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Brazil as a Security and Development Provider in Africa: Consequences and Opportunities for Europe and North America

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ABSTRACT

Brazil has continuously kept ties with Africa following the historic period of slave-trading, but its engagement gradually intensified after the Cold War and came to a head under Lula da Silva's presidency. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Brazil's involvement in Africa rose to unprecedented levels. Political dialogue on bilateral and interregional levels was accompanied by Brazil's claim to provide security and development to the continent. The country's ambition to reclaim its African identity and become a leader of the Global South was implemented through participation in United Nations missions on the African continent, military training and provision, technical cooperation, and forging alliances with African countries, thus directly challenging the West's development aid and defence positions. In return, Brazil benefited from political support for its leadership aspirations in global arenas. Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff, has pursued a less enthusiastic approach towards Africa, which has been accelerated by Brazil's ongoing domestic crises. This has resulted in a re-focusing on niche strengths, such as the transfer of policies and knowledge to the lusophone world, or economically viable endeavours, such as exporting specialised defence equipment to Africa. This contraction period provides Europe and the US with an opportunity to pull Brazil away from what they see as an antagonistic Global South policy and back into a cooperative framework for development and security with Western actors.

keywords

Brazil's foreign policy | Sub-Saharan Africa | Economic aid | Military missions | European Union | United States

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Introduction

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Brazil has succeeded in establishing itself as a crucial regional and global actor. It now belongs to the inner circles of international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations (UN), has been selected as a strategic partner by the European Union (EU) and, together with other emerging powers, it forms alliances such as the groupings of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA). Its leadership in South America is largely taken for granted by external actors, although this is not uncontested within the region.[1] In its strategy to become a pivotal actor in global affairs, Brazil has benefited from its ascendance into the top ten economies in the world. In turn, the country commits to the existing global order and while it pushes for international reforms, it does not advocate for overthrowing the entire system.[2] It thus behaves like most other emerging powers and has not been campaigning for radical change, such as the dismantling of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or the WTO, but rather strives to acquire a central role – that is, a permanent seat at the UNSC or a top diplomatic position.

Brazil's global aspirations have also brought Africa into the limelight. The continent provides a new economic market, a source of political support and credibility, and a validation for its own African identity and a development model.

[1] Maria Regina Soares de Lima and Mônica Hirst, "Brazil as an Intermediate State and Regional Power. Action, Choice and Responsibilities", in *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (January 2006), p. 21-40.

[2] Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, London/New York, Routledge, 2009.

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1. Historical context

Despite the central role that Brazil played in the transatlantic slave trade from Africa, political and economic relations with the African continent did not become noteworthy until well after the Second World War. Prior to that, domestic struggles and relations with the US and Europe dominated Brazil's foreign engagements.

The creation of the UN provided Brazil with a framework for a post-imperial structure and an anti-colonial discourse that advocated granting "self-determination to all peoples." In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a vast number of African colonies declared independence. In the following years, coalitions within existing multilateral arenas emerged, most notably the Group of 77 (G-77) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).[3] These all adhered to the ideals of anti-imperialism and claimed the need to overcome economic dependency on the West.

Brazil was initially unaffected by the emergence of African nation states. In the 1950s, its economy was domestically oriented through a scheme of industrialisation via import substitution. In terms of identity, values and culture, Brazil's elites considered themselves to be Western, yet at the same time a Latin American identity stemmed from continued lack of emancipation from imperial powers. Only gradually did Africa become part of the construction of identity, crucially in the ideology of *luso-tropicalismo* coined by Gilberto Freyre.[4] This argued for the superiority of Portuguese colonialism due to miscegenation and provided the racial and imperial grounds for portraying commonalities between Brazil and the Portuguese colonies. Political independence in many parts of Africa coincided with a period of progressive left-leaning presidents in the first half of the 1960s in Brazil. Africa emerged on the map of Brazil's foreign policy as the Brazilian government supported claims for independence in Mozambique and Angola. It was during that time that a romanticised idea of belonging to Africa took root as part of the political identity of Brazil. During the subsequent military dictatorship (1964-1985), interest in Africa did not disappear but shifted from anti-imperial solidarity to allegiance with colonial Portugal, and back to support for self-determination after the independence of the Portuguese colonies in the mid-1970s. With the transition towards democracy under way in the 1980s, Brazil took a more decisive position against apartheid. This enabled it to foster ties with African countries, both more generally in multilateral institutions and individually with the Atlantic riparians on maritime issues.

