

THE ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION IN BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY AS A STRATEGY OF SOFT POWER (2003-2016)

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Introduction

In the last few decades, there have been significant changes in the debate regarding humanitarianism (Bellamy 2003; Walzer 2011). New types of conflict and a larger focus in the individual security, among others, may be noticed as important aspects in those changes (Burke 2013; Kaldor 2013; Themnér and Wallensteen 2012; Wibben 2008). In a similar way, the role of the so-called Global South³ countries had also become a topic of discussion, given the critics derived from this group, especially in what concerns international interventions and the desire for a greater participation (Abdenur and Sochaczewski 2016, 68).

It is argued that, to a large extent, the humanitarian rhetoric has been employed to justify the interests of the involved states in detriment of those who suffer from the action. This occurs frequently in the field of humanitar-

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³ The term Global South is intensely debated at the academy. In this article, it refers to the group of countries that, in spite of not being fully geographically located at the Global South and of being heterogeneous, has the search for development as its common goal.

ian interventions. An example of this is the utilization of principles related to the concept of Responsibility to Protect (“R2P”). This concept has been and still is a target of much criticism either due to its selective application, either for integrating a list of political and military strategies of the states that employ it (Whittall, Reis and Deus 2016, 16-18), a situation that may compromise its humanitarian application.

In this sense, it has been possible to observe a growing involvement of developing countries in what concerns humanitarian issues. Brazil does not differ from this trend. From a dual model of cooperation, the Brazilian diplomacy has defended the creation of an autonomous and efficient humanitarian system. The experiences and difficulties through which the country has undergone have contributed in such a way that Brazil took the role of a transformational player of this system, being more attentive to the real necessities of the states to which this assistance was given and, mainly, of their populations.

Even though the Brazilian participation in humanitarian cooperation programs dates back to the 1960s, it was from 2000s on that its involvement stood out in the international scenario. Brazil, thus, assumed a *global player* profile (Pecequillo, 2008). Such larger international involvement, alongside a search for bigger cooperation, took place especially in the two governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, extending, to a lesser extent, to the governments of Dilma Rousseff. Lula’s foreign policy, marked by an “autonomy through diversification”, had as its goal a more just and balanced international system through the encouragement of the South-South cooperation⁴. In other words, that meant a closer relationship with African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007, 283).

In the present article, we shall focus on the Brazilian foreign policy throughout the 2000s as a strategy of *soft power* in the field of humanitarian cooperation. It is thus analyzed the humanitarian actuation as a tool for states with limited material components of power, as it is the case of Brazil, to stand out as *players* in the international scenario.

In the first section, we shall briefly present the guiding bases of Brazilian foreign policy in the period between 2000 and 2016, especially during Lula’s administration. In the second section, we explore Brazil’s role as an important player in the field of humanitarian cooperation due to the initiatives developed both in the domestic and external environments. The discussion continues, in the third section, with the evaluation of these foreign policy

⁴ The literature characterizes such policy as the cooperation for development and divides it in seven fields of activity: (i) technical cooperation; (ii) educational cooperation; (iii) scientific cooperation; (iv) humanitarian cooperation; (v) protection and support to refugees; (vi) peacekeeping operations; and (vii) expenditures with international organisms (IPEA 2016).

actions in light of the concept of *soft power*. Then, we conclude this article by highlighting the Brazilian contributions to the humanitarian field, which, due to the changes in government and political priorities, have not been maintained. We argue that the character of these actions led to strategies of high profile political gains in the pursuit of autonomy and Brazilian international relevance, long term objectives of Brazilian foreign policy.

The strategies of Brazilian foreign policy in the 2000s

The changes that took place in the international order from the 1990s on had a decisive impact in the formulation of the Brazilian foreign policy. After a paradigms' crisis during Collor de Mello's government (Pinheiro 2000, 308-309; Saraiva 2010, 46), Brazil redesigned its international action, maintaining its long-term aims – autonomy and relevance (Lima 2005; Pinheiro and Salomón 2013) – as its guiding principles.

