilian perspective, the new international scenario would be characterized by the predominance of economic and commercial considerations over military or “strategic” aspects, which would be beneficial to Brazil, a country still striving to overcome serious economic and social problems. The “universalist” foreign policy implemented by Cardoso took place in several fronts: Brazil assumed a protagonist role at the newly-created World Trade Organization (WTO), created the Community of Portuguese Speaking-Countries (CPLP) along with Portugal and other five countries<sup>54</sup>, established a free-trade agreement with the European Union, pursued closer political and economic relations with Japan, India, China, South Africa, Mexico, and Russia, and criticizing asymmetries in the international order, advocated the establishment of a new international financial architecture. Bilateral relationship with the United States was also significantly improved, as it was considered an essential step to ensure Brazil’s preeminence on South America.

Pragmatic, Cardoso understood that the changing structures of the global capitalist system at the time did not allow much latitude for diplomatic activism for a country with limited resources such as Brazil. In that context, to adapt to globalization was not an option, but an

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<sup>54</sup> The Community of Portuguese Speaking-Countries or Community of Portuguese Language Countries, created in 1996, has grown from the seven founding states - Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé e Príncipe – to the current nine, with the self-determination of East Timor in 2002 and the accession of Equatorial Guinea in 2014.

imperative. His hope was that domestic structural reforms would provide Brazil with the means to engage in a more proactive foreign policy. In fact, to a considerable extent, FHC was more concerned about promoting domestic economic reforms, stabilizing the country's economy, and restoring fiscal sanity to a country devastated by years of hyperinflation than with foreign policy. Cardoso's foreign policy certainly increased and strengthened Brazil's presence in the main international forums, while also contributing to improve Brazil's image. However, as Vigevani & Oliveira (2007:78) recall, "Brazil's effort to play a more relevant leading role was impaired in the end by its own internal constraints [which] left the Cardoso administration without great foreign-policy achievements to be celebrated".

Coming to power in January 2002, President Lula da Silva sought to differentiate his foreign policy from that of his predecessor, adopting a more assertively nationalist stance, as opposed to a more liberalizing perspective implemented by Cardoso, which was aligned with the globalizing agenda of the late 1990s. Reflecting his deep-rooted left leaning thought, Lula tended to believe that the "selective" liberal agenda only served the narrow interests of major powers, while the forces of globalization and the global economy offered simply more threats than potential benefits. As Hurrell (2008:52) puts it, Lula tended to see globalization "as a force working to reinforce the power of the developed world while creating new sources of instability [...] and promoting politically dangerous and morally unacceptable inequality".

Based on an essentially pessimistic view of the international system, particularly international markets, Lula sought to replace Cardoso's economic imperatives with a more political/ideological approach to the country's international relations, emphasizing the need for a greater South-South cooperation and promoting a renewed version of the *third-worldism*

advocated by the country's former PEI. In this context, “[w]here the Cardoso era had seen a marked focus on the creation and use of economic foundations to support the ideas and political ambitions of Brazilian foreign policy, Lula during his first three years brought a decided shift to the political end of the equation” (Borges 2009:159).

The fundamental diplomatic premise of the Lula's administration involved the politicization of international economic relations, in a context in which it was necessary to replace Cardoso's concept of autonomy through integration with that of *autonomy through diversification*. This new strategy was nothing more than an adherence to international norms and regimes through the establishment of South – South alliances, in an attempt to reduce what was then perceived as asymmetries in the relationships with major powers (Vigevani & Oliveira 2007). This movement towards a “decentralization” of international relations – which Cervo (2010:9) described as a “determination to democratize globalization” – was the basic logic behind the creation of the IBSA<sup>55</sup>, the BRICS<sup>56</sup>, the G-20<sup>57</sup>, and the Summit of South American-Arab Countries<sup>58</sup>, for example.

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<sup>55</sup> Created in 2003, the IBSA Dialogue Forum between India, Brazil and South Africa is a political mechanism to promote cooperation and coordination on global issues among these three countries.

<sup>56</sup> Coined in 2001, the term BRICS was initially created as an acronym for the rising global economic power of Brazil, Russia, India and China, the rapidly emerging countries which would be the “strategic pillars” of a renewed international system by 2050. As a mechanism for political

Lula also sought to pay greater attention to traditional partners. Apparently willing to bear the costs of assuming regional leadership and promoting regional integration, Lula not only strived to deepen Mercosur's integration, but was also the driving force behind the creation of the Union of South American Nations (Unasul), an intergovernmental body arguably modeled after the European Union, in 2004, which acts as a forum for political concertation between member-countries, and also serves as a platform for interregional trade promotion. While under FHC the word leadership had been banned from Brazilian diplomatic vocabulary, Lula spared no efforts to position Brazil as a South American leader. Under Lula, Brazil also gained the status of European Union's strategic partner, in 2007, being recognized as one of European Union's main global interlocutors. Since 2007, the EU and Brazil hold annual summits at the highest political

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and economic cooperation, the BRICS was formally created in 2009. South Africa joined the association in 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Formed in Geneva, on 20 August 2003, the Group of 20, or G-20, is a bloc of developing nations which agreed to try and coordinate their interests and positions within the framework of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization.

<sup>58</sup> Better known by its Portuguese and Spanish acronym, ASPA, the Summit of South American-Arab Countries is a bi-regional mechanism for political, economic and commercial cooperation and coordination, which gathers the 22 members of the League of Arab States and the 12 South American countries. It was created upon proposal of the Brazilian President Lula da Silva during the I ASPA Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Brasilia, in May 2005.

level, seeking to strengthen cooperation and develop a deeper diplomatic dialogue, at least in the realm of rhetoric.

In spite of the apparent absence of more concrete results in Lula's efforts to "change the world's economic and trade geography"<sup>59</sup>, his active foreign policy should not be underestimated for at least two main reasons. First, it contributed to generate increasing perceptions that global power could be more diffuse and decentralized than it appeared to be. Second, Brazil's assertiveness and diplomatic activism may have worked "to convince many that Brazil has to be part of any stable global trade regime for reasons of political legitimacy as much as narrow economic logic" (Hurrell 2008:57).

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<sup>59</sup> President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's interview to Time News Magazine, in 2009. Available at: [<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1883301,00.htm>]

## CHAPTER 3 - BRAZILIAN STRATEGIC CULTURE

### 3.1 Introduction

In a recent paper on the Brazilian military capabilities, Patrice Franko (2014:1) argues that “Brazil is a puzzling new player in the global system”, a country that “has come to be seen as a significant economic competitor and dynamic force in world politics”, but whose “transformational changes in the economic and political realms have not been accompanied by advances in military power”. Likewise, Kenkel (2013:107) suggests that Brazil has experienced an “unprecedented rise in economic output and political influence over the past decade”. However, the country’s military capabilities have lagged behind. Over the course of the last decade, Brazil has spent on average only 1.5% of its GDP annually on defense<sup>60</sup>, making the country rank only 65<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of military spending as percentage of GDP<sup>61</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of total dollars spent<sup>62</sup>. Former Defense Minister Nelson Jobim (2011:4) acknowledged the problem when he stated: “I affirm that this gap has now reached worrying proportions, once the defense’s limited capacity to support Brazilian foreign policy prevents us from adopting bolder diplomatic initiatives.”

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<sup>60</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014. Available at [<http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1504.pdf>]. Accessed 2 November 2015.

<sup>61</sup> IndexMundi. Available at [<http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?t=0&v=132&l=en>]. Accessed 2 November 2015.

<sup>62</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014.



In order to overcome this power gap and to reach a military balance compatible with the country's renewed global ambitions and its political and economic clout, then President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva formulated the new Brazilian National Strategy of Defense (END) in 2008, which would provide the conceptual framework for the country's much needed military modernization. Only three years later, in 2011, President Dilma Roussef announced the publication of the new Defense White Paper, which updated and detailed the 2008 END, defining the country's security environment and its military needs. The strategic guidelines provided by both documents were designed to take four core assumptions into account:

1. The protection of Brazilian territorial sovereignty;
2. The prevalence on non-conflictual approaches;
3. The indissociable link between defense and development policies; and
4. The “desire of becoming great without dominating” (Politi 2011:67).

Both the END and the White Paper echoed the First Brazilian National Defense Policy, issued by former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1998, built around an essentially defensive deterrent strategic posture, and upon the following principles:

- “close relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, with neighboring countries and with the international community in general;
- rejection of war of conquest; and
- peaceful resolution of disputes, with resort to the use of force only for self-defense”.

All these documents provide extremely useful insights to understanding how Brazilian decision-makers and the military see the world, what are their political and ideological

preferences, how they define and practice security, and what is Brazil's positioning as a global security actor in today's world, features that are part of Brazilian strategic culture. In fact, these documents make it clear that two of the most important traits of the Brazilian strategic culture are that the country sees itself as a peaceful nation and a deeply held belief that the Brazil is destined for greatness. The 2008 END clearly states that

Brazil is a peaceful country, by tradition and conviction. It lives in peace with its neighbors. It runs its international affairs, among other things, adopting the constitutional principles of non-intervention, defense of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts. This pacifist trait is part of the national identity, and a value that should be preserved by the Brazilian people ((Bitencourt & Vaz 2009:8).

Actually, both the country's Constitution and the National Defense Strategy explicitly emphasize and build perceptions of security upon the peaceful resolution of conflicts and legal-normativist approaches to international security issues. Kenkel (2013:112), somewhat ironically, observes that "[i]n defence policy documents, Brazil is invariably described as a nation at peace with its neighbours, guided by pacifist, multilateralist traditions and ensconced in a region whose strategic scenarios are relatively tranquil". Likewise, Lima (2015:106) argues that the inscription of a traditional peaceful Brazilian identity in foreign policy became commonplace in both civilian and military literature, in which "Brazilian identity is portrayed as being fair, legitimate, working for the greater good, and in opposition to the status quo". However, due to its economic weight and regional political influence, Brazil has been actively seeking to raise its profile, in order to have a greater voice in global affairs, but it has done so mostly through political and diplomatic channels, rarely resorting to the threat or use of force.

As meaningful examples of this political determination, Brazil, which once was on the verge of acquiring offensive nuclear weapons capabilities, “communicated its decision not to pursue them in the interests of fostering regional and global peace” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:9) in the beginning of the 1990s. As a matter of fact, the Brazilian Constitution limits nuclear activities in the national territory only for peaceful purposes and, even so, when previously approved by Congress. To those authors, the way Brazil handled the nuclear proliferation issue clearly reflects its strategic culture, another example of which is the fact that Brazil was the driving force behind the creation of the South American Defense Council, a mechanism established in 2009 whose main objective is allegedly to consolidate the region as a zone of peace and democratic stability. The Council also seeks a South American identity in the field of defense, through the strengthening of cooperation, military exchanges and exercises, and the implementation of confidence-building measures.

### 3.2 The Roots of Brazilian Strategic Culture

Joaquim Nabuco, who was the first Brazilian ambassador to the United States, from 1905 to 1910, perfectly captured the essence of the deeply-rooted aspiration for greatness in the country’s political thought when he declared that “Brazil has always been conscious of its size, and it has been governed by a prophetic sense with regard to its future” (Lafer 2000b:210). Likewise, Ambassador Araújo Castro (1974), who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs during Goulart’s administration, stated that “Brazil is destined to greatness, and it is destined to have a great involvement in the affairs of our time”.

Brands (2010:6) suggests that, as a matter of fact, since the Republic was proclaimed in 1889, a multitude of variables, which include Brazil's continental dimensions, its leading economic and political role, and its strategic geographic position within South America, the absence of border disputes and territorial threats, and its sense of exceptionalism in the region, "have inspired a belief that the country belongs among the global elite." These two ingrained and intertwined cultural values, pacifism and quest for greatness, have a profound impact upon the country's security thought and foreign policy. In that regard, for example, Brazilian president from 1995 to 2002, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (2006:255) stated in his memoirs that "of all the misguided quests that Brazil has undertaken over the years, few rivaled our efforts to attain our dream of world prominence."

However, despite the fact that the main elements of a Brazilian strategic culture began to become more discernible and consolidated when the country obtained its independence in the early 19th century (1822), one can go further into the past to find out the roots of the particular Brazilian cultural and strategic self-perception, which began to develop while Brazil was nothing more than a colony of Portugal, as the ways Brazil sees the world and react to world events have been deeply influenced by history and geography. Eakin (2009), for example, presents five points which he considers absolutely essential to understanding how the Brazilian elites' perceptions of their nation, themselves, and the role of Brazil in the world came to be formed. Initially, Eakin argues that Brazil is not fully part of Latin America. Contrary to almost all other countries in the region, Brazil was not colonized by Spain, but by Portugal, a country whose main interests were not in the Americas, but in the trade with Europe, mainly with England, its most powerful ally, and Africa.

In fact the history of Portuguese America presents some remarkable contrasts with the history of colonial Spanish America. When the Portuguese fleet led by Pedro Alvarez Cabral reached the Brazilian shores for the first time in April 22, 1500, it found no Indian civilization that could be slightly compared with the more developed Aztecas or the Incas. For that reason, “the Portuguese, unlike the Spanish, did not face a highly organized, settled indigenous civilization. These Indians had built no imposing cities and they had no mythic explanations for this sudden alien intrusion” (Skidmore & Smith 1997:22). To make things worse, and unlike most Spanish America, some local Indians tribes practiced cannibalism, and most were seminomadic, which in practical terms meant that the colonization process would have to follow a gradual strategy, rather than the immediate conquest and occupation policy adopted by the Spaniards.

Most importantly, as there were no apparent signs of precious metals, particularly gold and silver, “and consequently no easy path to fabulous wealth” (Skidmore & Smith 1997:22), as opposed to most Spanish America, agriculture was the main economic activity in the new Portuguese colony, especially the cultivation of sugar cane. The extension of the territory, the hostility of the natives, and the apparent scarcity of mineral resources led the Portuguese crown to initially exert a much looser control over Brazil than the Spanish monarchy did in its overseas dominions. This situation only started to change when Portuguese and Dutch settlers managed to develop a lucrative sugar industry in the Northeastern region of the country in the early seventeenth century. By 1650, Brazil had already become the world’s main producer of sugar cane, produced almost in its entirety by African slaves brought into Brazil by Portuguese slave traffickers.

In this historical context, the colonial ties with the Portuguese metropolis and the huge slave trade with Africa were the two most important factors which contribute to the formation of colonial Brazil during the first centuries and, indeed, up to the early nineteenth century. These facts imply that since the sixteenth century, when Brazil consisted of nothing more than a few Portuguese military outposts and commercial enclaves on its northeastern coast, Brazil has had an Atlantic and eastward-looking orientation, what means that the country has historically turned its back to its Spanish neighbors and has looked to Europe for most of its cultural, legal, economic, political, and scientific models. “Clinging to the coast like crabs”, as once noted the Franciscan Frei Vicente do Salvador, the first historian of Brazil, in 1627 (Philippou 2006:184), the scarce local population, mostly scattered along the Atlantic coast and physically separated from the Spanish America by the Andes and vast extensions of the Amazon rainforest, thrived in a state of almost complete isolation from the rest of the so-called New World.

During most part of its first three centuries of history, Brazil’s trade relations with its regional neighbors varied between non-existent and inexpressive. Indeed, this lack of economic engagement favored the emergence of a situation in which the only sustained contact with the Spanish America during that time was in the form of border disputes, facts that contributed to reinforce the sentiments of cultural insularity and uniqueness which shaped Brazilian identity. In his much acclaimed book *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*, in the English version) about the formation of the Brazilian society, published originally in 1933, Gilberto Freyre, one of the most important Brazilian scholars, explains that among the main characteristics of Brazilian society are hospitality and an innate aversion to conflicts of any

nature, which are a “manifestation of the so-called gregarious instinct intensified by isolation” (Freyre 1963:87).

The idea behind these arguments is that the myth of a common Latin American identity has never really penetrated the general public in Brazil and never found any significant resonance in the Brazilian cultural ethos and society. Actually, Brazilians tend not to see themselves as ‘Latin Americans’, except when it is economically or politically convenient. The Portuguese language is not the only variable that separates Brazil from its Spanish-speaking neighbors. Culture, history, tradition and interests are also important distinguishing features which help to explain why Brazilians “have had only a vague awareness and interest in what goes on in the rest of Latin America until very recently” (Eakin 2009:4). Bitencourt and Vaz (2009:13-15) share these ideas and observe that

In general, it is quite extraordinary to contemplate the fact that historically, Brazil has for the most part been able to avoid the rampant violence that has plagued its neighbors, and that it has been able to expand its territory non-violently despite the formal limits placed upon it from external sources of authority...Brazil emerged as a nation quite different from its continental neighbors, and can hardly fit into the strategic and cultural framework of Latin America as a whole...Brazilians do not consider themselves ‘Latin American,’ and take all possible opportunities to underscore their cultural, historical, and language differences *vis-à-vis* the ‘Hispanic’ countries in the region.

The findings of a recent comparative public opinion survey called *The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*<sup>63</sup>, coordinated by the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE-Mexico), support this idea. The research, whose main objective is to analyze how Latin Americans perceive foreign policy issues across the region and also through time, found that the average Brazilian do not perceive himself/herself as part of Latin America or South America. When asked about their perception regarding national or regional identity, 79 percent of the respondents defined themselves as “Brazilians”, 13 percent as “citizens of the world”, 4 percent as “Latin Americans”, and only 1 percent as “South Americans”. In a sharp contrast, the average of respondents who defined themselves as “Latin Americans” in six other countries of the region (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru) was 43 percent.

Size, insularity, and geographic location – the second point raised by Eakin (2009) – have shaped Brazil’s relationship with the major powers and its regional neighbors. In spite of its continental dimensions, Brazil has always been a “coastal civilization”, as even today nearly 80% of the Brazilian population lives within two hundred miles of the Atlantic. The existence of a vast and largely empty interior between Brazil and its neighboring countries, most of it in jungle areas of difficult access, contributed to the low number of border disputes recorded in Brazilian history, what “allowed Brazil’s military to develop without serious concern for foreign enemies...[r]ather than fear its neighbors, the Brazilian elites (especially Itamaraty and the military) have worried about the machinations of the Great Powers” (Eakin 2009:6).

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<sup>63</sup> Released in December 2015, the research is available at [<https://mexicoyelmundo.cide.edu>].



As a matter of fact, over the course of its more than five hundred-year history, Brazil has not had any serious military conflict with its neighbors, with the exception of the Cisplatine War (1825-28), an armed conflict between the Empire of Brazil and what is now Uruguay, and the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-70), which opposed Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay. The absence of credible foreign threats to the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty had two direct implications. First, the predominance of internal over external challenges led the elites and the military to focus on nation building, economic growth, and internal security issues. In fact, economic development has always been considered a national security objective and a defining feature of Brazilian strategic culture. This might be the reason why the country's military organizations, in a historical perspective, have not been considered

[A]n integral part of the country's foreign policy toolbox, focusing instead on territorial deterrence and an extensive array of internal tasks ranging from the provision of basic infrastructure in rural areas to delivery of government programmes (such as vaccinations) to the forceful pacification of slums (favelas) in urban areas in preparation for upcoming megaevents (Kenkel 2013:110).

Second, it inculcated in the diplomatic corps and in the military the idea of a preferential option for negotiated solutions. Kenkel (2013:109) agrees with this line of reasoning and states that

[I]n geostrategic terms, much of Brazil's land border spans practically indefensible jungle territory, and the bulk of the country's vast resources lie in the sparsely settled and controlled interior while the great majority of the population reside along the coastline.

This unique situation of geostrategic exposure forms the foundational dilemma of what has been recognized as a distinct Brazilian tradition in geopolitical thought.

Another factor pointed out by Eakin (2009:7) is the late development and geographic concentration of major cultural institutions, especially higher education institutions, when compared to Spanish America, which helped shape Brazilian elites, who were “less contentious, more pragmatic, and more homogenous than most national elites in Latin America”. In fact, political parties in Brazil during the monarchical period were much more a matter of personalities, of rallying about some particular issue or leader rather than about a given set of rigid philosophical principles, political convictions, or economic preferences, and, except in a few minor details, there were basically no significant difference between the two principal political organizations, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. The idea that those political groups were undifferentiated in their essence generated a sentence which became famous in the Brazilian political tradition, according to which “nothing looked more like a Saquarema (a Conservative) than a Luzia (a Liberal) in power” (Fausto 2014:98).

It was only after the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in 1808, fleeing from Napoleonic forces and the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, an event that brought profound changes to the colony and eventually led to its independence from Portugal, that the printing press was allowed in Brazil and the first higher education institutions were created, although concentrated in a few more important cities, such as Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Salvador, and, later, São Paulo.

The first universities, however, only appeared in the 1920s, while Lima, Mexico City and Havana already had universities and printing presses by the mid-sixteenth century. For most of

the nineteenth century, there were only two law schools (Recife and São Paulo) and two medical faculties (Rio de Janeiro and Salvador), institutions from where most of the elected members of the National Assembly would come, particularly the law schools. Probably due to the absence or scarcity of irreconcilable conflicts of interest, Brazilian elites developed a pattern of conciliation and an ability to include new groups and issues in their orbit which is still present, being a characteristic feature of its political system and its foreign policy traditions. Bitencourt and Vaz (2009:9) note that that historical circumstance helped creating a situation in which “it is clear that Brazilians developed a self-perception that they are particularly equipped to resolve conflicts in a negotiated way.”

The two final points raised by Eakin are related to the emergence of a strong nationalism and a remarkable cultural homogeneity that has shaped how Brazilians feel and perceive themselves. These ideas somehow echo Freyre’s masterwork (1963), in which the Brazilian scholar depicted the portrait of a country devoid of ethnic and linguistic fractures, in which centuries of racial, social, and cultural mixture produced a unique melting pot, which arguably made Brazilian people superior to any other on earth. That powerful nationalism, coupled with self-aggrandizing perceptions of the self, is at the core of Brazilian identity and the country’s longstanding quest for greatness, features that are at essential elements of the Brazilian strategic culture. For example, the acclaimed General Carlos Meira Mattos, considered one of main interpreters of the Brazilian geopolitical thought, once stated that “[w]e possess all the conditions that enable us to aspire to a place among the world’s great powers” (Brands 2010:6). Likewise, Franko (2014:127) characterizes Brazil as “a nation whose strategy has been grounded by nationalism in the service of sovereignty”. Anyway, while Bitencourt and Vaz (2009:13-14)

believe that Brazil was “able to experience a sense of geographic and cultural unity as far as identification with an ethnically and racially diverse populace with the grander notion of a unified Brazil cultural”, what certainly had a formative impact on the development of the Brazilian strategic culture, Eakin (2009:11-12) argues that

“[F]ive centuries of cultural and racial mixing have produced...[a country with] an impressive internal homogeneity that provides it with an ability to act globally without the linguistic, ethnic, sectarian, and regional divides that so fragment other large nations...This mixing has produced a people with a remarkable set of shared symbols, rituals, and beliefs – who share a profound unity.”

The fact is that, over time, Brazil has unequivocally expressed its reliance on and preference for negotiated solutions for conflicts. Even the country’s independence from Portugal, in 1822, was more of a negotiated arrangement than a prolonged and violent process. Compared with its Spanish-speaking neighbors, Brazil’s independence process was relatively peaceful and uneventful, making the country enter nationhood with considerably less strife and bloodshed, despite some violent reactions recorded in Recife and Salvador, in what are now the states of Pernambuco and Bahia, respectively. Finally, in August 29, 1825, through the medium of a treaty brokered by the United Kingdom, Portugal acknowledged the independence of Brazil, putting an end to Brazil’s fear of an impending massive Portuguese attack. In fact, with the support of the British government, the Portuguese colonial rule in Brazil was overthrown and the new Empire was to be firmly linked to Great Britain in both economic and political terms throughout the 19th century (Moura 2013:43).

A little less known historic fact, however, and one that clearly reveals Brazilian preference for negotiated solutions over war and conflicts, is that, in exchange for Brazil's recognition, the then Emperor Pedro<sup>64</sup> agreed to settle Portugal's debts with Britain. Secret clauses of the 1825 treaty determined that Brazil would assume the responsibility to pay about 1.4 million pounds sterling of Portugal's debt to Britain, and give some other 600,000 pounds sterling to Dom João VI, King of Portugal, supposedly as an indemnity for the loss of the former colony and as personal reparation.

Anyway, this newly won independence was unusual among the anticolonial movements in the region and contributed to place Brazil in a *sui generis* position in the whole context of the Americas, launching the country on a trajectory different from the rest of Latin America, underscoring even more its uniqueness, and emphasizing its differences vis-à-vis its regional neighbors: Brazil remained the only monarchy in a republican continent, or, as Lafer (2004:35) would say, “an empire among republics”, and “a great Portuguese-speaking territorial mass that remained united while the Hispanic world fragmented [...]. That is why, in the nineteenth century, in view of our position in South America, to be Brazilian meant not to be Hispanic” (Lafer 2000b:212).

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<sup>64</sup> Pedro's reign, known as the First Empire, lasted from 1822 to 1831. The emperor was succeeded by his son, also named Pedro, who was only five years old when his father resigned. A transitional regency triumvirate was formed to rule in the prince's name. In 1840, young Pedro was crowned Pedro II, ushering in the Second Empire (1840-1889).

### *3.2.1 Rio Branco's Legacy*

At any rate, the identifying features of the Brazilian strategic culture became even more discernible with the end of the monarchical regime and the advent of the Republic, in 1889. In 1902, in the early days of the fledgling Republic, José Maria da Silva Paranhos Jr., most commonly known as Baron of Rio Branco, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, retaining office until his death, in 1912, under four different Presidents, a feat unequalled in Brazilian history. Rio Branco – curiously, an ardent monarchist who refused to abandon his title – skillfully combined all the elements of the Brazilian strategic culture to pursue his geopolitical view of a singular and powerful, yet peaceful Brazil, reinforcing the belief about a land destined to greatness, a vision of grandiosity which has inspired generation after generation of diplomats, military officers and policymakers.

Considered “the father – or the patron – of Brazilian diplomacy” and one of the most prominent Brazilian statesmen ever, Rio Branco “epitomizes Brazilian nationalism [...] his political and diplomatic legacy, especially with regard to the demarcation of national borders, is revered as of great importance for the construction of the international identity of Brazil” (Alsina Jr. 2014:9). In fact, Rio Branco's vision shaped both the boundaries of the country and the traditions of Brazilian foreign relations. His most important legacy was his successful endeavor to negotiate territorial disputes between Brazil and some of its neighbors, including Argentina and Bolivia, and consolidate the borders of modern Brazil in a peaceful, yet somewhat expansionist manner. In the words of Celso Lafer (2000:1), a former Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rio Branco “peacefully drew the Brazilian map”, and as McCann (1998:64)

explains, “in the heyday of international imperialism, he was instrumental in negotiating limits over which the great powers were not to intrude”.

Initially, in 1895, as the Brazilian representative in cases submitted to international arbitration against Argentina and France (the latter regarding the neighboring French Guiana), and afterwards, already as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paranhos Jr. settled, on favorable terms, border disputes with Peru, Uruguay, Colombia, Great Britain (regarding the then British Guiana, currently Guiana, an independent nation), the Netherlands (regarding the then Dutch Guiana, currently Suriname), and Bolivia. According to Vassoler-Froelich (2008:5), Rio Branco’s masterful statecraft “allowed Brazil to increase its size by 297,850 square kilometers, thus winning through negotiations more territory than it won in the wars”.

Besides the successful demarcation of boundaries and the consolidation of the national space, Rio Branco, mirroring the geopolitical perspectives of the country’s ruling elites, actively sought to articulate and establish Brazil’s international identity. His extremely pragmatic views included a geostrategic realignment towards the United States, the first power to recognize the independence of Brazil, acting even before the mother-country. Realizing that the center of world power was gradually shifting from Europe to the New World, Rio Branco was responsible for beginning the process of moving Brazil out of the British orbit and into that of the United States, making it a key policy to “strengthen the ties between the United States and Brazil that already had been in process of formation as an outgrowth of reciprocal economic needs and similar political ideologies” (Ganzert 1942:432).

Such closer relationship with the most powerful country in the hemisphere was founded essentially on a pragmatic approach, which aimed at obtaining commercial and economic advantages, since the United States was the main consumer market for national exports of coffee, and involved security dimensions, as it sought to inculcate “in the minds of regional antagonists the idea that the U.S. would aid Brazil in case of conflict” (Alsina Jr. 2014:13). This new collaborative mood between the “Colossus of the North” and the “Giant of the South” – which, according to the Brazilianist Bradford Burns (1993), formed the basis of the “unwritten alliance” between the two countries, still today seen as the foundation of the bilateral relationship – was thus described by *O Paiz*, a Brazilian daily, in January 8, 1904, a few days after the simultaneous elevation of the legations of both countries to embassy rank:

It would be impossible to give the world a greater demonstration of sympathy and friendship between two great Republics of the New World. Linked by solid commercial interests which are developing progressively, destined to have parallel courses, natural leaders of the two parts of the Western Hemisphere, these nations enjoy a close friendship that is the natural consequence of their respective situations (Ganzert 1942:434).

In the Brazilian perspective, the strategic rapprochement with the United States would certainly increase the international prestige of Brazil, but it was designed to serve two other more pragmatic roles. First, it represented an attempt to release the country from the overwhelming economic and political influence and dominance exerted by European powers. Second, as Brazil sought to establish itself as the main power in South America, the leverage provided by the special relationship with the United States would hopefully serve as a “green light” for Brazil to



pursue hegemonic ambitions in the region, a project which has always been at the core of the Brazilian foreign policy since the monarchical times. By seeking regional primacy for Brazil, Rio Branco – who systematically “emphasized and represented Brazil’s singularity in the continent (Preuss 2011:182) – was actually seeking to enhance the international standing of the country, which is basically the same strategy that Brazil currently adopts to achieve a greater status in the international community.

The rise of the American influence in Brazil in the late nineteenth century represented the slow but gradual beginning of the end of the overwhelming European ascendancy – particularly French and British – over the country’s political, cultural and economic life, although French positivism remained the most robust intellectual influence within the military and on the civilian leaders of the republican movement that put an end to the monarchical regime in 1889. In that regard, according to Bradford Burns (1993:209), “[Positivism] profoundly influenced the ideas, actions, events, and changes characteristic of the dynamic ten-year period from 1888 through 1897 [in Brazil]. It also left an unmistakable imprint of the twentieth century.” However, the first Constitution of the Brazilian Republic, in 1891, for example, which remained in force until 1934, was heavily influenced by the U.S. Constitution, being almost a copy slightly adapted to local realities and needs. Once more, however, Brazil rejected the determinism imposed by its geographic circumstances and turned its back to Latin America, looking to other regions as a much needed source of inspiration regarding successful political and economic models to be followed. In the Brazilian perspective, the American model could certainly offer more hopes of a shortcut to the path of prosperity, development, sustainability, and social stability than its problematic and turbulent Latin American neighborhood.

### 3.3 The Keepers of Brazilian Strategic Culture

As Barnett (1999:16) notes, “debates over the national identity, construction of national interests and policy orientations also have to be situated within an institutional context. Identity [and strategic culture] will shape policy by drawing together and shaping societal interests into national interests.” Unlike the United States, whose process of nation and state building began in the context of deliberate efforts of the local society to create and install the institutions of a national government, the construction of Brazil as a nation was a process almost entirely driven by the direct action of the state, eventually leading to a situation in which the national state assumed prominence in almost every aspects of Brazilian political life.

For that reason, Trinkunas (2014:7) observes that “Brazilian thinking about the international order has historically been the province of three elites – diplomatic, economic and national security – that by and large share the aspiration to major power status.” In this context, the Brazilian diplomatic service and the military took over the role as the most important keepers of Brazilian strategic culture. Although those segments of society may present some differences about which capabilities to favor, and how to mobilize and use resources of power to increase the country’s visibility and influence in the global scene,

They share a consensus that economic development is a necessary precondition for achieving an international status commensurate with Brazil’s geographic and demographic size [...].Brazil’s elites also share a preference for peaceful relations among states and non-intervention in others’ affairs (Trinkunas 2014:7).

### 3.3.1 *The Military Establishment*

As economy and security were two indissociable concepts to the military, they were mainly focused on maintaining internal order, and developing the country's economic capabilities and productive infrastructure, so that the country could realize its potential for greatness, goals which are expressed in the positivist motto "Order and Progress" inscribed in the national banner<sup>65</sup>. The proclamation of the republic, in November 1889, marked the emergence of the military establishment as a significant political actor. Their growing role in national political life, however, is a direct consequence of the War of the Triple Alliance against the Paraguayan dictator Francisco Solano López (1864-1870), where they played a decisive part in the successful military campaign.

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, Brazil apparently enjoyed a stable monarchy, envied by neighboring countries. According to Conniff (1991:549), however, much of that stability "was due to the avoidance of major decisions affecting the society and the economy, decisions that by the 1880s became urgent and indeed overwhelmed the government's capacity to act". In fact, it can be said that the prolonged and unpopular War of the Triple Alliance contributed to the gradual decline of the Second Empire and to the loss of legitimacy and political support for Emperor Pedro II. Unemployment, rising inflation, economic crises, food

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<sup>65</sup> The motto "Ordem e Progresso" (Order and Progress) is inspired by Auguste Comte's motto of positivism: "*L'amour pour principe et l'ordre pour base; le progrès pour but*", which can be translated as "Love as a principle and order as the basis; progress as the goal". Comte, a French philosopher, is considered the founder of the doctrine of Positivism.

shortages, and political instability were some consequences of the conflict. Important segments of the military establishment openly criticized the Emperor and his ministers. Along with the antislavery movement which emerged in the 1880s, the military advocated republicanism. The monarchy was eventually overthrown and replaced by a transitional military regime which set up the political basis of a republican system, known as the First Republic, that would last for forty-one years.

In fact, after the proclamation of the republic, an event that was essentially an extremely peaceful military coup, led by Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca, who came to be, in 1890, the first Brazilian president, and up to the last decade of the twentieth century, the military had been a very active presence in Brazilian political life, playing the role of ultimate arbiters or informally serving as sort of a moderating power, frequently intervening in the political process. As McCann (1998:54) points out, “the history of the republic is also the story of the development of the army as a national institution. The elimination of the monarchy had reduced the number of national institutions to one, the army [...]. Thus, the army was the core of the developing Brazilian state, a marked change from the marginal role that it had played during the empire”. The second and the eighth Brazilian presidents, Marshal Floriano Peixoto (1891-1894) and Marshal Hermes da Fonseca (1910-1914), respectively, also came from the military ranks.

The economic development of Brazil, the maintenance of social order and internal stability and the projection of its power and influence abroad become the *raison d'être* of the military establishment, which “became not only one of the most important forces in the integration and construction of the nation and, eventually, the outward projection of Brazil into the world” (Eakin 2009:9), but also one of the most consistent keepers of Brazilian strategic

culture. By the way, the motto “Security and Development” represented the two pillars upon which the military formulated the National Security Doctrine, conceived at the Superior War College<sup>66</sup> (ESG), which guided the military regime after the Revolution of 1964, while simultaneously portraying their world view and their objectives. According to Oelsner (2005:67), “General Meira Mattos stated that there was a mutual causality between economic strength and security, although ‘economic growth in itself represents security.’” The first element of this approach involved a broad definition of security, which encompassed not only the defense against any act of external aggression, but particularly the internal security against potential threats presented by insurgencies and Communism. The second component referred to the pursuit of economic development. Under the military, the scope of the state in the economy grew considerably with the deepening of Brazil's industrial base. For that reason, McCoy (2009:3) observes that

During the 20th century, the armed forces seized power on two occasions in the name of aligning reality with destiny by minimizing the influence of politics on economic policy-making. Both produced impressive economic gains, but ultimately failed to institutionalize economic progress and secure Brazil a place on the world stage.

The first occasion was the Revolution of 1930, which aiming at disrupting the influence and power of old agrarian oligarchies, ousted President Washington Luis and prevented the inauguration of President-elect Júlio Prestes. On November 1, 1930, a military junta handed power to Getúlio Vargas, who governed Brazil until October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945, when he was removed

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<sup>66</sup> In Portuguese, Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG).

from office by the military<sup>67</sup>. The import substitution industrialization development strategy promoted by the Vargas Government “resulted in a major transformation of the Brazilian economy. By the time the army forced Vargas to step down in 1945, local manufacturers satisfied 90% of the demand for consumer goods for Brazil’s increasingly urbanized population” (McCoy 2009:3). Following the coup promoted by anti-Vargas military officers, General Eurico Gaspar Dutra, who had served under Vargas’s rule as Minister of War from 1937 to 1945, was democratically elected president in December 1945.