[3] The G-77 and the NAM regrouped a large part of developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia as an attempt to challenge the bipolar world order and represent post-colonial interests.

[4] Eric Morier-Genoud and Michel Cahen (eds.), *Imperial Migrations. Colonial Communities and Diaspora in the Portuguese World*, Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

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2. Relations after the Cold War

During most of the twentieth century, the position Brazil aspired to in the world order continued to oscillate between an orientation towards the West and an assertive commitment to the Global South. Towards the end of the 1990s during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's second presidential mandate, the pendulum swung back to position Brazil as an active member of the developing world. The narrative of global inequality and Southern solidarity became a central part of Cardoso's foreign policy, and the confrontation with Western countries over the global economic and financial system grew. Strategic links with other emerging countries, including the already revived relations with post-apartheid South Africa, were forged.[5] The special relations with lusophone partners were fortified, notably by actively supporting the creation of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (*Comunidade dos países de língua portuguesa*, CPLP) in 1996.

Brazil experienced a period of relatively strong economic growth in the 2000s. Domestically, this enabled some reduction in poverty and inequality, while externally it emboldened the country's foreign policy, which began attributing unprecedented importance to relations with other developing countries. Economic ties with Africa steadily improved as Brazil cancelled a series of debts and Nigeria became its most important oil supplier. From the early 2000s onwards, Brazil also emerged as a development partner. It provided technical assistance and project funding to reproduce Brazilian domestic policies, in particular social programmes, such as the *bolsa familia* education grant and health technologies related to tropical diseases. Political ties also became more stable as the number of state visits from African presidents steadily increased around the turn of the century.[6]

During Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's presidency (2003-2010), South-South relations, including with Africa, were further upgraded to one of the top priorities of Brazilian foreign policy. This development benefited from steps taken by Lula's predecessor and from the vastly improved economic situation in the country. The new president from the Workers' Party (*Partido dos trabalhadores*, PT) thus did not represent a paradigmatic rupture but instead ushered in a period of unprecedented rise in diplomatic presence and intensification of high-level interactions with developing countries.[7] As a result, the scope of positioning the country within the global order gained a new strategic quality. Expanding relations with other developing countries was part of a broader effort to increase Brazil's autonomy in the international arena. Even though Brazil-US ties were not primarily characterised by confrontation

[5] Andrew Hurrell, "Brazil and the New Global Order", in *Current History*, Vol. 109, No. 724 (February 2010), p. 60-66.

[6] Eugênio Vargas Garcia, *Cronologia das relações internacionais do Brasil*, 2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro, Contraponto, 2005.

[7] Élodie Brun, *Le changement international par les relations Sud-Sud. Les liens du Brésil, du Chili et du Venezuela avec les pays en développement d'Afrique, d'Asie et du Moyen-Orient*, Phd thesis, Paris, Institut d'études politiques, Sciences Po, 2012.

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during Lula's presidency,[8] a clear diversification of Brazil's partnerships took place by steadily building new links. It is less a zero-sum game between North and South and rather an act of rebalancing through intensification with the South.[9] With respect to Africa, the Lula government intensified and diversified Brazil's ties across the continent, initially bilaterally with the established lusophone countries as well as South Africa, and gradually through rising power coalitions such as the IBSA Dialogue Forum and the BRICS coalition.[10] The underlying narrative of South-South cooperation entailed an explicit distancing from the Western powers. Through new informal platforms, Brazil has called for a more representative global governance architecture – that is, one in which it has more room to manoeuvre.[11] However, the degree to which these emerging institutions have been able to institutionalise themselves has varied widely: IBSA has suffered from wavering political commitment and scarce financial resources, while the BRICS grouping has sought to create a longer-term role by launching new structures with specific mandates, such as the New Development Bank.[12] Since 2011, Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff, though from the PT as well, has shown less enthusiasm for foreign policy and in particular has been less dedicated to Africa. While much of Lula's Africa policy has been continued, the political clout on that continent has started to fade and no major new initiatives have been launched.