In this period, Brazil had initially chosen a rapprochement with the United States, based on the unipolar logic that was expected from the end of the Cold War. Such rapprochement, nonetheless, has not occurred in detriment to the relations with the other states (Pecequillo, 2008, 138). It is possible to observe that, in that time, especially during Fernando Henrique Cardoso ("FHC")'s government, the country had sought a larger participation in multilateral stances (Pinheiro and Hirst 1995), in an effort of "renewing its credentials"⁵ (Fonseca Jr. 1998).

Given the absence of significant amounts of material components of power (Carvalho and Valença 2014), multilateralism and the participation in international forum were the best way for the country to increase its credibility in the international scenario. The country's international legitimacy would then derive from its greater participation in the international regimes, promoting multilateralism in international relations (De Campos Mello 2014).

The strategies of Brazilian foreign policy developed during FHC's government would characterize the pursuit of "autonomy through integration". This was understood as the adherence to the international regimes, but with the maintenance of the autonomy, having as its goal "to influence the formulation of the principles and the norms that rule the international system" (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007, 283. Our translation).

⁵ Term coined by Gelson Fonseca Junior that showed Brazilian behavior to overcome its image of a solely sovereign country through the adherence to international regimes. Examples of this are the Washington Consensus, the Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Pact of San José.

The beginning of the 2000s brought changes in the Brazilian foreign policy. The failure of some initiatives, such as the attempt to promote a more just international trade, the search for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (“UNSC”) and the negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, shed light on a saturation of the “Bilateral Decade”. Furthermore, the disruption of the Uruguay Round, as well as the existence of litigations against the US within the scope of the World Trade Organization have affected even more the ambitions of construction a more egalitarian international order.

In light of a scenario of economic crisis in Latin America, which culminated in the weakening of Mercosur and the neoliberal model that was once desired to be implemented in the region, and of change in the presidency of the US – with George W. Bush increasing the distance between the US and the rest of the continent –, the Brazilian strategies switched their orientation. There is a greater rapprochement with South America and countries such as Russia, China and India (Pecequilo 2008). Multilateralism continued to be a focus of Brazilian foreign policy, however, its axis turned to the Global South, which began to strengthen itself in the international politics.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva win in the presidential election reinforced the preference for change in partnerships. The aim of increasing Brazil’s international participation from the Global South and through multilateralism was kept. The policy of development was strengthened during Lula’s government with foreign policy strategies compatible with the role of a middle power assumed by Brazil. It became noticeable that the world order that was being constituted was multipolar, opening up space for new actors. Brazil starts to seek a global trader and player profile (Pecequilo 2008), through which it would be capable of operating alongside the great debates at the same time that it would influence the constitution of international norms and principles.

While FHC’s foreign policy was marked by the “autonomy through participation”, Lula’s foreign policy strategies were defined as the “autonomy through diversification”. Both of these sought a more just and balanced international system, which would be reached through South-South cooperation. It was thus a renewal of the previous model, without, nevertheless, promoting a complete rupture. “Autonomy through diversification” is defined as

The country’s adherence to the international principles and norms through South-South alliances, including regional ones, and through agreements with non-conventional partners (China, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, Middle East, etc.), once it is believed that they reduce the asymmetries in foreign relations with more powerful countries and increase the national

negotiating capacity (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007, 283).

We need to highlight that South-South cooperation was not a new feature of Lula's government, neither it was born in FHC's administration. It gained more visibility in Jânio Quadros' and João Goulart's Independent Foreign Policy, being also present in the military government, even though to a lesser extent. An exception of this was Geisel's Responsible and Ecumenical Pragmatism, which, once again, placed South-South relations in a privileged spot in the Brazilian agenda.

Autonomy through diversification rescues some of the principles of these previous policies, aiming at reducing asymmetries of the international system through the creation of initiatives such as the IBSA Dialogue Forum, WTO's G20, the G4 – a partnership between Brazil, India, Japan and Germany that seeks a reform of the UNSC – and the BRICS. The goal of these coalitions is to legitimize these states' claims via concerted action, aiming to build an inclusive and fairer international scenario.

