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NOT THE BOY NEXT DOOR: AN ESSAY ON EXCLUSION AND BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Brazil's international profile is sustained by its soft power expressed in terms of the capacity to persuade, negotiate and mediate. As ex-foreign minister Celso Amorim indicates, “[i]n the present-day world, military power will be less and less usable in a way that these other abilities – the capacity to negotiate based on sound economic policies, based on a society that is more just than it used to be and will be more just tomorrow than it is today” (“The Soft-Power Power”). In the last two decades, Brazilian leaders consolidated relations with global powers such as the U.S. and the European Union through careful negotiation in order to avoid hostility and develop a sense of limited divergence (Lima and Hirst). At the same time, those leaders aimed at reducing power asymmetries in North-South relations with the coordination of positions with developing countries and non-traditional partners (Vigevani and Cepaluni 1309-1326). Brazilian authorities look forward to reshaping international institutions with emphasis on equal representation (Hurrell and Narlikar 415-433). In regional politics, Brazil's prominent position in South America was constructed through negotiation aiming at the development of strong political ties with Argentinean authorities and, in the 2000s, better relations with leftist leaders such as Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Bolivia's Evo Morales. In multilateral institutions, Brazilian negotiators used diplomatic tools that consolidated the legitimacy of their claims for the reformulation of decision-making structures (Lima and Hirst 25-33).

Brazilian foreign policy's literature indicates that the development of a “benign power” profile is not recent. Gelson Fonseca Jr. (356-359) indicates that

Brazil's preference for negotiation and mediation created some advantages internationally, because a necessary condition for modernization was a peaceful international environment. Thus consensus was not a value in itself, but an understanding of multiple interests, necessary for the legitimacy of Brazil's claims for international projection. According to Amado Cervo (204-205), cordiality was based on the perception of national greatness, which would make feelings of hostility superfluous for Brazilian leaders. Zairo Cheibub (122-124) indicates that, through negotiation and international arbitration, Brazil could define its territorial borders and eliminate disputes about them, trying not to be charged of imperial expansionism. Alexandra Silva (97-102) argues that pacifism and rule of law created continuity and coherence in the country's foreign policy, which strengthened Brazilian supremacy in South America and national unity through the consolidation of its sovereignty. In the academic debates on Brazilian foreign policy, it is possible to detect the consensus on Brazil's "benign" international insertion, coherent with its long-standing interests of autonomy and development, but less attention is given on the perpetuation of subtle forms of exclusion through this soft-power identity, as well as its main impacts on the maintenance of hierarchies that marginalize difference in the international level, though not always in an explicit way.

I argue that Brazilian leaders and diplomats maintain a "benign wonder" based on negotiation and mediation abilities, but this perspective is not innocent or humble, not only in the sense of satisfaction of Brazilian long-standing interests of autonomy and development. This article sustains that, in the archetype of "soft-power power", logocentric structures and dichotomous ways of thinking in relations with developing countries and global powers remain active in Brazilian foreign policy, though there is space for mediation with difference. The apparatus of exclusion in relations between Brazil and other countries creates obstacles for the recognition of the wealth of difference, the development of common experiences towards the destabilization of hierarchies and the sharing of values that transcend norms of coexistence. The effect of the maintenance of those divisions is the difficulty to look for common gains and to construct stronger

bases for an effective management of collective problems. Difference represented by underdeveloped and other developing countries is sometimes understood as “anomaly” or “backwardness” in relation to democratic or liberal models of development achieved by Brazil. There is a pattern of “exclusion through inclusion”, which means that Brazil develops an apparently inclusive perspective of difference in order to preserve and manage hierarchies. Developed and more powerful countries are not explicitly labeled as traditional “imperialists” or “dominators”, but the emphasis on their ambition and ability to use force and institutions in their benefit updates old colonial discourses not necessarily in order to destabilize hierarchies, but to question Brazil’s inferior positions. Depreciative visions of difference are updated, and hierarchies are not overcome as modern regulatory ambitions. These hierarchies are constantly rearticulated and reinvented.