3. The role of Brazil in peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa

Until Lula's presidency, Brazil's engagement with security issues had seldom ventured outside its region, understood as both Latin America and the lusophone world.[13] Conversely, it took a leadership role in peacekeeping missions in Angola and Mozambique in the 1990s by sending military and civilian personnel (in some cases even the force commander) to both the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM).

[8] Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo, "Brazil and South-South Relations: Alternative Settings of Leadership and Institutionalization", in Viatcheslav Morozov (ed.), *Decentring the West. The Idea of Democracy and the Struggle for Hegemony*, London/New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 119-135.

[9] Andrew Hurrell, "Rising Powers and the Emerging Global Order", in John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 6th ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 80-94.

[10] José Flávio Sombra Saraiva, "The New Africa and Brazil in the Lula Era. The Rebirth of Brazilian Atlantic Policy", in *Revista brasileira de política internacional*, Vol. 53, special issue (December 2010), p. 169-182, http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-73292010000300010.

[11] Chris Alden, Sally Morphet and Marco Antonio Vieira, *The South in World Politics*, Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

[12] Adriana Erthal Abdenur and Maiara Folly, "The New Development Bank and the Institutionalization of the BRICS", in *R/evolutions*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2015), p. 66-92, http://revjournal.org/?p=1636.

[13] Sean W. Burges, "Consensual Hegemony. Theorizing Brazilian Foreign Policy after the Cold War", in *International Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 65-84.

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In 2004, Brazil's role as a security provider changed fundamentally as it ventured outside its traditional area by becoming the biggest military provider to the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and holding the position of force commander throughout most of the mission. Although not located in Africa, Haiti constitutes a very important reference point for Africans owing to its history of a republic proclaimed by African slaves in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The radiance of Brazil's engagement thus crucially reinforced its African identity and its standing within Africa.[14] The engagement in MINUSTAH paved the way for further peacekeeping contributions, notably to the United Nations Stabilisation Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), where the Brazilian former commander of MINUSTAH, Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, took over command from 2013 to 2015, though the overall personnel contribution remained minimal. Brazil also contributes to another five out of ten current UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, namely the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). However, all these engagements entail only a modest number of peacekeepers, seldom beyond two-digit figures.[15]

Brazil is traditionally committed to multilateralism and non-intervention in domestic affairs of other countries, so it is reluctant to intervene outside the UN or the CPLP framework. It has been an observer to several regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and it has actively fostered political relations, but these engagements were not followed by financial or personnel support for their peacekeeping operations.

In the Portuguese-speaking African countries (*Países africanos de língua oficial portuguesa*, PALOP), Brazil plays a dominant role among external actors and conceives itself as a natural main actor. At the bilateral level, the historically engrained relations with the lusophone countries in Africa remain dominant. Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cape Verde figure prominently among those countries that receive military training by Brazil, serve as destinations for patrolling Brazilian vessels or are invited on joint exercises. Namibia also has an important position in Brazil's military outreach. Brazil played a crucial role in setting up a navy in the country after its independence and it has been a vital partner over the last 20 years, providing both extensive training in Brazil and naval

[14] Monica Hirst and Reginaldo Mattar Nasser, "Brazil's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations: The New Defence-Security-Foreign Policy Nexus", in *NOREF Reports*, September 2014, http://www.peacebuilding.no/Themes/Emerging-powers/Publications/Brazil-s-involvement-in-peacekeeping-operations-the-new-defence-security-foreign-policy-nexus.