The second occasion was the Revolution of 1964, when the armed forces staged a military coup that overthrew President Joao Goulart and came to take full political control of the country, “[t]his time promising to govern until Brazil was securely on the path to sustained growth [...] to deepen its development and finally realize its *grandeza*<sup>68</sup>” (McCoy 2009:4). The armed forces then inaugurated what became “one of the most resilient military governments in Latin American history” (Conniff 1991:549), and installed a dictatorial regime that would last until 1985, when Tancredo Neves, a former Minister of Justice under Getúlio Vargas’s presidency in the 1950s, was indirectly elected by Brazilian Congress as the first civilian president since 1960. Neves, however, came to collapse unexpectedly the night before his

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<sup>67</sup> The widely popular Getúlio Vargas would return to power in 1950, this time as a constitutional president democratically elected by the people, governing Brazil until his suicide in 1954.

<sup>68</sup> Portuguese for “greatness”.

inauguration<sup>69</sup>, and the presidency passed to a long-time supporter of the military regime, Vice President José Sarney (1985-1990). As McCoy (2009:4) argues,

The military presidents who held power until 1985 did produce the widely heralded Brazilian ‘economic miracle’ with annual GDP growth averaging over 8.0% between 1965 and 1980. But the armed forces returned to the barracks in 1985 in the face of economic stagnation and rising inflation.

The remarkable economic growth recorded during most of the military regime – especially from 1968 to 1973, when average growth rates reached 11 percent a year, registering 13.9% in 1973, a period which came to be known as the “Brazilian economic miracle” or “Brazilian Miracle”, which also included quick industrialization and technology acquisition – led Brazil to be seen as one of the brightest stars in the global economy, and became “the economist’s model of the way to manage expansion from agrarian stagnation to the newly industrialized stage” (Kilborn 1983). This “golden age” of economic growth, which paradoxically resulted in a massive wealth concentration, reinforced perceptions, in the country and abroad, that Brazil was destined to be a great power, “the country of the future”, as the Brazilian official propaganda of the time would vaingloriously repeat, along with the motto “Brazil, love it or leave it”. In that regard, Brands (2010:7) reports that

Prominent international observers shared this high opinion of Brazil’s potential. Henry Kissinger privately predicted that ‘in 50 years Brazil should have achieved world power

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<sup>69</sup> Tancredo Neves died on April 21, 1985.

status,’ and George Kennan labeled Brazil one of several ‘monster countries’ that might exert a decisive influence on the global scene.

In 1985, after nearly 21 years of a military authoritarian rule, the armed forces peacefully ceded power to civilian leaders, starting a period of transition to a liberal-democratic regime. The military, however, retained significant prerogatives and continued influencing policies and public life. Due to a weak political base, President José Sarney had to rely on the armed forces as the ultimate pillar of his government. Sarney relied particularly on the militarized Serviço Nacional de Informações (National Information Service – SNI), the central organ of the repressive and highly influential Intelligence Community apparatus, which operated more as a political police force than an Intelligence organization and served as one of the main supports of the authoritarian regime.

As a result of his dependence on the armed forces, President Sarney made little progress in gaining greater control over the armed forces and reducing their ostensive influence on political scene, which began to gradually take place after the election of Fernando Collor de Melo in 1989, the first president elected by direct vote in almost three decades. However, the institutional framework of civilian control over the military only became formalized and consolidated during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), with the creation of the Ministry of Defense in 1999, subordinate to the Head of the Executive Power and under direct civilian authority, and the establishment of a National Defense Policy. The 1988 Federal Constitution, however, preserved the external and internal roles of the armed forces in identifying and defining the threats to national security, which includes its central role in formulating the National Defense Policy.



The military, therefore, still retain extensive prerogatives, such as a specific Military Justice system, and are not subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The important influence of the military establishment can also be felt in the Intelligence Community. The *Agência Brasileira de Inteligência* (Brazilian Intelligence Agency – ABIN) was formally created in December 7, 1999, through Law n. 9,883. Initially designed to be an institution directly linked to the President, ABIN is currently under direct subordination to the Minister-Head of the Institutional Security Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic (GSI), a military institution headed by a four-star general. While ABIN is formally headed by a Director-General (DG), “chosen and appointed by the President of the Republic, submitted to Senate approval” (Gonçalves 2014:588), the DG must report to the Minister-Head of the GSI, not to the President. In concrete terms, the truth is that the Minister-Head of the GSI is the real head of both the intelligence service and the intelligence system, not the DG, which leads to a situation in which the main civilian intelligence service in the country is subordinated to a military institution. That fact does not contribute to soothe fears that the agency might end up serving more as a political police force, like its ill-famed predecessor, the National Information Service (SNI), than as a modern and democratic intelligence service, since, as Duarte (2013) observed, the SNI was also “used as a tool in disputes among factions within government and between political parties upon the country’s transition to democracy in the 1980s”.

### 3.3.2 *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty)*

The other main keeper of Brazilian strategic culture is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also known as Itamaraty – a reference to a palace in Rio de Janeiro, the nation’s capital before Brasília, and which was the first headquarters of the Ministry. Under the influence and decade-long command of the Baron of Rio Branco, Itamaraty started to build its prestige as one of the most capable and well-trained diplomatic services in the world. As mentioned before, Rio Branco was responsible for negotiating territorial disputes between Brazil and its neighbors, consolidating the modern borders of the country with the settlement of the western and northern boundaries. However, Rio Branco’s legacy is greater than that, as “it fell to Rio Branco to redraw the nation’s real and imaginary boundaries and thus become a living symbol of a new-old insular Brazil” (Preuss 2011:182). According to Lafer (2000:2),

Not only did Rio Branco bequeath to Brazil a peacefully obtained map of continental proportions, he was also the great institution-builder of Itamaraty [...] The Baron inspired a diplomatic style which characterizes Brazil’s international identity in the light of its circumstances, its history and its experience, a style of constructive moderation and de-dramatization of foreign policy, by relying on diplomacy and law.

It would not be unrealistic to contend that Brazil’s current management of its international relations derives from Rio Branco’s skilful diplomacy and style. Casarões (2014:87), for example, observes that

Over the past century, the ministry has been responsible for constructing a sound foreign policy repertoire built upon principles such as pacifism, multilateralism, and realism – with José Maria da Silva Paranhos Júnior, the Barão do Rio Branco, one of Brazil’s

national heroes, as their main inspiration. Some would even go as far as to claim that the evolution of Itamaraty, both as an institution and as the centerpiece of foreign policymaking, has walked hand in hand with the formation of Brazil's national identity.

In this sense, Eakin (2009:5) emphasizes that "Itamaraty forged a cultural ethos over the twentieth century priding itself on recruiting some of the 'best and brightest' young Brazilians into its ranks, and projecting an image of a meritocratic intellectual and cultural elite." In fact, candidates to admission into the Foreign Service undergo an extremely rigorous national public exam, followed by two years of intensive training, after which young diplomats can be sent to serve in any of the some 220 Brazilian diplomatic missions spread around the globe.

It is possible to point out several reasons why Itamaraty has assumed such a prominent role in the development of the national character and strategic culture. First, diplomacy literally shaped Brazilian borders. Casarões (2014:88) argues that "Brazil [...] is a country that has been almost entirely forged by diplomacy – to the extent that our rejection of the use of force has become part of our national identity." There is no doubt that modern Brazil is a result of a series of diplomatic initiatives and agreements: the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), which divided the newly discovered lands outside Europe between Portugal and Spain; the Treaty of Madrid (1750), also between Portugal and Spain, which put an end to border disputes between the two empires in South America, and ceded much of what is today's Southern Brazil to the Portuguese; the secret Independence treaties between Brazil and Portugal; and the border treaties negotiated by Rio Branco.

Second, as Casarões (2014:89) observes, diplomacy "has always been the ticket to Brazil's international recognition." As Brazil has lacked the economic and military capabilities

that would provide the basis for a more significant role in international affairs and that could compel other countries to accept its emergence, Brazil has relied heavily on the skills developed by its diplomatic service to maximize its autonomy in the international system, always placing a premium on the norms of sovereignty, non-intervention, peaceful resolution of disputes, and cooperation, eventually becoming a “champion of parliamentary diplomacy [and] a ‘norm entrepreneur’ on its own, helping devise rules for global regimes in issue-areas as diverse as free trade or environmental protection” (Casarões 2014:89). This situation has led some to claim that if Brazil is to one day be able to provoke a significant systematic impact on the global order, “it will have to do so not through the inexorable accumulation of geopolitical weight, but through the resourcefulness of its strategy and diplomacy” (Brands 2010:3).

During most of the recent Brazilian history, diplomacy has also been one of the main agents of modernization, development, and national security. In fact since the beginning of the import substitution industrialization process during the first Vargas government (1930-1947), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked incessantly to open doors for national industrialization, seeking investments, economic resources and political support abroad to build the nation’s infrastructure and the base industry, while trying to overcome resistance and suspicions from industrialized countries. Casarões (2014:89) sustains that “diplomacy has been the motor of development since the early days of industrialization. Most of the policies that have been played out along Brazil’s path toward industry represent an intricate equation between resource allocation and international bargaining.” In fact, the idea that diplomacy should serve as a platform for the promotion of development was summarized in the concept “Diplomacy for

development”, adopted by successive governments and reinforced mostly during the military rule, from 1964 to 1985.

Finally, Itamaraty has traditionally displayed a remarkable ability to navigate the challenging intricacies of Brazilian bureaucracy, which may also be due to the fact that it is essentially a non-partisan (or supra-partisan) institution. This ability has allowed that entity to be usually portrayed as one of the most stable and reliable advocates of the national interest, regardless of the political ideologies and affiliations of the government of the moment, although that perception may not be entirely accurate.

Anyway, since the Brazilian independence and especially after the advent of the republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces have shown an outstanding ability to position themselves in the State bureaucracy in order to be able to exercise influence over the policy-making process. For example, with the exception of the Dilma Rousseff government (2011-present), who seems to nurture a deep aversion towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomats have always occupied key positions in the Federal Administration, including the top positions in the Ministry of Defense in two occasions, first with ambassador José Viegas Filho (2003-2004), and then with ambassador Celso Amorim (2011-2014).

Perhaps, this is also due to the fact that Brazilian decision-makers in the Executive and Legislative branches, as well as other political actors, have “historically demonstrated a profound lack of interest towards security and defense issues – towards international relations. Congress’ role has been mostly perfunctory and functional; it rarely engages in serious questioning of security and defense issues” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:19-20). After the 1964 Revolution, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a virtual monopoly over the formulation of foreign

policies. On the other hand, Brazilian armed forces have not historically been considered a constitutive element in the foreign policy-making process, leaving that activity almost entirely in the hands of the diplomatic service. In Brazil, when it comes to foreign policy making, political parties and the military do not play a central role in mobilizing group action, defining policy options and articulating alternative strategic choices, although that situation is starting to change when it comes to the military.

### 3.4 Qualitative Interviews – Results and Findings

This study proposed that there is a Brazilian strategic culture, which derives from geographic, historical, political, economic, and other variables, influences, and circumstances, and helps explain why Brazilian policymakers have made the decisions they have. It was argued that Brazilian strategic culture has traditionally provided the milieu within which strategic thoughts, foreign policy and security concerns are debated, plans are formulated, and decisions are executed.

For that reason, Chapter 2 analyzed and summarized Brazil's foreign policy history, in order to identify and qualify the elements of Brazilian strategic culture and its nature, focusing on the country's interests, priorities, and key events which helped to build and characterize its international identity. Additionally, this study sought to determine the relationship between these elements and Brazilian foreign and security policy decisions.

This study, then, proceeded in Chapter 3 to discuss the characteristics of Brazilian strategic culture, its evolution, its sources, the institutions that serve as its shapers and keepers,

and its influence upon the country's foreign policy decision-making process. Through this analyzes, it was seen that the main features of Brazilian strategic culture were being identified as being guided by, among others:

- a. A deep-rooted belief that the country is destined for greatness;
- b. The repudiation of the use of force in international relations and preference for the peaceful settlement of conflicts;
- c. respect for the principle of non-intervention
- d. Natural leadership in Latin America
- e. A sense of exceptionalism in the region.

It was discussed that these main characteristics have shaped Brazilian international identity and behavior and given rise to other features that have also molded the country's strategic culture. In order to find additional support for the arguments advocated in this dissertation about the nature and contents of Brazilian strategic culture, as well as its potential implications upon the country's security and foreign policy policies, this study undertook semi-structured qualitative interviews with high-ranking diplomats and military officers, traditionally considered the main keepers of the Brazilian strategic culture – a feature reinforced by the results obtained. In other words, the survey can serve as an additional means of validation of the arguments developed in this study, rather than the source of it. In that regard, interviewed participants belong to one of the following two broad categories:

1. Members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Diplomatic Career). The choice of participants was made based solely on hierarchical criteria, that is, on the rank of the interviewed person

within that institution, rather than on one's functional position in the Ministry or in the government. Therefore, out of a universe of approximately 1,770 diplomats, only those in the higher echelons of the diplomatic career (Ambassador or 1<sup>st</sup> Class Minister, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Minister, and Counselor), or 740 diplomats, would qualify for this research. Naturally, those in the higher ranks tend to occupy higher positions in the structure of that organization, but, in itself, functional position was not a criterion adopted. Likewise, gender and age were not considered criteria for inclusion in the research. Invitations to take part in the research were sent to all individuals in this category that would fit the hierarchical criterion. 106 diplomats decided to take part in the research, which represents a response rate of 14.32 percent.

2. Members of the Armed Forces: Likewise, the choice of participants was made based only on hierarchical criteria. Only those in the higher ranks (General, Colonel, LT Colonel, and its equivalents), or approximately 2,048 officers, would qualify for this study, regardless of their functional position in the Armed Forces or in the government. Invitations to take part in the research were sent to all individuals in this category that would fit the hierarchical criterion. 268 military officers decided to take part in the research, which represents a response rate of 13.10 percent.

Participants were extensively informed about the nature and the objectives of the research. An email was sent to all potential participants with the "explanation of research" (Appendix B) inviting them to participate in the research by contacting the researcher to organize an interview or email them a questionnaire (Appendix A), containing 16 questions. Consent was then obtained from each participant, as the email was accompanied by a copy of the 'consent form' (Appendix C). All told, this research interviewed approximately 374 individuals, which



represents an average response rate of 13.42 percent. Table 1 provides details regarding population and response rate.

Table 1 Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews: Response Rate

Description	Population	Interviewed	Response rate %
Diplomatic Career	740	106	14.32
Ambassadors	200	25	12.50
2nd Class Minister	237	36	15.19
Counselor	303	45	14.85
Military Officers	2,046	268	13.10
General (or equivalent)	115	13	11.30
Colonel (or equivalent)	931	129	13.86
LT Colonel (or equivalent)	1000	126	12.60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,786</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>13.42</b>

All University of Central Florida research involving human beings must be authorized and monitored by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which ensures that the “research is performed in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and institutional policies”<sup>70</sup>. Appendix D contains the Approval of Exempt Human Research, which means that participation did not present any professional, emotional or physical risk for the individuals interviewed.

The confidentiality of the participants in the interviews was communicated to them, ensured and thoroughly protected, as appropriate processes were adopted to secure their data and identity. All personal data regarding each individual participant was maintained separated from records of interviews and collected data. A code was assigned to each participant. This code represents the only mechanism that can link personal data to interview registers and records. No

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<sup>70</sup> Source: University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board. Available at [<http://www.research.ucf.edu/Compliance/IRB/Participants/index.html>].

information of any kind on any of the participants was disclosed to any party. Digital files containing personal data and interview records are password protected, and only this researcher has access to them.

### *3.4.1 The Interviews*

Question number 1 asked “Do you believe that Brazil has a particular strategic culture?” Although an overwhelming 94 percent of the respondents answered “yes”, it must be acknowledged that responses to the survey may have been biased, as only those respondents that have a certain level of prior knowledge on the subject or are, for whatever reason, interested in this kind of discussion may have been willing to take part in the interviews.

It must also be noted that nearly 13% of the respondents qualified their answers. In that regard, a common argument was that “a few institutions of the Brazilian State, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces, possess a deep-rooted institutional culture which reflects their strategic culture”. As a consequence of this institutional limitation, and, as one respondent put it, of “the fact that the Brazilian people has not yet understood as a nation the relevance of the State, Brazil has not been able to generate a coherent grand strategy that guides the country in its domestic development project and foreign policy initiatives”, which is consistent with the arguments developed in Chapter 4.

In fact, both the Ministry of External Relations and the Armed Forces – the former even more than the latter – are substantially bureaucratically insulated institutions, and highly opaque in their decision-making process, exhibiting a quasi-monopoly on security and foreign policy

matters. According to Stuenkel (2010b:120), Brazilian diplomacy is guided by the “realist principles that domestic and international politics are two separate disciplines, often isolating foreign policy making from any domestic influence. The main argument [is] that foreign policy was of national interest and should therefore be protected from special interests.” Although the idea that Brazilian diplomatic thought is driven by realist principles is highly debatable, there is no denying that, as a whole, the national civil society – including the parliament – are not relevant actors in both the security and foreign policy debate and decision-making process yet.

Question 2 asked “What are some of the characteristics of the Brazilian strategic culture?” Table 2 indicates the most cited features and their respective percentage.

Table 2 Characteristics of the Brazilian Strategic Culture

Position	Percent	Characteristic
1	93	Preference for peaceful means of conflict resolution
2	75	Belief in predestination to greatness
3	72	Preference for instruments of ‘soft power’ over ‘hard power’
4	66	Natural leadership in the Latin American space
5	64	Search for leadership in the Latin American space
6	63	Support to regional integration mechanisms
7	59	Singularity in Latin America, due to Portuguese colonization
8	56	Singularity in Latin America, due to the Portuguese language
9	51	Pragmatism in its international relations
10	44	Support to regional integration mechanisms under Brazilian leadership
11	38	Nationalism
12	26	Suspicion and distrust towards regional neighbors
13	6	Isolationism
14	4	Messianism
15	3	Expansionism
16	0	Belief in the legitimacy of the resort to violence and military means to achieve political objectives
17	0	Bellicosity

These results are entirely consistent with the arguments developed throughout this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 3. Preference for peaceful means of conflict resolution, belief

in predestination to greatness, preference for instruments of ‘soft power’ over ‘hard power’, leadership role in Latin America, and singularity in that region are the mainstays of the Brazilian strategic culture. Pragmatism, a nationalism of ends, and support to regional integration also represent important features, with important implications for the formulation and execution of the country’s security and foreign policy. In that regard, although the answers provided by members of two distinct groups – the Armed Forces and the diplomatic career – exhibit remarkable similarity in many cases (Table 3), some differences are noteworthy.

Table 3 Characteristics of the Brazilian Strategic Culture per group - Armed Forces and Diplomatic Career

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Characteristic
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	91	1	100	Preference for peaceful means of conflict resolution
3	72	4	79	Belief in predestination to greatness
5	63	2	89	Preference for instruments of ‘soft power’ over ‘hard power’
4	65	5	70	Natural leadership in the Latin American space
2	74	10	44	Search for leadership in the Latin American space
6	55	3	81	Support to regional integration mechanisms
8	53	6	69	Singularity in Latin America, due to Portuguese colonization
7	54	8	59	Singularity in Latin America, due to the Portuguese language
10	43	7	66	Pragmatism in its international relations
9	52	11	28	Support to regional integration mechanisms under Brazilian leadership
11	31	9	52	Nationalism
12	30	12	18	Suspicion and distrust towards regional neighbors
13	4	13	10	Isolationism
15	2	14	8	Messianism
14	6	15	0	Expansionism
16	0	16	0	Belief in the legitimacy of the resort to violence and military means to achieve political objectives
17	0	17	0	Bellicosity

Understandably enough, the first striking difference concerns the preference for instruments of ‘soft power’ over ‘hard power’. While 89 percent of respondents from the diplomatic career believe it to be a traditional characteristic of the Brazilian strategic culture, only 63 percent of the interviewed military personnel think the same way. As discussed in

Chapter 6, such apparent current loss of support to the “virtues” of soft power capabilities and the concrete foreign policy benefits that it can bring to the country might be one of the reasons why Brazil has been endeavoring to develop greater hard power capabilities.

Although a static survey cannot be evidence for a dynamic change, these results appear to lend support to the idea that, as important as soft power approaches might be to Brazil’s foreign policy, and as rooted as they are in the country’s national identity, Brazilian policymakers might be willing to acknowledge that soft power alone will not be enough to protect the country’s interests and to achieve global power status. In that context, the strengthening of military capabilities and a more active participation in United Nation peacekeeping missions could be increasingly seen as important steps to increase Brazil’s presence and influence on international affairs. However, this assessment neither implies that Brazil is seeking to adopt a more aggressive or interventionist international behavior nor that its strategic culture is changing. On the contrary, both groups not only clearly manifested their preference for peaceful means of conflict resolutions, but also expressly rejected the legitimacy of the resort to violence and military means to achieve political objectives, as the interviews demonstrate.

Military officers and diplomats also diverge about Brazil’s leadership role in Latin America. While 74 percent of the military respondents said that the search for leadership in the region is a characteristic feature of Brazilian, only 44 percent of the diplomats interviewed acknowledged that. Such result might be a consequence of Itamaraty’s traditional stance of avoiding claims to regional leadership, in order to avoid hurting political susceptibilities, feeding rivalries, or creating unnecessary ill-will towards Brazil. As former President Fernando Henrique

Cardoso observed, Itamaraty's official rhetoric is that "true leaders do not need to say they are taking leadership" (Burgess 2015:193).

The same reasoning is true regarding Brazil's role in regional integration. While 52 percent of the military personnel advocated the idea that Brazil has sought to conduct regional integration initiatives under its leadership, a mere 28 percent of the diplomats share that perspective. Although Brazil has certainly sought to pace the rhythm of regional integration processes in terms of both depth and extension<sup>71</sup> according to its needs, interests, and foreign policy priorities, this diplomatic discourse "couched in the rhetoric of 'non-hegemonic leadership'" (Hurrell 2008:55) appears to be consistent with the idea advocated in this dissertation that the country exhibits a striking unwillingness to pursue a more assertive role in regional affairs. Brazil's leadership role in Latin American, hegemonic ambitions, geopolitical perspectives, and regional integrations processes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Questions 3 and 4 asked, respectively, "Do these elements of the Brazilian strategic culture exert any influence on the formulation and execution of the Brazilian foreign policy?" and "Do these elements of the Brazilian strategic culture exert any influence on the formulation and execution of the Brazilian defense policy?" In both cases, 94 percent of the respondents answered "yes". These findings contribute to reinforce the argument that strategic culture is not a mere explanation of last resort in international politics, but a useful tool to analyze and predict a country's foreign policy behavior and its proclivity to the use of force, based on its historical

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<sup>71</sup> Or vertical and horizontal integration.

accumulated experiences, practices, traditions, preferences, norms, cultural roots, and geographical circumstances.

Question 5 asked whether Brazil is currently a global power, a middle global power, a regional power, or an emerging country. Table 4 below shows the overall results.

Table 4 Brazil's International Stature

Percent	Answer
56	A Regional Power
32	An Emerging Country
12	A Middle Global Power
0	A Global Power

While these concepts remains highly contested, defying rigorous theorization and involving significant degrees of subjective perceptions, they are still useful to approximately indicate a country's relative position in the international system. Three key causal factors that are generally accepted to make a country a great power are (a) large material power capabilities, which include economic and military strength; (b) a foreign policy that goes beyond its own region, and; (c) the ability to project force and influence, and to protect its interests beyond that region, although the two latter features (b and c) are related more to agency than to structure. According to respondents, Brazil is clearly not a global power, perhaps because, as Hamann (2012:74) puts it, "it lacks adequate material capacity (economic and military) to act on the global scene, especially to maintain or restore international peace and security".

Although the concepts of emerging country, regional power and middle global power can be sometimes overlapping and make reference to a same country, they present slight differences. It is not in the scope of this dissertation, however, to discuss minutely such theoretical

perspectives. For the purposes of this study and based on the criteria previously described, therefore, a regional power is understood as a country that commands regional support and some degree of leadership in its own region. Global middle powers are seen as the potential candidates for the status of great powers in the international system, while emerging countries are those that are in a process of transition from regional to middle global powers. According to Wight (1979:65), a global middle power is a country “with such military strength, resources and strategic position that in peacetime the great powers bid for its support, and in wartime, while it has no hope of winning a war against a great power, it can hope to inflict costs on a great power out of proportion to what the great power can hope to gain by attacking it.” Since no analytical instruments were provided to respondents, the focus of analysis tends to be less on the objective characteristics of a state, particularly Brazil, and more on the respondents’ perceptions.

Table 5 shows that most diplomats and military officers agree that Brazil is a regional power rather than a global power. However, while 22 percent of diplomats consider Brazil a middle global power, only 7 percent of the military personnel interviewed has the same opinion. Such discrepancy might reflect, on one hand, the military’s acknowledgement that Brazil lacks the hard power capabilities – particularly military strength – to exercise greater protagonism on the world scene, an assessment that is consistent with other answers in this interview, particularly answers 8, 11, and 14.



Table 5 Brazil's International Stature per group - Armed Forces and Diplomatic Career

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Answer
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	57	1	54	A Regional Power
2	36	2	24	An Emerging Country
3	7	3	22	A Middle Global Power
4	0	4	0	A Global Power

On the other hand, it might also reflect the belief rooted in the diplomatic establishment that the country's economic weight and soft power approaches are sufficient conditions to include Brazil in the "global powers club", what is also consistent with other findings in this qualitative interview, particularly answers 6, 7, 9, and 10.

Question 6 asked, "Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present economic resources?" Table 6 shows that most respondents believe that Brazil deserves a better global status and greater international voice given its economic weight as one of the largest economies in the world, despite the country's lack of military capabilities, limited political influence, and small participation in international trade flows. This is compatible with the idea developed in this study that one of the enduring features of Brazilian strategic culture is the belief that its global greatness should be acknowledged by virtue of its economic importance and size.

Table 6 Brazil's Economic Resources and Status

Percent	Answer
57	No, Brazil has more economic resources than status
30	Yes, status and economic resources are fully compatible
13	No, Brazil has more status than economic resources
0	Other

It is also important to note that many respondents qualified their answers. A common argument was that Brazil has vast economic resources, however their allocation and management has historically been done in an inefficient way, preventing the country from both successfully addressing its domestic structural constraints, which have been limiting growth, and increasing its international presence. Such mismanagement of public finances, for example has led in late 2015 to a dramatic “restructuring” in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ budget, which has not only compromised Itamaraty’s diplomatic initiatives, but also its ability to honor its financial commitments to international organizations, with serious damages to the country’s international image. In that regard, Simon (2016) notes that

At the United Nations, Brazil’s debt – roughly \$225 million in 2015 – is second only to that of the United States (totaling \$3 billion according to some sources, although the United States is also the organization’s largest contributor by far). In terms of its debt to the Organization of American States, last January, after Brazil agreed to make a payment—of just one dollar—some Caribbean countries tried to push forward some form of punishment. Even after paying an additional \$3.4 million since, Brazil still owes the organization \$15.29 million.

Question 7 asked “Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present political resources?” The intentional subjectivity of the question produced mixed results, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Brazil's Political Resources and Status

Percent		Answer
50		Yes, status and political resources are fully compatible
28		No, Brazil has more political resources than status
22		No, Brazil has more status than political resources
0		Other

50 percent of the respondents answered that Brazil's political resources are compatible with its status. This is not necessarily a positive finding, as many respondents qualified their answers by arguing that "Brazil's low status on the international scene is compatible with its scarce political resources and influence", for example. Likewise, 28 percent answered that Brazil has more political resources than status, "which does not mean that those resources have been used effectively or efficiently".

Again, however, diplomats and military officers exhibit some noteworthy differences of perspective, as shown in Table 8. Overall, diplomats tend to have more generous opinions regarding Brazil's political capital, influence, and global status. A common argument among diplomats was that "Brazilian participation in important world issues is widely recognized in international fora. The country's voice is heard". Accordingly, only 14 percent of the interviewed diplomats believe that Brazil has more status than political resources.

Table 8 Brazil's Political Resources and Status per group - Armed Forces and Diplomatic Career

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Answer
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	51	1	48	Yes, status and political resources are fully compatible
3	23	2	38	No, Brazil has more political resources than status
2	26	3	14	No, Brazil has more status than political resources
4	0	4	0	Other

Question 8 asked “Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present military resources?” As table 9 reveals, most respondents believe that there is an apparent mismatch between Brazilian global ambitions and its military capabilities, and that the country’s does not have the military capabilities needed to act as a global power, which demands actions, responsibilities and commitments that go beyond pure diplomatic rhetoric. As Carranza (2014:9) notes, “Brazil does not have the capability to project serious military power – except for UN-sponsored peacekeeping operations – beyond its own borders”. Likewise, Hamann (2012:75) observes that “the lack of materiality in Brazilian power [...] emphasizes that Brazil does not have the credentials of a global power; only of a global player. Expectations need to be lowered accordingly.” As discussed in Chapter 6, such recognition might be one of the reasons why the country has been investing in the development of its military strength and seeking to adopt a more proactive stance concerning participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

Table 9 Brazil's Military Resources and Status

Percent	Answer
61	No, Brazil has more status than military resources
35	Yes, status and military resources are fully compatible
4	No, Brazil has more military resources than status
0	Other

Question 9 asked “Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its economic potential?” As differing from Question 6, this question focuses on economic potential, rather than current economic resources. Once again, respondents expressed their belief in economic power as perhaps the essential requirement to achieve great-power status. As Table 10 shows, in a manner consistent with the hypotheses formulated in this

study, 83 percent of the respondents answered that Brazil should have more global status given the country's economic weight and potential. The underlying idea is that Brazil's credentials as one of the largest economies in the world and as one of the most industrialized nations in the developing world should suffice to grant the country a greater influence on world affairs. Certainly, the availability of large economic resources can contribute to allow a country to be a more active player in the international arena. As discussed in Chapter 5, however, it has not been enough to win Brazil a seat on the great-power club, due also to the absence of a clearly articulated grand strategy. Furthermore, the existence of serious structural problems, such as poverty, societal inequalities, and poor productive infrastructure simultaneously undermine and drain resources from the country's economic capacity.

Table 10 Brazil's Economic Potential and Status

Percent	Answer
83	No, Brazil has more economic potential than status
12	Yes, status and economic potential are fully compatible
5	No, Brazil has more status than economic potential
0	Other

Question 10 asked "Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its political potential?" The results shown in Table 11 seem to corroborate the idea that Brazil has a self-aggrandized perception of itself and its role in the international system, as only 19 percent of the respondents answered that Brazil has more status than political potential. Brazil has certainly endeavored to become a more active player in the international

scenario<sup>72</sup>. Its behavior, however, has been characterized more by its reliance on political discourses – which are important elements of a successful foreign policy – than in concrete actions, perhaps due to constraints in its material capabilities. Global recognition necessarily involves concrete action that goes beyond diplomatic rhetoric, and influence tends to be a natural consequence of the ability to meet other countries’ heightened expectations, satisfy their needs, and/or effectively oppose or block their policies and actions.

Table 11 Brazil's Political Potential and Status

Percent	Answer
68	No, Brazil has more political potential than status
18	No, Brazil has more status than political potential
14	Yes, status and political potential are fully compatible
0	Other

As in Question 7, military officers tend to take a much less optimist view of the situation than diplomats, what is perfectly understandable, since part of a diplomat’s job is, to some extent, to “sell” the image of his/her country. It is also function of diplomacy to understand and navigate global problems, assess their real impact, perceive and analyze the underlying and multiple forces that shape the nature of international events, and chart a way of dealing with these issues in a manner compatible with reality and that might, whenever and if possible, serve the general interests. The absence of a clear conceptual framework to guide a country’s foreign policy, and the concrete resources to act overseas, will certainly undermine a country’s real and potential influence.

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<sup>72</sup> Certainly, with the exception of the Dilma Rousseff administration (2011-present), when the country’s foreign policy has perhaps reached its lowest point in decades.

In that regard, Table 12 shows that only 61 percent of the interviewed members of the Armed Forces believe that Brazil has more political potential than status, while 83 percent of the interviewed diplomats hold that opinion. Likewise, 24 percent of the military officers believe that Brazil has more status than political potential, versus mere 7 percent of the diplomats. The answers provided by the military suggest that they believe that Brazil will only achieve great power status if, among other things, it improves the materiality of the country's power, which does not mean to become a militarized or belligerent country, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 12 Brazil's Political Potential and Status per group - Armed Forces and Diplomatic Career

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Answer
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	61	1	83	No, Brazil has more political potential than status
3	15	2	10	Yes, status and political potential are fully compatible
2	24	3	7	No, Brazil has more status than political potential
4	0	4	0	Other

Question 11 asked “Based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its military potential?” Contrary to the findings revealed in question 8, in which 61 percent of the respondents answered that Brazil does not currently have the military capabilities to act as a global power, Table 13 shows that the country has potential to develop its military strength and possibly achieve greater global influence and status. This perception might be one of the reasons why Brazil is seeking to strengthen its military capabilities in a number of strategic areas, which might convey the symbolic message that the country will be ready to exhibit military power to complement its political-diplomatic and economic capabilities in order to achieve the great power status it believes it deserves

Table 13 Brazil's Military Potential and Status

Percent		Answer
68		No, Brazil has more military potential than status
19		No, Brazil has more status than military potential
13		Yes, status and military potential are fully compatible
0		Other

Curiously, such perception is higher among diplomats than the military themselves, as Table 14 indicates, This fact appears to be consistent with the idea that, as one the main keepers of Brazil's strategic culture, the Itamaraty not only plays a fundamental role in the preservation of the country's diplomatic traditions, practices and preferences, but also in the preservation – and hopefully achievement – of the country traditional global aspirations.

Table 14 Brazil's Military Potential and Status per group - Armed Forces and Diplomatic Career

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Answer
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	64	1	76	No, Brazil has more military potential than status
2	18	3	4	Yes, status and political potential are fully compatible
3	18	2	20	No, Brazil has more status than political potential
4	0	4	0	Other

Questions 6 to 11 dealt with Brazil's current status in the international order, while questions 12 to 14 dealt with the country's global aspirations. In that regard, question 12 asked "Is Brazilian economic capacity compatible with the country's aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?" As Table 15 shows, the respondents are almost evenly divided over whether the country's economic capacity is enough to support its global ambitions, as 52 percent provided a negative answer.



Table 15 Brazil's Economic Capacity and Global Aspirations

Percent	Answer
52	No, the economic capacity is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations
48	Yes, economic capacity and global aspirations are fully compatible
	Other

As previously seen, Table 6 showed that most respondents (57 percent) believe that Brazil deserves a better global status and greater international voice given its economic weight as one of the largest economies in the world. However, Table 15 reveals that only 48 percent believe that the country's economic capacity is sufficient to bolster its global aspirations. This apparent contradiction might be a consequence of Brazil's poor economic performance in recent years.

In fact, "Brazil's GDP growth is experiencing a downward trend. After averaging 4.5% between 2005 and 2010, the country registered rates as low as 1.8% in 2012, 2.7% in 2013, 0.1% in 2014<sup>73</sup>" (Degaut 2014b:2), -3.8% in 2015<sup>74</sup>, with an estimated negative growth rate of 3.5% for 2016<sup>75</sup>, and a growth of 0% in 2017<sup>76</sup>. "These modest numbers are much below the country's needs and too small for a country which once aimed to rewrite the "economic geography" of the world, as former President Lula da Silva used to say" (Degaut 2014b:2). It is therefore deemed

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<sup>73</sup> Source: World Bank. Available at [<http://data.worldbank.org/country/brazil>].

<sup>74</sup> Source: International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook January 2016 . Available at [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/update/01/>]. Accessed January 22, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

probable that the current adverse economic conjuncture might have negatively affected the respondents' perception and temporarily shaken their optimism and confidence regarding Brazil's "inevitable" trajectory towards global greatness. It can also express the acknowledgement that the country needs to speed up its rate of economic development and solve its many structural problems in order to seriously come to be considered a potential global power in the future.