Exclusion can be articulated in complex ways. There is the possibility of mediation with difference, but the mediation can provide a path for exceptionalism when certain ways of living are conceived as non-acceptable. The supposed freedom of difference can be conditioned to some kind of authority, for example (Walker). The postcolonial perspective adopted in this article gives emphasis to the fact that difference can be managed not only with spatial strategies of segmentation, but also temporal mechanisms of exclusion with the application of notions of development and modernization, which consolidate difference as “backwardness”, “barbarianism” or “dysfunction” (Blaney and Inayatullah 21-45). Difference confers positive content to the “advance” of the “civilization” of the Self. From this perspective, the crystallization of spatial boundaries between inside and outside occurs concomitantly with the permanence of different “stages of development” in a linear interpretation of time. Difference is located in the inferior stages compared to the “advanced civilizations” (Blaney and Inayatullah 93-125, 161-185). Based on the work of Sakaran Krishna, I will develop the idea that dominant discourses that equate modernization with “civilization”, development and progress can become instruments of power in the hands of once-colonized states in the developing world (Krishna 4), such as Brazil. Those dominant discourses are more explicit in Brazil’s relations with underdeveloped

and developing countries. In order to have a stronger dialogue with the literature of postcolonial studies, I will apply Edward Said's critique of notions of civilizational superiority and exclusive claims to rationality or objectivity. Inspired by Homi Bhabha, I will argue that politics – including international politics and foreign policy – is performative. At the end of this article, I will emphasize the negotiations between identity and difference, as well as the ambiguous and split selves that emerge from those negotiations. The mentioned ambiguity can be a source of creative political engagements in Brazil's relations with other countries. It can indicate a hybrid space where negotiation between the authority and its supposed supplicants can occur and change, according to Krishna (78-79, 96).

In the next sections, I will examine how hierarchies persist in Brazil's relations with underdeveloped/developing countries and global powers, respectively. The examined discourses will be mainly the speeches, declarations and interviews of government officials – specially the president and/or the foreign minister – during Brazil's two previous administrations, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), as well as authorities of other countries in response to Brazil's decisions¹.

Brazil's relations with underdeveloped and developing countries

Many Brazilian authorities believe that the Southern Cone and Latin America are becoming what Amorim called a "security community, in which war becomes inconceivable" ("The Soft-Power Power"). In Mercosul's 10th Social Summit of December 2010, the then Brazilian president Lula urged the members of the economic bloc to move forward in the integration process towards the

¹ I do not argue that the process of hierarchization has always been defined in the same way in different moments of Brazilian foreign policy history. Second, I understand that the words "developed" and "developing" used in this article carry strategies of exclusion and marginalization and denounce the existence of a "linear" perspective of time. But it is important to highlight that I do not assume them in an uncritical manner. In this analysis, I will question them as natural concepts and will explicit the hierarchies inscribed in them. Third, I also recognize that an orthodox realist account would see the image of a "benign country" as a cover for power. However, the theoretical perspective adopted in this article focus on how discourse defines hierarchies between identity and difference and has practical effects in those relations, while a realist perspective would not develop those issues in detail. Fourth, when I refer to "Brazil", it is important to notice that I do not see it as an unproblematic homogeneous unit of analysis. I will focus on discourses of exclusion created by Brazil's main foreign policy decision-makers and institutions, but I will not obliterate differences among domestic actors. Those differences will be discussed whenever they affect Brazil's international profile.

construction of a "Mercosul identity", a term coined by the president himself. In his view, the leaders of the region had overcome the disputes in terms of who was closer to U.S. interests and had important achievements, ranging from the agreement on the national benches in Parliament – and the bloc's direct election of representatives to this particular institution – to the privileged economic and political situation after the 2008 financial crisis. Although Lula had indicated a higher level of convergence in the political relationship among the members – "we are not here to talk about nuclear bombs, nor war" –, there are several impediments to integration. They range from the lack of an efficient mechanism for dispute settlement to the difficulty of developing the idea of integration in the collective imagination of its members' societies (Oliveira).

Divisions between identity and difference indicate the permanence of dichotomous ways of thinking about the regional relations in the Southern Cone. Within Mercosul, it is possible to observe the persistence of a traditional pattern of trade among the members: Brazil continues to import commodities and export manufactured goods to other members. Moreover, the bloc had a limited role in stimulating the competitiveness of regional exports, particularly manufactured goods to markets in the developed world, and fighting endogenous reasons for the lack of competitiveness of industrial imports (Vaz). At the intra-regional level, different views about the integration process – that prevent the coordination of positions – and individual strategic interests remain, which take precedence over the alliance between leaders and societies. Many of these differences arise from the conception that Paraguay and Uruguay are relegated to a marginal or submissive position in the distribution of gains within the bloc by Brazil and Argentina, which account for most of the benefits of economic activity spurred by integration. According to the Uruguayan advisor of the Chamber of Commerce Dolores Benavente, "Mercosul is like a family: Brazil is the father; Argentina, the mother; Uruguay and Paraguay, the kids" (Gerchmann, my translation). The logic – recognized even by weaker countries' authorities – is that the different – seen as "less skilled" and "less developed" like "children" – are placed in subordinate positions to the stronger and economically more vibrant members, labeled as

"advanced" and "more appropriate" to the parameters of international economy. By naturalizing such categorization, the marginalization of the economically weakest members is perpetuated, even though the interaction with the strongest is not interrupted.