[15] Kai Michael Kenkel, "Out of South America to the Globe: Brazil's Growing Stake in Peace Operations", in Kai Michael Kenkel (ed.), *South America and Peace Operations. Coming of Age*, London/New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 85-110.

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hardware.[16]

In addition to these traditional partners, defence cooperation has also been extended along the Atlantic shore, the area considered to be of greatest strategic importance to Brazil. This particularly covers defence agreements to facilitate mutual visits and exchange programmes with the regional powers of Senegal (2010), Nigeria (2010) and South Africa (2003), as well as 1.5 billion dollars spent by Brazil on military training programmes in Africa between 2009 and 2013.[17] In most of the countries of Africa, however, Brazil is mainly subordinate in terms of security provision, either to major powers such as France or to the UN.

From a topographical point of view, the maritime space between Africa and Brazil constitutes the most evident security link between the two.[18] The South Atlantic has long been considered a vital dimension to Brazil's concept of security. It has, for instance, been reflected in Brazil championing the Zone for Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), which was approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1986. ZOPACAS incorporated an anti-imperial notion of solidarity between South American and African riparian countries of the South Atlantic, with the explicit exclusion of apartheid South Africa and occupied Namibia. Though ZOPACAS has promoted joint projects in various fields, including the environment and the navy, the underlying narrative encompasses a division between the North and South Atlantic as the main commonality between its Western and Eastern shores.[19] In particular, since the early 2000s, Brazil has become more assertive towards a potential expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its members into Southern waters.[20] To this end, Brazil has tried to persuade African states to make the South Atlantic an area of predominantly South-South cooperation. Western powers, in particular those with overseas territories (e.g. the UK and France), or those with a notable military presence (e.g. the US), ought to play a secondary role. However, the willingness of African states to accept or even support Brazil's covert hegemonic ambitions has been minimal.

[16] Pedro Seabra, "Defence Cooperation between Brazil and Namibia. Enduring Ties Across the South Atlantic", in *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2016), p. 89-106.

[17] Pedro Seabra, *The Missing Link: Defense Cooperation in Brazilian-African Relations (2003-2013)*, Paper presented at the ISA-FLACSO conference "Global and Regional Powers in a Changing World", Buenos Aires, 23-25 July 2014, http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/FLACSO-ISA%20BuenosAires%202014/Archive/211ea067-ed68-4326-8464-a03ecf58438f.pdf.

[18] Adriana Erthal Abdenur and Danilo Marcondesde Souza Neto, "Brazil's Maritime Strategy in the South Atlantic: The Nexus between Security and Resources", in *SAIIA Occasional Papers*, No. 161 (November 2013), http://www.saiia.org.za/xx9h.

[19] Adriana Erthal Abdenur, Frank Mattheis and Pedro Seabra, "An Ocean for the Global South: Brazil and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic", in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2016), forthcoming.

[20] Bruno C. Reis, "Brazil versus NATO? A Long-Term View of Maritime Security in the Atlantic", in Brooke A. Smith-Windsor (ed.), *Enduring NATO, Rising Brazil. Managing International Security in a Recalibrating Global Order*, in *NDC Forum Papers*, No. 23 (2015), p. 227-250, http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=761.

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Given that most African members of ZOPACAS have only a limited capacity to engage in maritime security operations, concrete collaboration has focused on South Africa. The South Atlantic Naval Exercise (ATLASUR) has been a regular event where the navies of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and South Africa can undertake joint naval exercises. Since 1993, ATLASUR has occurred on a biennial basis so it is one of the most regular exercise venues for its partners. Brazil and South Africa, which have by far the most capable navies in the region, have also been conducting joint exercises together with India under the India, Brazil, South Africa Naval Exercise (IBSAMAR). Since 2008, IBSAMAR has also been conducted on a biennial basis and thus reinforces the military cooperation in the South Atlantic.