Question 13 asked "Is Brazilian political and diplomatic influence compatible with the country's aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?" Table 16 shows that 81 percent of the respondents believe that Brazil's political and diplomatic influence is insufficient to support the country's global ambitions. These results are consistent with Brazilian efforts to promote reforms in the global governance system – particularly in the institutional structure of the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, among others – that might favor its interests, and to build political and economic alliances, partnerships and integration blocs that might contribute to give it greater voice and clout in international affairs, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUL), the IBSA Forum, the South American-Arab Countries initiative (ASPA), and the BRICS, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 16 Brazil's Political and Diplomatic Influence and Global Aspirations

Percent	Answer
81	No, diplomatic and political influence is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations
19	Yes, diplomatic/political influence and global ambitions are fully compatible
0	Other

Question 14 asked “Is Brazilian military capacity compatible with the country’s aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?” As Table 17 shows, 86 percent of the respondents believe that the country’s military capacity is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations. These results are consistent with other findings in this research, particularly with questions 8 and 11. As previously mentioned, the acknowledgement of the gap between economic resources, military capabilities, and global ambitions, as well as the need to ensure the protection of its territorial integrity, has led Brazil in recent years to launch a number of initiatives to promote the re-equipment and modernization of its Armed Forces. As discussed in Chapter 6, this perception and these efforts to develop the country’s military capabilities might indicate that Brazil’s policymakers might be starting to realize that “soft power” and ideational factors of leadership alone are not enough to bring the country the global influence and status it has long pursued.

Table 17 Brazil's Military Capacity and Global Aspirations

Percent	Answer
86	No, military capacity is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations
14	Yes, military capacity and global aspirations are fully compatible
0	Other

Question 15 asked “which institution has had the greatest influence over the development of Brazilian strategic culture?” The results shown in Table 18 confirm that the Armed Forces (50 percent) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (41 percent) are usually considered the main keepers of the country’s strategic culture, as previously discussed in sub-section 3.2 in this Chapter. Although those institutions present some differences in perceptions and perspectives regarding the country’s international status, its economic, political, and military capabilities, and how to

mobilize and use resources of power to increase the country’s presence and influence in the global scene, as evidenced by the findings of the qualitative interviews in this study, they share a high number of common features, among which is the belief that Brazil is destined to become a major world power and that the development of economic – and military – capabilities is a precondition for the attainment of such status.

Table 18 Main Shapers and Keepers of Brazilian Strategic Culture

Percent		Answer
50		The Military
41		The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8		The Presidency of the Republic
1		The Parliament

As it could be expected, each institution believes that it has contributed more to shape and keep national strategic culture than others, as Table 19 reveals.

Table 19 Main Shapers and Keepers of Brazilian Strategic Culture per group

Armed Forces		Diplomats		Answer
Position	Percent	Position	Percent	
1	65	2	30	The Military
2	30	1	56	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3	3	3	14	The Presidency of the Republic
4	2	4	0	The Parliament

Anyway, on average, these findings also reinforce the idea that the National Parliament, known as *Congresso Nacional* has little influence over the security and foreign policy decision-making processes and the country’s strategic culture, as only one percent of the respondents indicated that institution as a main shaper or keeper of Brazil’s strategic culture. In fact, as Bitencourt and Vaz (2009:19) put it,

A remarkable factor to consider when analyzing the shapers and keepers of Brazilian Strategic Culture is the absence of a key political actor, that is, Congress. Indeed, the Brazilian Congress and civil politicians have historically demonstrated a profound lack of interest towards security and defense issues—towards international relations. Congress' role has been mostly perfunctory and functional; it rarely engages in serious questioning of security and defense issues.

On the other hand, 8 percent of the respondents answered that the Presidency of the Republic has had significant influence over the development of Brazilian strategic culture, a result which emphasizes the role of the so-called presidential diplomacy in the foreign policy decision-making process. According to Burges (2010:186), “[t]he idea behind presidential diplomacy is that the foreign policy formulation process and its active pursuit is led by the president and the presidency, not by the foreign ministry”. Likewise, Malamud (2005:139) argues that this mechanism should be “understood as the customary resort to direct negotiations between national presidents every time a crucial decision has to be made or a critical conflict needs to be resolved”.

In Brazil, in fact, particularly after President Getúlio Vargas administrations (1930-1945 and 1951-1954), the head of government has traditionally played a protagonist role in the conduction of the foreign policy, with a few exceptions, notably during the military rule (1964-1985). It was, however, during the administrations of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) and Lula (2003-2010) that such practice gains special relevance, with the intense diplomatic activism of both former presidents, to the extent that, as some diplomats acknowledge it unofficially, “during the Cardoso years the president was also the foreign minister, with Luiz

Felipe Lampreia and Celso Lafer often being left with the more parochial management details after the chief executive had devised and agreed the grand lines of action with his counterparts” (Burges 2010:187).

It is not, however, unreasonable to argue that heads of government, individually representing the institution of the Presidency, tend to be more affected by a particular strategic culture, and therefore tend to think and behave within its framework, than they influence and shape a particular strategic culture, even though that might also take place. A clear example is the lackluster foreign policy undertaken by Dilma Roussef (2011-present), in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeks to follow the guidelines that have traditionally guided its line of action, despite the lack of international engagement and interest for international affairs exhibited by President Dilma Roussef.

Question 16 asked “Where/how do you see Brazil in 25 years from now?” Once again, respondents’ opinions seem to have been significantly influenced by the country’s poor economic performance in recent years, leading the country to experience its worst economic recession in almost three decades, and by the domestic political problems faced by the highly unpopular Roussef government<sup>77</sup>, besieged by charges of corruption and threatened with a

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<sup>77</sup> A poll conducted by *Datafolha* – a private polling institute – conducted in November 2015 revealed that the number of Brazilians who rated Roussef’s Administration “bad” or “very bad” had reached 71 percent. Likewise, 65 percent of the respondents wanted the president to resign or be impeached. Available at [<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-brazil-rousseff-poll-idUKKBN0U20SV20151219>]. Accessed January 19, 2016.

process of impeachment, as most answers revealed a pessimist outlook<sup>78</sup>. In a certain sense, such perspective contradicts the optimism revealed by questions 9, 10, and 11 concerning Brazil's economic, political, and military potential. Below can be found some answers that reflect some of the most common opinions<sup>79</sup>:

- “As a country still stuck to a corrupt tradition and struggling with economic difficulties due to the mismanagement of resources”.
- “I see Brazil with no prospects of social, political, or economic growth, as the structural seeds needed to growth in these areas have not been sown.”
- “Despite some isolated attempts to strengthen a few institutions, I see Brazil as a country stagnated and with no clear direction.”
- “Better structured militarily than today, but without a clear politico-diplomatic agenda that takes into account the real interests and needs of the country.”
- “As a regional power still seeking to consolidate its regional leadership.”
- “Unfortunately, Brazil will be in a situation pretty much like the current one. The lack of medium and long-term strategic planning does not allow me to envisage a better situation”.

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<sup>78</sup> According to another polling institute, *Ipsos*, the number of Brazilians who rated Rouseff's Administration “bad” or “very bad” had reached 79 percent in January 2016, while 90 percent of those polled believe the country is going in the “wrong direction”. Available at [<http://www.oantagonista.com/posts/ipsos-aprovacao-de-dilma-cai-a-5>]

<sup>79</sup> All answers were provided in Portuguese and translated by the author of this study.

- “The country’s economic potential is the only variable that would allow a positive scenario. However, the shy and inconsistent foreign policy, the scarcity of military resources and institutional corruption prevent any great expectations about a greater Brazilian insertion into the international scenario and a more effective participation in global affairs”.
- “As a global power, if massive investments in education and technology are made; otherwise, it will remain as a mere promise”.
- “In the same place. Although Brazil has an extraordinary potential, the political class does not have the project of a nation and the strategic vision to promote national development”.
- “In 25 years, Brazil will be in a level very similar to the present one. Although regionally some progress can be made, no great transformation will be achieved globally”.

Some answers with a more positive outlook were also registered, although at a lesser scale. The most common arguments among them are:

- “In 2040, Brazil will have awakened to its economic, military, and political potential, reaching a position of indisputable regional leadership and greater protagonism in the international scenario”.
- “If the country overcomes the current political and economic crisis, it has the potential to achieve a global player status”.
- “As a middle power with peripheral influence over the international system”.



### 3.5 Conclusions

Overall, what has become clear from these interviews and their results, as it was expected, is that while there is not a single, unitary opinion within and between Brazil's most important institutions when it comes to strategic, security and foreign policy matters, the remarkable convergence of opinions between bureaucratically insulated institutions as to the existence of a particular strategic culture and its characteristics appear to reflect a strong general identification with an overarching, shared historico-cultural narrative which gives rise to a set of political principles that, to some extent, shapes, guides – and serves as a source of legitimacy to – Brazil's international action.

Likewise, and in spite of the influence of the current troublesome political and economic scenario, respondents appear to share the belief that the country's political/diplomatic, military, and economic capabilities and potential can be developed, optimized, and turned into the instruments that will grant Brazil the passport to global greatness and recognition as a major power.

## **CHAPTER 4 – STRATEGIC CULTURE AND COMPETING APPROACHES: EXPLAINING BRAZILIAN STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR**

### 4.1. Introduction

As previously stated, this research is also dedicated to assess the strength of the strategic culture approach in explaining the evolution of Brazilian security and foreign policy thinking and practices in comparison to other more traditional theoretical perspectives, particularly offensive realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and rational choice institutionalism. As this dissertation argues, more traditional and dominant modes of analyzing the strategic behavior of middle powers like Brazil, such as neoliberal institutionalism, offensive realism, and rational choice institutionalism (RCI), might not be the most appropriate ones to analyze the evolution of Brazilian security and foreign policy practices, as they appear to fall short of capturing the full gamut of motivations behind the strategic and foreign policy behavior of a state like Brazil, which seems to defy the narrow boundaries imposed by mainstream International Relations theories.

Likewise, neither of those major theories seems to be able to account for intangible aspects such as identity, values, and traditions to either predict the future or explain the past. For this reason, this dissertation has argued that, in spite of its gaps, the strategic culture approach appears to be more adequate to explain Brazil's geopolitical thought and, consequently, its foreign policy interests, priorities and behavior, vis-à-vis other competing theoretical approaches. Understanding identity, beliefs, values, traditions, action and discourse allows scholars and policymakers to take account of the issues to which the actors are reacting, as well as the impact of experience on their foreign and security policies. Neoliberal institutionalism, offensive

realism, and RCI, among other perspectives within the Realist and Liberal schools of international relations theory, fail to address these issues in a satisfactory manner. We can therefore not entirely rely on rational choice theories, but need to include the strategic culture approach, which examines the cultural elements used to construct strategies of action, and supplement traditional approaches by explaining, changes in a country's foreign policy preferences and behavior.

#### 4.2 Realist and Neorealist Theories

Realist, as well as Neorealist, scholars tend to neglect – and even ignore – the existence of regional powers. Their focus appears to be almost entirely directed towards the history and interests of the United States and the European great powers. Carranza (2014) believes that there are two problems with the realist/neorealist approaches. First, they ignore the regional level of analysis. They assume that the international system – which is composed of self-regarding “like units”, the states – is primarily anarchic and that, consequently, states have to rely almost exclusively on their own capabilities to protect their national security by any necessary means.

Best represented by Hans Morgenthau, the classical realist approach, for example, argues that states’ actions are determined by “statesmen [who] think and act in terms of interest defined as power” (Morgenthau 2006:5). Understanding the system according to the distribution of power, the realist/neorealist approaches “recognize the existence of a pecking order in international relations – the distinction between great powers and small powers – but they are not

concerned with regions, regionalism, or regional powers, or with the regional/global nexus” (Carranza 2014:3).

Carranza also argues that those perspectives have difficulties in explaining the emergence of issues that have the potential to substantially affect the structure of the international system, such as globalization, the rise of non-state actors, and the emergence of regional powers, such as Brazil. For this reason, “[f]or hard-core realists, meaningful international change only occurs after a great-power war that changes the composition of the great-power club” (Carranza 2014:4). Furthermore, as power, understood as the resources available to a state for building military forces, is a defining feature of the international environment, realist and neorealist scholars tend to relegate the importance of economic capacity to second plan, therefore not seriously taking into account the aspirations of a fast-growing economy as Brazil of being accepted in the “great-power club”.

Within that framework, Stuenkel (2010b:6) notes that Realist and Neorealist perspectives would predict that rising powers would not “play by the West’s rules”, rejecting the principles of the international system, as “[t]hey generally expect rising powers to use their newfound status to pursue alternative visions of world order and challenge the status quo, for example by joining hands with other rising powers and mounting a counter-hegemonic coalition.”

Realists, then, would predict that, with the creation of the BRICS group, Brazil would be willing to create such counter-hegemonic coalition and fundamentally alter the structure of the international system. As the strategic culture approach would predict, however, and as this dissertation argues, faithful to its strong tradition of negotiation and consensus-seeking policy-

making, which also are core values of its international behavior, Brazil has neither interest in building a counter-hegemonic coalition to upend the international power table nor the economic, political or military resources and capabilities to do so. On the contrary, Brazil wishes to be envisaged as a “broker whose main interests lie fundamentally in the preservation of a stable environment that allows it to accomplish its political and economic goals associated ultimately with national development” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:26). In other words, Brazil is striving to obtain more benefits within the framework of the current international system.

The BRICS and other initiatives, such as the India, Brazil, South Africa Forum (IBSA), the Summit of South American-Arab Countries (ASPA), should not only be seen under this light, but also reflect this stance, which also mean that, if Brazil does not want of upend the power table, it “wants a better seat and to be able to rewrite parts of the menu to its advantage” (Brimmer 2014:136), objectives also consistent with the country’s strategic culture, and its search for global greatness.

The establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), an inter-governmental body within the structure of the BRICS, “whose main task is to mobilize resources from BRICS nations for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in developing countries” (Degaut 2015:10), for example, is part of the strategic framework designed to help Brazil expand its sway in the international scenario without fundamentally challenging it. Likewise, Brazil and the other BRICS countries also agreed to set up a additional capital reserve of US\$100 billion, known as Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), which is intended to work as a “multilateral currency swap among BRICS central banks and to forestall short-term liquidity pressures, providing additional liquidity protection to members during balance of payments problems” (Degaut

2015:10). These initiatives are hardly evidence of counter-hegemonic alliances, as they seek to increase those countries influence within the current international order.

It seems, finally, that the classical realism paradigm is not adequate to explain international cooperation, as it assumes that international institutions are bound to only play a role subordinated to the interests of nation-states because “[m]ore important than anything else is the ability of the national government to defend its territory and citizens against foreign aggression” (Morgenthau 2006:528-29). As seen in Chapter 3, however, preference for multilateralism is one of the most remarkable features of the national strategic culture. Thus, contrary to classical realism, the strategic culture approach would predict that Brazil would engage actively in the defense of multilateralism.

In fact, Brazilian foreign policy has traditionally advocated, at least rhetorically, an international system in which the benefits of the rules of a multilateral order could arguably be enjoyed by all nations. Without the rules of this reciprocal multilateralism, the “international system remains at the mercy of the stronger [...] based on the unilateral conduct of the dominating power” (Cervo 2010:11). Some examples of the reciprocal multilateralism that characterizes the Brazilian foreign policy include, among many others, the active participation in the talks about the reform of the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, and Brazil's conduct within the framework of the World Trade Organization – which includes the election of its current Director-General, Brazilian Ambassador Roberto Azevedo.

### 4.3 Offensive Realism

Offensive Realism, as proposed by John Mearsheimer (2001), is even more problematic in explaining the foreign policy behavior and practices of an emerging country like Brazil and the system in which it operates. Clearly, Offensive Realism is a theory intended to explain “great powers” behavior. It advocates the idea that states pursue power as a means, and predicts that they will seek to maximize their power and pursue hegemony whenever possible. As Mearsheimer (2001:5) explains “[g]reat powers are determined on the basis of their relative military capability. To qualify as a great power, a state must have sufficient military assets to put up a serious fight in an all-out conventional war against the most powerful state in the world.” However, for a country like Brazil, which lacks hegemonic potential and is still in the periphery of the global distribution of power, behavioral expectations tend to be significantly different. In Brazil’s case, power maximization not only does not appear to be a viable strategic alternative, but, in fact, it has not been part of the country’s political repertoire. Much to the contrary.

As this study has sought to demonstrate, Brazil has been a long time advocate of multilateralism in international relations, both at regional and global levels. As argued in Chapters 3 and 6, Brazil has, at the regional level, encouraged and fomented the creation of a number of institutions and organizations aimed at promoting regional integration. These initiatives have, in the final analysis, contributed to diluting Brazilian material and political influence, which is clearly at variance with the power maximization tenet stressed by Offensive Realism.

As Victor Cha (2010:160) contends, “[i]f small powers try to control a larger one, then multilateralism is effective. But if great powers seek control over smaller ones, bilateral alliances are more effective.” Offensive Realism predicts that, in an inherently competitive international system, a state would be more secure if it were the dominant, the hegemonic power. In that case, as the most powerful country in South America, and even in Latin America, Brazil should not enmesh itself in a net of multilateral structures and should even discourage them. Instead, Brazil should seek to establish asymmetrical bilateral alliances with smaller countries, in order to accentuate their dependence and reinforce its leadership role.

However, as the strategic culture approach would predict, Brazil has done quite the opposite. Based on its traditions, values, geographic circumstances, and identity, the country has historically pursued the path of integration, not domination or hegemony, as the ABC Pact, the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) and the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) initiatives, and the UNASUL – with the South American Defense Council – and Mercosul integration processes clearly indicate.

#### *4.3.1 Brazil’s Renunciation of Nuclear Weapons*

Likewise, Offensive Realism understands power primarily as military capabilities and, to a lesser extent, as the concentration of resources – particularly economic and demographic assets – necessary to produce those capabilities. As Carranza (2014:3) points out, from a realist perspective, “a state can claim great-power status, but it is unlikely to join the great-power club unless it meets the requirements of economic and military strength that grant admission to the



club.” Therefore, a power-maximizing behavior could increase a state’s security and status. In that regard, Érico Duarte (2011:2) asserts that “[t]he strategies to acquire real and potential power and the strategies to use them are the paramount concerns of all states. This is particularly important for great powers [...]. The pursuit for power has as conceptual verge the conquest of global hegemony.”

In that regard, once again, the Brazilian approach towards the possession of nuclear weapons capabilities and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) not only contradicts Offensive Realism predictions, but is also a revealing indicator of its particular strategic culture. Brazil, the only BRICS country to never possess a nuclear device and which was on the verge of acquiring offensive nuclear weapons capabilities in the early 1990s, explicitly manifested its preference for negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes by renouncing its secret nuclear program and engaging in an a series of steps toward binding non-proliferation commitments, as the strategic culture approach would predict. The secret nuclear program, codenamed the Solimões Project, had been in development since the late 1970s, still during the military rule. According to Graham (1994:233), the existence of such secret nuclear project “had been rumored for years, although until Collor took office, the Brazilian government never admitted it publicly. The president learned of it when he read a transition document prepared by the outgoing Sarney administration in early 1989.”

In fact, the Brazilian military regime (1964-1985) believed that the possession on nuclear weapons could bring the country not only greater security and regional hegemony, but also a greater global status. As Patti (2015) explains, President General Costa e Silva (15 March 1967 –

31 August 1969) already advocated the idea that Brazil had the right to develop its nuclear program both for civilian and military purposes:

There was no clear decision that Brazil should arm itself with nuclear weapons, but for Costa e Silva and his successors during the years of military rule it was essential to keep such a possibility open for the future. The quest for greater prominence in the international arena is one of the reasons for Brazil's ambition to become a nuclear power. On the other hand, Brazil needed security guarantees from the nuclear powers so as to insure against risk of a nuclear attack. (Patti 2015:192).

However, while Brazil actively sought to develop its nuclear program for civilian purposes, with a focus on the development of its energy matrix, as seen in Chapter 2, it seems that the development of nuclear military capabilities was never really a priority for the successive military governments. Severe divergences within the Armed Forces and the opposition of important segments of the public administration, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the civil society, deeply attached to, and proud of, their country's pacifist traditions, as well as their international commitments to non-proliferation, made the progress of the nuclear military program very slow. Eventually, Brazil was successful in its endeavors, as its "research centres had mastered certain key processes based on in-house technology: in 1982, uranium enrichment (through the ultracentrifuge method), and, in 1985, the reprocessing of spent fuel rods, used for producing uranium" (Patti 2015:197). The control of the nuclear fuel cycle, however, did not necessarily mean that Brazil could – or was willing to – build a nuclear artifact, the best proof of which is the fact that a nuclear weapons test was never conducted, even though a 1,050-foot-

deep shaft in Serra do Cachimbo, in the Brazilian State of Pará, in the North of the country, already in the Amazon region, had been built for that purpose.

In September 1990, then President Collor gave a speech at the United Nations General Assembly where, announcing the country's official decision not to proceed with the development of WMDs for the sake of contributing with the promotion of regional and global peace and stability, he declared that "Brazil today rejects the idea of any test that implies nuclear explosions, even for peaceful ends" (Graham 1994:234).

Following the bilateral rapprochement initiated still during the final years of military rule in both countries in the early 1980s and intensified during the administrations of Sarney, in Brazil, and Alfonsín, in Argentina, as seen in Chapter 2, on November 28, 1990, during a historical meeting at the Brazilian border town of Foz do Iguaçu, Collor and Argentine President Carlos Menem signed a bilateral treaty by which both countries renounced the development, manufacture, and testing of nuclear weapons. Although the gradual democratization of both countries certainly contributed with the détente process, it is not enough to emphasize that nuclear talks between Brazil and Argentina were initiated during the Administration of General President João Batista Figueiredo (1979-1985). Anyway, these confidence-building measures led both countries to sign the Guadalajara Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, on July 18, 1991, which created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), installed on December 13, 1991.

The ABACC represents the only binational safeguards organization in the world, and its mission is to oversee the joint application and management of the Common System for

Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. Once it was installed, a new Agreement was signed between Brazil, Argentina, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the ABACC, aimed at consolidating the system for application of safeguards that is currently in force in both countries, and that is essential to maintaining a more stable and nuclear weapons-free Latin America. As a consequence, nuclear activities in the Brazilian territory are allowed only for peaceful purposes, and even so when authorized by the *Congresso Nacional*, the national parliament, as prescribed by the Brazilian Constitution, which states in its Article 21, XXIII, a: “all nuclear activity within the national territory shall only be admitted for peaceful purposes and subject to approval by the National Congress”<sup>80</sup>.

In this case, it became clear that Brazil’s self-perception of its identity as a country that had traditionally manifested its strong preference for peaceful settlement of disputes between states and the rejection of the use of force in international relations, some important features of its strategic culture, had a greater influence upon the country’s leaders and policymakers than the very real prospect of becoming a nuclear weapon state and, consequently, a military power. From an offensive realist perspective, the abandonment of the nuclear program represented the adoption of a non-rational policy, as it was not only at odds with the power-maximizing behavior sustained by that theoretical perspective, but it could also be eventually translated into a decrease in a state’s security level and status. From the strategic culture perspective, however, Brazil remained faithful to its traditions and values, even if that security and foreign policy behavior

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<sup>80</sup> Source: Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil. Available at [<http://english.tse.jus.br/arquivos/federal-constitution>].

were not conducive to the fulfillment of its longstanding dream of becoming a major power and achieving a greater degree of influence in international affairs.

#### 4.4 Neoliberal Institutionalism

Like Offensive Realism, Neoliberal Institutionalism seems not to be the more suitable approach to explain Brazil's security and foreign policy thinking and practice. Contrary to classical liberalism's assumptions that domestic-level variable matters, which means that the nature of the domestic political system of a given country is an important element to be taken into account when analyzing a country's behavior and preferences, Neoliberal Institutionalism focuses on how international institutions can contribute to reduce the fear and uncertainty of states in the international scenario so as to foster cooperation among them. In fact, this approach share with Offensive Realism a number of key concepts about the nature and structure of the international system, while diverging in others.

In general, Offensive Realism's basic assumptions of conflict, anarchy, and struggle for power reflect an international environment in which cooperation tends to be unlikely, although certainly not completely impossible. Neoliberal Institutionalism, on the other hand, understands the fear and uncertainty that characterizes Offensive Realism's anarchic environment from a different perspective. Certainly, neoliberals accept the realist idea that anarchy makes cooperation difficult, so any forms of cooperation will very often demand extensive interaction and bargaining. However, they not only believe that cooperation is likely, but also that international institutions can reduce nations' fear and uncertainty through continued interaction

and cooperation and increasing interdependence. While offensive realists dismiss international institutions as epiphenomenal elements of international relations and, consequently, as mere foreign policy instruments of powerful states, neoliberal institutionalists assert that international institutions possess the instruments and resources necessary to produce their own autonomous impact upon a country's behavior.

Like offensive realists, neoliberal institutionalists accept that states are unitary and rational actors that make their decisions based on cost/benefit calculations. Neoliberals, however, reject the emphasis placed on conflict by offensive realists. On the contrary, neoliberal institutionalists reject the view that war is all but inevitable, and tend to exhibit preference for non-violent methods in the pursuit of national objectives. In that context, international institutions can help increase interdependence and stability by alleviating states' potential concerns about cheating, defection, and free riding, and by increasing the transparency of state behavior. Considering that international cooperation can usually take the form of norms and understandings as to what would be deemed an appropriate behavior on important matters, international institutions contribute to reinforce and institutionalize reciprocity as a norm, by substantially augmenting the cost of cheating, and by reducing the cost of cooperating. It is, therefore, through norms and institutions based on reciprocity and cooperation that the international order can evolve, since, as Keohane and Martin (1995:42) assert, "[i]nstitutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination, and in general facilitate the operation of reciprocity".

Within this framework, neoliberal institutionalist theorists argue that democratic nations tend to display less signs of a security dilemma in their foreign relations and, therefore, can

potentially coexist in a more peaceful manner. These theorists, consequently, also predict that democracies are more likely to take part in international institutions than non-democratic regimes. When it comes to the role of emerging powers in this international system, neoliberal institutionalist theorists predict that “democratically organized rising powers [will] become ‘responsible stakeholders’, adapt to the existing norms and align with the status quo, the Western-dominated system of liberal internationalism” (Stuenkel 2010b:5-6). The underlying idea is that a more transparent, predictable, monitored, norms-based, and stable system would make it potentially easier for these emerging powers to rise, a mechanism that Stuenkel (2010b) calls “intra-institutional mobility”.

In fact, since international institutions tend to promote a relative convergence of expectations, it will, to some extent, constrain the behavior of major powers, relegating traditional power balancing and the reliance on military strength to a second plan. Such “constraining” mechanisms or processes can give rise to “intra-institutional mobility” and facilitate the rise of emerging powers, such as Brazil. Likewise, due to increased financial, commercial and economic interdependence, rising powers will endeavor to strengthen existing systems of global governance in order to preserve financial and economic stability. This situation leads neoliberal institutionalists to predict that an emerging country tends to eventually reach great-power status if it presents economic interests that expands beyond its immediate geographic region and is willing to assume the role of a “responsible stakeholder” in the global economy (Carranza 2014).

Brazil has certainly made some important integrative moves, as the neoliberal institutionalist theoretical edifice would predict, and has displayed a clearly preference for

multilateralism in its international relations, as its adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1995 and the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1997<sup>81</sup>, as well as its active participation in discussions in the framework of the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, among other examples, can attest. One could then conclude that the Neoliberal Institutional principles should hold true in the Brazilian case, were not for the fact that Brazil's behavior towards international institutions appear to challenge one of the core assumptions of Neoliberal Institutionalism.

As it has been seen, at the heart of the neoliberal institutionalist perspective is the idea that international regimes and institutions are a possible solution to existing dilemmas of self-interest. As Stein (2008:205) argues, “[s]tates find that autonomous self-interested behavior can be problematic and they prefer to construct international institutions to deal with a host of concerns”. However, Brazil's engagement in international institutions and regimes should not be seen only as a strategy to foster international cooperation and increase international stability, on one hand, or to reduce existing asymmetries in the current distribution of power in the international system.

Consistent with its strategic culture features – particularly the quest for global greatness and the pragmatism in its international relations – Brazil has sought to construct an integrationist/multilateral discourse that legitimizes its international behavior, while pursuing policies that might cause changes in the international system in order to forward its strategic

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<sup>81</sup> As explained in Chapter 2.



interests. As a result, Brazil has adopted a twofold strategy that leads the country to become more integrated into the international system when it is convenient, and to confront or reform it when that stance is needed to favor its own interests. This situation has led scholars to argue that Brazil “is a stakeholder, but it will act like a naysayer when it disagrees with and cannot change the situation” (Brimmer 2014:136).

That behavior seems to indicate that, although having historically benefitted enormously from the liberal world order, Brazil may not be willing to unconditionally align with – or submit to – all major international organizations and regimes. The country has, for example, resisted “interventionist foreign policy doctrines such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) emanating from the West, particularly from the United States, and display conservative attitudes on the prerogatives of sovereignty” (Pant 2013: 95). Furthermore, Brazil has pragmatically sought to change its position in the present system and raise its international profile in multilateral organizations. Brazil wants to be accepted as a member of the “global powers club”, a country able to exert significant influence on global affairs as a rule-maker, rather than just as rule-taker. As an emerging power and a “champion of the Third World”, a stance expressed in its South-South strategy, Brazil believes that it deserves greater voice in international institutions, in order to provide them with greater legitimacy and representativeness, and to give underrepresented countries more weight.

Brazilian policymakers believe that one way of achieving such objective is to promote the reform of the structures of international organizations, such as the United Nations Security Council, the IMF, and the World Bank, and to change the way they operate. Certainly, such reformist behavior is addressed by neoliberal institutionalist theory, which argues that some

degree of revisionism contributes to strengthen international organizations and regimes by updating decision-making processes, including new actors, and encouraging continuous adjustments regarding important issues, reason why it should not be confounded with systemic confrontation, although it does involve some confrontational elements (Keohane 1984). Essentially, this type of confrontational behavior does not seek to destabilize the international system or bring about deep changes in its structure and functioning.

The problem emerges when the importance conferred to multilateral institutions, norms, and regimes is mostly instrumental to the self-interested achievement of national objectives and priorities. Brazil appears to be more concerned with benefits and power distribution issues than with the maximization of existing benefits, which is more consistent, in the Brazilian case, with the predictions provided by the strategic culture approach. As Stein (2008:206) argues, “even if states found themselves in situations in which they would be better off cooperating with one another, it remained the case that states were concerned about the relative gains that would accrue from cooperation”. In such scenario, cooperation would be harder to achieve and keep, as countries would be willing to renounce possible gains in case other countries were to gain more from the same system and the same cooperation process. In this context, Brazil appears to be more concerned about its own relative international standing and the relative gains that it can derive from international institutions and regimes than about the stability of the system or its own contribution to existing cooperative arrangements. In other words, when Brazil does not foresee concrete self-interested benefits arising from cooperation, it not only does not expect cooperation to take place, nor institutions to develop.

In fact, some scholars and countries, particularly in the developing world, argue that Brazil's diplomatic rhetoric is often at variance with its foreign policy behavior, and its initiatives to reform such international organizations would in reality not be about democratizing or giving greater legitimacy to them, "but rather about creating an 'expanded oligarchy'" (Stuenkel 2010b:126). In this context, Brazil, a traditional critic of the system, would spare no efforts to promote the advancement of its own deeper integration into the system and be acknowledged as a member of the global elite.

Despite Brazil's interest in the stability of the system and in reducing asymmetries of power distribution, its participation in such institutions and regimes apparently also follows two distinct but complementary logics. On the one hand, these collective arrangements can provide Brazil with a geopolitical cover, reducing the impression that the country is merely seeking a superpower role in global affairs, while using them as a platform to advance its national geostrategic interests. On the other, Brazil reinforces its image as a leading developing nation among its counterparts, and reiterates its preference for multilateral solutions to international issues.

As this dissertation argues, two of the most important traits of the Brazilian strategic culture are its pragmatism in its international relations and a deeply held belief that the country is destined for greatness. These two ingrained and intertwined cultural values profoundly impact the country's security thought and foreign policy. In this context, more than the search for power, security, survival or international stability, the predominant driver of Brazilian foreign policy appears to be the search for great power status. As Kenkel (2015:92) explains,

[T]he key role of multilateral institutions in the expression of Brazil's foreign policy identity underscores the commingling of normative and material interests within it: sustaining international institutions and their practices is a way of pursuing the national interest, which in turn derives partially from normative feedback from those fora.

The next subsections will be used to test the strength of Neoliberal Institutionalism in explaining Brazil's foreign policy behavior towards international institutions and regimes and provide an alternative explanation. Through two case studies, Brazil's participation in the League of Nations and Brazil's stance towards the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), this dissertation argues that the strategic culture approach can more adequately explain and predict Brazilian security and foreign policy behavior. Based on its strategic culture features, Brazil tends to become more integrated into the international system, institutions, and regimes when it is most convenient to serve its purposes, and to confront or reform it when that stance is needed to favor its own interests.

#### *4.4.1 Brazil and the League of Nations*

As seen in subsection 2.4.2, the Brazilian government also hoped to reap a number of benefits in the political realm due to its participation in World War I. Immediately after the war, the British and Italian legations in Rio de Janeiro were elevated to the rank of embassy. Likewise, Brazil's active role in the 1919 Conference of Paris, the international peace talks which led to the creation of the League of Nations – the predecessor to the United Nations and, until that moment the most important attempt to organize international relations through a

multilateral institution – boosted the country’s image in terms of its international standing and involvement in global diplomacy. Using the discourse of multilateralism and international cooperation, Brazil sought to pursue its own national interests, as part of its quest for prestige and global power status. As Leuchars (2001: 125-126) explains,

Brazil’s behavior at the Peace Conference was portentous in two ways. Firstly, it proved to be vociferous in pushing for representations for smaller countries – a theme which it was to reiterate in future years, although its own commitment to the ideals was less than consistent, and secondly it showed an almost single-minded pursuit of personal gains with very little perception of the broader issues under discussion.

Brazil, however, expected more from the 1919 Peace Conference of Paris, a perspective that was reinforced by the strong support provided by the American government to Brazilian aspirations. In a telegraphic message sent to Secretary Robert Lansing in Paris, Counselor Frank Polk advised that Brazil should be given “most favored treatment”, as it “has stood loyally by us in practically every question that has come up in South America”<sup>82</sup>. This became clear when State Department officials made known that their support for Latin American representation at the Peace Conference, held at the Palace of Versailles, would be provided only to those countries which had actually joined the war effort, which was considered a direct reference to Brazil, since

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<sup>82</sup> Souce: The National Archives. Frank Polk to Lansing, tel., January 10, 1919, RG 59 (Record Group State Department), DF 1910-29, 763.72119/3325.

acting otherwise “would be a source of gratification”<sup>83</sup> to other countries in the region, which had stayed out of the war, particularly Argentina and Chile. As Smith (2010:77) observed,

Brazil stood to gain from this particular distinction. As the only South American nation to enter the war<sup>84</sup>, Brazil confidently anticipated a position of some importance at the conference table. This expectation was reinforced by the flattering attentions recently paid to Brazil by European governments.

Brazilian expectations, however, were frustrated. Despite the support of the United States, particularly President Woodrow Wilson, the country did not obtain a permanent seat in the League Council – the most important executive organ in the structure of the new organization, comparable to the United Nations Security Council –, due to harsh opposition from England, which “suspected the existence of an ulterior motive to increase the overall voting power of the American Nations” (Smith 2010:78).

Brazil was merely granted a consolation prize, being elected a temporary member of the League Council, along with Belgium, Greece, and Spain, although with veto power. The permanent members would be the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. However, as the American Congress did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and consequently the United States was not able to join the League of Nations, the Council became extremely

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<sup>83</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>84</sup> In fact, with the exception of Cuba, which was then under the tutelage of the United States, Brazil was the only Latin American country which actually joined the war.

imbalanced, leaving no power to American Nations. As Smith (2010:78) noted, “[p]articipants lost sight of the particular merits of Brazil’s own case as the country became a pawn in the game of great power politics”.