Since 2006, Uruguay's and Paraguay's leaders have made it clear that time was running out to meet their demands regarding the elimination of asymmetries in the bloc and thus ensure their stay in Mercosul. Paraguayan authorities said that their country would leave the bloc if Brazil and Argentina did not interrupt their protectionist practices. In 2006, Uruguayan authorities argued that Mercosul should have flexible rules on trade with countries outside the integration process. They stated that, in case of Brazil's non-acceptance of a free trade agreement with the U.S., Uruguay could change its status in Mercosul to the one of associated country. Brazilian leaders have not categorically rejected the initiative of Uruguay to seek bilateral agreements, provided that it did not compromise compliance with the Common External Tariff (CET), which is a central axis of the bloc. Uruguayan leaders alleged that the failures of Mercosul prevented further progress regarding the expansion of access to other markets and that their country was damaged by "significant costs" such as deindustrialization of less competitive sectors and job losses.

The creation of the Mercosul Structural Convergence Fund in the second half of the 2000s aimed at reducing economic asymmetries among Mercosul members, seeking to meet the demands of Uruguay and Paraguay. With the creation of Mercosul Parliament in 2006, Lula urged congressmen to think of generous policies for smaller countries and saw that the most powerful countries of Mercosul should collaborate in the development of the weakest. Still, even with this apparent increased concern with the reduction of asymmetries, hierarchies between stronger and weaker members are perpetuated, and as such they reproduce the understanding of weaker countries as "supporting actors" in relation to the other members. In the search for a more balanced participation of Paraguay and Uruguay, Brazil's and Argentina's decision-makers would have to confront the

issue of institutional representativeness beyond the terms in which it has been treated so as to provide the authentic expression of multilateralism in Mercosul (Bouzas, “Mercosul, dez anos depois: processo de aprendizado ou déjà-vu?”).

The maintenance of Brazil’s privileged position in Mercosul is also possible through the dissemination of values and principles that inhibit the expression of difference that represents a threat to its interests. For example, the 1998 Ushuaia Protocol stipulated that democratic institutions were a prerequisite for the development of the bloc and changes of the democratic order were barriers to participation in the integration process (Almeida, *Mercosul em sua primeira década (1991-2001): uma avaliação política a partir do Brasil*). Venezuela – a country in process of accession that should incorporate the democratic commitments at that time – was conceived by many Brazilian politicians and civil society groups as an “atypical,” “dysfunctional” or “problematic” model of state that would need to be “tamed” under “real” democratic values. Brazilian legislators criticized Hugo Chávez’s decision not to renew the lease of network transmission of Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV), hindering the freedom of the press and wounding democratic principles. Chávez responded by labeling Brazilian congressmen as “parrots who repeat U.S. orders”. Brazilian Congress ratified Venezuela’s accession to the bloc in 2009, but many Brazilian senators complained about Chávez and Venezuela. During talks with U.S. officials (who suggested “intelligence sharing” with the Brazilians in order to monitor the Venezuelans), Amorim declared that Brazil did not see Chávez as a threat (Viana). However, in a confidential telegram revealed by WikiLeaks, Defense Minister Nelson Jobim labels Venezuela as a “new threat to regional stability” and says that “Brazilian people consider plausible a military incursion by Chávez in a neighboring country because of his unpredictable character”. This was one of the main reasons for the creation of a South American Defense Council in order to “insert Venezuela and other countries of the region in a common organization that Brazil can control” (“Celso Amorim diz que Chávez ‘late mais que morde’”, Veja, my translation).