As a reflection of the search for greater cooperation and the promotion of the Southern countries' development, Brazil had engaged itself in resource transfer policies and technical advice with minimum financial counterparts. Examples of such are the resources transfers to poorer African countries – in a partnership with the World Bank –, the remission of debts and the Brazilian Development Bank actuation as an *Eximbank* for Latin America (Amorim 2010, Carvalho and Valença 2014). The pursuit of regional leadership was conducted by the idea that the promotion of the South's development was fundamental for the success of such endeavor.

In this context, we realize that, during Lula's government, humanitarian cooperation programs had become central in foreign policy strategies. In spite of being involved in the subject of humanitarian cooperation since the 1960s, it was during the 2000s that the Brazilian action became remarkable in the international scenario. The "diplomacy of solidarity"⁶ of Lula's government, with a greater emphasis in South-South relations, had as its slogan the "non-indifference" principle. The "non-indifference" principle would have a broader scope than the principle of non-intervention. While this latter focused on the interference in other states' internal matters, the non-indifference based its justification the idea of social justice, in which the international concerted action could not, and should not, ignore the inequalities and social challenges within the states (Soares de Lima 2005).

6 Such idea of solidarity as an engine for diplomatic activism gained strength in the speeches of Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The Brazilian search for international projection was also influenced by institutional changes within Itamaraty⁷ (Saraiva 2013, 70). This implied a reevaluation of Brazil's role in the international system, and it is based on these principles that we shall analyze the Brazilian involvement in the field of humanitarian cooperation.

Brazil and Humanitarian Cooperation

Humanitarian cooperation is understood as the joint action regarding humanitarian issues; in other words, to go beyond the unilateral donation of resources, seeking a simultaneous action between the states that offer assistance and those that receive it. Its objectives, having as its basis UN's principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, comprise the guarantee of "fundamental and universal human rights in situations in which (...) the states and the civil society regard as debilitated their capacity to protect, promote and provide such rights, reasons for which they appeal to the international community" (IPEA 2016, 123). It is possible to notice, from this concept, the search for an egalitarian relationship between states, in which there is an "idea (...) of establishing more horizontal, less hierarchic and more dialogical parameters both in speech and in practice" (Milani 2016, 160).

By preferring to use this expression rather than "humanitarian aid", Brazil demonstrates to be greatly involved in the international agendas (Murthy and Kurtz 2015). Humanitarian aid, on the other hand, consists in "alleviating the suffering during conflicts, social turbulences, disasters and social exclusion (...) it refers to the immediate capacity of saving lives" (Whittall, Reis and Deus 2016, 12 and 21).

The preference for humanitarian cooperation occurs due to the fact that the expression "humanitarian aid" is considered to be pejorative. It suggests that the assistance is given to states that are not capable of achieving certain "patterns" of development. Given the recent colonial past of considerable part of Global South states, the humanitarian aid would imply an unequal relation between the one that assists and the one that is assisted. The utilization of the expression "humanitarian cooperation", on the other hand, attributes agency to both parts, establishing, at least in speech, a more just, horizontal and egalitarian relation.

⁷ During Lula's government, a group known as "autonomists" gains strength in Itamaraty. The "autonomists" defend that the country adopts a more proactive and independent behavior in international politics, differently from the "institutionalists" – which had a bigger influence during FHC's government –, which gave priority to Brazil's support to international regimes (Saraiva 2010).

In Brazil's case, there is an evident expectation, though still undefined, of the results to be produced from humanitarian cooperation initiatives. It "aims at contributing to the prevention, the response, the mitigation and the socioeconomic and environmental recuperation of vulnerable communities and in emergency situations" (MRE 2015). This means that, in terms of humanitarian cooperation, Brazil develops strategies both in short and long term, reiterating its concern with the structural issues of the assisted states.

Among the actions carried out by Brazil, an example that stands out due to its centrality in the Brazilian international role was the General Coordination of Humanitarian Cooperation and Fight Against Hunger ("CG Fome"). CG Fome, formalized in 2004 and ceased in 2016, operated as the international interface of the Zero Hunger Program (Fome Zero) and led to the creation of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on International Humanitarian Assistance ("GTI-AHI"), in 2006 (MRE 2015). The creation of CG Fome permitted an increase in the Brazilian participation in international humanitarian cooperation, in such a way that a significant part of the country's actuation was articulated having this program as its basis. It was with its aid, for example, that the Congress approved the donation of US\$ 55 million to support the victims of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.