Finally, expressing its opposition to Germany’s entry into the Council as a permanent member, and after systematic attempts to break with the logic of undisputed preeminence of major powers in the governance of the international system incessantly promoted by European nations, Brazil exercised its veto power, obstructing Germany’s entry into the council. A few days later, on June 10 1926, Mello Franco, Brazilian Ambassador to the League, presented the country’s resignation from the League Council, and two days later, on June 12, Brazil formally withdrew from that organization.

As Leuchars (2001:125) puts it, “Brazil’s ambition was [...] a major cause of the 1926 crisis”. Brazil’s insistence on being accepted as a permanent member of the league led to a virtual paralysis in that institution’s decision-making mechanisms, since the country, as a temporary member of the League Council, was endowed with veto power. That behavior is hardly compatible with neoliberal institutionalism’s predictions, since it sought to entirely obstruct the functioning of a fledgling international organization, therefore preventing the creation of international norms and rules that would arguably bring greater stability to the international system. Brazil’s behavior is, however, entirely consistent with the strategic culture approach, which would predict that, driven by its longtime quest for global greatness, Brazil would seek to use the new institution as a platform to advance its national geostrategic interests and to and to pursue great power status. Deprived of their geopolitical ambitions at the outset,

Brazilian policymakers saw no incentives in taking part in an organization that was intended, to some extent, to shape the international order.

#### *4.4.2 Brazil and the Non-Proliferation Treaty*

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signatures in 1968, and entered into force two years later. According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), it represents a “landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament<sup>85</sup>” As it can be seen, its central pillars are the prevention and curbing of nuclear proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and the promotion of cooperation in the field of civilian use of nuclear technology.

According to its provisions, only China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – the five permanent members of the UNSC – are acknowledged as nuclear weapons states. All other signatories to the Treaty, which is open to all members of the United Nations, are considered non-nuclear weapons states. However, South Africa, Pakistan, Israel and India, four UN members which are known to possess nuclear weapons, have never signed the

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<sup>85</sup> Source: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Available at [<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>].



NPT. North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2003, after never having complied with its provisions.

Already in the early 1960s, Brazil assumed a role of leadership in the global discussions on nuclear disarmament. Brazilian Foreign Minister Araújo Castro's famous "3 Ds" speech at the opening of the XVIII United Nations General-Assembly in 1963, referring to Disarmament, Decolonization, and Development, made it clear that Brazil would not accept an international agenda set out based solely on the interests of the then superpowers. Brazil advocated the idea that developing countries should assume a central role in the management of the global order, and could not, therefore, be merely relegated to a secondary position in the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Castro proposed those superpowers to help reduce poverty and inequalities worldwide, by investing in development aid the huge amounts of resources spent on nuclear stockpiles and military competition.

Although having taken part in the negotiations that eventually led to the NPT, Brazil – who was conducting its own secret nuclear program, as seen in subsection 4.3.1 – refused to sign it on the grounds that the protocol was essentially discriminatory. In fact, in the Brazilian perspective, as well as in the perspectives of other countries which refused to join it, particularly India,

[T]he treaty 'disarmed the disarmed', since it imposed full commitment to denuclearization only to countries which in any case had no nuclear weapons, while there was no obligation for those which did to eliminate them. The result was [...] a 'nuclear

apartheid', dividing the international community between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in terms of nuclear technology for military use. (Patti 2015:192).

Furthermore, since the NPT also imposed severe constraints on the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, making it almost virtually impossible for a non-nuclear state to develop it autonomously, without the assistance, support, guidance, or acquiescence of a recognized nuclear state, a condition that was considered unacceptable by Brazilian leaders, for not only violating a state's sovereignty and the universal principle of equality among nations, but also establishing a clear hierarchy of power and rights in the international order, Brazil denounced the treaty as a "colonialist threat" (Stuenkel 2010b:139).

Here, once again, one can see the comingling of normative and material interests within Brazilian foreign policy. In the normative sphere, Brazil agreed with the three overarching pillars of the treaty (non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and cooperation), which is reflected in the signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in 1967 (see subsection 2.7). Neoliberal Institutionalism would therefore predict that Brazil would also join this new regime, which arguably sought to provide more transparency to a controversial subject and provide more stability and security, by reducing the risks of nuclear proliferation and misuse.

However, in the realm of material interests, Brazil strongly disagreed with the operating norms and practical rules of the NPT. Brazilian leaders soon realized that the new arrangement would not constrain the behavior of major powers and thus facilitate the rise of emerging countries, as Neoliberal Institutionalism would predict. On the contrary, the treaty was perceived as constraining the behavior of emerging powers in order to crystallize an international system

based on the asymmetrical distribution of power, which was not conducive to the achievement of Brazilian national objectives and interests, particularly its quest for great power status. The NPT would not allow Brazil to become a member of the global elite club or, in other words, to take part in an “expanded oligarchy”. Brazil had, essentially, no incentives to join that treaty.

Therefore, as the strategic culture approach would predict, based on its tradition of pragmatism and autonomy in its external relations, and moved by the search for great power status, rather than power or security, Brazil did not sign the NPT. The refusal to join the treaty does not necessarily mean that Brazil was actively pursuing the development on nuclear weapons or wished to do so. Brazil fundamentally wanted to preserve the right of not to be treated in a discriminatory manner as a nation of lower rank, and so it should possess the right to pursue and develop its own nuclear program, as the nuclear states did.

It must be noted that, with the abandonment of its nuclear military program and the renunciation of nuclear weapons in the early 1990s, but already in possession of nuclear technology for civilian use, as seen in subsection 4.3.1, Brazilian leaders apparently saw no more reasons not to adhere to the non-proliferation regime. Once again based on its tradition of pragmatism and its preference for multilateralism, whenever it can advance Brazilian interests, as the strategic approach would predict, Brazil decided to sign the NPT in 1998, under Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1995-2002), amid heated discussions on the convenience of this diplomatic move. More than a display of esteem for international institutions and regimes, Cardoso saw the adhesion as an opportunity to show that Brazil was a “responsible stakeholder” and to strengthen Brazil’s longstanding bid to a seat in a reformed UNSC. Brazil, however, did not sign the additional protocols to the NPT, which emphasize the inspections regime and would

allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to have full access to facilities and technologies that Brazil developed autonomously.

#### 4.5 Rational Choice Institutionalism

Deriving from rational choice theories, RCI argues that utility-maximizing states “acting out of self-interest, are central actors in the political process, and that institutions emerge as a result of their interdependence, strategic interaction and collective action or contracting dilemmas” (Jönsson & Tallberg 2008:5). Therefore, institutions – whose concept is broad enough to include regional integration processes – are created and kept because they play crucial roles in the international strategies of the states, or other individual actors, affected by them.

As a “calculus approach” perspective, RCI relies heavily on transaction costs and agency theories. Basically, the transaction costs theory argues that any economic transaction should include in its final costs not only the direct costs of production, but also those related to the organization and management of production, such as source selection, contract negotiation, drafting, management and enforcement, and dispute resolution procedures and mechanisms. As all these activities have their inherent cost, the creation of institutions would contribute to reduce transaction costs by, for example, reducing international tariffs and providing a single forum for multilateral negotiations (Keohane 1984).

Agency theory is an offshoot of transaction costs theory whose focus is directed “at the ubiquitous agency relationship, in which one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent), who performs that work” (Eisenhardt 1989:58). International relations scholars who

follow this perspective consider states as principals who delegate work, roles, and functions to its agents, namely the international institutions. In that regard, Jönsson & Tallberg (2008:5) contend that “possible ‘shirking’ by the agent – that is, pursuing its own rather than the principal’s interest – is a major consideration. Information asymmetry and conflicting interests are seen as the chief sources of shirking, monitoring and incentive mechanisms as its remedies”. In fact, one of the main focus of this theory is to solve problems that arise whenever the objectives and priorities of the principal and the agent collide.

In contrast to the more “normative” approach presented by Neoliberal Institutionalism, which posits that the behavior of states towards international institution is not necessarily a direct consequence of self-interested strategic machinations, but rather shaped and limited by their worldviews, as institutions “provide moral or cognitive templates for interpretation and action” (Hall and Taylor 1996:939), the “calculus approach” of Rational Choice Institutionalism focuses on means-end efficiency.

As an analytical approach, RCI can be characterized by four major assumptions (Hall and Taylor 1996). Firstly, actors tend to present a relatively unvarying set of preferred policy outcomes and therefore will behave in a calculated and strategic manner, which means that they include in their political calculations what they consider to be the probable behavior of other actors, in order to amplify the satisfaction of their own policy outcome preferences. Secondly, politics tends to be understood as a succession of collective action issues which demand the creation and development of institutions to manage them. Thirdly, institutions represent a strategic framework within which pertinent actors can interact by providing apparently reliable information and developing constraining mechanisms aimed at reducing uncertainty regarding

the behavior of other actors, therefore shaping behaviors in ways that are compatible with expected outcomes; and finally, institutions are created due to their intrinsic importance to actors interested in making more certain and more palpable the achievement of mutual benefits coming from a process of cooperation.

Thus, RCI would predict that, based on those assumptions, sovereign countries would accept a political arrangement – whether it is a free-trade area, such as Mercosul, or a regional organization, such as UNASUL – that essentially constrains their autonomy. However, contrary to what RCI predicts, regional institutional arrangements among sovereign states are neither necessarily a result of rational foreign policy choices nor, as Genoves (2014:15) puts it, “necessarily result in rational-optimal solutions to collective action problems”, as the integration process in South American, arguably under Brazilian leadership, illustrates.

That region has always been considered one of the top priorities of Brazilian foreign policy. The rhetoric of regional integration has traditionally been adopted by Brazilian diplomats and policymakers to build good relationships and strengthen cooperation in the region. Despite the strong politico-diplomatic discourse in favor of South American integration, a historical analysis of the economic and political realities has exhibited a systematic pattern in which Brazil has manifested a remarkable unwillingness to build strong regional institutions, while simultaneously expressing its rhetoric of continental solidarity, as explained in Chapter 6. Furthermore, Brazil’s ambiguous policies to the region appear to have privileged strategies that focus on the country’s short term national interests – in an attempt to maximize its potential benefits – and that are oftentimes contradictory with the evolution of an integration process. In fact, these strategies seem to suggest that Brazil is actually pursuing the path of regional

hegemony, rather than the path of regional integration. As this dissertation argues, Brazil's inconsistent and contradictory regional policies, which are a product of its strategic culture, have not only undermined the process of regional integration in South America, but have also reduced its own chances of becoming a global power.

In order to assess the strength of RCI in predicting and explaining Brazil's foreign policy behavior towards regional integration, this dissertation will initially present a discussion on the concepts of geopolitics and grand strategy, in Chapter 5, which are central to understand Brazilian foreign policy. Subsequently, Chapter 6 (particularly subsections 6.4 and 6.5) will discuss why Brazil's behavior towards regional integration appears not to be consistent with the four main assumptions of the RCI approach. Rather, it is more compatible with an alternative explanation, the reason why this study argues that Brazil's regional behavior regarding integrations processes can be best explained by the strategic culture approach..

Therefore, the lesson learnt here is that, although RCI, offensive realism, and neoliberal institutionalism can sometimes present useful insights into Brazilian international behavior, these mainstream theories fail to capture the full gamut of motivations behind the strategic and foreign policy behavior of a state like Brazil, whose strategic and foreign policy behavior appears to correspond to the expectations of the strategic culture approach. Brazil has, for the most part, historically relied on its strategic culture features to forward its foreign policy priorities and to promote international changes that might be conducive to its objectives, even though its international policies may reveal themselves contradictory and inconsistent at times.

## **CHAPTER 5 GEOPOLITICS AND GRAND STRATEGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 examined how strategic culture can provide an analytical lens through which it might be possible to better understand the underlying logic behind a state's motivations, preferences and actions when it comes to the adoption of foreign and security policies. Likewise, strategic culture can leave an enduring legacy in a country's geopolitical thought and grand strategy. This chapter will therefore analyze how strategic culture can decisively influence these two concepts: geopolitics and grand strategy. For this purpose, this section will provide some theoretical background on grand strategy and geopolitics. Also, for illustrative and comparative purposes, a brief discussion about how strategic culture has influenced geopolitical thought in the United States and Argentina will be provided.

### **5.2 Geopolitics**

At its most basic level, geopolitics could be simply defined as the science of the relation of politics to geography. However, as Child (1979:89) recalls, this poor definition fails to capture the full scope of the concept, which includes "the relationship between geography and military strategy, national development, expansion, and imperialism". This definition, however, seems not to be in line with the current use of the concept, which significantly deviates from its original meaning, formulated in the late 19th century.

In essence, the term geopolitics involves the intimate relationship between power and interests, strategic decision-making, and geographic space. It implies the interplay of natural



resources, strategic interests and geographic location and space on the one hand, and the numerous state and non-state actors pursuing individual or collective interests on the other. Consequently, geopolitics comprises much more than the mere study of international relations from a spatial or geographical perspective, as it fundamentally comprises the very conduct of international relations. As Oliver Lee (2008:266) observes, geopolitics can be understood as the “study and/or application of foreign policy within the context of basically unchanging geographic realities which however are impacted by the international distribution of economic and military power and the alignment of friendly and hostile states”.

It must be noted, however, that – like many other terms in the social sciences – there is not a universally accepted definition of geopolitics. In fact, the term was practically “banned” from American scholarly literature on foreign policy for about one generation after the end of World War II due to its almost automatic association with the Nazi German strategic thinking. Since then, the concept of geopolitics has experienced successive waves of prestige and decline. As Gray (1999b:1) ironically remarks, “[T]he popularity of geopolitical theory from 1945 to the present has been rather like the length of hemline on a woman's skirt; it has fallen and risen with the vagaries of fashion”.

### 5.2.1 *The German School*

The term geopolitics was initially coined by the Swedish political scientist Johan Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922)<sup>86</sup>, in 1899, who defined it as “the theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space” (Cahnman 1943:57). Kjellén seems to have drawn in the teachings and writings of the German political geographer and ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), the founding father of political geography, “a discipline that broke with the tradition of reducing geography to cartography” (Puntigliano 2011:848). In fact, in his *Dictionary of Human Geography*, Brian Goodall (1987:362) defines political geography as the “study of the effects of political actions on human geography, involving the spatial analysis of human phenomena. Traditionally political geography was concerned with the study of states – their groupings and global relations [...] and their frontiers and boundaries”.

Responsible for laying the theoretical foundations for the uniquely German variant of geopolitics, the *Lebensraum*, Ratzel can be considered the real father of geopolitics as an expression of state interest and identity politics. As Smith (1980:51) puts it, “Lebensraum is probably the best known of all twentieth century German political terms”. The basic notion behind the idea of geopolitics and *Lebensraum* was that human beings and the territory which they inhabited were organically linked. In that sense, Ratzel understood *Lebensraum* as the

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<sup>86</sup> According to Haushofer (1998:33), one of the “founding fathers” of Geopolitics, “while the theoretical foundations of *Geopolitik* were laid in recent times, its practical application – the instinctive sense for geopolitical possibilities, the realization of its deep influence on political development – is as old as history itself”.

territorial area required to support a living species at its current population size and living conditions (social, economic, and productive). The size of this particular vital territory was relative to its members' physical, social, economic and productive needs, which tended to expand as population grew.

Ratzel's concept of Lebensraum apparently appropriated and adapted some ideas from Darwin's natural selection theory and placed them in a spatial and environmental dimension, by arguing that "[a] species' adaptation to its total environment led to evolutionary success and a tendency to spread. Without impediments, a species and its Lebensraum would expand to cover the area of an ever-widening circle [...]" (Smith 1980:53). In other words, since populations are continuously searching for more lands to meet their ever-increasing needs, particularly more advanced cultures, states are never at rest, as new territories are acquired, incorporated, bought, invaded or conquered, and borders are constantly redefined. This was therefore the basic mechanism through which "states integrate and disintegrate in a process of growth and diminution. If there was determinism in Ratzel's thinking it rested in his belief in an increasing size of states, or what he called the 'expansion of geographical horizons'" (Puntigliano 2011:848).

In other words, states would begin to grow by means of the annexation or absorption of smaller, weaker countries and people. In consequence, the efforts spent in expansionist movements to subdue and absorb new territories and peoples, "and the struggle to produce more from the land upon which the state rests" (Schwam-Baird 1997:10), would deepen the cultural and emotional ties between a people and its land.

Much in the same vein, Kjellén further developed and disseminated the notion that states were organic and dynamic entities that presented a natural tendency to expand and to become stronger. Culture was at the same time the fuel and the engine for expansion. Consequently, the more dynamic and advanced a particular culture, the more they tended to advance into the territories of other states, and the more it had the right to do so. In that regard, Puntigliano (2011:849) draws attention to the fact that Kjellen associated geopolitics “with the development issue and the systemic transformations of the international system”.

Karl Haushofer (1869-1946), a German General and revered academic was one of the main individuals responsible for the association of the term geopolitics with the Nazi regime and its use as a foreign policy instrument, although that clearly never was Ratzel’s intention. Haushofer understood geopolitics as the “new national science of the state” (Gökmen 2010:15), which implicit implied a national bias. To Ratzel’s geopolitics, Haushofer added some elements which appeared to be extremely appealing to Hitler<sup>87</sup>: the need for the industrial expansion of Germany, national self-sufficiency, the concept of Pan-Germanism, imperialism, interstate rivalry and the German cultural superiority:

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<sup>87</sup> In fact, one of Haushofer's major disciples and scientific assistant was Rudolph Hess, who served as Deputy Führer to Hitler from 1933 to 1941, when he was imprisoned. Hess brought his teacher into the inner intellectual circles of the Third Reich. Although Haushofer was never a member of the Nazi Party, and often times voice disagreements with the party, he was appointed by Hitler to run the German Academy in Berlin, which, according to Vagts (1943:87), was “more a propagandistic institution than a true academy in the continental European sense”.

Like a dry sponge, Hitler soaked up what Haushofer offered. The concept of Lebensraum, for example, was not in circulation in National Socialist terminology up to 1923. Haushofer used it routinely, including the term in the first issue of the *Journal of Geopolitics* in January 1924. It then cropped up regularly after 1924, in both volumes of *Mein Kampf* and in Hitler's unpublished "Second Book" (Herwig 2010:10).

### *5.2.2 Mackinder and the Heartland*

Although the most relevant names in the field of geopolitics during its initial and, at the same time, golden age, between the late nineteenth century and the end of the Second World War, were German<sup>88</sup>, and both the theory and practice of the discipline exerted a deep influence on German culture and identity, the discipline should not be seen only as a German science. In fact, one of the most prominent scholars in the field was the English geographer, academic, and politician Sir Halford John Mackinder (1861-1947). Gökmen (2010:29), for example, considers Mackinder the most important geopolitical theorist in contemporary history, as he established "modern geopolitical imagination and visualization, created an image of the World as a total both in terms of time and space, searched for a correlation between history and geography, and argued for the geographical essence of world politics", even though most of Mackinder's strategic assumptions do not resist a deeper scrutiny.

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<sup>88</sup> Although Kjellen was Swedish, he was the most prominent disciple of Ratzel and deeply influenced by the German School, reason why "it is possible to consider him under the label of German geopolitics" (Gökmen 2010:27).

On 25 January 1904, Mackinder delivered an address before the Royal Geographical Society titled '*The Geographical Pivot of History*', in which he sought to examine the relationship between politics and geography in a historical context, and laid out the foundations of his *Heartland Theory*, which greatly contributed to inform and shape U.S. containment policy throughout the Cold War. Attempting to analyze the survival odds of the British imperial power against the threat posed by the emergence of two powerful states, Russia and Germany, in the international scenario, Mackinder argued that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the world had evolved into what he termed a “closed system”, in which states would find no more room for expansion, as imperialism and colonialism had brought the whole world under the influence of European nations. In that context, Mackinder formulated the hypothesis that power politics of the future was destined to be characterized by a fierce competition among major powers over existing territories rather than a quest for new ones. In this context, the identification, possession, and control of strategic geographic areas might represent the key to global supremacy.

Mackinder considered political history as a permanent struggle for regional and global dominance between sea and land powers. The ultimate victory would eventually go to the continental power, represented by the *World Island*, which consisted of Eurasia (Europe and Asia) and Northern Africa. Mackinder called the core area of Eurasia as the *Heartland* (or Pivot Area, Fig. 3), considered by him the greatest natural fortress on earth surrounded on all sides by geographical barriers, and consequently the most natural “seat of power”. Mackinder suggested that geography favored the Heartland power for five main reasons, all of which were refuted by later scholars and strategists:

The Heartland was virtually *impenetrable* to foreign invasion; technological changes offered increased *mobility* which favored land powers; the Heartland was in the *central position* on the World Island, giving it shorter, interior lines of transportation and communication than a power defending the Rimland; the Heartland was loaded with natural resources waiting to be exploited that could give the area the highest *productivity* on earth; and, last, the Eurasian World Island, being the home to the majority of the world's land, people, and resources, was the springboard for global hegemony (Fettweis 2000:62).

Mackinder divided Europe into two distinct regions, East and West, by a line joining the Adriatic to the Baltic seas. This dividing line also corresponded to a zone of struggle between the Teutonic (the German people) and the Slavs (the Russian people) with no established balance of power. Mackinder suggested that the nation that was able to change the balance of power in its favor would probably rule the World-Island. The English geographer and politician then proceeded to formulate his famous hypothesis that the control of Eastern Europe would be vital to control the world, and whose basic assumptions were: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island. Who rules the World Island commands the world” (Mackinder 1962:150), a theory which was put to test during the Second World War, especially when one considers that the core of the Heartland corresponds approximately to the territory of the Soviet Union. Therefore, as Gökmen (2010:34) puts it, “the German invasion of Russia, a move into the heartland, was the most important development that highlighted the effects of Mackinder’s theory.”

### 5.2.3 Modern Geopolitics

The field of geopolitics gained renewed vigor in the early 1980s with the academic writings of Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski<sup>89</sup>. Kissinger saw geopolitics as a perspective that focused on maintaining a favorable equilibrium in world politics: “by geopolitical I mean an approach that pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium” (Kissinger 1979:914). With a large theoretical and practical experience in geopolitical analysis and implementation, Kissinger claimed for geopolitics a near-synonymity with *Realpolitik* and “global equilibrium and permanent national interests in the world balance of power” (Gray 1999b:1). From a pragmatic point of view, geopolitics then could be used to denote any policy dependent upon power principles, and devoid of any ideology or "sentimentality"(Fettweis 2000).

Brzezinski, author of *The Grand Chessboard*, adopted a slightly different approach. To the former President Carter’s National Security Adviser, to whom Eurasia should be the focus of U.S. foreign policy, geopolitics should not be confounded with the everyday tactical conduct of statecraft; rather, it should be understood as a synonym for grand strategy. However, both scholars recognize the importance of geopolitics in the relationship among states, and of geostrategic analysis in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Not only that, geopolitics in the sense used by both academic traditions rejects the imperialist and expansionist elements of the German School and share a general outline of the field which generally “accepts the basic concept of the state as a living organism that responds to geographic, political, military,

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<sup>89</sup> Curiously, both scholars have served as National Security Adviser in the White House.



economic, demographic, and psychological pressures in its struggle to survive in competition with other states” (Child 1979:89). Within this theoretical framework, then, states are the most important actors in the international system; a politico-military-economic competition exists between them for regional and/or global supremacy; nations and alliances should strive to gather resources to be able to “balance” one another either by securing political influence within a geographical space or even through physical occupation; and that geography is one of the strongest determinants of political relationships.

### 5.3 Grand Strategy

As it happens with geopolitics, the concept of grand strategy does not have a universally-accepted definition, perhaps due to the fact that different nations establish different foreign policy priorities and pursue different objectives in different ways. This lack of conceptual unity has led scholars and policymakers to interpret the term in many distinct ways, based on their ideological preferences, world views, institutional affiliation and interests. Some define it in a rather broad way: to Gaddis (2009:7), grand strategy is a practical exercise, based on the "calculated relationship of means to large ends", in which intentions are related to capabilities, and objectives are related to resources. It seeks to align a country's power with its interests and orchestrates ends, ways and means. McDougall (2010:173) follows the same reasoning and states that grand strategy is "an equation of ends and means so sturdy that it triumphs despite serial setbacks at the level of strategy, operations, and campaigns".

Others adopt a more abstract approach: Martel (2010:357-358) sees grand strategy as the "overarching guide for the policies we should implement [...without which] policymakers cannot

conduct an effective foreign policy", and as a "fundamental awareness and articulation of what a nation seeks to achieve in foreign policy" (Martel 2014); Venkatshamy (2012) believes that grand strategy can be understood alternatively as a plan, a vision, as politics, as a paradigm, as strategic culture, as harmonization of ends and means, or as a pattern of behavior observable during certain historical period; Likewise, Alsina (2014:11) observes that grand strategy "involves at least the following internal factors: political, economic, ideological, institutional, cultural, geographical, technological, role of leaders, and civil-military relations."

Still others are more specific: Feaver (2009), despite acknowledging that grand strategy is "the art of reconciling ends and means", understands it essentially as "the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state's deliberate effort to harness political, military, diplomatic, and economic tools together to advance that state's national interest"; while Murdock & Kallmyer (2011:542) outline that "the essence of grand strategy is found in two elements: (1) the goals (or ends), including the priorities among them, being pursued by a nation; and (2) the general way [...] that the nation's leadership pursues these goals."

As different as these approaches may be, they all appear to be based on the distinction between tactical means and strategic ends presented by Clausewitz. In his classic *On War*, Clausewitz (1986:358) argues that "[a]t the strategic level, the campaign replaces the engagement, and the theater of operations takes the place of the position. At the next stage, the war as a whole replaces the campaign, and the whole country the theater of operations." Grand strategy is, in other words, that "next stage". Therefore, in the absence of unlimited resources, and in an environment potentially characterized by political restraints and conflicting perspectives, priorities need to be defined and objectives set.

However, grand strategy should not be reduced to encompassing solely military affairs, particularly in a country like Brazil, where ideational resources of leadership and non-military sources of power are not only prized, but are also constitutive elements of the national strategic culture and identity. In fact, considering that the concept of security involves many dimensions other than the military, defining a grand strategy becomes even more important for countries deprived of military capabilities. As Paul Kennedy (1992:5) suggests, “[t]he crux of grand strategy lies in *policy*, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, in wartime *and* peacetime) best interests.”

These perspectives therefore share some common elements and some common implications which allow us to define grand strategy, for operational purposes, as the simultaneous operation of both retrospective and prospective processes through which nations gradually establish their world views, decide what kind of world they wish to build, according to their concrete possibilities and circumstances, and which international system is more conducive to their interests, define and implement their foreign policy priorities, and identify and allocate all resources and instruments of power available to pursue their international objectives in an integrated manner. It is, in essence, a core set of integrated principles, objectives, approaches and means that help to guide a country’s foreign policy.

A clear grand strategy, which must be consistent with the country’s values, traditions (Martel 2014), and *smart power* capabilities, while combining the "tools of both hard and soft power" (Nye 2009:160), not only provides greater conceptual clarity to a country’s international policies but can also rally domestic support around a national project. It can, at the same time,

shed light on and guide security and foreign policy practice. Although simplifying reality, grand strategy can reduce ambiguity, and increase consistency, by providing "a cognitive structure to explain the world, make it intelligible and thus facilitate action" (Venkatshamy 2012:120).

However, what if there is no clear sense of direction in the government regarding overarching objectives, priorities, and strategies to achieve them? The failure to articulate a national grand strategy leads countries to implement ineffective, and often contradictory, piecemeal strategies, reacting passively to international challenges and to the uncertainties of the international (dis)order. In this context, the foreign policy decision-making process is bureaucratically managed on a daily basis, which reflects a regretful lack of paradigms and an overwhelming empiricism. No country that aspires to regional or global leadership can afford to conduct its foreign policy in such an improvised way.

#### 5.4 Geopolitics, Grand Strategy and Strategic Culture: The Case of the United States

As seen in chapter 1, a particular strategic culture may originate from a multiplicity of sources which can exert influence on foreign and security policies and strategic thinking. Variables such as geographic location, history, geopolitical practices and preferences, political and cultural traditions, and perceptions of international role, among others, are crystallized in a collective memory and identity through historical political narratives, common interpretations of shared memories, and other collective psychological and social processes. Consequently, as Al-Rodhan (2015) suggests, "[e]ach and every state enters the international arena with its historical baggage of accumulated experiences, beliefs, cultural influences and geographic and material limitations, all of which impact its conduct".

Within this hypothetical framework, it can be theorized that a country's strategic culture is also a result from the intersection between a state's self-perception of its geopolitical role, potential, and capabilities, with its assessment of the international scenario, whether regional or global, in a context where the perception of geopolitical potential is a consequence of "the interaction between the nation's geography and its political culture" (Lee 2008:268). In other words, strategic culture informs both geopolitics and grand strategy. Policymakers operate with a set of assumptions through which they seek to interpret international events. Without serving as a straitjacket of an inescapable dogma, the analysis of a given strategic culture can not only help to interpret and explain foreign policy behavior and security decisions, but also offer predictive possibilities. "As a heuristic device to make sense of a country's collection of foreign and security policies, or alternatively as a description for such strategic behaviour" (McDonough 2011:32), it offers a promising analytical tool to understand the environment and circumstances under which policymakers define their country's geopolitical interests and formulate their nation's grand strategy, whether it is motivated by the mere search for international status and prestige or by the permanent pursuit of national interests.

In that regard, a remarkable degree of continuity can be observed in the strategic culture of the United States, with clear impacts on the country's geopolitical thought and grand strategy. In fact, there are not many other countries where strategic culture features can be so consistently delineated as in the case of the United States, as seen in Chapter 1. America's unique historical circumstances which led to the geographic expansion from the East to the West Coast (Fig. 4), the country's sense of exceptionalism, moral superiority, and territorial security, as well as the development of a societal culture based on individualistic and liberal values, coupled with the

development of the country's "defensive military capabilities [...] immensely favored by the fact of its geographic isolation from Eurasia" (Lee 2008:269), translated into a particular pattern of foreign relations, characterized, at least in the realm of rhetoric, by an enduring willingness to transform the international system in the service of what is perceived as liberal democratic aspirations. As Al-Rodhan (2015) suggests, "the upholding of liberal democratic values, respect for human rights and liberties and casualty aversion (especially post-Vietnam) have been the mainstays of U.S. strategic culture and intervention rhetoric". Likewise, Commander John Kuehn (2010:76) contends that, over time, American strategic culture and grand strategy came to "encompass military nonintervention outside the Western Hemisphere, free trade access to whatever markets Americans desired, and the right to act as the hemispheric hegemon. These last two components are known as the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door Policy, respectively".

The 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which argued that extra-hemispheric powers should refrain from taking actions to increase their influence or promote their interests in the Americas, was consolidated as one of the major guiding principles of U.S. foreign policy, in an attempt to keep the region free from enduring European geopolitical rivalries. Although initially the United States did not possess the military and economic resources to enforce the Monroe Doctrine, the rationale behind that diplomatic initiative was essentially based on geopolitical considerations, as it sought to ensure that European powers would not meddle in hemispheric affairs. Until the First World War, the Monroe Doctrine remained practically undisturbed, contributing to the understanding of American foreign policy as essentially isolationist, as the Doctrine saw the Americas and the Old World as two entirely different socio-political systems which, as two distinct spheres, should remain apart.

### 5.4.1 *The End of the Monroe Doctrine*

Although the Spanish-American War of 1898<sup>90</sup> represented the first overseas war of conquest in the American history, it did not mark a complete rupture with the Monroe Doctrine. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, it led to an increasing understanding that the country should seek to develop and strengthen its military capabilities, particularly its naval forces, if it wanted to defend its territorial integrity and pursue its national interests, even if that meant relegating isolationism to a secondary position and adopting a greater involvement with international affairs and conflicts. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), a Navy admiral, historian, and strategist, was one of the leading voices behind this new geopolitical approach<sup>91</sup>.

With the United States having secured its land borders, Mahan stressed the importance of sea power and of establishing a naval superiority as the core principle of U.S. foreign policy. Seeking to draw Washington's attention to the potential threat represented by an attack from the sea, Mahan urged American decision-makers to recognize that national security and interests

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<sup>90</sup> The Spanish-American War of 1898 ended Spain's colonial rule in the Western Hemisphere, resulted in U.S. acquisition of all of Spain's overseas island territories, and secured the position of the United States as a Pacific power. The American victory produced a peace treaty that compelled Spain to relinquish claims on Cuba, and to cede to the United States sovereignty over Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The U.S. also annexed the independent state of Hawaii. The conflict enabled the United States to establish its predominance in the Caribbean region and to pursue its strategic and economic interests in Asia.

<sup>91</sup> Mahan was perhaps the first well-known geopolitical theorist of the United States.

were deeply affected by the balance of power in Europe and Asia. According to Mahan, the United States was in geopolitical terms a vulnerable “island nation” offshore the Eurasian landmass, whose integrity could be threatened by a hostile country or military alliance which achieved dominance over Eurasia’s Heartland.

Based on a profound understanding of the impact of geography on international affairs, Mahan then argued that the key to ensure national security and geopolitical pluralism of the Hinterland, as well as to project power abroad, was naval supremacy over the oceans. Inherent in the idea of naval supremacy and control of the seas of the world was the notion that the United States could no longer afford to be isolated from the rest of the world.

Mahan firmly advocated the idea that the United States should not only endeavor to become a major global power, but an Empire. With the newfound strength stemming from naval supremacy, the United States would be ready to take its claims in the world and protect its interests. Complementing his ideas, Mahan also asserted his conviction that international laws and diplomacy should be relegated to the background of international affairs, as power should be the basis for foreign policy, a thought that was not in line with traditional American strategic culture and its defense of liberal values. In fact, America’s entry into the First World War – which marks the beginning of the United State’s history as a major power” and the end of the Monroe Doctrine – was “the result of its international moral responsibilities”, which was much more in consonance with the county’s political discourse and international identity.

Although Alfred Mahan is certainly an influential name in the field of geopolitics, the Dutch-American scholar Nicholas Spykman (1893-1943) is praised as being responsible for bringing the traditional geopolitical mindset to the United States, and for “importing” the term



“geopolitics” from Europe into the United States. Generally considered as the “godfather of containment” (Kennan 1991), Spykman is also credited with having initiated a tradition of geopolitical thought which, in opposition to the German *Geopolitik* School aimed “the creation of a distinctly American world view and a thoroughgoing examination of the country’s world role” (Parker 2015:5). As Gökmen (2010:49) puts it, “Spykman was the scholar who taught the Americans that foreign policy is about power and the struggle for power rather than ideals”. Power, then, is to Spykman the central element in the relations among states, not abstract values such as justice. One of the fathers of the classical realist school, Spykman also drew heavily on geographical principles to understand and determine how geopolitical interactions could be structured and developed.

Spykman asserted that geography was the major variable in world politics, as a country’s size, geographical location and demography play a central role in a state’s foreign and security policies. Like Mackinder, Spykman believed that the concept of heartland was essential to understand and explain the world, and that the U.S. should adopt an active, non-isolationist foreign policy. However, he rejected Mackinder’s belief that the central areas of Eurasia, the heartland, would be the key to global power and to control the destinies of the world, a role destined to Eurasia’s “periphery”, a region which he termed *Rimland*. In his assessments, rimland countries, such as Japan, were more likely to become superpowers, since they had more extensive contact with the outside world, could receive more in terms of technological innovations and productive practices, and possessed a wealth of natural resources greater than did heartland states (Gray 2004).

Spykman's geopolitical analysis demonstrated high accuracy and prescience, when it predicted that the Soviet Union, China – considered an emerging hegemonial power –, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, the Great Britain would be the dominant actors in the Eurasian region in a near future. Understanding that both the United States and the Soviet Union had interests not only in Eurasia, but also the global arena, he expressed his conviction that a conflict between those countries, whether direct or indirect, was inevitable. Also, drawing upon Mackinder, he assessed that the balance of power in the hinterland/rimland would represent a direct threat to the security of the United States and its national interests, as the expansionist policies of Japan, the USSR, and Germany raised the specter of American encirclement by enemy forces who eventually dominated the power centers of a dynamic Eurasia (Spykman 1938).