In spite of the fact that trade liberalization has proceeded relatively quickly in Mercosul, structural imbalances between Brazil and Argentina were not eliminated. With rising budget deficits and weak attraction of foreign investment, the “Brazil-dependence” proved negative for Argentina (Almeida, *Mercosul em sua primeira década (1991-2001): uma avaliação política a partir do Brasil*, “Problemas conjunturais e estruturais da integração na América do Sul: a trajetória do Mercosul desde suas origens até 2006”). The negative image of Brazil in Argentina was strengthened after 1999, when the devaluation of the Brazilian real and the introduction of a floating exchange rate have generated not only the reaction of Argentina’s private sector, but also a political-commercial crisis of Mercosul’s external credibility. At first, with the permanence of the problems linked to the Argentina’s lack of competitiveness, Argentinean politicians saw Brazil as a threat. Some said that there was a Brazilian plan to deliberately harm Argentina and doubted Brazil’s good intentions. In references to Brazil, Argentinean Economy minister Domingo Cavallo said that “countries that devalue their currencies to become more competitive are doing the same thing as stealing from their neighbors” (Maia, my translation). Argentinean authorities saw such a policy as harmful to their country, which updated constant criticisms that Brazil tried to solve its internal problems at the expense of its neighbors. The lack of capacity of Mercosul to deal with the crisis became even more obvious, especially regarding problems such as the lack of an appropriate institutional framework for solving internal disputes, the gap created by different perceptions of members about the bloc and the weak macroeconomic policy coordination (Souto-Maior 7-10). Although in 2002 President Lula had made promises to rebuild Brazil’s special relationship with Argentina, Argentinean authorities began to make use of trade defense mechanisms considered “abusive” by their Brazilian counterparts, such as unilateral safeguards and antidumping measures (Almeida, “Problemas conjunturais e estruturais da integração na América do Sul: a trajetória do Mercosul desde suas origens até 2006”). If Brazil was conceived by Argentine politicians and businessmen as “unfair and self-interested”, Argentina was seen as “weak” by the Brazilian side. Amorim’s declaration in 2004 puts Brazil in a privileged position and marginalizes Argentina as “less dynamic”:

In the beginning of negotiations in Mercosul, what did Argentinean businessmen and public sector want? They saw in Brazil a dynamism that Argentina didn't have, especially in the industrial sector. They wanted to include Argentina into this dynamism, to positively contaminate Argentine industry, but, for various reasons, they followed a different track. It is necessary to get back to this dynamism. (...) This won't be done with automatic safeguards, triggers that have problems (...) Brazil is the bigger country and it will keep having a greater importance in all of this (Amorim, "Entrevista ao Jornal Valor Econômico", my translation).

In relation to African countries, the separation of modernity and backwardness; civilization and barbarianism was consolidated. The concept of "civilization", in the contemporary world, reaffirms the ideas of socioeconomic progress, viable governments, human rights, the strengthening of democratic values and the repudiation of terrorism. It lives on as a modern regulatory ambition, when it disciplines subjectivity and determines identity in particular spatiotemporal contexts. The "civilizing" notions are conceived as an ideal of social organization and adapted to the particularities of each place and time, giving effect to hierarchies that marginalize difference and ensure the integrity of the dominant identity. In Lula's declarations about African countries, many of those hierarchies persisted and reflected the conception of Africa as a "backward" continent. In his visit to Namibia in 2003, Lula said that the country's capital, Windhoek, was "so clean, that it doesn't even look like Africa" (BBC Brasil, my translation). In his conception – shared by different sectors of Brazilian government and society –, Africa's images are connected to poverty and dirtiness, which reifies a contrast between African states and the "rich" and "clean" non-African countries. Another example was Lula's declaration about South Africa's hosting of the 2010 World Cup. Lula said that "it was necessary that the World Cup occurred here [in South Africa] for the world to see that Africans were as civilized as those who criticized them before the event" (Azevedo, my translation). Although Lula's intentions to pay a compliment to South Africa and to the African

countries, his declaration reified the centrality of the concept of civilization and the hierarchies it established, according to which African countries were perceived as backward, primitive or not as civilized as non-African states.

Many would say that declarations like those could demonstrate simply the existence of an exclusionary vision on Lula's or his government members' part. I recognize that statements like those alone could not demonstrate the existence of an unequivocal excluding profile in Brazilian foreign policy. However, those individual declarations take a different dimension when, in relations between Brazil and African countries, we can identify mechanisms that reveal cultural and political postures of hierarchization even in official documents and reports produced by Itamaraty, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. In its foreign policy balance from 2003 to 2010 for the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries – composed mostly by African countries –, Brazilian Foreign Ministry indicates that:

For Brazil, the natural benefits of shared language and common cultural-historical heritage, as well as the fact that the country has recognized expertise in strategic sectors for economic and social development of African Portuguese-speaking countries and East Timor, such as the case of tropical agriculture and the fight against HIV-AIDS, make these countries singular partners for the consolidation, either in bilateral or communitarian bases, of the South-South cooperation paradigm. Almost half of the resources destined by Brazil to technical cooperation are destined for African Portuguese-speaking countries and East Timor (“Balanço de Política Externa 2003/2010”, my translation).