CG Fome embraced both structural and emergency cooperation, which occurred through two different ways: financial contributions and donation of first necessity items. The financial contributions were carried out through international organizations' programs that aimed mainly at promoting long-term development. The donation of essential items, for its turn, occurred according to each states' individual demands and comprised the donation of food supplies, medicaments and others (MRE 2015).

Despite not presenting a remarkable international record in humanitarian cooperation, Brazil had significantly increased its participation in the field during the 2000s and 2010s, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. According to data of the year of 2012 from the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2015), in the ranking of international donors of the World Food Programme ("WFP"), the country went from the 34th place in terms of amount and 53rd in relation to the Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") to the seventh place⁸. In those lists, before Brazil there were only countries considered to be developed (Rondó Filho 2016, 129-132). Accordingly, "the Brazilian experience inspired the Secretary-General of the United Nations to launch the Zero Hunger Challenge, which forged the second Sustainable Development Goal – that approaches the hunger issue" (Jones 2016, 151. Our translation).

⁸ The data were taken from the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report of 2015. The Brazilian donations were centered in the food area, involving especially rice, beans and corn.

Although not being a great financial donor in absolute financial amount, Brazil had an undeniable strategic relevance in the international scenario. Given its particularities regarding humanitarian cooperation, and its recent past as an aid receptor and as a representative of the Global South, the country is a part of the Good Humanitarian Donorship group. Nonetheless, its participation as a contributor to the UN's peacekeeping operations collaborates to increase its strategic role through a broader range of initiatives concerning humanitarian issue (Jones 2016, 150).

Specifically, regarding peacekeeping operations and humanitarian interventions, it is possible to observe a Brazilian emphasis on the promotion of social development, constructing its rhetoric by connecting the eruption of significant conflicts to the socioeconomic inequalities. The developmental agenda that marked the country's foreign policy strategies was present in this construction, as well as the defense of multilateralism and the non-indifference principle (Nasser 2012, De Campos Mello 2014).

In accordance to the foreign policy strategies developed in the period, Brazil had also proposed, in 2011, the concept of "Responsibility while Protecting" ("RwP") alongside the UNSC (Hamann 2012). This concept had its origins in the non-intervention principles and in the pursuit for greater social justice in the international scene. RwP represents the preference for preemptive measures rather than the use of force to avoid massive human rights violation and hamper the occurrence of armed conflicts, focusing on the protection of civilians in scenarios of violence (Valença and Tostes 2015, 75).

Such actions, in spite of having been conducted after the end of Lula's government, reflected the aspects present in its presidential inauguration speech, in 2003. In it, Lula emphasized that foreign policy would be an instrument of national development and that the combat against hunger would be a priority in his government (Brasil 2003). Enjoying the legacy left by its antecessor, former president Lula strengthened the international action and, with the formulation of a foreign policy anchored in humanitarian cooperation, projected mechanisms that would be compatible with national interests, such as "two sides of a same coin" (Soares de Lima and Hirst 2006, 21. Our translation).

In this very same line of thought, we may also highlight the speech delivered in the World Economic Forum of Davos, in 2003. In its speech, the former president explained what would be his perspective of foreign policy, which would correspond to the conciliation of national interests and the search for cooperation: "the Brazilian diplomatic speech seems to acknowledge the possibility of a harmonic coexistence – both in practical and conceptual terms – between national interest and solidarity" (Nasser 2012, 234).

As a result, the power projection would be compatible with his government's diplomacy of solidarity, which would occur mainly through humanitarian cooperation.

The search for protagonism and leadership in all of these factors had contributed to Brazil's international strengthening and its recognition as a humanitarian actor, even though these initiatives were weakened by subsequent governments. The consequences of such status had a positive effect on Brazilian foreign policy's long term objectives: the search for relevance and autonomy. This had increased the country's projection in the field of humanitarian cooperation and allowed the diffusion of a political agenda according to the country's interests regarding the consolidation of international norms and principles. With a more active voice and a growing participation in the international forum and organizations, a larger international projection was achieved more naturally. In the following section, we continue by evaluating through which way this pursuit of a bigger international projection works, specially through the employment of *soft power*.