In fact, Spykman believed that the greatest threat to America's integrity and interests would arise from the possibility of a coalition of Eurasian power centers against the United States, reason why the United States should play a decisive role in ensuring that the rimland would never be united under the dominion of a single power or a coalition of nations. Already in 1942, in his book *America's Strategy in World Politics*, the Dutch-American Scholar advocated the idea that, with the end of the Second World War, the United States should not return to an isolated and defensive position. Rather, Spykman (1942) stressed the centrality of the development of ever-increasing military capabilities and the formation of a global system of politico-military alliances to offset a likely military aggression on the part of the Soviet Union, to prevent that country from establishing a more solid and favorable position in Eurasia, and also to protect Japan from an increasingly expansionist and belligerent China. Such anti-Soviet alliance

– which would form the pillars of the United States containment strategy during the Cold War – should include Germany and Japan, nations which, according to Spykman, were almost on the brink of being defeated in the second global confrontation.

#### *5.4.2 Post-Second World War American Geopolitical Thinking*

Parker (2015:5) contends that “[f]ollowing America’s arrival at the centre of the stage in the aftermath of World War II, further geopolitical thinking sought to understand the cold war and the bipolar world, together with America’s new position as one of the two superpowers”. In this context, notwithstanding Spykman’s immeasurable contribution to American geopolitical thought and the U.S. Cold War containment strategy, the diplomat George Frost Kennan (1904-2005) is generally credited with being responsible for articulating the American geopolitical containment policy which, despite all the criticisms, remained the basic strategy of the United States throughout the cold war to block Soviet expansive tendencies and its search for power.

In general lines, Kennan advocated the idea that, in response to the post-Second World War expansionist activities being conducted by the Soviet Union, and also as a major politico-diplomatic initiative designed to prevent Soviet influence from taking root in Eastern Europe and the developing world, the United States should adopt a series of economic, political, psychological, and also military counter-measures. Kennan insisted that the containment strategy was not meant to prevent, disrupt or inhibit the Soviet Union’s capacity for growth and development. Rather, its sole purpose was to prevent the leadership of the Soviet Union from forcibly imposing their ideology and political system on neighboring countries or those in need of some form of developmental assistance. Containment then emerges as a strategy aimed at

offsetting potential Soviet hegemonic aspirations towards the Eurasian heartland and also those countries in the rimland. To some extent, this line of reasoning mirrors Spykman's ideas. Spykman never proposed the complete destruction of the power of an enemy country, but its "retention" on the international scenario as a necessary counterweight in the global balance of power, since "[t]he answer to the problem of world peace [...] lay in a balance among the major centres of world power in the post-European age" (Parker 2015:21).

Like Spykman before him, as previously seen, Kennan also advocated a system of global alliances to consolidate American newfound status as a superpower, and as a global safeguard against the threat of Soviet aggression. In that regard, the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance between North-American and European countries, was founded on 4 April, 1949. Following NATO'S creation, military alliances and collective defense arrangements were created in August 1951 (bilateral treaty with the Philippines), September 1951 (ANZUS<sup>92</sup>), 1953 (bilateral treaty with the Republic of Korea), 1954 (Southeast Asia Treaty<sup>93</sup>), 1960 (bilateral Treaty with Japan), and the formerly mentioned 1947 Rio Treaty, among many other bilateral agreements.

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<sup>92</sup> Australia, New Zealand and United States.

<sup>93</sup> It involves the United States, Australia, France, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

In the 1960s and 1970s major changes began to take place on the international scenario, when both superpowers engaged, somewhat reluctantly, in a period of “peaceful coexistence”<sup>94</sup>. In this new and more fluid environment, policymakers, academics, and analysts began to dedicate more attention to other global question, such as poverty, trade, development and economic assistance, natural resources, and environmental preservation, and nuclear disarmament, among others. Containment, however, remained the core strategy in American foreign policy from the end of the Second World War to the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 26, 1991. The logic of the Cold War provided the environment in which the United States and the Soviet Union developed their respective strategic geopolitical views that guided and legitimized their discourse and behavior.

Although the containment strategy evolved over time, while the United States sought to move away from a direct military confrontation of communist expansionism in countries like South Korea and Vietnam to a less militaristic approach that would give priority to economic assistance and financial aid as a mechanism to attract developing and nonaligned countries into its sphere of influence, it was still very influential in Washington. Brzezinski, for example, used to depict Soviet global strategy a one of a kind organic imperialism which was derived from territorial insecurity. He advocated the continuity of the three main pillars of the containment

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<sup>94</sup> The term refers to an approach initially developed by the Secretary-General of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in 1956, as an attempt to reduce hostility between the two superpowers. According to this approach, socialist states could peacefully coexist with the capitalist bloc.

strategy: a permanent American diplomatic and military presence in Eurasia along with a NATO alliance, a strong and resurgent Europe, and an independent China.

### 5.5 Argentina's Geopolitical Thought

Located in the so-called Southern Cone, the southernmost area of the Americas, Argentina occupies an area of 2.780.400 km<sup>2</sup><sup>95</sup>, the second largest in Latin America and eighth in the world. Although its geographic position allows for direct access to the Beagle Channel, the Drake Passage, and the Strait of Magellan, three isthmus that strategically connect the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean (Fig. 5), Argentina borders two potentially more powerful countries, Brazil and Chile, a geostrategic condition that appears to have always decisively influenced the country's Argentine foreign and security policies. Argentine scholar and former Army officer Jorge Atencio (1986:41), for example, emphasizes that geopolitics refers to

[T]he influence of geographic factors in the life and evolution of states, with an objective of extracting conclusions of a political character... [it] guides statesmen in the conduct of the state's domestic and foreign policy, and it orients the armed forces to prepare for national defence and in the conduct of strategy; it facilitates planning for future contingencies based on relatively permanent geographic features that permit certain calculations to be made between such physical realities and certain proposed national

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<sup>95</sup> In spite of its size, Argentina is much smaller than Brazil, which occupies an area of 9.511.965 km<sup>2</sup>.

objectives, and consequently, the means for conducting suitable political or strategic responses.

Interpreting Atencio's ideas, Dodds (2003:150) explains that the Argentine geopolitical tradition understands that "[g]eographical features such as rivers, mountains and the seas were considered permanent factors that could be modified but never eradicated by human endeavour". Heavily influenced by the German *Geopolitik* School<sup>96</sup> and Brazilian diplomatic and security thinking, Argentine thinkers emphasized stressed the centrality of space and territory in shaping foreign and security politics. That is, perhaps, one of the reasons why of the main characteristics of the Argentine's geopolitical thought seems to be its enduring obsession with Brazil and what is considered a Brazilian expansionism into the Rio de la Plata Basin, which would arguably be part of an "Argentina's natural sphere of influence" (Child 1979:95).

Although the political life of Argentina as an independent country had arguably begun in 1810, the rivalry dates back to colonial times, when Portuguese and Brazilian *bandeirantes*,

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<sup>96</sup> During the first four decades of the 20th century, Argentina and Germany had a very close military cooperation, to the extent that, in 1900, the head of the Argentine Superior War College was a German officer, and nearly 50 percent of that institution's faculty was of German origin (Dodds 2003), which led the Argentine military to absorb and incorporate German ideas about the importance of the links between state, nation and geography. Such close military cooperation lasted until 1940, when Germany was no longer capable of providing technical and financial assistance to Argentina. With the end of the Second World War, however, many Nazi officials fled to Argentina, and began a new life there.

marching inland in search of gold, silver, precious gemstones, and Indians to enslave, ended up largely expanding the “natural” frontiers of Brazil, to the detriment of its Spanish-speaking neighbors, as seen in chapter 2. Although the Republic of Argentina was declared on 25 May 1810, its official independence from Spain was declared only on 9 July 1816, by the Congress of Tucumán. Actually, Congressmen assembled in the province of Tucumán declared the independence of the *United Provinces of South America*, a designation that remains one of the legal names of Argentina still today. The process of creation of a united country was marked by bitter struggles with the indigenous Indian population (and their nearly complete annihilation), fierce political disputes between local provinces and regional leaders, and the involvement of rival states, reasons why many Argentine commentators argue that the country, whose “frontiers and boundaries were poorly defined, partially mapped, and frontier regions generally unpopulated” (Dodds 2003:154), was not really a national state until the 1880s.

The geopolitical thinking in Argentina seems to have been heavily influenced by four main elements: first, Brazil’s perceived expansionism and claims to leadership and even hegemony in South America; second, concerns about the existence of an alliance between Brazil and the United States – particularly during the first decades of the Brazilian republic, when bilateral relations between Brazil and the United States were remarkably strong – to decisively influence and exercise control over the Americas. Brazil was considered by many a “sub imperial” state, which represented an extension of U.S. interests in South America; third, the existence of threats to a self-perceived Argentina’s natural leadership role in the Southern Cone; and finally, concern over potential threats to the maritime expansion of the country.



The relationship with Brazil has always been central to Argentinean policymakers and scholars. Unlike the country's rivalry with Chile, grounded on concrete border disputes over territories potentially well endowed with mineral resources and other riches, the rivalry with Brazil has been much deeper, being grounded on three main variables: the sharing of the strategic waterways connected to the River Plate Basin, which covers about one-fifth of the surface of South America (Fig. 6) and provides a communication and transport system for five countries in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay<sup>97</sup>; disputes over political influence in – or even direct control over – Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia<sup>98</sup>; and a struggle for regional supremacy.

The concept of “living frontiers” advocated by Brazilian diplomacy, and which represented the national version of the German *Lebensraum*, was of special concern to Argentine policymakers and scholars, who tended to see Brazil engaged in a permanent process of expanding the boundaries of its territory and its sphere of political influence. These concerns over Brazilian tendencies to expand “into border areas deal not only with expansion into the buffer states of Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, but also with Argentina's own national

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<sup>97</sup> The waters of the Rio de La Plata basin are also used as a source for irrigation and for hydroelectric power. Furthermore, its platform is believed to contain considerable oil reserves.

<sup>98</sup> For example, former Argentina's President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who ruled the country between 1868–1874, proposed to create a United States of South America, which would include small countries in the River Plate region, that is Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, under the Argentine leadership.

territory” (Child 1979:96), a project that, indeed, never found any resonance in the Brazilian geopolitical repertoire.

The existence of a supposed special relationship between Brazil and the United States led to diverging perspectives among Argentine thinkers. Some used to see Brazil as an agent of American imperialism in the region, and as a regional key country in the U.S. geopolitical alliance system (Sanguinetti 1973). Others, like the influential geopolitical writer and former Army General Juan Guglielmelli (1975), believed that Brazil was just a pawn in American regional strategic initiatives, reason why Argentina should not only try to undermine that dependency relationship, but seek to build a more cooperative relationship with Brazil and develop a true strategic partnership, in order to balance the power and influence of the United States in the region.

This perspective was adopted and advocated by Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974), an Army Colonel and President of Argentina in two occasions, the first one between June 1946 and September 1955, and the second one between October 1973 and July 1974<sup>99</sup>. Perón believed that Argentina would never overcome underdevelopment on its own. He was convinced that regional integration was the key for a better insertion of South American countries in the global economy. Regional integration, however, would be achieved only with the establishment, strengthening, and consolidation of an Argentinean-Brazilian axis, which would be the basis for a solid South America. At the same time, realizing that Argentina would be the “minoritarian partner” in that

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<sup>99</sup> Perón was perhaps the most important Argentine politician in the 20th century, and maybe in the country’s history.

relationship, Perón acknowledged the need to build stronger relations with Chile, in order to balance Brazil, who was rapidly overcoming Argentina in both economic and demographic terms.

According to Puntigliano (2011:852), “the geopolitical scope of Perón was not of local rivalries or military targets, but of the creation of an optimal *lebensraum* to sustain autonomy in the international system”. Argentine policymakers, however, never abandoned their claims for regional leadership, particularly in the Southern Cone, and their project of building a “Greater Argentina” – which would also encompass Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and parts of Brazil and Chile –, particularly during the several military governments that the country experienced throughout the 20th century.

In opposition to Brazil’s continental doctrine of “living frontiers”, Argentine geopolitical theorists developed their own national doctrine, based on the maritime expansion of the country and the consolidation of an “Argentine Sea”, which would spread from the River Plate to the Antarctic Peninsula, including the Malvinas/Falklands Islands. According to one of the first Argentine geopolitical theorists, Admiral Roberto Storni<sup>100</sup> (1876-1954) – whose writings seem to have been heavily influenced by Mahan and Mackinder – Argentina is a maritime nation, and so its interests are, or should be, mostly marine-oriented. Storni argued that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, “conceived as empty spaces which await the attention of the economically successful Argentine state” (Dodds 2003:159), would simultaneously be a source of economic development and national unity, since “in this common attractive force resides one of the real

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<sup>100</sup> In fact, Storni is considered the father of Argentine geopolitics.

and permanent causes of national union; it makes geographical unity and in the end political unity” (Storni 1967:22)<sup>101</sup>. In that regard, particular attention was drawn to the fact that Argentina can potentially play an important role in monitoring key entry and exit points to and from the South Atlantic, and that it controls access to the Straits of Magellan and Cape Horn, a geographic and political condition that would acquire “crucial strategic significance if the Panama Canal were to be closed” (Child 1979:97).

While much has changed since the days of the Brazilian *bandeirantes* and the proclamation of the Argentine republic, geopolitics remains a powerful idea within the country’s security and foreign policy literature and traditions. It continues to represent an important analytical tool to discuss and to frame issues linked to the country’s development and its relationships with its regional neighbors and its role in the international system.

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<sup>101</sup> Storni’s most important book, *Interes Argentinos en el Mar* (Argentinean Sea Interests), was originally published in 1916.

## CHAPTER 6 - BRAZIL'S GEOPOLITICS AND GRAND STRATEGY

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze how strategic culture has historically influenced Brazilian geopolitical thought and grand strategy, paying special attention to Brazil's geopolitics to South America. By discussing how these geopolitical views have shaped Brazil's international insertion and its relationship with regional neighbors, consequently affecting integration projects in South America, this chapter also attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of how the country tends to perceive its regional and global role and implement security and foreign policy decisions. It seems that Brazilian strategic culture and the country's global ambitions have led Brazilian decision-makers to believe in the existence of an innate right to greatness, and to take for granted its undisputed leadership role in South America, which has been translated into a certain degree of neglect – and even condescendence – to regional affairs and needs, despite the fact that the Brazilian “official” diplomatic discourse has long regarded regional leadership as a springboard to global recognition.

### 6.2 A General Overview – Brazilian Regional Leadership

In general terms, Brazilian decision-makers believe they can increase the country's global political clout by becoming an undisputed regional leader, which would augment its diplomatic credentials and negotiating capabilities, a reasoning that might be correct if it were not for the fact that Brazil – the only non-Spanish speaking country in the region and whose population does not even consider itself as *latino*, "except when it is politically or economically expedient"

(Eakin 2009:4) – historically has had its back turned to South America, preferring to establish preferential ties with European countries, as previously seen. In consequence, most historical initiatives undertaken by Spanish-speaking regional leaders to promote integration in the South American geographic space excluded the participation of Brazil. The first integrationist initiative that seriously considered the inclusion of Brazil took place only in the late 1950s, resulting in the establishment of the short-lived Latin America Free Trade Area (LAFTA) in 1960. At any rate, that mechanism represented a victory of the Brazilian strategy of pursuing a more superficial integration "without deeper attachments" (Puntigliano 2011:853), over Argentinean and Chilean intentions to create a deeper customs union.

Even today, Brazil is still seen by many in neighboring countries as an imperialist nation, which longs to dominate the region. That enduring perception, combined with long-standing political rivalries and structural asymmetries, has prevented Brazil from building and consolidating a stable, reliable and prosperous power base in its backyard (Brands 2010). Puntigliano (2011) noted the existence of a real dichotomy in Brazilian geopolitical thinking towards South America, divided as to which path to pursue: integration or hegemony? In fact, Brazilian policies to South America are extremely ambiguous and paradoxical. On the one hand, the country seeks to reaffirm its political leadership in the region, an objective "couched in the rhetoric of 'non-hegemonic leadership'" (Hurrell 2008:55), while, on the other, it displays a remarkable unwillingness to pursue a more assertive role in regional affairs, which reflects a longstanding belief in Brazilian political thinking that the country could become a global power without being a regional power.

Brazil's global ambitions have led many neighboring countries to express their concerns about Brazilian lack of interest regarding regional matters, its reluctance to foster regional/sub-regional supranational institutions, which might constrain its diplomatic autonomy and political margin of maneuver, and its excessive emphasis on its own interests. Likewise, for fears of having its influence diluted in regional organizations, Brazil has historically displayed a preference for pursuing bilateral solutions to regional issues, despite the existence of several regional institutions which it helped to create, such as Mercosul, Unasul, and the South American Defense Council (SADC)<sup>102</sup>.

For these reasons, Brazil's initiatives to establish and keep a superficial and "relatively toothless" (Stuenkel 2013:327) *Union of South American Nations* (Unasul or Unasur, its Spanish name) under its leadership – a principle enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution – have been seen with certain distrust and have led some countries in the region to seek for alternatives to any Brazilian would-be hegemony, while others have openly "started balancing and constraining an increasingly ambitious Brasília" (Burges 2015:194). Several, such as Colombia, Peru and Chile, have signed free-trade agreements with the United States, and prefer to pursue a special relationship with the global superpower. These Andean countries, along with Mexico, also

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<sup>102</sup> In Portuguese, *Conselho de Defesa Sul-Americano* (CDS). Established in March 2009, the South American Defense Council is made up of the Defense Ministers of Unasul's 12 member states. Its declared objective involves the consolidation of South America as a zone of peace and a basis for democratic stability, as well as the emergence of a South American identity in the area of defense.

established the Pacific Alliance in 2012, a dynamic trade bloc created to counterbalance the weight of the Brazilian-led Mercosul, in itself an increasingly dysfunctional, divided and emptied organization which has to endure several threats of abandonment by its smaller and less satisfied members, Paraguay and Uruguay.

By the way, the Brazilian government has dedicated considerable efforts to keep Mercosul, an imperfect customs union under whose provisions no member country can unilaterally negotiate a free-trade agreement with non-member countries, alive, which limits its foreign policy autonomy and represents another contradictory element in Brazil's ambiguous strategy. In 2014, Brazilian exports to the other members of the bloc decreased by almost 18%, while Brazil's imports from other Mercosul countries diminished by 11%. In this context, Brazilian exports to Argentina were especially affected, decreasing by over 30% (Secex 2014). Likewise, exports from Argentina to other Mercosul countries dipped by 25%, whereas its imports decreased by 31% (Indec 2014), numbers that reflect a sharp and increasing loss of vitality in the sub-regional scheme.

On the other hand, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA), a political-ideological bloc created by deceased Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez in 2004 as an ideological platform for international cooperation including countries like Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba, among others, apparently represented nothing more than an attempt by Chávez to stake Venezuela's claims to regional leadership, in the absence of a clear hegemon in the region. This movement, watched by Brasilia with passive eyes, added more uncertainties to regional complexities in a highly contested geopolitical environment "with virtually no history of regional cooperation" (Stuenkel 2013:338), making prospects of a unified region less likely in the short



term. One consequence of that continental divide is the strong opposition of some of the most important countries in Latin America, such as Colombia, Argentina and Mexico, to Brazil's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC.

Reflecting a view promoted by the Superior War College (*Escola Superior the Guerra – ESG*), which has to some extent dominated Brazilian geopolitical thought since its establishment in 1949, Brazilian decision-makers tend to believe that Brazil's regional leadership, which is considered critical to both its global insertion and national development, should be taken for granted purely by virtue of its economic importance and size. That geopolitical thought sustains the thesis that regional integration should be intimately linked to the "continental projection of Brazil" over South America (Mattos 2007:71) in order to bolster its global ambitions, but without entailing additional regionalist commitments that might limit the country's room for maneuver on the world stage. Those policymakers not only aspire to "achieve for Brazil a position of greater importance at the world level" (Almeida 2009:168), but they also believe that South American countries should be subservient to Brazil, the "natural leader" of the region and its voice in the international community, a view certainly not shared by most neighbors. The conflation of global ambitions and regional interests has always offered an enticing prospect to Brazil, based on the idea that the country can put less in the regional sphere and take out more.

These perspectives have led Brazilian policymakers to commit two mistakes. First, they seem to forget that both region-formation and regional leadership-building processes are not costless undertakings. Countries in the region appear to be reacting to Brazilian efforts to assume the role of regional hegemon, through several political and diplomatic initiatives designed to serve primarily Brazilian national interests, without incurring the high costs inherent in this

ambitious project. Without providing large-scale public goods, significant economic benefits, trade concessions, military protection and assistance, and other incentives to neighboring countries, Brazil cannot realistically hope to enlist them behind its projects.

Second, they have neglected the willingness of neighboring countries to seek some sort of accommodation with the United States, which can afford to engage in the large-scale provision of public goods they desire. As it is becoming increasingly clear that Brazil neither has a coherent foreign policy regarding South America nor the political capital, diplomatic influence, and military and economic resources to play a leadership role, Brazil's quest for a "consensual hegemony" (Burges 2015) may run a serious risk of turning the country into a "leader without followers" (Malamud 2011).

### 6.3 The Origins, Nature, and Fundamentals of Brazilian Geopolitical Thought

In his classical *Geopolitical Thinking in Latin America*, John Child (1979:90) contends that Brazil presents the most notable school of geopolitical thought in Latin America, "both for its prolific and imaginative output as well as for the fact that Brazilian geopolitical concepts have been incorporated into its national development policies and its international relations." In fact, influenced by the country's strategic culture and its geographic circumstances, Brazil's geopolitical thinking has traditionally been focused on several distinct objectives, particularly the protection of its large coast line; the expansion into the interior, particularly into the Amazon heartland; the integration of the national territory; the expansion of its influence in the Rio de la Plata Basin and the rivalry with Argentina; the establishment and consolidation of a leadership role in Latin America; the maintenance of security in the South Atlantic region; the emphasis on

the indissociable nexus between security and development; the international projection of Brazil's prestige, and the permanent search for great power status and global greatness, which is, at the same time, a strategic culture feature and a geopolitical objective.

As seen in chapters 2 and 3, having its origins in Portuguese overseas expansion, Brazil's continental scale was a result of the actions of men who considered territory not only as one of the elements of the nation-state, but also as a strong component of the national identity. In that sense, the epic work of the *bandeirantes* was complemented by Luso-Brazilian diplomacy, who, in the words of Lafer (2000b:209), "legitimized and allowed for the legalization, at the international level, of the occupation of the territory that is now Brazil. This Portuguese heritage provided a continuous link with the past that Brazilian diplomacy would successfully explore."

Despite the pivotal role played by the Luso-Brazilian diplomatic corps of the colonial administration in preserving and expanding the Brazilian territory, the consolidation of the national space and the continental dimension of Brazilian identity as a systemic national policy began only after 1822, when an independent Brazil, distant from major international powers, conflicts and tensions, gradually emerged in the concert of nations and acquired the means and resources to promote the effective occupation, unification, and defense of the national territory. The consolidation of the national territory, which included pursuing the definitive configuration of the country's borders, was, in fact, the first guiding line for Brazilian foreign policy, an orientation that remained unaltered during the first years of the new Brazilian republic. In that regard, Alsina Jr. (2014:21) observes that as a "symbolic continuer of the Empire's foreign policy in the Republic, Rio Branco intended to assert Brazil as the first power of South America.

This desideratum would not be achieved by dint of words, but by the country's capacity to perform concrete deeds.”

That remark essentially means that, although the Baron of Rio Branco was eventually able to peacefully draw the contours of the modern Brazilian map, the negotiating processes were not completely exempt from the threat of use of force on the part of Brazil, as the establishment of borders traditionally represents a major problem for the security and foreign policy of any nation, particularly one like Brazil, which borders ten countries in South America and has the third-longest distance of international land borders in the world, totaling 10,492 miles<sup>103</sup>. Despite being a steadfast advocate of dialogue and the peaceful settlement of controversies between nations, Rio Branco acknowledged the importance of developing strong military capabilities to support a country's claims in case diplomatic negotiations failed, particularly at a time when an eventual recourse to war was very common in international relations to settle disputes. Therefore, Rio Branco believed that “Brazil needed to have military power commensurate with the challenges faced by his diplomatic efforts in the intricate negotiations that had been unfolding with several neighboring states.” (Alsina Jr. 2014:21).

Aware of the narrow limits imposed by Brazil's lack of economic power and the weakness of its armed forces, Rio Branco adopted a twofold strategy to ensure Brazil's preeminence in South America: firstly, the Brazilian Chancellor sought to strengthen ties with the United States, a partnership which was politically and economically expedient to Brazil,

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<sup>103</sup> The only countries that have longer international land borders in the world are China and Russia.

generating positive results also in the fields of trade and defense. Secondly, despite recognizing the limited scope for cooperation in the framework of a South American solidarity, Paranhos Jr. rhetorically advocated the maintenance of good relations with regional neighbors, and sought to avoid an aggressive foreign policy in the River Plate Basin and adjacent areas, understanding that, under the circumstances, “Brazilian influence on the Southern Cone had to be shared with Argentina and Chile” (Puntigliano 2011:850).

In advocating shared influence, Paranhos Jr. was acting, above all, with pragmatism. Understanding that the political stability and economic progress in South America depended, to a large extent, on the political cooperation among the region’s main powers, Rio Branco was the leading force behind the creation of an ABC Pact<sup>104</sup>, negotiated in 1909 by Argentina, Brazil and Chile. On 21 November 1904, Rio Branco sent a letter to Manuel Gorostiaga Paz, then Argentinean ambassador in Rio de Janeiro, in which he claimed that: “I am more and more convinced that a cordial intelligence between Argentina, Brazil and Chile could be of great benefit for each three Nations” (Bueno 2003:291). Bueno, Vigevani, and Ramanzini Jr. (2013:211) argue that, in Rio Branco’s view, “the ABC subsumed the idea of what we may call an oligarchic condominium of nations, for the sake of peace in South America.” However, Rio Branco also believed that, within the framework of this *Cordial Entente*, the close friendship between Brazil and Chile would serve to contain Argentina’s desire for regional hegemony.

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<sup>104</sup> The ABC Pact, or ABC Treaty, is formally known as “Tratado da Cordial Inteligência entre Brasil, Chile e Argentina”, or “Treaty of the Cordial Intelligence between Brazil, Chile, and Argentina”.

Given the tense relations between Brazil and Argentina, on one hand, and Argentina and Chile, on the other, negotiations failed to advance, postponing the signature of the treaty for over ten years. A new ABC Pact, now a mere declaration of mutual friendship designed to facilitate the peaceful solution of international controversies among the signing parties, was signed only on 25 May 1915, after the First World War breakout in Europe. However, amid regional tensions, it was never promulgated, as only the Brazilian parliament ratified the treaty.

### 6.3.1 The “Modern” Brazilian School of Geopolitical Thought

While the geopolitical concepts of expansion, autarky, and vital space formulated by the German *Geopolitik* School have apparently been present throughout the history of Brazil’s development as a nation, becoming more evident with Rio Branco, the emergence of a typically Brazilian School of geopolitical thought with its own characteristics can be credited to the writings of Army Colonel (and later Marshall) Mário Travassos (1891-1973), who systematized the new discipline and explained Brazil’s geopolitical imperatives. In his 1935 book, *Projeção Continental do Brasil* (Brazil’s Continental Projection), Travassos set the basis for the theoretical linking between “integral security” and “development” that would later come to form the pillars, the ideological bedrocks, upon which the military governments in Brazil would build their security and foreign policy and the country’s industrialization and development models.

Travassos (1938) contended that, in order to achieve security and development, Brazil should expand both domestically and internationally along two main axes, rather than keeping itself permanently attached only to its Atlantic coastline. The first one, an East-West axis,

leading into the Amazon Basin heartland, would seek to establish what he called a “longitudinal Brazil”, and represented the first push to occupy "the empty spaces" of the Amazon basin, considered strategic for economic, security, and environmental reasons, and which occupies nearly half of the Brazilian territory. According to Ryan (1993:21), “[a]llowing a large portion of the Amazon frontier to remain unoccupied was analogous to providing an invitation for the bordering countries to reclaim their previously lost lands or possibly claim new ones.” The transfer of Brazil’s capital from Rio, in the Atlantic coastline, to Brasilia, a newly built city in the interior state of Goiás, by President Juscelino Kubitschek, in 1960, can be understood within the framework of this Amazonian geopolitics. Brasilia’s construction marked the beginning of a state policy to shift the nucleus of the country's population inward, in an effort to occupy those spaces, which were essentially empty, and effectively integrate them into the national territory, in economic and political terms, taking advantage of their until then unexplored economic potential.

The second axis involved an expansion towards the former Mato Grosso state<sup>105</sup> (Fig. 6) and into the Southern Cone, more political than territorial, in order to minimize Argentina's influence on the buffer states of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and prevent its domination of the River Plate Basin. Travassos believed that the region encompassing Mato Grosso, Bolívia and Paraguay formed the core of the South American heartland. Consequently, he argued that

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<sup>105</sup> In 1977, the state of Mato Grosso was split into two halves, with Mato Grosso do Sul becoming a new state. Located in the Western part of the country, the state of Mato Grosso was the second largest by area in Brazil, before the partition, and bordered Bolivia and Paraguay.

this twofold strategy<sup>106</sup>, which corresponded to Brazil's form of Manifest Destiny, "would give Brazil a much stronger base from which to project its power" (Ryan 1993:8), and that "[o]nly by 'projecting' in these two directions could Brazil fulfill her 'continental destiny'" (Child 1979:90). In fact, in a manner somewhat similar to the United States expansion process in the 19th century, Brazilian geopolitical thought – as well as the country's expansion – has been characterized by a defensive Atlantic coastline and an active western frontier.

Another scholar who greatly influenced Brazil's geopolitical thought was Everardo Backheuser (1879-1951), a contemporary of Mário Travassos. Although Puntigliano (2011:852) argues that his work was essentially, "a direct translation of Kjellen's work", Backheuser adapted the principles of the German *Geopolitik* School to Brazilian circumstances, particularly the concept of "living frontiers", which advocated the idea that borders, as organic entities, are fluid and flexible and respond to pressures exerted by neighboring countries. Backheuser argued that Brazil, emerging as a dominant power in the region, should inexorably expand into territories of weaker neighbors and effectively occupy and develop the "empty spaces" along its border regions to secure the body of the nation and to consolidate the territorial gains obtained by Rio Branco. Backheuser also advocated the establishment of economically active and productive

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<sup>106</sup> Still today, however, Brazil's population and economic activity is largely concentrated on a narrow strip along the Atlantic coast. Nearly 80 per cent of the country's population lives less than 200 kilometers away from the Atlantic coastline. Together, the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo still account for approximately 43 per cent of Brazil's GDP. Large urban centers in the hinterland, such as Brasília and Manaus, are rare exceptions.



centers in remote frontier regions, all of them interconnected and integrated with a larger regional center through an expanded net of basic infrastructure.

Both Travassos and Backheuser were clearly influenced by the European geopolitical tradition – particularly Kjellén, but also Ratzel, Haushofer and Mackinder – and were concerned with applying geopolitical concepts “to the problems of the formulation of practical developmental policies meant to attack the problems Brazil faced in realizing its political and economic potential” (Schwam-Baird 1997:26). Although, after the Second World War, the fledgling Brazilian school of geopolitical thought, based on the writings of Travassos and Backheuser, sought to distance itself from the more militarized aspects of the doctrine adopted by Hitler’s Germany, geopolitical concepts, propagated by the newly created Superior War College (ESG), represented the core of the country’s National Security Doctrine, as well as the development project, implemented during the military rule in Brazil.

### *6.3.2 The Superior War College and the National Security Doctrine*

As Schwam-Baird (1997:2) observes, “the main thrust of Brazilian geopolitical thought revolved around the idea of *grandeza*<sup>107</sup>, which was the unchallenged assumption that Brazil’s destiny – due to its size, vast resources, strategic location and uniqueness – was to become the first superpower of the Southern hemisphere.” In that regard, as previously mentioned, the ESG

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<sup>107</sup> Greatness, in English.

was the main institution responsible for disseminating these geopolitical perspectives among members of the country's military, political, and economic elites.

Based on the model of the United States National War College, the ESG was established by Law n.785 on August 20, 1949, in Rio de Janeiro, being directly subordinate to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The idea of establishing a Superior War College in Brazil grew out of the close contacts kept between members of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (FEB) and American army officers during the Second World War. Dissatisfied with national staff operations and military training, high-ranking FEB veterans requested their American counterparts to help setting up a war college in Brazil. Tollefson (1998:394) recalls that a “United States mission arrived in 1948, helped with the founding of the ESG in 1949, and remained in an advisory capacity until 1960. The chief of the United States mission held faculty status at the ESG.” Brazilian military, policymakers, and geopoliticians appeared to believe that American military assistance and guidance would help to put the country in the right track to finally realize its *grandeza*.

However, unlike the U.S. National War College, the ESG placed substantially more emphasis on the inseparable link between security (both internal and external) and development. In fact, the watchwords of Brazil's progress would be security and development. The linking of these two concepts became “the military's ‘third mission’ (the first two being classic defense against a conventional invader and counterinsurgency)” (Child 1979:90). Within that context, therefore, the ESG had two main objectives. The first one was the careful preparation of an elite of civilian and military leaders able to perform executive and advisory functions linked to the formulation, planning, and implementation of national security policies and strategies. The

second one referred to the formulation of a national defense strategy that could effectively promote the integration of the actions undertaken by the country's military, industrial and administrative sectors.

As seen in Chapter 3, the motto “Security and Development”, or *Segurança e Desenvolvimento*, in Portuguese, represented the two pillars upon which the ESG formulated the National Security Doctrine (NSD), particularly during the military regime. The NSD incorporated the geopolitical concept of the nation-state as an organic entity, placing greater emphasis, however, on the determinants of a nation’s power: population, territory, economic and military capabilities, military strategy, a national grand strategy, and national will. In order to fully develop its potential, Brazil should be able to permanently and consistently develop and implement a national strategy integrating its political, economic, and social actors and variables. As Marshall Castelo Branco (1964-1967), the first of the so-called “General-Presidents” of the military dictatorship period and one of the main ideologists of the NSD, argued, the “interrelationship between development and security leads on the one hand to the security level being determined by the degree of economic growth; and on the other, the (fact that) economic development cannot be attained without a minimum of security” (Comblin 1978:30). In this context, the military government placed greater emphasis on economic development as the most important determinant behind foreign policy. As Hurrell (2013:146) noted, “[e]conomic growth was therefore seen both as the answer to the problem of security and as the prerequisite for a wider and more independent international role in the future.”

The origins of the NSD date back to the beginning of the Cold War, as its founding principles were intimately linked to U.S. security policies for the continent and the global fight

against communism. The prevailing idea was that Brazil's close relationships with the United States and its geographical position should be enough to determine the country's allegiance to the Western bloc. In the early 1960s, as the Brazilian military began to perceive the country as entering an era of internal subversive warfare, the doctrine evolved. The emphasis on external threats to the country's political stability was shifted to the domestic sphere and the fight against the internal enemy, which led counterinsurgency efforts to become the dominant defense strategy. According to the NSD, the "revolutionary warfare" waged by domestic insurgents referred to an internal conflict that was "encouraged and aided materially or psychologically from outside the nation, generally inspired by an ideology, and which attempts to gain state power through progressive control of the nation<sup>108</sup>." Additionally, that objective became indissociable from the pursuit of national development, which could be achieved, among other aspects, through accelerating industrialization and the quick expansion of the state's basic infrastructure.

### *6.3.3 General Golbery and General Meira Mattos*

One of the most important names behind the development of the Brazilian geopolitical thought and the NSD was that of General Golbery do Couto e Silva<sup>109</sup> (1911-1987), who was also a pivotal figure in the coup d'état that overthrew President João Goular in 1964. Besides

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<sup>108</sup> Extracted from a Basic Military Guidebook written by the Department of Studies of the ESG, in 1976.

<sup>109</sup> General Golbery is, in fact, considered the "father" of the National Security Doctrine.

serving as the first head of the newly created National Information Service (SNI), the intelligence service of the military regime, which essentially worked as “the backbone of the military regime's system of control and repression” (Tollefson 1998:359), Golbery was also one of the founders of ESG and served as the Chief of Staff of the Presidency of the Republic from March 1974 to August 1981<sup>110</sup>. Considered by many in the country as the “Brazilian Henry Kissinger”, Golbery was regarded as the real *eminence gris* behind the successive military administrations.