In the official discourse, Brazil is portrayed as the owner of something that its partners do not have: expertise in strategic sectors for socioeconomic development. It inserts Brazil in a privileged socioeconomic and cultural position in relation to its partners, creates the logic of superiority of its policies, and reinforces the dependence of other countries on Brazilian support in the area of technical cooperation. The discourse consolidates exclusionary practices in which

the “more civilized” and “developed” actor helps its “less civilized” and “backward” partners. Though this cooperation avoids impositions and conditionalities on aid, those “comparative advantages” that the Foreign Ministry tries to highlight allow the facilitation of the action of Brazilian institutions and companies in those countries.

In other occasions, Brazilian authorities try to posit Brazil as a “model” to inspire “less civilized”, “less democratic” or “less developed” countries, conceiving their solutions for specific problems as “natural” or “the best way” to solve impasses. In February 2011, when the Egyptian Parliament was dissolved after President Hosni Mubarak’s resignation, the Brazilian ambassador for Egypt Cesário Melantonio Neto said that “this is the natural way to democracy in Egypt. We can even compare with Brazil’s history. In our transition to democracy, after the military regime, we needed a new Parliament and formed a National Constitutional Assembly to elaborate a new Constitution for the country, based on democratic values” (“Embaixador do Brasil no Egito apoia dissolução do Parlamento”, my translation). This model image of Brazil – and also its leaders – is also accepted by those who have more common historical roots with Brazilians, such as the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. When Guinea-Bissau’s president Malam Bacai Sanhá won national elections in 2009, he said that he would like to be “the Lula of Guinea-Bissau. We share a very similar culture, we speak the same language, we share the same history. (...) I would like to sit and talk to president Lula. I’d like to share some points of view on development (...). There are a lot of good things in Brazil” (“Presidente diz que quer 'ser o Lula da Guiné-Bissau'.”). Although Brazilian authorities might manipulate and emphasize the common aspects of identity with African countries for political and economic convenience, they put Brazil, again, in a privileged position that reifies hierarchies.

Similar patterns are visible in Brazil’s relations with Iran, particularly when Brazil tried to mediate between Iran and Western powers – specially the U.S. – regarding the controversial Iranian nuclear program in May 2010. Brazilian authorities brokered, along with their Turkish counterparts, an agreement in which

Iran agreed to exchange low-enriched uranium for 19,75% enriched fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor. During the talks, Brazilian negotiators tried to show that Brazil shared with Iran the identity of a developing country that wanted to preserve its autonomy and the inalienable rights to develop peaceful nuclear activities. However, in the eyes of most of the international community, Iran seeks to develop its nuclear program for the possible production of nuclear weapons. While Iran looks distant from the Western model of society, Brazilian leaders reinforced that Brazilian foreign policy was based on “universal values” such as the defense of human rights, the criticism to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the condemnation of terrorism. The reiteration of this image and its embedded values perpetuated – even unconsciously – the idea that countries and societies that were not totally adapted or conformed to this standard were "dysfunctional" and "anomalous" in relation to "civilized" actors. Through the adoption of a diplomatic vocabulary and the enhancement of communication channels, Brazilian authorities tried to broker the fuel swap, but the U.S. and European leaders criticized the Tehran Declaration for not eliminating the continued production of 19,75% enriched uranium inside Iranian territory. Brazilian authorities tried to increase their relevance in world affairs by disciplining Iran in modern structures of authority through mediation and trying to build trust. However, the U.S. and European leaders considered that Iran wanted to break international unity regarding its nuclear intentions. They rejected links between the Tehran Declaration and sanctions against Iran. Though Brazilian negotiators and the global powers' leaders opted for different methods, it is possible to identify in both initiatives attempts to “discipline” and “domesticate” difference, as well as its assimilation into structures of authority where the threat it symbolized could be eliminated in the name of stability and well-being of the international community.