Soft Power and Humanitarian Cooperation

The search – at least rhetorical – for a more autonomous, just and efficient humanitarian system does not mean to leave aside gains in the national level. Brazilian foreign policy strategies that had the humanitarian cooperation as its tool provided a positive sum game to the country and to the international order, with victories for both arenas. Both in the political and diplomatic speeches and in the practice, the coexistence between the national interest and solidarity is evident (Nasser 2012).

This logic was at the core of Brazilian South-South cooperation established in the XXI century, and had motivated a series of actions and measures. Examples of this are the G-20, the IBSA Dialogue Forum and the BRICS. All of these initiatives comprise states with different material and political capacities, which, however, unite to reach common objectives and goals, contributing to strengthen national *soft power*.

Differently from material components of power, *soft power* does not depend on military elements or natural resources in order to promote a state's interests. The term *soft power* refers to the capacity of influencing the decision-making process of a state by coopting it, without the deployment of material components of power.

Joseph Nye defines *soft power* as the “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attrac-

tiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our *soft power* is enhanced" (Nye Jr. 2004, 10). It is not about influence, but a strategy of application of power politics, given that influence is not the same as power (Morgenthau 2003, 52). Later on, Nye Jr reinforces this tripartite structure on which a state's *soft power* is based, putting it as a descriptive rather than a normative concept (Nye Jr. 2011, 81)⁹.

In the case of Brazil, *soft power* is employed as a political strategy for the legitimation of national interests, especially in light of its limitation in terms of material components of power (Kenkel 2013, 276). Despite being complemented by material components of power, as shown by Brazil's participation in peacekeeping operations and in the development of a submarine of nuclear propulsion (Carvalho and Valença 2014), Brazilian rhetoric is structured around the central role of *soft power* as a way of accomplishing its aims. Thus, and through a non-confrontational foreign policy, Brazil operationalizes the usage of its *soft power* from three axes: its culture, the promotion of its political values in the regional level and diplomacy (Milani et al. 2014, 50).

The diversification of partnerships and the defense of multilateralism were operationalized as tools of the Brazilian *soft power* strategy. Daniel Flemes, for instance, when criticizing Brazilian limitations to become a dominant power – especially in the military dimension – highlights that a violent rupture in the international order is unlikely. Therefore, strategies of institutional character, such as the formation of coalitions within the scope of South-South cooperation, would seem more promising to alter the states' international hierarchy (Flemes 2010). This strategy is defined as *soft balancing*, which means the search for a balance of power in the international system through the employment of non-military mechanisms. With this, and through the promotion of new forms of power in the international politics, states as Brazil could have better conditions of projecting themselves as global players, occupying and consolidating political spaces in a dynamic international arena.

More than specific initiatives, the promotion of multilateralism as a guiding aspect of the international relations reinforces Brazilian constitutional principles and gives greater legitimacy to the country's leadership. Notwithstanding this principled dimension, an international order structured in multilateralism would guarantee the maintenance of the balance of power in international relations and reflect the claims, influence and rhetoric of States

⁹ Although popularized by Nye Jr. in 2004, the concept underlying the idea of *soft power* is not new to international politics. Authors such as Hans Morgenthau (2003) had already discussed the influence of *soft power* in their work, referring to it as another strategy for applying power politics.

with less material capacity for power (Hirst, Soares de Lima and Pinheiro 2010, 29).

Thus, we may point out that the political rhetoric and the diplomatic strategies promoted during Lula's government were structured having elements of *soft power* as its foundation. The aim was that Brazil achieved international recognition, respect and prestige (Ricupero 2010). Its employment through Brazilian foreign policy would be in accordance with Brazil's position in the international system and would be compatible with its strategic interests. Aware of the limitations in terms of material components of power, the political decision-makers focused on the Brazilian projection as a regional leadership and a global player, not as a power. The Brazilian international project would present itself as inclusive and would reinforce the claim for a fairer international order.