During the last ten years, the Brazilian defence industry also significantly expanded its operations into Africa, by selling equipment to African countries. Since 2011, the state-owned aviation company Embraer has sold dozens of Super Tucano aircraft across the continent, including in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Ghana and Angola.[21] The Super Tucano offers a product that is not only relatively affordable but also adapted to tropical conditions and relevant missions in Africa, such as combating insurgencies, terrorism and the drug trade. Another state-owned company, Emgepron, has equipped various African navies with small vessels, again benefiting from offering tailored and lower-cost solutions. However, the fall in the oil price in 2015 forced various potential resource-dependent buyers, such as Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial Guinea, to cancel their orders.

4. The role of Brazil in development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Brazil's ascendance as a provider of development assistance started while it was still itself a recipient of official development aid (ODA), and it gained particular momentum under Lula. The institutionalisation of development assistance occurred with the shift of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (*Agência brasileira de cooperação*, ABC) from a donor management body to a provider of aid. This transformation also paved the way for an engagement in Africa, though many other emerging powers had already established their presence in the meantime.[22]

The weight of Brazil's development assistance is difficult to assess by ODA terms and thus also difficult to compare with that of other actors.[23] The official figures seem very small, totalling 20 million dollars in 2010, but they do not include important items such as debt relief. More important than the budget figures has been the scope of expansion beyond its immediate neighbourhood and the traditional links

[21] "Super Tucano Counter-Insurgency Plane Makes Inroads in Africa", in *Defense Industry Daily*, 9 May 2016, http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/?p=7348.

[22] Christina Stolte, *Brazil's Africa Strategy. Role Conception and the Drive for International Status*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[23] Emma Mawdsley, *From Recipients to Donors. Emerging Powers and the Changing Development Landscape*, London/New York, Zed Books, 2012.

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with PALOP to include most African countries in various cooperation schemes. Notably, Brazil's own region – South America – eventually enjoyed only second priority with regard to the country's incipient development aid.[24]

Owing to the limited budget, development was conceived less in terms of infrastructure but focused on capacity-building. Technical cooperation has figured prominently on the agenda,[25] in particular in the fields of social policy, health and agriculture, where Brazil is considered to be a model, thanks to its successful poverty reduction, fight against the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and emergence as a leading food producer. Apart from ABC, crucial actors in carrying out projects have thus come from other ministries and public institutes, such as the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (*Empresa brasileira de pesquisa agropecuária*, EMBRAPA), which set up an office for Africa in Ghana to coordinate training and technical cooperation in the field of agriculture. The understanding of development promoted by these actors was largely positivistic in terms of their technological emphasis, as well as self-centred, because it focused on the unidirectional transfer of Brazilian knowledge to Africa.[26]

The dominant narrative of African expansion was embedded in the leitmotif of South-South cooperation to promote cohesion between countries of the Global South on the basis of colonial history, position in the global order, socioeconomic standing and cultural affinities.[27] Owing to Brazil's domestic achievements, development in Africa was also considered to be a special responsibility in terms of paying back the historic debt of the slave trade; development thus embodied a paternalistic approach.

Brazil's relations with other development actors are ambiguous. The country openly contested the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the development cooperation of its member states. At the same time, it has been subservient to Western agencies through trilateral cooperation, carrying out work on the ground – e.g. the British-funded Africa-Brazil Partnership on Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security, and the Japanese-funded ProSavana (Programme of Triangular Co-operation for Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannahs of Mozambique). There is an important element of competition with other emerging donors as Brazil struggles to match the weight of Chinese loans and infrastructure. Gradually, Brazil has abandoned its prioritisation of knowledge

[24] Christina Stolte, *Brazil's Africa Strategy*, cit.

[25] Cristina Yumie Aoki Inoue and Alcides Costa Vaz, "Brazil as 'Southern Donor'. Beyond Hierarchy and National Interests in Development Cooperation?", in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 2012), p. 507-534, http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Brazil%20as%20Southern%20donor.pdf.

[26] Lídia Cabral and Alex Shankland, "Narratives of Brazil-Africa Cooperation for Agricultural Development: New Paradigms", in *Future Agricultures Working Papers*, No. 51 (March 2013), http://www.future-agricultures.org/publications/research-and-analysis/working-papers/1638-narratives-of-brazil-africa-cooperation-for-agricultural-development-new-paradigms.