The multiple attempts to “civilize rogue states” show the permanence of a modern regulative ambition that locates difference spatiotemporally in order to preserve peace. As Amorim puts:

We think that when we are in the Security Council, whether permanent or not, we have to contribute to peace and security in the world and not just deal with our own interests. I have followed this subject for a long time, and it was a problem that I always thought had no solution until I heard about the swap agreement. (...) And I thought maybe a country like Brazil, which has this capacity for dialogue with several countries, could somehow help. And so I discussed this subject with the Iranians. President Ahmadinejad came here. And I made trips to Iran, and I really found that it was in principle possible to pursue that role ("The Soft-Power Power").

Amorim's declaration shows that Brazil sees itself as different from the "problem" that Iran brings and, instead, it conceives itself as part of the "solution" in light of its ability to negotiate. Brazil was as a "student" of global powers in the "pedagogy of the competition" (Blaney and Inayatullah) when it adopted democratic and liberal orientations developed by such powers, which was fundamental in winning support from those states and key international institutions. As it became more adept and embedded in the "teacher's" intellectual world, this relationship changed: Brazilian decision-makers tried to prove that they can not only "teach" Iran on how to act, but also thought that global powers could learn a lot from Brazilian lessons of dealing, in a more open and trustful way, with countries traditionally labeled as "rogue states".

Brazil's relations with global powers

Although Brazil shares the Western identity with global powers, other types of hierarchies operated simultaneously in their relations. I recognize there is a lot of space for mediation with difference and sharing of values between Brazil and the U.S. or the European Union, but many logocentric structures remain active. Brazilian decision-makers wanted to ensure that regime type and economic orthodoxy, for example, were not used as tools of subtle control by leaders of dominant states. Domination can be implemented in more subtle ways, specially by

the preservation of asymmetries in international institutions, which Brazilian authorities criticize very intensely. Amorim said that:

Until recently all global decisions were made by a handful of traditional powers. The permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the U.S., who are incidentally the five nuclear powers recognized as such by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — had (and still have) the privilege of dealing the cards on matters of international peace and security. The G-8 was in charge of important decisions affecting the global economy. In questions related to international trade, the ‘Quad’ — the U.S., the European Union, Japan and Canada — dominated the scene (Amorim, “Let’s Hear From the New Kids on the Bloc”).

Amorim recognized that developing countries had more participation in world politics, but asymmetries were preserved:

On April 15, Brasilia was host to two consecutive meetings at the highest political level: the second BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) summit and the fourth IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil and South Africa). Such groups, different as they are, show a willingness and a commitment from emerging powers to redefine world governance. Many commentators singled out these twin meetings as more relevant than recent G-7 or G-8 gatherings.(...)

Paradoxically, issues related to international peace and security — some might say the “hard core” of global politics — remain the exclusive territory of a small group of countries (“Let’s Hear From the New Kids on the Bloc”).

When talking about the Tehran Declaration, Amorim (“Let’s Hear From the New Kids on the Bloc”) saw that emerging powers such as Brazil could “disturb the status quo” when dealing with subjects “that would be typically handled by the

P5+1 (the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany)”, but he also recognized that “the traditional centers of power will not share gladly their privileged status”. Brazilian decision-makers recognized the obsolescence of old types of domination by global powers, such as open conquest or colonization, but indicated the existence of more subtle forms of crystallization of hierarchies that revived old myths of submission of weaker or less developed countries. Most of those myths were revived by the growing unilateralism of global powers, which contrast to what Amorim (“The Soft-Power Power”) called Brazil’s “unique characteristic which is very useful in international negotiations: to be able to put itself in someone else's shoes, which is essential if you are looking for a solution”. The supposed arrogance of global powers dealing with some international issues were constantly condemned by Brazilian leaders and officers. As Amorim puts, “[t]here are things we [Brazilians] are able to say (...) that we would not be able if I just go to the world podium and say, ‘Here I am; I'm a great guy. I'm a self-righteous guy. And you have to do what I say’. (...) They [global powers] may think they have the moral authority, but they won't be heard” (“The Soft-Power Power”).