The foreign policy of the beginning of the XXI was, hence, oriented by a mix of international solidarity and defense of the Brazilian values and interests. Although these aspects might seem irreconcilable at first sight, it was of Brazil's interest that, in the long term, its neighbors overcome the condition of underdevelopment and do not collapse in situations of sociopolitical convulsion or armed conflicts (Amorim 2009).

A form through which Brazilian *soft power* operates, especially in what concerns the structural branch of humanitarian cooperation, are the income distribution programs. Besides of having a socioeconomic role, initiatives as Bolsa Família also inspired other similar programs around the world. The perceived successful experiences were promoted beyond the country's borders, in such a way that Brazil would conquer a greater space as a player engaged in the promotion of a more just and egalitarian international order.

Similarly, we shall also mention the presidential diplomacy, initiated in FHC's government and enhanced in Lula's administration. The charisma of this latter former president contributed to construct a positive image of Brazil in the international scenario (Carvalho and Valença 2014), in such a way that his almost personal involvement in many issues helped to promote Brazil in various spheres. It is thus possible to notice the utilization of *soft power* to enhance the Brazilian position and influence through diplomacy and the transmission of political values of a plural and multilateral order, especially from the Global South.

These actions have positively affected Brazil in the area of humanitarian cooperation. Due to its experience and expertise, besides the actuation of specialized agencies, Brazil has reinforced its participation mainly in the branches of food aid and transfer of agricultural know-how. Two examples are Brazil's Food Purchase Programs for Africa (PAA Africa) and Colombia (PAA

Colombia). This latter, characterized as “Strengthening of Family Agriculture as an Agro-Food Model for Self-Sufficiency” collaborated to the peace process in Colombia (MRE 2015), promoting guarantees in the economic reintegration e recuperation programs. Other examples are the donations of around five hundred thousand dollars to Sudan and more than five hundred thousand reais to *sahrawis* refugee camps in Algeria (Kenkel 2010, 30).

The initiatives of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) can also be seen as crucial for humanitarian cooperation actions. After a successful experience in the Brazilian Cerrado, it has been possible to replicate and adapt the strategies for employment in Ghana, in the year of 2006, as well as in other efforts to cotton production in Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso – this latter inspired by the Zero Hunger Program.

Brazil’s belonging to the Global South and the export of its successful public policy initiatives to the international level suggest that the country’s action was not conventional. Despite being part of a plan compatible with its foreign policy strategies, aiming to achieve its long term objectives and the search for regional leadership, humanitarian cooperation initiatives – not assistance, as we pointed out earlier – put the country within the list of international donors. Brazil did not subordinate its aid to specific goals, as it is the general proceeding, choosing to align its projects with the local necessities, clearly identified in terms of sustainable economic and social effects. The image that the country sought to draw was that this cooperation was not hierarchical and was structured through initiatives adequate to each country with which Brazil firmed the cooperation agreement. In qualitative terms, this helped in the construction of an image of collaborative leadership of Brazil, legitimate and not requiring counterparts, which eventually motivated some critics from the opposition.

The utilization of *soft power* boosted the construction of the Brazilian international project. The previously mentioned initiatives expanded the Brazilian influence area to beyond South America, turning Brazil into a leadership in the Global South. Moreover, operationalized through diplomacy, the *soft power* of the South-South coalitions and the international humanitarian cooperation constituted itself in an efficient way of achieving the country’s objectives in the international politics, even though some aims were not reached, such as the permanent seat in the UNSC. On the other hand, nevertheless, they collaborated to put Brazil in a position of leadership in groups such as the G20, the IBSA Dialogue Forum and the BRICS.

Conclusion

Humanitarian cooperation was a hallmark of Brazil's international relations in the first two decades of the XXI century. It reinforced the pursuit of Brazilian foreign policy's long-term goals through strategies to overcome the country's power constraints without creating conditions of insecurity for its partners and neighbors. In addition, it served to build a network involving the states assisted by such collaboration. With the exercise of *soft power*, Brazil would assume a regional leadership position, aiming to be the "first of the last" (Lima 2005). Through the promotion of initiatives that reflected a positive sum game, Brazil sought to change the existing global power structure.