[27] Élodie Brun, *Le changement international par les relations Sud-Sud*, cit.

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transfer, an area where Turkey has started to follow suit, and appropriated some of China's instruments, such as financial lending, albeit with significantly smaller resources.

5. Priorities and challenges of Brazil's engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa

Brazil is in a phase of transition. Many of the elements that have characterised its engagement in Africa over the last ten years are changing rapidly.[28] Brazil has been losing momentum on its way to becoming a global power. Since 2015 the country has been suffering from a contraction of the economy, severe budgetary cuts and a political institutional crisis involving most of the country's leading political figures. Budgetary cuts mean that Brazil can afford fewer engagements in Africa. The subsequent dominant focus on domestic issues translates into more modest global aspirations. This foreign policy shift conversely reduces the relevance of Africa, as Brazil requires less support from the continent in international organisations. The South American country thus needs to revisit its commitment to existing alliances and partnerships. ZOPACAS, for instance, has come to a standstill since Brazil backed out of the leadership role that it had fulfilled during the previous decade.

In turn, the economic interest is gaining more importance. Engagements in Africa are now expected to yield material benefits to help overcome the domestic economic crisis, rather than mainly aiming for political gain, such as votes at the UNGA.[29] This shift is affecting the strategic relevance of development and security initiatives, as markets and profits for Brazilian companies become a key priority, especially in sectors that have already invested heavily in Africa – that is, mining, oil and construction.[30]

In general terms, the expansion phase that has characterised Brazil's presence in Africa under the PT, chiefly under Lula, has come to an end. Since Brazil also perceived Africa as a trial ground for a projection of its leadership outside South America, it can now take lessons from the knowledge gained and start to consolidate. The priority is shifting away from covering the whole African continent with diplomatic representations, high-level summits and agreements. Embassies are at risk of closing or, if they are not entirely shut down, they could enter a phase of hibernation where their activities are drastically reduced until more

[28] Oliver Stuenkel and Matthew M. Taylor (eds.), *Brazil on the Global Stage. Power, Ideas, and the Liberal International Order*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[29] Dana de la Fontaine and Jurek Seifert, "The Role of South-South Cooperation in Present Brazilian Foreign Policy: Actors, Interests and Functions", in *Stockholm Papers in Latin American Studies*, November 2010, http://www.lai.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.135252.1368796865!/menu/standard/file/STCHLM_PAPERS_LatAm_2010_dana%20et%20al.pdf.

[30] Ana Cristina Alves, "Brazil in Africa: Achievements and Challenges", in Chris Alden et al., *Emerging Powers in Africa*, in *LSE IDEA Reports*, No. SR16 (June 2013), p. 37-44, http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/SR016.aspx.

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favourable conditions return. In some cases, as in South Africa, the post of head of mission has been vacant for an extended period of time. Such stagnation has happened before and might enable Brazil to resume operations when the situation in the country has improved. The Brazilian embassy in Ghana, which remained but was dormant from the 1970s to the 1990s, is indicative of such an oscillation.[31] As Brazil's engagements in Africa enter a phase of contraction, a stronger focus could return to the PALOP, where structural relationships are more likely to survive changes in political and economic prioritisation.

The self-perception of Brazil's political elite is shifting. Under the next government, a Western and South American joint mindset prioritising traditional partners in Europe, the US and MERCOSUR (the common market of the South) is likely to prevail. The narrative of Brazil being an African country could fade from the foreign policy agenda, not least because trade agreements and memoranda of understanding, such as with the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have yielded very modest results beyond acquaintance with regionalisms in Africa.[32] The position that Brazil aspires to reach in the global order may shift accordingly. Even though its identification with the Global South is unlikely to disappear altogether, coalition-building will probably move away from idealistic and historical justifications. The same is true for the external relations of MERCOSUR, which are more likely to be refocused from the Global South towards the traditional EU partner.