The maintenance of hierarchies between “us” and “them”, identity and difference is more explicit in Brazil’s relations with the U.S.. According to Andrew Hurrell, both countries have a consensual position over substantive values that coexist with a deep disagreement over the procedural values. This means that they agree on the importance of democracy and liberal values, but they disagree on which values from the liberal basket should be given priority. Particularly after September 11th 2001, those Western liberal values were emphasized in Brazilian foreign policy, but that was not a synonym for full-scope adherence to policies adopted by the U.S. For example, while the U.S. authorities defended a more interventionist perspective on the defense of democracy and the design of institutions in similar models to its own society, Brazilians adopted a minimal and less interventionist definition of the term that encompassed free elections and institutions and the rule of law. I agree with Hurrell about the consensus on substantive values, but I think the real clashes of interest, along with deep and

persistent divergences between Brazil and the U.S. in the way they view the international context have deeper motivations. The common frustration in relations between those countries and the absence of close engagement has to do, in my opinion, with the reiteration of hierarchies in the bilateral relations that updates old discourses of domination and imperialism, even in a context of close commercial and political relations between both states. The U.S. represented a threat to Brazilian interests of preserving leadership in South America and among developing countries.

Brazil's initiative toward a leading role in South America is visible in the creation of the Union of South American Nations in 2008 and the strengthening of the 1978 Amazon Pact. Nevertheless, fears that Brazil could assemble South America into a single bloc in order to destabilize U.S. presence in the Americas grew strong after Brazilian reluctance to follow the American initiative to revitalize its inter-American leadership. Brazilian authorities have also shown their resistance to U.S. interventionist initiatives in Latin America, which would open precedents that threaten sovereignty. Brazilian leaders showed their condemnation, through bilateral and multilateral channels, to the U.S. supported coup d'état against Hugo Chávez (Santiso). They also criticized U.S. support for Colombia's war against drug trafficking and guerrilla forces – that could be used as a pretext for U.S. presence in the Amazon region – and showed strong reservations regarding U.S. concern with intelligence and police control in the Triple Border between the cities of Puerto Iguazu, Ciudad del Este and Foz do Iguaçu, supposedly a sanctuary for Islamic terrorism (Hirst).

In economic affairs, Brazilian authorities defended that the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) structure should lie upon the existing blocs in order to consolidate existing sub-regional initiatives and their bargaining power towards the U.S. and Nafta. In 1997, Brazil assumed a more affirmative stance based on the indivisible nature of the negotiating package, the coexistence between FTAA and the existing agreements and non-exclusion of any sector in negotiations related to access to markets or the elimination of barriers. In the beginning of last decade,

the Brazilian government's perception was that the U.S. administration wanted to consolidate the implementation of liberal reforms and force the unilateral opening of Latin American economies, creating commercial advantages with the reduction of barriers to its exports. Furthermore, the U.S. Congress was not willing to make concessions, such as the elimination of agriculture subsidies and the revision of antidumping legislation (Bouzas, "El 'nuevo regionalismo' y el Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas: un enfoque menos indulgente"; Cortes). Brazilian authorities started to develop the image of the U.S. as a threat connected to intentions of creating a hemispheric institutional and legal architecture for its hegemonic interests. Brazil feared the dismantling of its industries and national services because of the high level of competitiveness of American companies and the possible negative impacts on its trade balance.

Before the interruption of FTAA negotiations in 2005, Lula's government indicated that, even if the FTAA were created, Brazil would not become an unconditional ally of the U.S.. Similar positions were defended by Brazil in multilateral forums where it was an active player regarding the definition of rules. In multilateral trade negotiations, Brazilian negotiators criticized the subsidization of agriculture and excessive U.S. demands regarding new issues such as the enforcement of intellectual property rights. One of the major issues during the WTO Doha Development Round – which started in 2001 – was the debate on pharmaceutical licensing and public health programs, especially concerning the use of non-licensed pharmaceuticals in Brazilian anti-HIV/AIDS programs (Hirst). The Brazilian government and NGOs consider the U.S. position as a threat not only to the industry of generic pharmaceuticals, but also to health care programs for Brazilian society. Divergences that expose persistent hierarchies and the difficulty in dealing with the U.S. were also visible in Brazil's multilateral position towards nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament issues. In spite of constant U.S. pressures, the Brazilian government refused to sign the IAEA Additional Protocol, partially because the reinforced safeguards system could create obstacles for the safety of national ultracentrifuge technology. Nevertheless, Brazilian authorities also saw that reinforced safeguards were not sustainable

without parallel developments by the nuclear-weapon states regarding nuclear disarmament (Ruble 54). Brazil still saw nuclear-weapon states such as the U.S. as threats because they did not live up to the commitments of NPT's Article VI to eliminate nuclear arsenals. Lula declared that "[t]he existence of weapons of mass destruction is what makes the world more dangerous, not agreements with Iran" (Lula, "Nuclear Weapons Make the World More Dangerous, Not Agreements with Iran").