In his 1966 book *Geopolítica do Brasil* (Geopolitics of Brazil), Golbery presents what is possibly his greatest contribution to the field. Golbery’s writings were similar to those of Travassos and Backheuser in that they “espoused national integration and effective use of national resources, effective occupation of internal territories, solidification of border areas, and economic development as vehicles to obtain *grandeza*” (Ryan 1993:8). However, unlike Travassos and Backheuser, who focused on the influence exerted on and by Brazil within the South American context, Golbery dedicates particular attention to extra-continental considerations, placing not only Brazil, but also South America, into the context of global politics.

Then, in addition to continental concerns, threats, constraints, and needs already pointed out by Travassos, Backheuser, and other scholars, Golbery also expresses his concerns about Brazilian economic and political dependence on extra-continental powers (including the United States), and the possibilities of cooperation, in many spheres, with them. Therefore, argues

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<sup>110</sup> That position is often referred to as Minister-Head of the Civilian Cabinet of the Presidency.

Golbery (1966), Brazil's prospect of furthering its national political, economic, and military objectives do not rest anymore exclusively on its own abilities to "project itself into the interior of South America" (Schwam-Baird 1997:32), which tends to be severely conditioned by the pressures exerted by major extra-continental powers. For this reason, Brazil should strive to acquire the capabilities to be able not only to resist such pressures, but also to project its influence well beyond South America. It was then imperative for Brazil to frame its own development path, progressing from "control of her own national territories to continental projection to international influence" (Child 1979:90). These developmental goals would have the additional benefit of increasing Brazil's international prestige and would serve as a means of achieving greatness.

Building on Golbery's writings and teachings, General Carlos de Meira Mattos (1913-2007) also sought to link geopolitical principles to a National Security Doctrine, looking beyond Brazil's needs to consolidate its influence in South America. Mattos argued that, occupying nearly half of South America, Brazil had a legitimate geopolitical interest in the South Atlantic Ocean and the Antarctic. Likewise, linked to the West by geography, history, and by choice, Brazil should play a critical role in the defense of those areas and the Western hemisphere, as a whole. In that regard, Mattos (1987:75) contended that "[t]oday, within the framework of continental defense and Western strategy, Africa is of much more interest to Brazil than any other area in the world. [...] It is from there that we must protect our own territory."

Brazil's quest for greatness and great power status, which reflected the geopolitical convictions of Golbery and Mattos, compelled the country, after the Second World War, to initially align with the United States in the global arena, as part of the anti-communist efforts – in

what should be a relation of association, rather than subordination – then to challenge its hemispheric ally in a number of less important issues, and finally to openly diverge from the “Colossus of the North” in more substantial global issues. Since the mid-1960s bilateral relations between Brazil and the United States were considered to be gradually deteriorating due to the growing perception in Brazil among policymakers and the military that the United States has acted to block its path to “first world” status. As Ryan (1993: 93-94) puts it, Brazil views itself, to some extent, as “engaged in a ‘patron-client’ relationship with the United States and characterizes that relationship as the obstacle that prevents its progress towards modernization”. In the same line of reasoning, Hurrell (2008:54) argues that the imperative of developing a more prominent international role for the country was accompanied by “the suspicion that the United States is more likely to be a hindrance than a help in securing the country’s upward progress.” As previously mentioned, this situation led Brazil to unilaterally renounce, in April 1977, the military alliance with the United States, which dated back to the early 1940s.

The geopolitical views of Golbery, to a larger extent, formed the ideological bedrock of the Brazilian foreign policy during the military rule. As seen in Chapter 2, the “Diplomacy of Prosperity” and the “Responsible Pragmatism”, with their aversion for automatic alignments and the attempts at transforming Brazil into a global power, represented the strongest expressions of Brazil’s “nationalism of ends” and its pursuit for greater autonomy in the international system. The emphasis placed on an ideological identification with the Western politico-military bloc progressively gave way to a substantially less West-centric foreign policy orientation. Repudiating the ideological polarization of the international system, as well as merely semantic discussions about the nature of the East-West logic of the Cold War, Brazilian geopoliticians

formulated a model of international insertion, based on the pragmatic diversification of the country's international relations, which greatly influenced policymakers into launching a new diplomatic agenda that would persist into the twenty-first century, espousing “theories of independent foreign policy, the doctrine of security and development, and the quest for the hegemony of the *primus inter pares*<sup>111</sup> in the Third World as the legitimate military-industrial power” (Pang 1995:146).

The cold war period witnessed a lingering debate as to whether Brazil was really part of the Western world in its global battle against communism or a Third World country struggling to overcome underdevelopment, a perspective which eventually won. In that context, Brazil should be prepared and have the capabilities to fight for its own interests even if they were not aligned with “Western” objectives. Under the logic of the Cold War, Brazil experienced a natural limitation in its diplomatic initiatives. One possible way to seek to increase its autonomy was to distance itself from the United States orbit of influence through the “universalization” of its foreign policy and the multiplication of its international partners. Claiming to itself the right to implement and assert its own independent positions in the international scenario without the constraints and pressures imposed by the contending global powers, particularly the leader of the Western bloc, Brazil sought to expand its foreign policy towards other countries and regions, envisaging great political, economic, and commercial opportunities in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

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<sup>111</sup> *Primus inter pares* is a Latin phrase meaning “first among equals”.



By an irony of fate, this new foreign policy orientation adopted by the military regime, which called for a new course for Brazil “by modifying the country’s role in the Cold War as a subservient follower of the United States” (Pang 1995:146), adopted the same foreign policy principles and objectives advocated by President João Goulart, overthrown by a military coup in 1964, and his “Política Externa Independente” (Independent Foreign Policy - PEI). Anyway, what is remarkable here is the fact that, in view of the internationalization of Brazil’s international relations brought by the new geopolitical orientation, Latin America, one more, was relegated to second plan in Brazilian foreign policy priorities.

#### 6.4 Brazil and Latin America: Integration or Hegemony?

Latin America, and most specifically South America, has always been considered one of the top priorities of Brazilian foreign policy. The rhetoric of regional integration has traditionally been adopted by Brazilian diplomats and policymakers to build good relationships and strengthen cooperation in the region, which seems to reflect the belief that “[b]ecause the country is smaller and less powerful than the other ‘monster countries’, Brazil’s ruling elites have believed it necessary to gain the support of the region in order to bolster their global claims” (Malamud 2011:6). Such belief has also been ingrained in the national political discourse to such an extent that the 1988 Federal Constitution states, in the sole paragraph of Article 4, that “[t]he Federative Republic of Brazil shall seek the economic, political, social and cultural integration of the peoples of Latin America, viewing the formation of a Latin-American community of nations.”

Brazil's discourse towards regional integration in Latin America might, at first sight, give the impression that it fits the four theoretical assumptions proposed by the RCI approach, as discussed in subsection 4.5. However, a closer analysis of Brazilian regional foreign policy behavior indicates that it appears to contradict all those four major assumptions, what can lead one to conclude that the predictions of the RCI perspective may not be the most adequate to explain Brazil's security and foreign policy behavior.

Firstly, as previously discussed, RCI predicts that actors tend to present a relatively unvarying set of preferred policy outcomes and therefore will behave in a calculated and strategic manner, which means that they include in their political calculations what they consider to be the probable behavior of other actors, in order to amplify the satisfaction of their own policy outcome preferences. Brazil has certainly sought ways to maximize the satisfaction of its own policy outcome preferences but, as this dissertation argues, has done so by adopting contradictory policies which very often disregard the ambitions and preferences of other regional actors, and does not appear to consider their probable behavior.

Secondly, RCI understands that politics tends to be understood as a succession of collective action issues which demand the creation and development of institutions to manage them. However, despite the strong politico-diplomatic discourse in favor of South or Latin American integration, a historical analysis of the economic and political realities has exhibited a systematic pattern in which Brazil has manifested a remarkable unwillingness to build strong regional institutions, while simultaneously expressing its rhetoric of continental solidarity.

Thirdly, RCI argues that institutions represent a strategic framework within which pertinent actors can interact by providing apparently reliable information and developing constraining mechanisms aimed at reducing uncertainty regarding the behavior of other actors, therefore shaping behaviors in ways that are compatible with expected outcomes. Brazil's ambiguous policies to the region, however, appear to have privileged strategies that focus almost exclusively on the country's short term national interests – in an attempt to amplify its own potential benefits – and that are oftentimes contradictory with the dynamics and evolution of an integration process. In fact, these strategies seem to suggest that Brazil is actually pursuing the path of regional hegemony, rather than the path of regional integration, which has been a strong source of divergences in the region.

Finally, RCI believes that institutions are created due to their intrinsic importance to actors interested in making more certain and more palpable the achievement of mutual benefits coming from a process of cooperation. Brazil however, appears to be more interested in enlisting other countries behind its global greatness projects than in providing public goods that would give a substantial boost to Latin American integration.

Brazil's behavior, however, is entirely consistent with the strategic culture approach. In fact, as this dissertation has sought to argue, Brazil only sees itself as part of the region when it is politically and economically convenient, in order to advance its objectives. In consequence, Brazil would seek to promote regional integration under its leadership, so that it could determine its scope, institutional frameworks, and pace of progress.

#### *6.4.1 Hurdles to Regional Integration*

The process of integration in South America presents some structural obstacles which tend to impose several constraints and undermine the effectiveness of strategies aimed at regional cooperation. First, Brazil accounts for nearly 60% of South America's GDP. With that economic weight, Brazil assumes itself as the natural economic leader of the region, and, as such, is expected to pay for the costs of the integration process in a ration compatible with its economic weight, which include, among many others, compensation for development asymmetries regarding poorer countries and the bureaucratic functioning of regional multilateral or supranational institutions, as the RCI perspective would predict.

However, unlike the United States, Brazil has, consistently refused to incur the costs of a more formal leadership role. At the same time, South American countries expect to obtain large benefits from regional integration and Brazilian leadership, but reject adopting the criterion of proportionality in the decision-making process of the region's several integration mechanisms, something that leads Brazil to have the same political and economic weight in regional fora as Bolivia, whose GDP is equivalent to less than 1.5% of Brazil's GDP, and whose population is less than 5% of Brazil's. As the strategic culture approach would predict, Brazil would not accept such constraints in its political and material capabilities, which could somehow undermine its own informal leadership in the region and its global projects.

That structural fragility presents political and economic components, which are intimately connected, if not indissociable. From a more political standpoint, Brazil's major foreign policy aspiration, as Malamud (2011:4) recalls "has long been to achieve international

recognition in accordance with its self-perception as a ‘big country’”. As such, Brazil has, in theory, at least two distinct, although not mutually excluding, strategies to follow in order to achieve its objectives. First, it could pursue an autonomous insertion in the international scenario, based solely on its diplomatic credentials, political influence, demographic and territorial assets, market size, industrial and export capacity, investments potential, and economic resources and capabilities, variables which, according to popular perception in the country, would entitle Brazil to play a leading role on the global stage.

Second, Brazil might try to forge a strategic alliance with neighboring countries in order to consolidate its leadership in the region, using it as a springboard to global recognition and to assume a greater role in world affairs. In this case, such strategy would be conditional on a number of *sine qua non* conditions: (a) such leadership encompasses the whole of South America, and not only its Southern Cone; (b) the costs/burden of exercising such leadership should be perceived as low; and (c) Brazil should be allowed to maintain a high degree of foreign policy autonomy (Taccone and Nogueira 2001). In aggregate terms, Brazil’s Mercosul partners represent approximately 41% of its territory, 50% of its area, and 35% of its GDP (Table 20).

Table 20 Brazil's Relative Position in South America

Countries	Population		Area		GDP		GDP per capita	
	10 <sup>6</sup> pop.	Index	10 <sup>3</sup> km <sup>2</sup>	Index	US\$ 10 <sup>9</sup>	Index	US\$	Index
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,547</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,353</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,604</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Rest of Mercosul (A)</i>	83.3	41	4,276	50	830.8	35	10,033	86.5
Argentina	42	20.6	2,791	32	540.2	22.9	12,873	111
Paraguay	6.9	3.4	407	5	29.7	1.2	4,305	37
Uruguay	3.4	1.7	177	2	55.1	2.2	16,199	139
Venezuela	31	15.3	912	11	205.8	8.7	6,757	58
<i>Mercosul Associates (B)</i>	28	14	1,856	22	292	12	5,609	48
Bolivia	10	4.9	757	9	34	1.4	1,371	12
Chile	18	8.9	1,099	13	258	11	9,847	84
<i>Andean Community (C)</i>	94	46	2,708	31	682	29	4,160	36
Colombia	46	22	1,139	13	378	16	4,549	39
Ecuador	16	8	284	3	101	4.3	3,782	33
Peru	32	16	1,285	15	203	8.7	4,151	36
<b>Subtotal A+B+C</b>	<b>205.3</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>8,840</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>1,804</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>7,092</b>	<b>61</b>

Source: Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In 2014, Mercosul represented only 9.6% of Brazil international trade<sup>112</sup>, figures that represent a disincentive to deepening regional integration, considering a cost-benefit relationship from a purely commercial point of view. The inclusion of other South American countries in this analysis would not alter the picture substantially. Their combined economic and demographic weight is similar – when not inferior – to that of Brazil. In 2014, South American countries represented only 14.5% of all Brazilian exports and imports.

In this line of reasoning, Burges (2005) contends that, as a whole, the economic structures of South American countries do not generate enough incentives towards a deeper

<sup>112</sup> Source: Trade Map. Available at [[http://www.trademap.org/\(S\(junjk02cniqrnc554np4tp55\)\)](http://www.trademap.org/(S(junjk02cniqrnc554np4tp55))) /Bilateral\_TS.aspx]. Accessed 22 October, 2015.

integration, as most countries in the region are marked to a substantial degree by a monostructure of exports, which significantly decreases the potential for intraregional trade. In that regard, Scholvin and Malamud (2014:24) argue that, with the exception of Brazil, “less than ten goods accounted for more than half of the exports of each South American country”, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Still today, the exports of most South American countries are focused on one or two primary-sector products, such as, for example, Bolivia (natural gas, 43%, and silver and zinc, 22%), Chile (copper and copper ores, 51%), Ecuador (crude petrol, 58%), Paraguay (soy, 42%), Uruguay (beef, 21%, and vegetables, 20%) and Venezuela (crude petrol, 94%)<sup>113</sup>. It seems that the concept of economic complementarity is not an integral part of the economic and commercial reality of the region. Brazil, for example, whose most important imports include electronics, chemical products, transport equipment, and capital goods<sup>114</sup>, would potentially profit more from integration with more industrialized economies.

To make things worse, out of the 11 countries in the region, only Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay have Brazil as their main trading partner. All the others have closer trade relations with the United States<sup>115</sup>. In that regard, it is possible to divide South America into five groups of countries: (i) those strongly oriented towards deeper economic and trade ties with the United States (Chile, Colombia, Guiana, Peru, and Suriname); (ii) those which, going in the

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<sup>113</sup> Source: Trading Economics. Available at [[www.tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com)]. Accessed 22 October 2015.

<sup>114</sup> Id.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

opposite direction, prefer to challenge the United States, and establish a populist and arguably socialist economic model (Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela); (iii) Argentina, which has been in a downward spiral of political and economic conditions for almost two decades, and growing more and more commercially and economically dependent of Brazil; (iv) Brazil, which seeks to consolidate its economic modernization course and its influence on the region; and (v) those countries that revolve around Brazilian political influence and economic weight in a more direct way (Paraguay and Uruguay).

In that context, what was expected to facilitate a process of integration, that is, the pursuit of common goals, including development and the increase of commercial ties, quite often becomes an almost insurmountable obstacle. As Pecequilo and Carmo (2013:53) point out, “[d]ue to the structural imbalances that affect trade results of these [South American] nations, gains on development are dependent on the increase of their exports. So, all nations are trying to guarantee a positive trade balance, which is not viable inside a regional bloc.” Furthermore, in order to obtain positive trade results, countries tend to adopt protectionist measures and safeguards to local industries and production, leading to a situation in which the relevance of intraregional trade is not as high as expected or needed. All these facts are hardly compatible with the RCI approach.

#### *6.4.2 Cost, Autonomy and Sovereignty*

In light of these constraints, why then would a South American nation decide to pursue the path of integration? For most countries in the region one of the answers would be to lower their “dependence towards developed capitalist centres, increase national autonomy and enhance



the ability of States to define national policies independently”. Therefore, as part of a bloc, and according to RCI assumptions, countries should be able to “fight against the structural constraints that are imposed on their exercise of political and economic autonomy” (Pecequillo and Carmo 2013:53). For Brazil, however, as the strategic culture approach would predict, there seems to be an entirely different answer. Integration is apparently seen as a potentially powerful mechanism to broaden and increase support for the Brazilian political and economic agenda in multilateral institutions, to gain higher input into global governance talks, to enlist South American nations behind Brazil’s pursuit of global greatness, and to project power globally, besides helping to “prevent the formation of an anti-Brazilian regional bloc” (Hurrell 2013:249).

Here, nonetheless, are some of the main paradoxes of Brazilian foreign policy towards the region, which help to illustrate why the strategic culture approach seems to be more adequate to explain Brazil’s foreign policy behavior than RCI. As Burges (2015:194) recalls, for hegemony and leadership to be lasting and, most importantly, effective, they must “account for the interests and ambitions of those it encompasses”. In many respects, South American countries were expecting Brazil to actively assume the burden of leadership, and provide them with concrete public goods. However, as previously discussed, Brazil has, perhaps also due to a combined lack of economic resources and political willingness, consistently refused to pay for the costs of a process of integration in which its relative weight and power are greatly diminished, and the concrete economic and commercial benefits are below expectations. As an economically more developed country, Brazil has always been “wary of any moves towards integration that would involve making concessions to weaker members” (Hurrell 2013:249).

Likewise, since Brazilian foreign policy contemplates distinct strategies for international insertion, the country has historically adopted ambiguous policies towards its regional neighbors, particularly in the economic sphere. In that regard, Brazil has shown an increasing unilateralism in its economic hemispheric initiatives, which is reflected in the fact that the management of its domestic fiscal, monetary, economic, and foreign trade policies oftentimes disregards their impacts upon the economies of its smaller regional neighbors, especially within Mercosul. As Tacone and Nogueira (2001:3) observe, “Brazil’s natural leadership of the bloc rests on the assumption that the other partners should passively adapt their policies to Brazilian activism. Hence there is no clear perception of the limits to be respected when exercising such leadership”, a stance which is frontally contrary to the assumptions of RCI.

Another traditional pattern in Brazilian international relations, which appears to be a result of the country’s strategic culture, is its reluctance to promote and to strengthen regional institutions that have the potential to severely limit Brazilian national sovereignty, as is the case in the European Union. The emphasis on the importance of defending economic and political sovereignty is clearly an interpretation of the international principles of nonintervention and non-interference, whose defense is deeply ingrained in Brazil’s foreign policy traditions. Arguing that “Brazil’s interests are best served by not relinquishing any sovereignty to regional bodies [what] certainly deals a blow to Brazil’s leadership”, Brazilian diplomats and policymakers have consistently advocated a strategy of promoting a superficial integration without deeper attachments. This has created a situation in which the Brazilian foreign policy has become, above all, a quest for domestic policy autonomy, in which “the overriding priority is vouchsafing sovereignty and ensuring freedom to pursue policies, foreign and domestic, seen as necessary to

advance national development” (Burgess 2015:199). Likewise, this behavior is hardly consistent with the assumptions of RCI.

Considering that attempts to establish leadership or even hegemony may, in broad terms, give rise to three distinct forms of response – balancing, bandwagoning, and resistance –, it is in these paradoxes that we can find the roots of regional discontent with Brazilian behavior and policies toward South America. Brazil’s failure to adequately deliver public goods and to satisfy the demands of its regional partners has prompted a surge of resistance to its leadership projects, encouraging neighboring countries to pursue alternative paths for the provision of public goods. It is therefore of essence to discuss how these foreign policy principles and paradoxes have been historically applied, and why they do not fit the assumption of RCI, but rather fit into the framework of the strategic culture approach.

### 6.5 Brazil’s Geopolitics of Integration

The objective of promoting the political and economic integration of South America is not a new one. Already in 1826, during the 1st Panama Congress, Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) advocated the creation of a political bloc to safeguard the interests of the new South American nations, and to maintain their autonomy against foreign powers. Domestic unrest in most countries of the region, caused by the task of unifying and consolidating power around a central authority, coupled to regional conflicts and rivalries, postponed such integrationist goals.

In view of its size, demographic assets, economic capabilities and potential, and its strategic culture, Brazil’s perspective of continental integrations has always been different from other South American countries. As Puntigliano (2011:853) explains, Brazil’s continentalism

“meant to consolidate the necessary *lebensraum* to uphold its national autonomy.” As previously seen, Rio Branco’s ABC Pact, one of the first attempts to concretely establish a political concertation forum in the region, should be understood within this perspective.

In more recent times, the institutional underpinning for regional integration began with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA<sup>116</sup>), created in 1948 as a forum to produce and disseminate trade and economic information about countries in the region, to discuss the issues of development and industrialization, and, most importantly, to coordinate actions towards those ends. Under the influence of its Executive-Director, the Argentinean Raúl Prebisch<sup>117</sup>, the ECLA advocated the urgent need for a massive industrialization process in the

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<sup>116</sup> CEPAL, in Portuguese and Spanish. In 1984 its scope was broadened to include the countries of the Caribbean, having its name changed to ECLAC. In Portuguese, *Comissão Econômica das Nações Unidas para a América Latina e o Caribe*.

<sup>117</sup> The theory of “historical structuralism” formulated by Prebisch in the late 1940s proposes that Latin America inherited institutional and productive structures from its colonial past that greatly influenced its economic dynamics and the way the region has inserted itself into the international economic system, causing low growth, economic instability, and negative social effects. One of its central ideas was based on the fact that the overreliance of the region’s countries on primary goods tended to generate an imbalance in terms of trade between manufactured goods and raw materials. In overall terms, because the raw materials exported to industrialized countries did not bring in enough revenue to offset their import costs, Latin American countries were doomed to remain indebted and financially dependent on the industrialized world.

regional sphere, as the only path to overcome a condition of structural underdevelopment. Industrialization and regional integration were then considered long-term solutions to the external vulnerabilities. Despite ECLA's efforts, the economic ties among the region's countries were too weak to impulse a common agenda and to ignite an integration process. In order to finance their fledgling industrialization process, or better, their import substitution process, most countries in the region depended massively on their exports of primary products, which tended to aggravate their situation, as more products available generally means lower prices and, potentially, less income available. This situation, combined with the lack of economic complementarity, contributed to the scarcity of significant trade and economic contacts between Latin American neighbors.

#### *6.5.1 LAFTA and LAIA*

In view of this regional scenario, and contrary to what RCI would predict, Brazil adopted a different strategy, opting to strengthen its domestic market as the main pillar for its import substitution and industrialization project. The logic of collective action to solve common problems was relegated to a second plan. As the Brazilian project gradually bore fruits, leading to the "exhaustion" of the first phase of its import substitution industrialization process (ISI)<sup>118</sup>,

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<sup>118</sup> An ISI process is generally considered to be "exhausted" when a country has been able to install most of those kinds of industries that can produce products that were previously imported; in these circumstances, if growth is expected to continue, then the challenge becomes to amplify existing markets. By the mid-1960s, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru

local policymakers and scholars understood that only domestic markets would not be enough to absorb the country's production and sustain its growth, eventually adhering to ECLA's discourse about the need to enlarge export markets to create and benefit from economies of scale. In that context, "to complement the small scale of some domestic Latin markets, integration was defined as a possible means to keep the track of industrialization going in the long run" (Pecequilo and Carmo 2013:55).

As a corollary of this apparent convergence, the Treaty of Montevideo established in 1960 the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA<sup>119</sup>), between Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, and the latter inclusion of Colombia (1961), Ecuador (1962), Venezuela (1966), and Bolivia (1967). As its name reveals, the LAFTA was essentially a commercial agreement, which, to some extent reflected the "success" of the Brazilian strategy of pursuing a more superficial integration – contrary to Argentine and Chilean projects of a deeper integration – presumably under its leadership and within which it could preserve an elevated degree of autonomy, while exporting its manufactured goods to the region.

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had already begun to exhaust their early phase of import-substitution possibilities. After market expansion is achieved, the development of a new post-import substitution strategy is necessary, this time involving more sophisticated methods of production and new products both for local consumption and for export.

<sup>119</sup> Or ALALC in Portuguese and Spanish. In Portuguese, *Associação Latino Americana de Livre Comércio*.

In mid-1960s, the agreement stagnated for a number of reasons. First, the advent of military regimes in many countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina, increased politico-military tensions in the region and gave renewed vigor to old rivalries, which severely curtailed pro-integrationist forces; second, disrespect for the agreement's provisions by countries were the rule rather than the exception; third, countries continued to unilaterally increase their level of exports and obtain positive trade balances at the expense of their regional neighbors, what was hardly a sign of compromise with integrationist ideals; and fourth, as the inequalities amongst the region's economies were so high, many scholars and policy makers reached the conclusion that that model of integration might eventually increase economic asymmetries, rather than eliminating or diminishing them.

At any rate, Brazilian exports to other LAFTA members did not experience any significant increase, ranging from 10 to 13% of the country's total exports, less than the 18.6%<sup>120</sup> that Brazil exports today to the member countries of the *Latin American Integration Association* (LAIA<sup>121</sup>), the successor to LAFTA. Brazil's strategy of diversification of partners led to a growth in trade relations mainly with Africa and Asia, but not with Latin America, as a whole. Finally, as Pecequillo and Carmo (2013:55) note, "[th]e distrust of Brazilian goals shared by its neighbors, that viewed the process as an attempt to transform Latin America in a market for

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<sup>120</sup> Source: Trade Map. Available at [[http://www.trademap.org/\(S\(junjk02cniqrmc554np4tp55\)\)/Product\\_SelCountry\\_TS.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/(S(junjk02cniqrmc554np4tp55))/Product_SelCountry_TS.aspx)]. Accessed 26 October 2015.

<sup>121</sup> ALADI, in Portuguese and Spanish. In Portuguese, *Associação Latino Americana de Integração*.

Brazilian products represented an additional barrier to the fulfillment of the project of regional integration.”

In response to LAFTA’s failures, the 11 signatory countries to the 1960 Treaty of Montevideo, which established the LAFTA, signed the new Treaty of Montevideo, on 12 August 1980, creating the LAIA/ALADI, whose short-term objective was to reach a “regional preferential customs<sup>122</sup>”, and the long-term objective would be the gradual creation of a Latin American common market. Much like its predecessor, the LAIA focused solely on economic aspects of integration<sup>123</sup>, continuing to reflect Brazil’s strategy of pursuing a more superficial integration – which, in its turn still reflected ESG’s geopolitical views of using the region for the international projection of Brazil, while leaving aside deeper regional attachments that could potentially reduce Brazil’s foreign policy autonomy. According to Puntigliano (2011:856), Brazil pushed further the construction of South America preserving “the line of thinking in continental terms (South America), pursuing national consolidation and regional hegemony”.

Unlike the LAFTA, however, the LAIA is a framework treaty, which adopts a much more elastic approach to regional integration, allowing, for example, member countries to pursue their own path towards economic integration. In fact, the LAIA/ALADI basically operated through partial-scope agreements, in which only a few countries (even only two) could take part, and regional-scope agreements, in which all could participate. In that context, although LAIA

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<sup>122</sup> A regional preferential customs involves bilateral agreements that apply only to the signatory countries, and to countries which decide, at a later date, to officially join these agreements.

<sup>123</sup> It still does...



cannot be considered a commercial success, it has encouraged the establishment of sub-regional or partial integration schemes, such as Mercosul and the Andean Community of Nations.

### 6.5.2 *Mercosul*

Both LAFTA and LAIA presented several reasons for failure. Among other problems, the process of liberalization was conducted on an almost *ad-hoc* basis, product by product, rather than contemplating a broader liberalization; likewise, most member states adopted a great number of protectionist measures, which affected the overall competitiveness of their industrial sector, which is also contrary to the RCI predictions. As a result, there was not enough scope for efficiency through the development and exploitation of economies of scale. Aware of these problems and challenges, Brazil sought to dedicate increased attention to relationships with Southern Cone countries, particularly Argentina. Perhaps most importantly, the dynamic of South American integration has traditionally manifested a fundamental contradiction between declared goals of regional integration and the reality of economic and political fragmentation, in a context in which each individual country has tried to fix its economic problems according to responses shaped by its own narrow national interests and priorities, which is consistent with the strategic culture approach, in the Brazilian case.

The loose framework of the LAIA and the Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982<sup>124</sup>, as well as the end of military regimes in Brazil and Argentina and the ensuing democratization process in both countries, opened a new path for a rapprochement between these two nations, which eventually led to the creation of Mercosul, in 1991, as seen in Chapter 2. Without ever abandoning the “universalism” that characterized Brazil’s foreign policy, post-military governments in the country have ever since considered Mercosul not only as a “priority”, but also as the core of a renewed South American integration process. Mercosul, according to Brazilian diplomats and policymakers, was not an option, but a “destiny”.

It is also important to note that since the creation of Mercosul, and particularly after the late 1990s, Brazilian diplomats and policymakers have abandoned the rhetoric of building a Latin American identity and promoting Latin American unity and integration in favor of a more restricted perspective of achieving South American integration. To some scholars, that movement represented a tacit acknowledgement that Brazil lacked the political and economic resources to play a larger leadership role on the whole continent, and therefore should try to focus on a smaller region. In that regard, Malamud (2011:6) argues that Brazil’s geostrategic reorientation from Latin America towards South America also involved a twofold objective: “first, Mexico – the other Latin American giant and potential rival – was left out; and second, the countries included in the newly defined region were less dependent on the United States than

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<sup>124</sup> During the conflict, Brazil officially declared a position of neutrality. However, it is now recognized that Brazil provided covert military help to Argentina, as well as intelligence support, while not allowing British air forces to make use of Brazilian air space.

those excluded, which gave Brazil broader room to maneuver.” South America, then, has been defined as Brazil’s immediate sphere of influence.

Although considered a keystone of Brazilian foreign policy and a platform for the country’s economic development and international projection, Mercosul suffers not only from institutional deficiencies and Brazil’s ambiguous policies to the bloc, but also from a “deficit of leadership”, as pointed out by former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Tolentino 2004). Despite diplomatic rhetoric<sup>125</sup>, Brazil’s foreign policy has faced a dilemma between regional cooperation and power projection, with emphasis being placed on the latter. One of the core ideas behind the country’s international insertion, for example, is the development of the national industry, reason why Brazil does not support an integration process based on a broad liberalization. However, the country’s traditional and increasing reliance on protectionist measures has contributed to substantially impede growth

to such an extent that the International Chamber of Commerce ranked Brazil 70th out of 75 countries for openness to trade, foreign direct investment and infrastructure competitiveness. Likewise, in the 2014 Index of Economic Freedom, a ranking designed by The Heritage Foundation, Brazil ranks only 118 out of 178 countries, which is certainly not good news, as some argue that economic freedom can exert a positive

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<sup>125</sup> The *Strategic Guidelines for the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations*, Pluriannual Plan 2008-2011, for example, states that “[i]n accordance with the Government’s Strategic Guidelines, the strengthening of South American integration is our prime objective” (Ministry of External Relations 2008:46).

impact upon investment levels, entrepreneurial business activity, economic growth, and capita income” (Degaut 2014:4).

Anyway, seeking to adopt regionally what it condemns globally, Brazil still seems to advocate the idea that some of its sub-regional partners should specialize in the production of primary and low-value-added products, while representing markets for Brazilian industrial output. Furthermore, as Markwald (2005:79) contends, as Brazil’s development and industrialization projects are essentially domestic, rather than community-based, the country tends not to support integration initiatives aimed at fostering the industrial development of the Southern Cone as a whole:

This explain its [Brazil’s] aggressively competitive stance in terms of its policy for attracting foreign investments, as well as its lack of interest in setting up a regional bank to finance development projects within Mercosul. It also explains its opposition to *maquilas*<sup>126</sup> in Paraguay, as well as its utterly intransigent position that swept through the first six months of 1999, when it refused to discuss any type of measure – even temporary

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126 A *maquila* is a manufacturing operation in Paraguay, where companies import certain material and equipment on a duty-free and tariff-free basis for assembly, processing, or manufacturing and then export the assembled, processed and/or manufactured products, sometimes back to the raw materials' country of origin.

– with Argentina in order to cushion the dramatic shift in competition conditions from the devaluation of its currency<sup>127</sup>.

As a result of these policies, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay have consistently and systematically expressed complaints that the bloc is heavily skewed towards Brazil, a situation acknowledged by Brasilia, which offers nothing but vague allusions to Marshall plan-like aid for its smaller partners. Consequently, despite official rhetoric, Brazilian policies towards Mercosul reveal that that sub-regional integration scheme is far from being a priority. It seems to be but another element in Brazilian strategy of promoting its regional leadership in South America, which does not seem to be a foreign policy priority either. Anyway, another step in that direction was taken in December 2004, with the creation of the Brazilian-led South American Community of Nations (SACN), another regional integration project, whose name in Portuguese, appropriately enough, was CASA, which means “home”.

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<sup>127</sup> Due to domestic economic problems and the 1998 global crisis, the Brazilian government decided to devalue the national currency, the *real*, by 8% in late December 1998. However, as the situation worsened, the *real* depreciated 66% against the U.S. dollar, by the end of January 1999, contributing to sink Argentina and Mercosul into one of their worst economic crisis in the last thirty years.

### 6.5.3 Unasul and the South American Defense Council

Once again, the initiative of promoting a new regional integration mechanism was left to Brazil. During his inaugural ceremony speech, on January 1st 2003, former president Lula da Silva stated that “[t]he main priority of my Government’s foreign policy is to construct a South America that is politically stable, prosperous and united” (Ministry of External Relations 2008:43). On the same day, during his ceremony on taking office as Minister of External Relations, Ambassador Celso Amorim declared: “We believe it is essential to consolidate the integration among South American countries on many different levels” (Ministry of External Relations 2008:44). As a result of Brazilian political efforts, delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela firmed, on 8 December 2004, the *Cuzco Declaration*, which established the South American Community of Nations (CASA), , at the annual South American Summit, in Peru, with the objective of uniting the two sub-regional integration schemes in South America and developing political, economic and social coordination between all South American states.

Following Brazilian geopolitical perspectives and leadership strategies, the new bloc excluded other major economies in the hemisphere, namely Canada, Mexico and the United States. During the third Summit of Heads of State of CASA in Brasilia, in 2008, its original name was changed to Union of South American Nations (UNASUL<sup>128</sup>), which would arguably highlight the goal of social and political integration. In fact, rather than focusing on trade and economic integration, UNASUL has assumed a more political profile, replacing the role of the

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<sup>128</sup> Or Unasur, in Spanish.

Organization of American States as a major regional forum for political concertation, which, to some extent, contributes to undermine U.S. influence on the continent.

A special place in UNASUL's structure is reserved to the South American Defense Council (SADC<sup>129</sup>). This body, whose creation was pushed forward mainly by Brazil in 2008, is made up of the Ministers of defense of all twelve South American countries, and serves as an instance of consultation, cooperation and coordination on defense matters. With the creation of the SADC, Brazil sought to establish a regional mechanism for conflict resolution and a platform for common foreign policy actions. In accordance with Brazilian tradition of fomenting and creating regional institutions that do not limit its foreign policy autonomy, the SADC is heavily based on the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty and territoriality. As Stuenkel (2013:333) accurately recalls,

Contrary to NATO or any other military alliance, the main purpose of the council is to consolidate internal relations rather than challenge outside powers. Security implications are thus kept to the region itself and do not extend to extra-regional issues. [...] Contrary to NATO, the council has no operational capacity and no permanent physical headquarters, and its creation is not the result of the common identification of an enemy, as it was the case with NATO.