In this context, one may realize that, from the 2000s on, the diplomacy of "autonomy through diversification" led the country to strive for greater autonomy and prestige in the international relations. The Brazilian actuation, increasingly present in the field of humanitarian cooperation, was one of the means through which the country's foreign policy would accomplish its goals.

Given the absence of a surplus of material power, the diversification of partnerships, multilateralism and solidarity would become instruments of international projection. It is worth highlighting that the commitment to solidarity and the larger humanitarian activism are not contradictory. In this sense, it is important to observe how the government and the diplomacy of the period made use of national *soft power*.

Some benefits of exercising *soft power* through humanitarian cooperation may be highlighted. One of them is that Brazil had become a more active member in the international relations, going beyond discursive rhetoric. In addition, a good relationship with the countries that receive this aid is developed, promoting cooperative relations in other areas.

Notwithstanding, we shall notice that the efforts of maintaining humanitarian cooperation were not continued by the governments of Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer. Besides of demonstrating less interest in foreign policy when compared to FHC and Lula, the reduction of these initiatives promoted by these presidents might be connected to the cease of CG Fome's activities, in 2016. According to some authors, the end of the CG Fome testifies the low institutionalization of this Brazilian humanitarian strand and that "Brazil's role as a humanitarian actor is highly subject to economic oscillations and political reorientations, and the engagement of the Brazilian civil society with humanitarian issues and initiatives is still incipient" (Abdenur and Sochaczewski 2016, 67. Our translation).

Celso Amorim, nonetheless, suggests that the rebound on this subject

seems to be more conjunctural:

However, in the last decade, Brazil became a relatively important contributor in humanitarian crises, coming to occupy, at a determined moment, the first place among the developing countries. We began to be present in diverse situations, in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, even in more distant places, as in Asian countries affected by tsunamis. Recently, there has been a back off, but there are reasons to believe that this is due to conjunctural (economic and political) factors that will not revert the long term trend (Amorim 2016, 104).

Regardless of which explanation is offered to justify a reduction in these strategies, it is currently possible to perceive some challenges regarding this subject, especially in light of the recent economic and political crisis experienced by Brazil. Among these challenges there are the precarious budget destined to humanitarian cooperation, the lack of specialized professionals and the absence of an international regulatory mark for cooperation.

Beyond these issues, the humanitarian cooperation strategies developed between 2003 and 2012 as a means of exercising *soft power* and greater international prominence have called the attention of the international community. Although its results are not consensual, Brazil's projection in multi-lateral forums and its leadership in international organizations, such as the WTO, are perceived facts during this period.

In terms of the scope of its national interests, Brazil's efforts to seek a more inclusive international trade, especially for domestic products, and the pressure to reduce agricultural subsidies by European governments through coalitions such as the G20 exemplify how humanitarian cooperation can be redirected to issues beyond the ones of solidarity. There are concrete returns to the country from these actions.

Thus, analyzing Brazilian foreign policy based on humanitarian cooperation brings about concrete possibilities for action, without prejudice to the national or international political dimension. Brazil was able to orient its international projection from its domestic issues, with the adoption of a more horizontal posture, reaching, therefore, more relevance and prestige in the international scenario (Whittall, Reis and Deus 2016, 15). Being an emergent state, Brazil's contribution aimed not only at correcting inequalities in the international system, but also at building elements that allowed its participation to continue, even without the material conditions of power to become a global power.

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ABSTRACT

Humanitarian cooperation initiatives were central to Brazilian Foreign Policy in the two first decades of the 21st century. Based on national initiatives considered successful, these programs have been used as tools for the country's projection to achieve an international leadership role. This article explores the role of humanitarian cooperation in Brazilian foreign policy in order to show that, although it was not the only policy developed, it evidenced Brazilian soft power and allowed the country to achieve prominence and place its interests on international agendas.

KEYWORDS

Brazilian Foreign Policy; Humanitarian Cooperation; Power; Soft Power.

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