Brazil's relations with the European Union were also characterized by the preservation of hierarchies, though in a more subtle way. The European Union developed a strategy of engagement with Latin American countries based on the promotion of economic development and global projection of European values and interests. The change in those relations was connected to the liberalization of European economies, the attempt to highlight the European Union in the new global economic politics and the competition with the U.S. for new markets. The model of cooperation developed by the European Union is based on partnership, inspired by notions of equality and cooperation that transcend power inequalities and supposedly challenge the notion of hierarchies. Inter-regionalism might encompass political and institutional reforms, as well as social inclusion and the overcoming of power imbalances between Europe and Latin America. The European Union tries to show that it is more concerned with a type of cooperation in which the North assumes responsibilities for the South's development and encourages transformations related to social responsibility and participation of civil society (Grugel). It was a way to minimize domination and submission stereotypes created by colonialism. However, new hierarchies emerge and rearticulate old myths of domination of European powers and dependency of Southern countries in contemporary times. In this context, Brazilian authorities see, behind the benevolent image of European strategy of partnership, the persistence of hierarchies that translate into protectionist barriers by the European Union against the access of Brazilian and Latin American export to its markets. Those barriers consolidate exclusion and represent a threat to Brazilian development, relegating the country to an inferior position in light of its necessity

to export agricultural products for economic growth. Brazilian politicians and businessmen understood the maintenance of strict rules that damage free trade as a threat to the development of the Brazilian economy and to the preservation of the country's identity as an emerging country.

Final considerations

Although there is space for mediation and interaction with difference in Brazil's relations with other countries, mechanisms of exclusion persist and create obstacles to the development of common experiences towards the destabilization of hierarchies and the sharing of values that transcend coexistence. Difference represented by underdeveloped and other developing countries was conceived as "backwardness" in relation to liberal and democratic models of development achieved by Brazil. Global powers were seen as "ambitious" through the revival and adaptation of old colonial discourses. Negative visions of difference persist and are constantly updated, reinvented and rearticulated. It would be very simplistic to say that this argumentation constructs the idea that, if Brazil recognizes that it has a more dynamic economy than his South American neighbors or his African partners, it would be evidence of Brazil's prepotency. It would also be limited to affirm that, if in the commercial and economic trade disputes with stronger powers (the U.S., European Union, etc.) Brazil moves towards protecting its national interest, it would be considered instantaneously a subtle indication of a dichotomist suspicious and resentful posture. What is being defended here is that Brazilian foreign policy might reflect deeply internalized notions of the depreciation of difference, which create obstacles to better political solutions for many problems in the relations with other countries.

I do not suggest in this article that the appreciation for dialogue and negotiation would require Brazilian authorities to deliberately ignore the existence of rich and poor countries, weak and strong states or even the anarchic characteristic of the international system. Instead, Brazilian leaders and society should consider those categories, but not take them for granted or as immutable elements of the international context. The destabilization of the pre-given

polarization between "advanced" and "backward" countries, societies that are "fit for development" and "unfit for development", opens the possibility for a critical reflection of Brazil's actions and the ways it internalized liberal proposals. It may also highlight ways to redefine policies aimed at reducing inequality with a denser and more precise knowledge of suffering of other societies, the recognition of common aspects between these experiences and the intensification of dialogue in new terms in order to overcome oppression. When it is possible to identify elements of exclusion similar to other societies in its own political, socioeconomic and cultural experience – the "Other within" –, Brazilians may reinforce dialogue with other societies and have more comprehension of their own society. This dialogue would be implemented through the analysis of domestic and foreign mechanisms that reproduce oppression and marginalization of peripheral societies in the international system and the development of better responses to such problems. Such efforts – which would be taken not only in relations with developing, but also developed countries – can be carried out through different ways. One first step could be the increased interaction of Itamaraty with other ministries to develop programs with foreign counterparts, aimed at strengthening technical cooperation in tackling problems related to issues such as health care, education and public safety, for example. Brazilian authorities can learn from mistakes and successes of its partners in implementing these programs domestically. Paradiplomacy and the involvement of subnational actors such as municipalities and federal state's governments may be important, given that many of these policies are put in practice at levels below the national level.

I do not assume the immutability of the international system as an arena of conflict in which foreign policies are determined with the consideration of relations between several self-interested states. So it is possible, according to the main argument developed in this article, to develop multiple ways to recognize practices of exclusion and share experiences of suffering and oppression in order to replace them with new proposals that critically reinvent international relations as intercultural relations of sharing and understanding.

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