In fact, the establishment of both Unasul and the SADC should be understood as an attempt to balance the influence of the United States in the region, by making Brazil South America's major interlocutor on political and defense matters. Most importantly, by encouraging

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<sup>129</sup> CSD in Portuguese and Spanish. In Portuguese, Conselho Sul-Americano de Defesa.

the creation of these institutions and strengthening cooperation channels, Brazil was sending an important symbolic message to its neighboring partners, increasingly concerned about a possible Brazilian regional hegemony: Brazil should not be feared. Tangible results, however, have been modest, and included the deployment of South American troops under Brazilian command at the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH<sup>130</sup>) the Summit of South American-Arab Countries<sup>131</sup> (SAAC, more commonly known by its Portuguese/Spanish name, ASPA), the South America-Africa Summit<sup>132</sup> (ASA), as well as the creation of the Community of Latin

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<sup>130</sup> Established on 1 June 2004 by Security Council resolution 1542, MINUSTAH succeeded a Multinational Interim Force (MIF), after President Bertrand Aristide departed Haiti for exile in the aftermath of an armed conflict which ravaged the country. Its main objectives are supporting efforts towards recovery, reconstruction, and political stability, particularly after the devastating 2010 earthquake which killed over 220,000 people.

<sup>131</sup> As a mechanism for South-South cooperation and policy coordination in multilateral forums, ASPA is composed of 34 members-states of Unasul and the League of Arab States. Its main objective is to foster the economic and commercial exchange between these two regional blocs. The first ASPA Summit took place on May 10-11, in Brasilia. The second Summit was held in Doha, on 31 March 2009. Its third edition took place in Lima, Peru, on October 1-2 2012.

<sup>132</sup> On November 30, 2006, the first South America-Africa Summit (ASA) was held in Abuja, Nigeria, creating the South America-Africa Cooperation Forum (ASACOF). The II ASA Summit was held on 26 and 27 September 2009, in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, while the third Summit took place in Equatorial Guinea, between February 20-23 2013. According to Itamaraty, “[t]he



America and Caribbean Countries (CELAC<sup>133</sup>), all of them having originated through Brazilian initiative.

Once again, however, Brazil's reluctance in exercising effective and assertive leadership and allowing a deeper vertical integration process has led this bloc to stagnation. Even worse, Brazilian lack of political willingness and resources allowed the integrationist agenda to be hijacked by late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, who, supported by Bolivia and Ecuador, sought to transform a political concertation forum into an ideological organization, whose mission was to build a South American identity through the spread of a "Bolivarian/Socialist" movement. In that context, Malamud (2011:8) observes that Unasul became "a Venezuelan rather than a Brazilian instrument", which makes prospects for regional integration more on an ambition than a reality.

The important lesson to learn from Brazil's policies towards South America is that South America is not actually a priority to the country's foreign policy, nor does Brazil seem to be

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origin of the mechanism dates back to the visit of President Lula to Nigeria in April 2005. His then counterpart, Olusegun Obasanjo, had expressed his interest in establishing a mechanism for bringing the African countries closer to Brazil. The Brazilian President immediately welcomed the initiative, but suggested the creation of a mechanism that would also include the other countries of South America." Available at [<http://asasummit.itamaraty.gov.br/asa-ingles/summit-of-south-american-africa>].

<sup>133</sup> Composed of 33 Latin American and Caribbean states, its objective is to strengthen the political, social and cultural integration of these regions. It was established on 3 December 2011.

really interested in pursuing the path of integration, the reason why the RCI approach cannot really explain Brazilian foreign policy behavior. Despite diplomatic rhetoric, Brazil appears to be more comfortable, in the regional sphere, in engaging in bilateral relationships than in collective undertakings, even when regional issues are at stake. The corollary of this strategy would be an “emerging hub and spoke system centred on Brazil, not the flatter organizational structure of a pan-regional mechanism, which returns us to the sense that Brazil is only interested in creating regional mechanisms it can control and (quietly) bend to its will” (Burges 2015:202), as the strategic culture approach would argue. By adopting such ambiguous policies to the region, however, Brazil might be sabotaging its own strategies, as it encourages increasing contestation from its neighboring partners, which has been translated in resistance to and defection from its global and regional projects, as it will be discussed in the next subsection.

#### *6.5.4 Resistance to Brazilian Global Ambitions*

Flemes and Wehner (2012:4) argue that secondary regional powers can respond to the perceived leadership of a regional power by utilizing three distinct strategies: conflict, competition or cooperation. However, according to these scholars, “relative contestation is the most likely strategic response to regional hegemony.” Their main assumption is that structural, historical, behavioral, and domestic variables can explain secondary powers’ initiatives to contest other countries’ implicit or explicit claims to regional leadership, shaping their strategic behavior and their relationship with the “primary” regional power. Particularly, a foreign policy behavior on the part of that primary power perceived as a “passive leadership” or a regional neglect is likely to provoke some degree of contestation. Then, note Flemes and Wehner

(2012:9), if “the most powerful state does not at least partially play the role of a regional leader, including the exercising of the respective duties and responsibilities, secondary powers will tend to contest the use of the region as a power base for the rising power’s global ambitions”.

Adopting that theoretical perspective, this study has argued that Brazil’s economic and political weight has not been translated into effective leadership in South America, meaning the concrete capacity to build consensus over a cohesive regional integration project or the ability to enlist neighboring countries behind its individual global initiatives. Perhaps the most evident example of regional resistance to Brazil’s hegemonic aspirations is the refusal of important countries in the region, particularly Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, to support Brazilian campaign to occupy a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, as previously discussed, which certainly exerts an important negative impact on the “regional leader” image Brazil has been attempting to cultivate.

However, many other significant examples illustrate, if not open defiance, at least regional contestation to Brazil’s contradictory role in South America, which represent additional evidence that the RCI assumptions cannot predict or explain Brazil’s foreign policy. Some examples have symbolic importance, such as the occasion when, in April 2005, Brazil campaigned for a Brazilian candidate, Ambassador Luis Felipe de Seixas Correa, to be elected for the position of Director-General of the World Trade Organization. Reacting to the Brazilian candidacy and as a means of protesting against Mercosul’s stagnation and asymmetries, Uruguay presented its own candidate, Ambassador Carlos Perez del Castillo, who was ostensibly supported by Argentina. With less than ten declared votes, out of a total of almost 200, Correa, not surprisingly, was the first one to be eliminated from the elections to succeed then Director-

General Supachai Panitchpakdi. Likewise, a couple of months later, in July 2005, Brazil presented its own candidate for the post of president of the Inter-American Development Bank, João Sayad, who ran against the Colombian candidate, Luis Alberto Moreno, supported by Mexico and the United States. Brazil calculated that its candidate would win the support of the absolute majority of South and Central American countries. The Colombian candidate, however, was eventually elected<sup>134</sup>. Brazil's diplomatic strategy led Nestor Kirchner, then Argentina's president, to voice his discontent over Brazilian unilateral power-seeking: "If there is a job open at the WTO, Brazil wants it. If there is a space at the United Nations, Brazil wants it. If there is a job at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Brazil wants it. They even wanted to have a Brazilian pope<sup>135</sup>." By the way, Brazil's systematic attempts to occupy key positions in international institutions, disregarding other countries' intentions and candidacies, is also part of its quest for major power status, and can therefore be explained by the strategic culture approach.

Other examples reveal a more consistent and strategic pattern of contestation. Chile, which is generally considered Brazil's most reliable partner in the region, has systematically declined Brazilian invitations to become a full member of Mercosul<sup>136</sup>. Chile understands Mercosul as a Brazilian political project, and believes that full membership would mean

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<sup>134</sup> And re-elected to a second five-year term in 2010.

<sup>135</sup> Available at [<http://prensa.cancilleria.gov.ar/noticia.php?id=11389783>]. Accessed 29 October 2015.

<sup>136</sup> Currently, Chile is only an Associate member of Mercosul, which entails substantially less duties and responsibilities.

“acceptance of Brazil’s leadership, which might have limited Chile’s autonomy in its own foreign relationships” (Flemes and Wehner 2012:16), reason why it pragmatically prefers to focus on the commercial side of that sub-regional integration scheme.

Venezuela presented its own alternative vision of hemispheric integration, with the creation of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), in 2004, which can be seen as a simultaneous attempt to counterweight U.S. and Brazil influence. Former President Chávez’s oil diplomacy has led Venezuela to exert significant influence over smaller countries, particularly Ecuador and Bolivia. Not surprisingly, Brazil’s relationships with these two Andean countries have gone through tense periods. Perhaps encouraged by Chávez, Bolivian President Evo Morales dispatched troops to occupy Petrobrás, the major Brazilian petroleum company, oil and gas facilities in the country and forcefully nationalize its assets in 2006. President Lula’s reaction reflected Brazil’s lack of assertiveness. According to Malamud (2011:14), Brazilian “opposition leaders cried that Brazil had been humiliated and asked the president to toughen his stance, which Lula refrained from doing. Instead, he stated that the Bolivian government had made a sovereign decision and pledged that his country would respect it.”

Profiting from Brazilian political weakness, and also encouraged by Venezuela, Ecuador’s Rafael Correa followed Bolivia’s example. In 2008, Correa announced that it would not honor a US\$ 320 million loan granted by Brazil’s BNDES (National Bank for Economic and Social Development) to a Brazilian construction and engineering company to build power plants in Ecuador, on vague grounds that the loan was “illegitimate”. Brazil’s only reaction was to recall its ambassador in Quito.

Finally, it must be noted that Peru, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico are engaged in a project known as the Pacific Alliance, since 2012, a dynamic free trade area that can be seen as an attempt to balance against both Venezuela and Brazil, and as an effort to pursue a special relationship with the United States.

Such examples of resistance and contestation to Brazilian would-be hegemony might mean that as long as the country continues to use the empty rhetoric of regional integration and South-South solidarity for its own instrumental and individual purposes, pursuing contradictory policies towards South American countries and not exercising an effective and assertive leadership, with all the costs and burdens that this entails, Brazil cannot hope to enlist neighboring countries behind its global projects and ambitions, establishing a solid regional power base able to project its influence overseas. They also illustrate why RCI cannot fully explain Brazilian foreign policy towards regional integration, while strengthening the idea that the strategic culture approach can offer a more adequate theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 7 - BRAZIL AS A GLOBAL PLAYER: IS A NEW STRATEGIC CULTURE EMERGING?**

### 7.1 Introduction

This study has discussed the idea that the strategic culture approach can contribute to discern tendencies in behaviors or preferences. Considering that foreign policy strategies and behavior are mediated through a set of core ideas, beliefs and doctrines that a country's decision-makers use to justify preferences and actions, the traditional focus of this approach has been on continuity or at least semi-permanence in a country's strategic culture. Although those ideas, beliefs and doctrines – which, according to Legro (2007:522) are embedded in the "collective memories, national symbols, government procedures, education systems, and rhetoric of statecraft" – undergo changes along the years, those changes tend to evolve very slowly, turning those variables into semi-permanent features of the national character and identity (Mahnken 2006). Such relative continuity allows a country to articulate a coherent grand strategy which reflects its world views, enabling it to decide what kind of world it wishes to build and which international system is more conducive to its interests, to define and implement its foreign policy priorities, and to identify and allocate all instruments of power available to pursue its international objectives in an integrated manner.

However, strategic cultures can and do change, sometimes radically. Those changes can be caused, among other factors, by external shocks – which might serve as a catalyst for the reevaluation of common assumptions regarding a country's strategic culture's security environment and foreign policy preferences –, by internal constraints, and/or by the behavior of rival elites that could influence strategic identities in a state. These variables can affect security

and foreign policy in unprecedented ways and generate what Lantis (2006) calls “strategic cultural dilemmas” regarding the possible best ways to react to new situations.

This dissertation now focused on the question of the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the country’s security and foreign policy decision-making process, as well as for its regional neighborhood. Therefore, examining how Brazil understands the concept of security and the security scenario with which the country operates, both regionally and globally, is a *sine qua non* condition to assessing Brazil’s positioning as a regional and global security actor and to understanding Brazil’s national defense policies, military strategies, and, if it turns out to be the case, the changes in its strategic culture.

## 7.2 The Brazilian Concept of Security and its Security Scenario

Both the Brazilian military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>137</sup> work with the premise that the Brazilian security scenario is completely different from those that predominate in Europe, the United States, and China, where more traditional Realist notions of security tend to be predominant in the strategic thinking of the decision-makers and diplomatic and military elites. For example, although not necessarily stable, Brazil’s regional security environment is remarkably peaceful, as, with the exception of the Ecuador-Peru border conflict in 1995<sup>138</sup>, no

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<sup>137</sup> Or Ministry of External Relations, as the Itamaraty prefers.

<sup>138</sup> Ecuador and Peru share a long border made up largely of jungle and high mountains. The area known as Cordillera del Condor region had been the site of armed disputes between Peru and



interstate wars have taken place in South America in the twentieth century. In that case, Brazil assumed a prominent role leading the United Nations Military Observer Mission Ecuador-Peru (MOMEPE), which also included Argentina, Chile, and the United States, and eventually brokered a peace agreement between the two Andean countries in 1999, putting an end to decades-long hostilities. The important factor to be stressed here is that Brazil has not been involved in a regional interstate war for over one hundred and fifty-one years now. Likewise, Brazil's last border conflicts were settled over one hundred years ago, and the last time when the country engaged in a major international conflict was during the Second World War.

These regional circumstances and Brazil's geostrategic situation have, to some extent, reduced the country's interest in developing the kinds of extensive military capabilities that characterize other emerging powers, a perspective which has already slowly started to change. However, the dominant understanding of security in Brazil still relates primarily, though not exclusively, to the role of nonmilitary phenomena and includes a wider range of potential threats, ranging from development and poverty issues to environment and international trade. This distinction is essential to understanding Brazil's positioning as a regional and global security actor. For this reason, Kenkel (2013:108) cautions that

To understand Brazil's role as an actor on the international security stage it is paramount that analysis be based on a broadened conception of security. Though they continue to

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Ecuador for over one hundred and fifty years. Despite claims that the land was part of Ecuador, the area of confrontation was recognized as Peruvian by the 1942 Rio Protocol and other international legal instruments.

drive strategic analysis in much of the developed world, traditional, hard power-only analytical approaches to security often fail to account for the real challenges to both state and human security faced by states outside the North Atlantic core.

Flemes and Radseck (2009:8) contend that South America's security agenda is extensive, multilevel, and complex, and require the

[S]imultaneous management of domestic crises, interstate conflicts and transnational threats. Though located at different systemic levels (national, international, transnational), the three conflict clusters are often interrelated and tend to overlap in the region's border areas, which is why they are often referred to as "border conflicts".

It is, therefore, of essence to discuss the most important perceived threats to Brazil's security and how they mold and influence national strategic, security, and foreign policy thinking and behavior. Stuenkel (2010a:105) argues that "the principal international threat Brazil faces is its own inability to assume regional leadership." Certainly, by not displaying aggressive behavior towards its neighbors, and by emphasizing social and economic development, Brazil, which borders all South American countries, with the exception of Ecuador and Chile, contributes to low levels of interstate conflicts in the hemisphere. However, Brazil's lack of political appetite to exercise a more vigorous regional leadership has narrowed its ability to influence other governments in order to discourage or prevent the emergence or escalation of crises that might generate regional instability, leading former Defense Minister Nelson Jobim (2011:7) to declare: "I affirm in a very straightforward way that our current capacity of regional influence is important, even though it is hindered by domestic gaps and by the low density of military power in the country."

This situation potentially undermines the effectiveness of policies designed to address some strategic threats and reduce their scope, particularly when such policies involve some form of cooperation from other countries. Violence in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, and Venezuela, for example, which has distinct and complex origins – from terrorism and guerrilla activities to weapons and drug-trafficking, among other issues – might spill into Brazilian territory. In that regard, Stuenkel (2010a:106) asserts that “the weakness of others is now a threat [to Brazil], as weak nations may not be able to provide basic levels of public order.”

### *7.2.1 Interstate Conflicts in South America*

The absence of border disputes involving Brazils does not mean that there are not other border disputes and tensions in South America, and even some level of interstate conflict. According to Flandes and Radseck (2009:10), a bellicose legacy has deeply influenced the attitudes and patterns of behavior of countries in the region, as

Only 27 percent of the region’s contemporary frontiers [...] can be traced back to colonial times; of the remainder, 26 percent have been defined by wars, 17 percent by unilaterally imposed claims to power, another 17 percent by bilateral agreements, and 13 percent by contended arbitrations

In fact, with the remarkable Brazilian exception, virtually every country in South America presents a border issue with at least one neighboring country, of which the most conspicuous are:

- Venezuela-Guyana: Venezuela has a longstanding border dispute with Guyana over the Essequibo region, which covers nearly two-thirds of Guyana. The conflict dates back to colonial times and has given rise to occasional military scuffles.
- Venezuela-Colombia: this border conflict stems primarily from the presence of non-state criminal actors, such as drug-traffickers, Colombian guerrillas and paramilitaries. Colombia has systematically accused Venezuelan regime, under both Chávez and Maduro, of providing a safe haven to members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which would then undertake their insurgent activities and commit crimes in Colombia. In modern times, relations between these countries reached its lowest level in 2009, when Colombian President Álvaro Uribe instructed his military to prepare for war on that ground.

Likewise, Caracas and Bogotá have disputed the maritime border in the Gulf of Venezuela has since the 1830s. The discovery of significant oil reserves in the region in the 1980s only intensified the conflict, and has led both countries to engage in small military skirmishes in the area.

- Colombia-Ecuador: this border conflict also stems from the presence of drug-traffickers, Colombian guerrillas and paramilitaries. In December 2006, Francisco Carrión, Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared a Colombian crop-spraying program which reached Ecuadorian territory a hostile act and recalled his country's ambassador. On March 1, 2008, a larger diplomatic crisis broke out when the Colombian Armed Forces bombed some FARC camps in Ecuador and crossed the border to chase FARC combatants. Ecuador, supported by Venezuelan troops, dispatched its militaries to the border region. Bilateral diplomatic ties were

interrupted and were resumed only in November 2010. Tensions, however, remain in the area regarding the action of those sub-state actors.

- Ecuador-Peru: As previously mentioned, these countries share a long border made up largely of jungle and high mountains. The area known as Cordillera del Condor region had been the site of armed disputes between both countries for more than one hundred and fifty years. Despite claims that the land was part of Ecuador, the area of confrontation was recognized as Peruvian by the 1942 Rio Protocol and other international legal instruments, following the 1941 war. Another conflict erupted in 1995, resulting in a peace agreement signed in 1999.

-Peru-Chile: After winning the Pacific War (1879-1993) against Bolivia and Peru, Chile imposed its sovereignty on the Peruvian province of Arica, which harbors the strategic Arica Port. Both countries have kept strained relations since then. In 2008, Peru demanded the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule its claim to redraw the maritime boundary between both countries. On January 27, 2014, the ICJ basically maintained the borders as they were.

- Chile-Bolivia: As a result of the Pacific War, Bolivia lost its access to the Pacific Ocean and to copper-rich lands, annexed by Chile. Since then Bolivia never gave up of its objective of regaining the lost possessions. On April 24, 2013, Bolivia brought the case before the ICJ, which is still pending. Bolivia and Chile are the only countries in South America that do not have diplomatic relations.

-Chile-Argentina: Since the 1880s, these countries have disputed over 100 miles of a contested territory known as the Southern Icefields, which is believed to contain the one of the largest reserve of potable water in the world. Although an accord settling the dispute was signed in

1998, domestic circumstances in Argentina have led the country's rulers to try to reignite old tensions as a diversionary strategy from the Argentina's dire economic situation.

Although none of these border issues can be credibly considered a direct threat to Brazil, they represent potential sources of regional instability. Consequently, it would be in Brazil's best interest to use its diplomatic, military, and economic weight to develop and implement strategies and policies that actively favor regional cooperation and the maintenance of a stable and peaceful continent.

Another potential source on instability in the South American continent can be found in the "Bolivarian Revolution" advocated initially by the deceased Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, which incorporates Marxist influences and pushes for a form of pseudo-democratic socialism that allegedly seeks to repel imperialisms – particularly "American imperialism – and reward nationalism while trying to promote economic self-sufficiency of the country. Particularly under Chávez, Venezuela has sought to push its domestic agenda onto the regional stage and use the country's oil wealth to imprint a higher profile to this new brand of Latin American leftism, while its leaders endeavor to apply the playbook of authoritarian populism throughout Latin America in their search for regional power

Venezuela is therefore not alone in its attempt to consolidate a "Bolivarian Revolution" and to build a united socialist Latin America, as the ALBA now includes nine member-states: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela. Like Chávez and Maduro did in Venezuela, policymakers in most of these countries have used democratic instruments, such as elections and plebiscites, to

destroy democracy and build semi-totalitarian states, violating human rights, eliminating or restricting freedom of speech and press, oppositions movements, and other civil liberties and individual rights, while also nationalizing various industries.

In that context, on behalf of an alleged continental socialist identity and solidarity, Venezuela's Maduro declared in January 2015 that Venezuela would militarily invade Brazil if the left-leaning government led by Dilma Roussef, who runs a significant risk of facing an impeachment process, is ousted. In August 2015, Bolivia's President Evo Morales repeated Maduro's threat to invade Brazil to support Roussef. Although these threats cannot be considered credible, they represent one more destabilizing factor in the region, and one which increases the suspicions of Brazilian military towards South American countries, reinforcing one salient feature of Brazilian strategic culture.

### *7.2.2 The Extra-Continental Scenario*

Although "it is evident that South America's borders zones have become 'hot spots' because traditional and new threats tend to overlap and mutually intensify one another in these often poorly patrolled spaces" (Flemes and Radseck 2009:8), it seems that Brazil perceives no major threats to its national security and dominant position in South, and even Latin, America. However, the same cannot be said regarding the extra-continental scenario. Bitencourt and Vaz (2009) argue that the traditional strategy of inextricably associating economic development and

security as a national goal<sup>139</sup> may have given rise to negative effects, the main downside of which is the emergence of “conspiracy theories”. In the Brazilian public mentality, there is a long held belief that developed countries, especially the United States, are systematically blocking and frustrating Brazilian efforts to become a major power. Brands (2010:11-12) observes that “Brazilian strategic analysis thus features a pervasive sense of danger — a fear that the strictures of the current global order might impede Brazil’s development or otherwise limit its potential.” In the same line of thinking, Bertonha (2010:114) asserts that “the possibility of Brazil making demands in the international scenario has always been blocked by two variables: less power (economic, political and military) and no chances given to it by the great powers.” Likewise, Gouvea (2015:138) observed that

In the 1990s and 2000s, Brazil’s defense industry suffered a dramatic reduction in size, diversification, and momentum. Beginning in the 1980s and early 1990s, it suffered a missile technology and a supercomputer embargo from the G-7 nations, which hampered the industry’s ability to upgrade its defense hardware and software; this in turn dramatically compromised its global penetration capability.

Likewise, Brazilians policymakers, in general, believe that other nations covet Brazil’s natural resources and would take them if and when necessary. As Ambassador Celso Amorim

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<sup>139</sup> Giving continuity to such historical tradition, Brazil’s National Strategy of Defense states that “[t]he national strategy of defense is inseparable from the national strategy of development. The latter drives the former. The former provides shielding to the latter. Each one reinforces the other’s reasons” (Ministry of Defense 2009:8).



(2013), former Minister of External Relations (1993-1995 and 2003-2011) and former Minister of Defense (2011-2015), observed,

Brazil's abundance of energy, food, water, and biodiversity increases its stake in a security environment characterized by rising competition for access to, or control of, natural resources. In order to meet the challenges of this complex reality, Brazil's peaceful foreign policy must be supported by a robust defense policy

In the same vein, Gouvea (2015:139) argues that Brazilian leaders have realized that "although Brazil does not face any pressing external threats, the country has an on-going threat of drug and arms traffickers and needs to secure its natural resources, including recently discovered offshore oil and gas reserves – Pre-Sal."

The way Brazil sees the world and assesses the international scenario in order to formulate and execute its security and foreign policies, designed to promote structural changes that favor its strategic interests, reflect its strategic culture. In this sense, although Itamaraty traditionally depicts the country as a *satisfied* or *status quo* nation, deprived of major ambitions, the country is anything but satisfied with the current global order, a stance that is consistent with its drive for greatness. The idea of a *satisfied* or *status quo* country thus seems to be instrumental and might mean only that "Brazil has no ambitions for territorial expansion and considers all its borders clearly delineated, secure, and stable" (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009: 4-5), an approach designed to be consistent with Brazilian peaceful traditions and "not to stir controversy through the identification of neighbours as potential threats" (Kenkel 2013:112). In this line of thinking, Brands (2010:10) suggests that Brazil's grand strategy

has been rooted in a deeply ambivalent view of the international system. In one sense, Brazil has benefited enormously from “public goods” that the United States and its Western partners provided during the postwar — and now the post-Cold War — era...[n]onetheless, the prevailing global order still strikes many Brazilians as fundamentally inequitable.

In fact, in its eagerness to achieve major power status, Brazil has sometimes adopted an erratic behavior, implementing ineffective, and often contradictory, piecemeal strategies. At times, Brazil has accepted the current status quo and tied its emergence to the fate of the major powers. At different times, it has adopted a revisionist stance, in order to try to improve its position in the international system. Likewise, at times, Brazil’s assessments of the international system appear to be informed primarily by realist and neorealist perspectives, on one hand, and by neoliberal institutionalism, on the other. Brazilians appear to believe that the chaotic and competitive nature of the international system, as well as its asymmetric character, is a source of instability that determines the status of the countries and limits their options of strategic choices. Consequently, the willingness to provoke changes in the *status quo* demands the development of economic, political, military, and diplomatic capabilities. However, the fundamental contradiction in Brazilian foreign policy is the fact that Brazil presents itself as an indefatigable “champion” of the Global South but spares no efforts to be “recognised as a potential member of the North” (Valença e Carvalho 2014:76), particularly longing to be included in the restrict club of the truly global powers.

For that reason, “deprived of hard power capabilities, Brazil has systematically emphasized the manipulation of soft power resources multilaterally as a proper strategy to foster

international changes that might shape a more favorable international environment into realizing its political and economic interests” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:23-24). That would be the case of the leading role of the country in the creation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), established in 1964, and the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), established in 1995. However, the concentration of power in the hands of a few countries, which goes against the principle of equality among sovereign countries, is something that Brazil has vehemently rejected, the reason why the country has displayed a preferential option for the strengthening of international institutions. In that sense, Brazil’s perspective of its emerging role in global politics relies heavily on the efficacy of multilateral institutional power, “as a means to achieve a more balanced and equitable world order. A vigorous multilateralism is regarded as the corollary to multipolarity and, in turn, is highly valued as a condition that is more favorable for a developing country to challenge its own status quo and find its place among the great powers” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:24). The strategic cornerstones of Brazilian foreign policy have followed from this framework, in which Brazil has historically sought to increase its presence and influence in international institutions.

While McCoy (2009:2) observes that Brazil is trying to make the “transition from ‘rule-taker’ to ‘rule-maker’ in international affairs, Eakin (2009:12) argues that “Brazilian elites began the twentieth century very unsure of themselves and in their place in the larger world. They begin the twenty-first century with a growing self-assurance and self-confidence that Brazil is now becoming not only a regional, but also a world power”. Brazil is struggling to have a bigger influence on global issues, and Itamaraty seemed to understand that there were only two ways to achieve this objective, which were complimentary in their essence, rather than antithetical. The

first one is to adopt a more proactive foreign policy and to engage actively in the activities of multilateral organizations within the framework of the current international order. The country has been an active member of the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, has been a constant presence in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and has been a key member in the discussions on climatic change, for example. This multilateral approach does not mean the adoption of a new political or economic agenda, but it is merely an attempt to gain leverage within existing mechanisms.

The second strategy is twofold. On one hand, the country vigorously advocates reforms in the global governance system, which might favor its interests. Brazil has worked hard to push for reform of the UNSC structure in order to get a permanent seat, it has been a longtime supporter of a radical overhaul of the international financial architecture and multilateral financial institutions, and is one of the most active supporters of a global trade system that provides more benefits to both developing and least developed countries. On the other hand, Brazil tries to take the lead in building political and economic alliances, partnerships and integration blocs, in order to multiply, maximize and spread its influence. The Common Market of the South (Mercosul), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUL), the IBSA Forum, the South American-Arab Countries initiative (ASPA), and the BRICS, whose affiliation is seen as a passport to global leadership and one of its top priorities, are examples of this strategy.

However, as important as these strategies might be to Brazil's foreign policy, and as rooted as they are in the country's national identity, Brazilian policymakers seem to more and more acknowledge that soft power alone will not be enough to protect the country's interests and to achieve global power status. In that context, a third strategy, based on the strengthening of

military capabilities and a more active participation in United Nation peacekeeping missions, has taken shape and is gradually being implemented. As Ambassador Celso Amorim (2013), observed, “in an unpredictable world, where old threats are compounded by new challenges, policymakers cannot disregard hard power.”

### 7.3 A Changing Strategic Culture?

As part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, as seen in Chapter 3, Brazil has traditionally vehemently rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership. On the one hand, Brazil has cultivated the “demonization” of the use of force, indicating its clear preference for strategies that favor diplomatic and peaceful means of conflict resolution. As a long-time supporter of the international principles of sovereignty, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention, non-interference, and territorial integrity, Brazil has historically relied on its soft power resources to forward its foreign policy priorities and to promote international changes conducive to its objectives. In that context, as Hamann (2012:72) explains,

Brazilian foreign policy is molded by strong non-material aspects *and* lack of material capacity. When translated into foreign policy, these two conditions act in favour of the use of soft power to deal with international politics, which justifies Brazil’s preference for non-coercive measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

In the same line, Brazil’s National Strategy of Defense (Ministry of Defense 2009:8), for example, states that

Brazil is a peaceful country, by tradition and conviction. It lives in peace with its neighbors. It runs its international affairs, among other things, adopting the constitutional principles of non-intervention, defense of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts. This pacifist trait is part of the national identity, and a value that should be preserved by the Brazilian people. Brazil [...] shall rise to the first stage in the world neither promoting hegemony nor domination.

Likewise, former President Lula da Silva (Ministry of External Relations 2008:18) declared, during the 33rd World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on 26 January 2003, that

Our foreign policy is firmly oriented towards the search for peace, for negotiated solutions to international conflicts and towards the intransigent defense of our national interests. Peace is not just a moral objective. It is also imperative for rationality. This is why we defend the position that conflicts should be resolved by pacific means and under the auspices of the United Nations.

On the other hand, such stance has led the country to largely neglect the development of its military capabilities. When it comes to hard power, there is an apparent mismatch between Brazilian global ambitions and its military capabilities. In comparison to its economy and size, Brazil "underspends on its defense" (Franko 2014:10). Over the course of the last decade, for

example, Brazil has spent on average only 1.5% of its GDP annually on defense<sup>140</sup>, as seen in Table 21, ranking only 65<sup>th</sup> in terms of military expenditure as a percentage of GDP<sup>141</sup> in the world, and 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of total dollars spent<sup>142</sup>, as previously seen. Brazil's military expenditure reached approximately US\$ 32 billion dollars in 2014, nearly 5% of the United States defense spending budget and less than one quarter of China's military spending. It is important to note, however, that over 70% of that amount was allocated to the payment of salaries and benefits, seriously impairing the country's capacity to modernize its military hardware, to equip its armed forces, and to project force outside its borders. Brazil has also spent less than the other BRICS countries. While military expenditures in Brazil increased only by 22 percent from 2002–2011, China's, Russia's, and India's spending grew by 170 percent, 79 percent, and 66 percent, respectively, in the same period (Franko 2014).

Within such framework, Brazil's traditional non-confrontational politics might reflect – and be a consequence – of the weakness of its military power. As Kenkel (2015:92) argues, “historically speaking, in global terms, Brazil's perception of its identity was long that of a weak peripheral state in need of the protection of absolute sovereignty against the will of the stronger Northern powers”. In the same vein, Eduarda Hamann (2012:75) notes that, “the lack of

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<sup>140</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014. Available at [<http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1504.pdf>]. Accessed 2 November 2015.

<sup>141</sup> IndexMundi. Available at [<http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?t=0&v=132&l=en>]. Accessed 2 November 2015.

<sup>142</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014.

materiality in Brazilian power has at least two consequences. First, it emphasizes that Brazil does not have the credentials of a global power; Second, Brazil still has to recognize that climbing up to a new level involves responsibilities that go beyond pure diplomacy.”

Table 21 Brazil's Defense Budget as a percent of GDP 2005-2014

YEAR	BUDGET in U.S. dollars (billions)	% of GDP
2005	26,502	1.5
2006	27,441	1.5
2007	29,595	1.5
2008	31,488	1.5
2009	34,334	1.6
2010	38,127	1.6
2011	36,932	1.5
2012	37,751	1.5
2013	32,875	1.4
2014	32,860	1.4

Source: Global Security<sup>143</sup>

Former President Lula (Ministry of External Relations 2008:21) himself acknowledged this situation when he declared that the expression “global player” could create some misunderstandings: “[t]he first one is to believe that Brazil, a country with social problems and without effective means to project itself as an international military power, cannot aspire to becoming a full player at a global level<sup>144</sup>”. However, what happens when a country’s traditional strategic culture conflicts with what has been increasingly seen as an aspiring great power identity? This study proposes that in spite of Brazil’s traditional preference for strategies that

<sup>143</sup> Available at [<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/brazil/budget.htm>]. Accessed April 19, 2016.

<sup>144</sup> Speech delivered by former President Lula at the opening of the debate “Brazil: A Global Player”- Paris, July 13, 2005.



deploy non-material aspects of power, such as consensus building, diplomacy and persuasion, a recent and very slow but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign policy objectives, “away from the more traditional strategies used in Brazilian foreign policy and towards hard power” (Valença e Carvalho 2014:68).

It would be exceedingly premature to claim that this changing perception represents the emergence of a new strategic culture as it might merely represent a conjunctural change or adaptation to temporary situations and circumstances, or reflect the short term priorities and objectives of a given Administration. However, it does suggest that Brazilian policymakers seem to be gradually relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone, as a foreign policy “excessively based on negotiation may show signs of weakness and may generate more damage than benefits” (Bertonha 2010:112), a stance which, in itself, serves more as evidence against traditional Brazilian strategic culture than the emergence of a new one. As the country’s National Strategy of Defense puts it,

It is difficult – and necessary – for the Armed Forces of such a peaceful country like Brazil to keep, amidst peace, the encouragement to be ready for combat and to develop the habit of transformation in favor of this state of readiness. Will to change; this is what the nation currently requires from its sailors, soldiers and pilots. It is not only a matter of funding and equipping the Armed Forces. It has to do with having the Armed Forces transformed to better defend Brazil (Ministry of Defense 2009:9).

That gradual shift appears to mirror a growing perception among Brazilian decision-makers – which is not consensual, as previously mentioned, as it goes against the country’s traditional strategic culture – that if Brazil wants to achieve global power status and eventually occupy a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, or at least to increase its standing in international politics, it must be able to flex its muscles and display military and power projection capabilities and resolve. As the Brazilian National Strategy for Defense Strategy (Estratégia Nacional de Defesa – END) clearly states, “in order to dissuade, one needs to be prepared to combat” (END 2008:11), and “if Brazil is willing to reach its deserved spot in the world, it will have to be prepared to defend itself not only from aggressions, but equally from threats. Intimidation overrides good faith in the world where we live” (Ministry of Defense 2009:8). Former Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim (2011:7) also expressed the “new” stance adopted by the Brazilian government: “Soft power separated from hard power means a diminished power or a power that cannot be applied to its full potential.” Likewise, former Minister of the Navy (1990-1992) and Secretary of Strategic Affairs Admiral Mário César Flores stated that “pacifism is not conformity, and modern military power should not be improvised. It will be too late if we think of it only in times of need”<sup>145</sup>.

This new stance also seems to reflect a growing understanding that no country has been able to acquire a regional or global power status without a solid military power – one of the most

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<sup>145</sup> Source: O Estado de São Paulo. Available at [<http://opinio.estado.com.br/noticias/geral,defesa-nacional-imp-,1658121>].

important sources of national power – to complement its diplomacy. The American support for India’s aspiration to a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council seems to illustrate well this point. As Arguello (2011:195) observes, “[t]o Brazilian military experts, this fosters the impression that the achievement of the [UN Security Council] seat depends largely on a country’s military power and that the US support for India is related to its nuclear status.” As Bertonha (2010:112) puts it, “the renunciation of force may be ethically defensible and may bring advantages, but it also brings, compared to stronger protagonists, an asymmetry that impairs relationships and does not always provide good results.”

At this point, once again, the lack of a grand strategy is reflected in Brazilian contradictory foreign policies. Devoid of hard power instruments to pursue foreign policy objectives, or "without sticks or carrots", as Burges (2006) defines it, Brazil has at the same time become a strong advocate of multilateralism and a kind of regionalism that serves its interests, putting a premium on ideational resources of leadership. However, in order to bolster its global ambitions based on a "soft-power leadership", Brazil would need to have built a strong base of regional support.

As seen in a previous section, Brazil largely overestimated the readiness of neighboring countries to support its global projects as South, or even Latin, America's leader. As Hurrell (2008:55) aptly puts it, "[i]f the measure of success for Brazil’s regional strategy is the creation of a regional bloc with a significant degree of internal cohesion and a capacity to increase the region’s power in the world, then there can be little doubt that the strategy has failed." Thus, it remained to be seen how Brazil would formulate an effective foreign policy without the military and economic power needed to “convince” other countries to accept its "emergence" as a global

power. As Bertonha (2010:114) puts it, “without the military power, the country is constrained in its relations and autonomy relation to the great powers and even its own national ‘soft power’ and diplomacy decrease in credibility.”

In this context, the development of its nuclear submarine program, the more active participation in UN peacekeeping missions in recent years – Brazil is currently an active member in 9 of the 17 missions being carried out by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations, and its military is in charge of three of those missions, in Haiti, Lebanon and Congo, which seems to be in stark contrast with the country’s steadfast defense of the non-intervention principle –, the purchase of 36 new combat aircraft, with prospects of acquiring another 72 in the short-term, and the ongoing process of modernization of its armed forces seems to fit within the framework of a country that, although deeply tied to its historical traditions, is gradually recognizing that it must develop its military capabilities if it wants to one day be considered a major power.

### *7.3.1 Brazil’s Military Modernization*

As Bertonha (2010:114) observes, “military power does not need to be used but it needs to be reliable”. Adopting that perspective, Brazil is seeking to strengthen its military capabilities in a number of strategic areas, which might convey the symbolic message that the country will be ready to exhibit military power to complement its political-diplomatic and economic capabilities in order to achieve the global power status it believes it deserves. In that context, the

National Strategy of Defense (NSD) is based on the following guidelines (Ministry of Defense 2009:11-23):

- “1. To dissuade the concentration of hostile forces in the terrestrial borders, in the limits of the Brazilian jurisdictional waters, and prevent them from using the national air space. [...].
2. To organize the Armed Forces under the aegis of the monitoring/control, mobility and presence trinomial. [...].
3. To develop the ability to monitor and control the Brazilian air space, the territory and the jurisdictional waters. [...].
- d. To develop the capacity of promptly responding to any threat or aggression backed by the capacity to monitor/control<sup>146</sup>. [...].
- e. To deepen the link between technological and operational aspects of mobility, under the discipline of well-defined objectives. [...].
- f. To strengthen three strategically important sectors: cybernetics, space and nuclear. [...].
- g. To unify the operations of the three branches of the Armed Forces<sup>147</sup>, far beyond the limits imposed by joint exercise protocols. [...].
- h. Reposition the personnel of the Armed Forces through the Brazilian territory. [...].

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<sup>146</sup> Here, the concept of strategic mobility<sup>146</sup> becomes of utmost importance “given the vastness of the space to be defended, and the shortness of means to do it” (Ministry of Defense 2009:11).

<sup>147</sup> Navy, Air Force, and the Army, who will act under the coordination of the Ministry of Defense.

- i. To enhance the presence of Army, Navy and Air Force units in the border areas. [...].
- j. Prioritize the Amazon region.
- k. To develop logistic capacity, in order to strengthen mobility, especially in the Amazon region. [...].
- l. To develop the concept of flexibility in combat to meet the requirements of monitoring/control, mobility and presence. [...].
- m. To develop the repertoire of practices and operational qualification of combatants to meet the requirements of monitoring/control, mobility and presence. [...].
- n. To promote, on Brazilian militaries, the joining of the attributes and skills required by the concept of flexibility. [...].
- o. To review the troop composition of the three service branches, from the perspective of a human resource employment optimization policy, in order to properly design them to meet the provisions of the National Strategy of Defense. [...].
- p. To structure the strategic potential in terms of capabilities. [...].
- q. To prepare troops to fulfill law and order enforcement missions, under the terms of the Federal Constitution. [...].
- r. To encourage the integration of South America. [...].
- s. To prepare the Armed Forces to perform growing responsibilities in peacekeeping operations. [...].
- t. To expand the country's capacity to meet international commitments in terms of search and rescue. [...].

- u. To develop the potential of military and national mobilization to assure the dissuasive and operational capacity of the Armed Forces. [...].
- v. To qualify the national defense industry so that it conquers the necessary autonomy in indispensable technologies to defense purposes. [...].
- w. To maintain the Mandatory Military Service.”

These guidelines indicate that the Brazilian NSD is based on three perspectives: national, regional, and global. The national dimension involves the development of hard power capabilities that can be used as an effective deterrent against any threats to Brazil’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, while reconciling “the vastness of Brazil’s territory, the paucity of forces, and the areas which are vital to the nation” (Ham Jr. 2009:18), such as the Amazon region, border areas and Petrobrás oil fields, and the reorganization of the Armed Forces. The regional level envisages Brazil as an element of unity and stabilization in South America, while promoting its integration. The third dimension, which advocates a “broader pluralism of power” (Ministry of Defense 2009:18), reflects the country’s ambition of playing a major role in international affairs, which includes a more active presence in international peacekeeping missions conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. As Bertonha (2010:119) points out, “the basic premise of the document is that Brazil will grow to become one of the world’s main powers but ‘without hegemony or domination’”.

Brazilian Armed Forces are expected to spend approximately US\$190 billion on its Armed Forces between 2013 and 2019 in order to upgrade its military capabilities. According to Gouvea (2015:139), Brazil “has already implemented an offset policy and strategy forcing foreign defense companies to transfer technology and to use local Brazilian domestic companies

to produce and assemble defense hardware and software.” The development and strengthening of an indigenous defense technology industry is the central pillar upon which these perspectives are built. In fact, Brazil’s NSD, which was updated in 2012, stresses that the modernization of the Armed Forces is intrinsically linked to national development, emphasizing the need to strengthen the domestic defense industry.

According to U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Linwood Ham Jr. (2009:14), such modernization “would serve the dual purpose of strengthening its defenses while advancing its modern technology industry, which would significantly contribute o national development”. Brazil is probably the only state in Latin America country with the technological capabilities and economic resources to develop a diverse defense industrial base. The country’s NSD explicitly called for a robust domestic defense industry with the “technological capacity [...] to gradually rule out the need to purchase imported services and products” (Ministry of Defense 2009:18).

Such endeavor has led the Brazilian government to establish partnerships not based on ideology and that allows for growth of the Brazilian defense technology sector. The insistence on offsets and technology transfer in its military modernization process is a crucial part of this effort. In fact, a key tenet of the Brazilian NSD is the perception that the country will only achieve international prominence through mastery of sensitive technologies in the following strategic sectors: cybernetics, whose focus is the development of advanced technology; the development of an autonomous space program, including the development project of geostationary satellites to ensure secure communications and to monitor the vast Brazilian territory; and the strengthening of peaceful nuclear capabilities, whose main focus is the



development of a nuclear submarine and the generation of energy. In this regard, the NSD (Ministry of Defense 2009:33) explicitly calls for Brazil to undertake the following initiatives:

- “a) Regarding the nuclear-propelled submarine program, Brazil should complete the full nationalization and the development – at industrial scale – of the fuel cycle (including gasification and enrichment) and of the reactor construction technology for exclusive use of the country.
- b) Speed up the mapping, ore searching and utilization of uranium deposits.
- c) Develop the potential of designing and building nuclear thermo power plants with technology and capacities that may end up under the national domain, even if they are developed by means of partnerships with foreign companies and States. [...] and
- d) Increase the capacity to use nuclear power for a broad range of activities”.

Likewise, Brazil is making substantial investments in military hardware, with the objective of not only being able to project power, but also as a symbolic message that the country aspires to assume greater responsibilities in global strategic affairs. As former Defense Minister Jobim stated in 2008, “[w]hat we want is to have voice and vote in the international arena, and this only goes to countries that have a defense structure to deter and to express national power” (Brands 2010:15). The country is expected to invest more than US\$190 billion until 2019 to update its Armed Forces. As Bertonha (2010:122) argues, “the Brazilian economy is strong enough to support the necessary expense and the military forces have the structure and critical mass needed to absorb new weapons and technology.”

As part of its modernization program, Brazilian Navy signed a contract with a French company for the construction of five highly modern submarines of the *Scorpene* class, one of

them nuclear-powered. One of the main potential advantages of the acquisition of a nuclear submarine would be to probably put Brazil ahead of regional competitors regarding the “dispute” for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, as no other Latin country possesses that equipment. Furthermore, Navy officers have systematically drawn attention to the fact that all permanent members of the Security Council possess nuclear submarines. A former Brazilian Admiral, for example, contended that "when Brazil becomes the sixth [member of the UN to develop and possess a nuclear submarine), it will be much bigger as a nation from both military and strategic points of view. It will have solid means to claim a [permanent] seat on the Security Council" (Rodrigues 2009).

The Navy has also sought to invest in the construction of six escort ships, equipped with up to 12-ton helicopters, eight ocean patrol ships and 15 river patrol ships, to be used for navigation in the Paraná, Paraguay and Amazon basins. The Navy is also undertaking efforts to modernize the country’s single aircraft carrier, while seeking to acquire another one. The AF-1 Skyhawk jetfighters operating in the aircraft carrier, whose name is São Paulo, are also undergoing a modernization process, under the responsibility of Brazilian firm Embraer, one of the most important aerospace companies in the world.

The Army has been developing the projects *Combatant of the Future*, which seeks to develop communications and location systems, weapons and night vision equipment, and *Strong Arm*, whose objective is to acquire a new caliber rifle model to equip soldiers. As part of its *Guarani* project, the Army has already signed a contract with an Italian company for the construction of two thousand tanks for transportation of their troops. Likewise, 250 German tanks, model Leopard 1A564, have already been purchased. All these projects clearly state that

their “medium- and long-term goals should be to help the Army enhance its ‘power projection capabilities’” (Valença and Carvalho 2014:80).

The Air Force modernization process has adopted a twofold strategy: it has invested in the purchase of last generation jet fighters on one hand, and the development of technology to manufacture its own fighter aircrafts. Brazil signed a multi-billion dollars contract with Sweden for the acquisition of at least 36 Gripen NG jet fighters, of which 15 will be manufactured in Brazil. An important part of this bilateral agreement is the transfer of technology to the Brazilian defense industry. Brazil has also acquired the latest generation of Russian attack helicopters AH-2 Sabre, already in operation. Likewise, Embraer has developed two very important projects which are already international sales success: the Attack Aircraft A-29 Super Tucano and the medium-sized KC-390 tactical airlifter. The Air force is also seeking to modernize all its A1 (AMX) units.

### *7.3.2 Peacekeeping as a Strategy of International Projection*

Kenkel (2015:85) observes that “as with other forms of humanitarian intervention, states’ motivations to engage in peace operations are variegated.” Among other reasons, some states view these operations as an opportunity for achieving self-interested objectives. Others believe that it can be translated into greater international prestige. Some states consider participation in peacekeeping operations as a shortcut to important positions within the structure of an international organization, particularly the United Nations, while some take part on PKO’s merely in the hopes of getting some form of financial compensation. Based on that perspective, Kenkel (2015:85) argues that peacekeeping is, therefore, the “quintessential activity for this

category of state for which international institutions have become the primary vehicle for the pursuit of national interests.” In the same line of thinking, Neack (1995:183) contends that “Participation in UN peace-keeping is supposedly an act that transcends narrow international interest, while in no small way peace-keeping has developed as a way for middle powers to demonstrate their power in and their importance to world politics”.

This appears to be the case of Brazil, and it also helps to explain why neoliberal institutionalism cannot adequately explain Brazil’s behavior towards international institutions and regimes, as seen in Chapter 4. A more active participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), in order to raise the country’s international profile, increase its involvement in global affairs, and promote a stronger presence in the United Nations debates is clearly another course of action present in Brazil’s NSD – and something that might eventually contribute to change the profile of the national strategic culture. The Brazilian NSD (2009:62) clearly states that “Brazil shall expand its participation in peacekeeping operations, under the aegis of the UN or of a regional multilateral organization, according to the national interests stated in international commitments.” Likewise, the 2005 Brazilian National Defense Policy (2005:9) states that

To enlarge the country’s projection in the world concert and to reaffirm its commitment with the defense of peace and with the cooperation among the peoples, Brazil should intensify its participation in humanitarian actions and in peace missions with the support of multilateral organisms.

In that context, Brazilian policymakers “have quietly worked on the belief that would-be permanent members of the UNSC need to develop their hard power in order to be able to engage

in military interventions and thus meet any potential challenges to international peace and order” (Valença e Carvalho 2014:79). Likewise, as Ham Jr. (2009:18) recalls, “Brazil has long coveted a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, but recognizes that it must beef up its international resume to make a reasonable argument for inclusion if another seat is made available.”

According to Hirst and Nasser (2014:1), Brazil’s involvement in PKOs in the last decade “has become a challenging learning process in the context of post-cold war UN-led interventions. Brazil has evolved from being a selective troop contributor to an ambitious innovator in terms of its political approach and stabilisation methods.” As there is spread consensus that Brazil has performed relatively well in PKOs, the NSD underscores the need for the country to be even more prepared to assume greater responsibilities, in order to meet UN collective security requirements worldwide. Couching the country’s ambitions and this more pragmatic and assertive behavior in diplomatic language, in which the idealistic component of Brazilian foreign policy is enhanced, former Foreign and Defense Minister Celso Amorim (2013) argues that

By deterring threats to national sovereignty, military power supports peace; and, in Brazil’s case, it underpins our country’s constructive role in the pursuit of global stability. That role is more necessary than ever. Over the past two decades, unilateral actions in disregard of the UN Security Council’s primary responsibility in matters of war and peace have led to greater uncertainty and instability. [...] Even as Brazil hardens its soft power, it remains deeply committed to the path of dialogue, conflict prevention, and the negotiated settlement of disputes.

Amorim's words mean that as international norms and practices regarding humanitarian intervention and PKO's are evolving towards a greater willingness of major powers to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of other nations, allegedly to prevent or stop the violation of human rights, Brazil can reliably present itself as a country able to eventually fulfill a mandate received from the Security Council and therefore contribute to international peace and stability. It also means, according to Kenkel (2015:112), that PKO's provide "an opportunity for Brazil to demonstrate responsibility and effectiveness without resorting to increased levels of force."

In general lines, this new stance began to be adopted in June 2004, when Brazil accepted the military command of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), as "until 2004-05[...] Brazilian contributions to such operations were mainly symbolic, military based and concentrated in Portuguese-speaking countries" (Santos & Cravo 2014:1). According to Valença e Carvalho (2014:84), "[t]his shift from Brazil's secondary participation in earlier UN missions to its active leadership role at MINUSTAH underlines the country's own perception of its changing international role and the limitation it faces for lack of material resources." Likewise, Santos and Cravo (2014:1) argue that "[r]ecent changes in the size, type and geographical distribution of Brazil's participation in peace operations echo the reorientation of the country's foreign policy in its search for a more globalised political influence".

Since then, Brazil's engagement in PKOs has become one of the central pillars of the country's search for a new status in the international scenario. In fact, Santos and Cravo (2014:4) recall that "[w]hen Dilma Rousseff took office in 2011 Brazil was engaged in eight peacekeeping missions". Now, Brazil participates in nine of the 17 UN-led PKOs, including the UN Interim

Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)<sup>148</sup>, with 1,229 troops, as of 31 October 2015<sup>149</sup>.

As much as Brazil's insertion in the international scenario has traditionally been described in terms of a longstanding commitment to the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, such greater engagement in UN PKOs echoes the reorientation of Brazil's foreign and security policy in its search for greater political influence, in a context where, by accepting greater international responsibilities in the preservation of peace and security, Brazil seeks to assume a role more consistent with its global ambitions and the expectations of the international community. In this line of thinking, Santos and Cravo (2014:5) claim that

the country's recent foreign policy reorientation, reflected in its search for an increased role in peace and security, has led it to espouse contradictory pledges of non-indifference and then to become involved in controversial external interventions. In particular, peacekeeping operations provide a vantage point from which to appreciate the dilemmas this "emerging power" has hitherto encountered.

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<sup>148</sup> MONUSCO's Force Commander is Brazilian Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz.

<sup>149</sup> Souce: United Nations. Available at [[http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/oct15\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/oct15_1.pdf)].

Likewise, as Valença and Carvalho (2014:84) argue, “beneath the discourse and outward appearance of soft power [such reorientation] also revealed a more traditional, power-politics side to Brazil's role in peacekeeping operations.” Although this ongoing process is not consensual and it cannot be said that it implies a change in the country’s strategic culture, it not only contradicts some principles of traditional Brazilian strategic culture, but also seems to indicate a readjustment in the country’s international behavior and a shift in the capabilities, tactics, and doctrines of its Armed Forces. In light of the country’s lack of grand strategy and contradictory foreign policies, this process could also be understood as a “product of the country’s simultaneous legitimation and contestation of the international power structures in which it operates” (Santos e Cravo 2014:5).



## CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has sought to show that the study of strategic culture can provide an important analytical lens through which to better understand the continuities underlying a state's international actions and the possible motivations behind them. While the strategic culture approach is not intended to produce a predictive model of behavior, it can suggest which lines of action and outcomes tend to be more likely than others in a given circumstance and provide a consistent explanation as to why, since it can provide tools that allow researchers and analysts to understand and interpret state diplomatic and military action in a particular historical context. It is not however an imperative dogma to be followed nor a narrow framework through which to look into the past and have the future revealed, but a useful tool to comprehend and assess the politico-cultural environment in which policymakers operate and determine possible means and ends to attain foreign policy and security objectives, as well as the forces that somehow influence, shape, condition, and define a country's political action, particularly when supplementing more traditional schools of International Relations theory.

As shown in Chapter 1, there is now a well-established body of research which, beginning with Jack Snyder and his pioneering work on Soviet nuclear strategy in the late 1970s, suggests that foreign and security policies are, to a large extent, determined by strategic culture, which is derived from a country's geographical circumstances, history, political culture, traditions, values, symbols, diplomatic preferences, patterns of behavior, and how the use or threat of use of force is seen. Since then, three – or possibly four – successive generations have sought to deepen the conceptual debate on the relationship between strategic culture and a

country's international behavior. Chapter 1, therefore, presented a comprehensive literature review on the subject and examined how and why strategic culture can be a determinant of a country's foreign policy. It discussed the origins of the approach and its possible sources, summarized its contents, and traced some of the main milestones in the evolution of the concept and their implications for the development of this theoretical body, including an analysis of the alternative interpretations the term is subject.

This study was about the role of strategic culture in helping to shape a country's foreign and security policies. It sought to analyze how a strategic culture influences a country's geopolitical thought, and consequently its policy choices and outcomes. As such – and this is the dissertation's main contribution – this research sought to overcome some methodological and semantic difficulties earlier scholars had encountered as they expanded their research to incorporate other regions of the world. South America has been largely absent from such analysis which is unreasonable, given Brazil's growing importance in the world.

Therefore, within this framework, this study has argued that the impact of culture – and consequently strategic culture – is important to understanding Brazil's foreign policy, and military and security affairs. The primary objective of this research was to seek to explain how a rising power such as Brazil, which is still considered to be on the periphery of the international system and on the margins of the global distribution of power, has historically behaved, reacted and constructed a discourse that has, at the same time, constrained and motivated its decisions, explained its actions, and legitimized its behavior.

This research proposed that there is a Brazilian strategic culture which helps explain why Brazilian policymakers have made the decisions they have. It argued that Brazilian strategic culture has traditionally provided the milieu within which strategic thoughts, foreign policy and security concerns are debated, plans are formulated, and decisions are executed. Accordingly, Chapter 2 of this dissertation summarized Brazil's foreign policy history, focusing on its interests, priorities, and key events which helped to build and characterize the country's international identity, in order to identify, determine, and qualify the elements of Brazilian strategic culture and its nature, as well as to determine the relationship between these elements and Brazilian foreign and security policy decisions.

Again, it must be emphasized that this dissertation was not intended to be a comparative study nor was it intended to explain similarities in strategic behavior across completely different strategic cultures. For that reason, it is not possible to exclude the possibility that some characteristics, features, practices and preferences that help to explain Brazilian security and foreign policy behavior, and that might be considered unique attributes of the Brazilian strategic culture in a certain politico-historical context, could in fact be explicable by other variables and factors that would affect all rising powers – and provoke the same kind of responses/behaviors – under similar circumstances.

Subsequently, Chapter 3 discussed the characteristics of Brazilian strategic culture, its evolution and sources, the institutions that serve as its shapers and keepers, and its influence upon the country's foreign policy decision-making process. Additionally, deep archival research and a series of elite interviews with individuals engaged in national level foreign and security policy decision making regarding their perceptions and views concerning the existence and the

nature of a Brazilian strategic culture have revealed that not only there is a particular Brazilian strategic culture, but also what are considered its most common defining threats, as well as their potential impact upon the security and foreign policy decision-making process.

Among these characteristics, one can find preference for peaceful means of conflict resolution and for instruments of ‘soft power’ over ‘hard power’, belief in predestination to greatness and to natural leadership in the Latin American space, singularity in Latin America due to Portuguese colonization and Portuguese language, and pragmatism in its international relations, among others, as seen in section 3.3. Overall, it has been found that Brazil’s security and foreign policy behavior is heavily influenced by traditional political, cultural, and social values historically rooted in Brazilian society. To some extent, these traits have helped to consolidate Brazil’s international identity and image, leading to a situation in which “[f]rom the perspective of its international behavior, Brazil can be regarded as a principle-oriented actor striving for changes in the international scenario and challenging its own status within” (Bitencourt and Vaz 2009:25). This assessment fundamentally means that Brazil does not really want to upend the international power table, nor does it want to deeply alter the current world order, but rather wishes to have a greater say in global affairs, even if a number of international organizations and regimes have to be reformed – and political coalitions created – for that to happen.

Chapters 4 and 6 discussed the idea that the strategic culture approach can be more appropriate to analyze the evolution of Brazilian security and foreign policy practices than other theoretical perspectives, such as neoliberal institutionalism, offensive realism, and rational choice institutionalism. As seen, although those perspectives may sometimes present a plausible

model of reality, they tend to fall short of capturing the full gamut of motivations behind the strategic and foreign policy behavior of a state like Brazil, which appears to defy the narrow boundaries imposed by mainstream International Relations theories.

We have seen that, as neither of those major rational choice theories seems to be able to account for intangible aspects such as identity, values, and traditions to help predict the future or explain the past, we can therefore not entirely rely on them, but need to include the strategic culture approach, which examines the cultural elements used to construct strategies of action, and supplement traditional approaches by explaining changes in a country's foreign policy preferences and behavior. For this reason, in spite of its gaps, the strategic culture approach appears to be more adequate to explain Brazil's geopolitical thought and, consequently, its foreign policy interests, priorities and behavior, vis-à-vis other competing theoretical approaches. Understanding identity, beliefs, values, traditions, action and discourse allows scholars and policymakers to take account of the issues to which the actors are reacting, as well as the impact of experience on their foreign and security policies. In the case of Brazil, it helps to explain why, in the pursuit of dream of boundless grandeur, the country has adopted erratic security and foreign policies that have eventually undermined its global projects and ambitions.

After delineating the main features of Brazilian strategic culture, this dissertation analyzed their influence upon Brazilian geopolitical thought and grand strategy, and Brazil's geopolitics to South America. A comprehensive picture of how the country tends to perceive its regional and global role and implement security policy decisions was provided, as well as a discussion about their implications to past and current integration projects in South America, and to future prospects for regional integration. More specifically, this study also sought to explain

why Brazilian regional policies are not more assertive given the country's capabilities, and found that its strategic culture have an important effect on the country's regional policies, as seen in Chapter 5.

As it has been seen, Brazilian decision-makers in general believe they can increase the country's global political clout by becoming an undisputed regional leader, which would augment its diplomatic credentials and negotiating capabilities. In the strictly diplomatic realm, Latin America – and particularly South America – has always been considered one of the top priorities of Brazilian foreign policy. The rhetoric of regional integration has traditionally been adopted by Brazilian diplomats and policymakers to build good relationships and strengthen cooperation in the region.

However, in spite of such strong politico-diplomatic discourse in favor of South or Latin American integration, this study has found that the historical analysis of the region's economic and political realities has exhibited a systematic pattern in which Brazil has manifested a remarkable unwillingness to build strong regional institutions, while simultaneously expressing its rhetoric of continental solidarity, which contradicts the predictions of rational choice institutionalism. It seems that Brazilian strategic culture prior history and the country's global ambitions have led Brazilian decision-makers to believe in the existence of an innate right to greatness, and to take for granted its undisputed leadership role in South America, which has been translated into a certain degree of neglect and condescendence to regional affairs and needs, despite the fact that the Brazilian "official" diplomatic discourse has long regarded regional leadership as a springboard to global recognition.

Furthermore, Brazil's ambiguous policies to the region appear to have privileged strategies that focus on the country's short term national interests – in an attempt to maximize its potential benefits – and that are oftentimes contradictory with the evolution of an integration process. In fact, these strategies seem to suggest that Brazil is actually pursuing the path of regional hegemony, rather than the path of regional integration.

The important lesson learnt from Brazil's policies towards South America is that neither South America is actually a priority to the country's foreign policy, nor Brazil does seem really interested in pursuing the path of integration. Despite diplomatic rhetoric, Brazil appears to be more comfortable, in the regional sphere, in engaging in bilateral relationships than in collective undertakings that it cannot effectively control, even when regional issues are at stake. However, by adopting such ambiguous policies to the region, Brazil might be sabotaging its own strategies, as it encourages increasing contestation from its neighboring partners, which has been translated in resistance to and defection from its global and regional projects, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Finally, this study also examined the idea, in Chapter 7, that the strategic culture approach is about discerning tendencies, rather than identifying determinants of behaviors or preferences. The focus of this theoretical approach has traditionally been on continuity or semi-permanence in strategic culture, as foreign policy strategies and behavior are mediated through a set of core ideas, beliefs and doctrines that the country's decision-makers use to justify preferences and actions. Although those ideas, beliefs and doctrines may undergo changes throughout the years, therefore leading to changes in a country's intentions, those changes tend to evolve very slowly, making those variables semi-permanent features of the national character and identity. To a large extent, it is this relative continuity that allows a country to articulate a

coherent grand strategy which reflects its world views, enabling it to decide what kind of world it wishes to build and which international system is more conducive to its interests, to define and implement its foreign policy priorities, and to identify and allocate all instruments of power available to pursue its international objectives in an integrated manner.

However, strategic cultures are not immutable, as they can and do change, sometimes radically. Those changes can be caused by external shocks and/or by the behavior of competing groupings or elites within a state that affect strategic cultural identities, among other possible factors. These variables can affect security and foreign policy in unprecedented ways and generate a kind of “strategic cultural dilemma” about how best to respond to new situations.

In that context, this dissertation discussed the question of the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the country’s security and foreign policy decision-making process, as well as for its regional neighborhood. It examined and discussed how Brazil understands the concept of security and the security scenario with which the country operates, both regionally and globally, and found that this is a *sine qua non* condition to assessing Brazil’s positioning as a regional and global security actor and to understanding Brazil’s national defense policies, military strategies, and the changes in its strategic culture.

This research sought to explain that, as part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, Brazil has historically rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership. Brazil has not only clearly indicated its preference for strategies that favor diplomatic and peaceful means of conflict resolution, thus “demonizing” the use of force, but also, as a long-time supporter of the



international principles of sovereignty, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention, non-interference, and territorial integrity, it has traditionally relied on its soft power resources to forward its foreign policy priorities and to promote international changes conducive to its objectives, a stance that has led the country to largely neglect the development of its military capabilities.

However, despite Brazil's traditional preference for strategies that deploy non-material aspects of power, a very slow but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign policy objectives, as seen in Chapter 7. Brazilian policymakers seem to be gradually relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone, what seems to be reflected in the process of military modernization currently being undertaken. In this context, the development of a nuclear submarine program, the more active participation in UN peacekeeping missions, the purchase of 36 new combat aircraft, and the allocation of substantial financial resources to the ongoing process of modernization of its armed forces seems to fit within the framework of a country that, although deeply tied to its historical traditions, is gradually recognizing that it must develop its military capabilities if it wants to one day be considered a major power

While it cannot be said that such new stance represents a change in Brazilian strategic culture, as it might indeed merely represent a conjunctural change or adaptation to temporary situations and circumstances, or reflect the short-term objectives and priorities of a government or a group of policymakers, that gradual shift appears to mirror a growing perception among Brazilian decision-makers, which is far from being consensual, however, as it goes against the country's strategic culture, that if Brazil wants to achieve global power status and eventually

occupy a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, or at least to increase its standing in international politics, it must be able to flex its muscles and display military and power projection capabilities and resolve. This behavior also seems to reflect a growing understanding that no country has been able to acquire a regional or global power status without a solid military power – one of the most important sources of national power – to complement its diplomacy. In that context, only historical perspective will be able to tell, in the future, whether current conjunctural changes in Brazil's security and foreign policy behavior, and its persistence through time, will have given rise to the emergence of a new strategic culture, which, at this moment, does not seem the case.

## **APPENDIX A: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW – QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Do you believe that Brazil has a particular strategic culture?

- a.  Yes
- b.  No
- c.  Other. Explain:

2. In your opinion, what are some of the characteristics of the Brazilian strategic culture? (Select all that apply).

- a.  Preference for peaceful means of conflict resolution;
- b.  Expansionism;
- c.  Preference for instruments of 'soft power' over 'hard power';
- d.  Singularity in Latin America, due to the Portuguese language;
- e.  Bellicosity;
- f.  Belief in the legitimacy of the resort to violence and military means to achieve political objectives;
- g.  Search for leadership in the Latin American space;
- h.  Natural leadership in the Latin American space;
- i.  Messianism;
- j.  Isolationism;
- k.  Support to regional integration mechanisms;
- l.  Support to regional integration mechanisms under Brazilian leadership;
- m.  Suspicion and distrust towards regional neighbors;
- n.  Singularity in Latin America, due to Portuguese colonization;
- o.  Nationalism;
- p.  Belief in predestination to greatness;
- q.  Pragmatism in its international relations;
- r.  Others (list as many as applicable):

3. In your opinion, do these elements of the Brazilian strategic culture exert any influence on the formulation and execution of the Brazilian foreign policy?

- a. ( ) Yes
- b. ( ) No
- c. ( ) I don't know

4. In your opinion, do these elements of the Brazilian strategic culture exert any influence on the formulation and execution of the Brazilian defense policy?

- a. ( ) Yes
- b. ( ) No
- c. ( ) I don't know

5. In your opinion, Brazil currently is

- a. ( ) A global power;
- b. ( ) A middle global power;
- c. ( ) A regional power;
- d. ( ) An emerging country;
- e. ( ) Other:

6. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present economic resources?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and economic resources are fully compatible;
- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than economic resources;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more economic resources than status;
- d. ( ) Other:

7. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present political resources?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and political resources are fully compatible;

- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than political resources;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more political resources than status;
- d. ( ) Other

8. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its present military resources?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and military resources are fully compatible;
- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than military resources;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more military resources than status;
- d. ( ) Other

9. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its economic potential?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and economic potential are fully compatible;
- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than economic potential;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more economic potential than status;
- d. ( ) Other

10. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its political potential?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and political potential are fully compatible;
- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than political potential;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more political potential than status;
- d. ( ) Other

11. In your opinion, and based upon question 5, is Brazil current status in the international order compatible with its military potential?

- a. ( ) Yes, status and military potential are fully compatible;

- b. ( ) No, Brazil has more status than military potential;
- c. ( ) No, Brazil has more military potential than status;
- d. ( ) Other

12. In your opinion, is Brazilian economic capacity compatible with the country's aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?

- a. ( ) Yes, economic capacity and global aspirations are fully compatible.;
- b. ( ) No, the economic capacity is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations;
- c. ( ) Other:

13. In your opinion, is Brazilian political and diplomatic influence compatible with the country's aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?

- a. ( ) Yes, diplomatic/political influence and global aspirations are fully compatible.;
- b. ( ) No, diplomatic/political influence is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations;
- c. ( ) Other:

14. In your opinion, is Brazilian military capacity compatible with the country's aspirations for a greater voice in global affairs?

- a. ( ) Yes, military capacity and global aspirations are fully compatible.;
- b. ( ) No, the military capacity is insufficient to bolster Brazilian global aspirations;
- c. ( ) Other:

15. In your opinion, which institution has had the greatest influence over the development of Brazilian strategic culture?

- a. ( ) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- b. ( ) The Armed Forces;

c. ( ) The Parliament;

d. ( ) Other:

16. Where do you see Brazil in 25 years from now?



**APPENDIX B: EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH – MODEL INVITATION LETTER**

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are being invited to take part in an academic research in virtue of your professional qualification. Your participation is fully voluntary. My name is Marcos Degaut, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Central Florida (UCF), and this research is part of my doctoral dissertation. My hypothesis is that Brazil has a particular strategic culture that has historically influenced the security and foreign policy decision-making process in the country.

In general, the literature presents two distinct approaches to analyze strategic culture. The first one is presented by scholars who tend to define strategic culture almost exclusively in terms of military strategy and the use of force in International Relations. This perspective understands strategic culture as a cultural predisposition towards a particular military behaviour and thinking.

However, strategic culture is not just a product of military culture, and this is not the only area where its influence is felt. The combination of experiences and internal and external factors, such as history, geography, diplomacy, symbols, and traditions, also influence a country's political and foreign policy traditions and practices, reason why the second approach has broadened its concept and has preferred to focus on the grand strategies of states and include aspects such as economic and diplomatic ways of attaining a state's objectives in addition to military ones.

The objective of this study is to identify the main characteristics of Brazilian foreign policy, as well as the existence and characteristics of a particular strategic culture. It seeks to explain the cultural and geopolitical mechanisms that can exert influence over Brazilian policymakers and have led them to adopt specific security and foreign policy behaviors over the course of Brazilian history.

You will be asked to complete a basic survey questionnaire, which will be sent through internet. Alternatively, a face-to-face interview can be conducted. In that case, you will be asked to inform preferred date, time, and location. The questionnaire has 16 (sixteen) questions. It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete this task.

Your participation is important. Many thanks!

Marcos Degaut Pontes  
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Email: marcosdegaut@knights.ucf.edu  
Department of Political Science, University of Central Florida  
4297 Andromeda Loop N.  
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Orlando, FL 32816

## **APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT (MODEL)**

Title of Project:

**Ideas, Beliefs, Strategic Culture, and Foreign Policy: Understanding Brazil's Geopolitical Thought**

Principal Investigator: **Marcos Rosas Degaut Pontes**

Faculty Supervisor: **Prof. Roger Handberg**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

The purpose of this study is to identify the main characteristics of the Brazilian foreign policy, as well as the existence and characteristics of a particular Brazilian strategic culture, in order to understand and explain why Brazilian policymakers have historically adopted the foreign policy decisions that they have over the course of Brazilian history.

You will be asked to complete a basic questionnaire which will be sent through internet. Alternatively, a face-to-face interview can be conducted, which is entirely based on the questionnaire. If you wish to take part in the face-to-face interviews, please email us back with your preferred date, time, and location.

The questionnaire has 16 (sixteen) questions. It will take you no more than 30 minutes to complete the task.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to Marcos Degaut Pontes, Ph.D. Candidate, Security Studies Program, Department of Political Science, at (+1 407) 823-4608 or by email at marcosdegaut@knights.ucf.edu, or Dr. Roger Handberg, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Political Science, at (+1 407) 823-4608 or by email at roger.handberg@ucf.edu.

**IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint:** Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901

## **APPENDIX D: APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Marcos Rosas Degaut Pontes**

Date: **October 06, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 10/06/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: Ideas, Beliefs, Strategic Culture, and Foreign Policy:  
Understanding Brazil's Geopolitical Thought  
Investigator: Marcos Rosas Degaut Pontes  
IRB Number: SBE-15-11641  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: n/a

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kanielle Chay" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

IRB Coordinator

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