In addition to the domestic constraints, Brazil's foreign policy towards Africa, whether under a PT government or led by a different party, will face numerous challenges on the continent. The introduction of the South-South narrative in Brazil's engagement in Africa has largely failed because the ground proved less fertile than expected. Flagship projects such as support of the Namibian navy and the region-wide transfer of agricultural production technologies have been challenged because local partners did not reciprocate the commitment that Brazil expected. It has been very difficult for Brazilian security and development actors to position the country as a new key partner among the established Western presence and the competition with other emerging powers for influence, especially in the wake of China's ubiquitous engagement. Financial expectations on the African side and competition from established and new donors constitute a difficult environment for Brazil to operate in. The outlook for instruments such as development loans are currently grim, but this could open a window of opportunity to refocus on the transfer of successful policies, in particular in the areas of health and socioeconomic structures.

[31] Jerry Dávila, *Hotel Trópico. Brazil and the Challenge of African Decolonization, 1950-1980*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010.

[32] Frank Mattheis, *New Regionalisms in the South. Mercosur and SADC in a Comparative and Interregional Perspective*, Leipzig, Leipzig University Press, 2014.

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However, despite the economic crisis, the asymmetry between Brazil and African states in terms of development, political influence, size and security capacity prevails and continues to hamper an idealised "partnership between equals." This asymmetry has been further consolidated by unrealistic expectations of support on the African side and a paternalistic approach on the Brazilian side.

Concerning the key security priority for Africa – that is, the South Atlantic – there is simply a lack of interest, capacity and even awareness on the African side. Yet this space represents a crucial area for development and security for the Brazilian side, and the lack of African naval power will require a stronger collaboration with South American or even external actors.

6. Recommendations for the EU and the US in the context of Brazil's presence in Africa

The EU and the US have a lot to gain from pulling Brazil – a country that has often been sitting midway between the West and the Global South – into their sphere. They should accommodate the torn identity of Brazil by offering privileged partnerships in the OECD, which is often perceived as a Western club. Special membership status would allow for an alignment of norms and rules, while leaving Brazil enough space to credibly refer to its autonomy and its South American belonging. For instance, the country could be given space to design its own foreign development tools and priorities but it should be bound to ODA transparency and accounting rules. The EU and the US should also directly include Brazil in setting up UN-backed interventions in Africa and demand further personnel contributions. Joint operations could mitigate the limitation of Brazil's capacities in the security domain and would play to its historical preference for multilateral solutions. It could also be beneficial to support the leadership role of Brazil in South America by providing recognition of its initiatives, such as the Union of South American Nations (*Unión de naciones suramericanas*, UNASUR), in particular if concurrently exploiting existing differences with other BRICS countries with respect to global governance matters. The consolidation of regional leadership in combination with a fragmentation of coalitions that are challenging Western norms and institutions would embed Brazil's engagement in Africa into a South American rather than a Global South context. This would, in turn, facilitate collaboration between the EU, the US and Brazil in Africa because a rationale of commonality and multilateralism within existing security and development initiatives would be more approachable.

Regarding security provision, the EU and the US should be mindful of their role in Africa and in the South Atlantic. An expansion of NATO, even if rhetorical, carries the risk of providing a common interest in resistance for the otherwise fragmented alliance between Africa and Brazil. Increased NATO military presence in places such as the Gulf of Guinea or in defence of UK and French overseas territories provides grounds for a resurgence of anti-imperialism, unless firmly anchored in regional institutions such as the AU and the Gulf of Guinea Commission. Brazil

has played an important role as a defender of the Global South and will continue to confront Western powers in solidarity with Africa. The EU and the US should steal Brazil's thunder by ensuring that their security presence is not perceived as a Western action but rather as multilateral, with the inclusion of African institutions such as the AU or the SADC. In addition, it should seek long-term solutions for their overseas territories that are considered to be the last colonies and provide a raison d'être to alliances entrenching the North-South divide. Concerning existing alliances with a strong exclusionary focus, such as ZOPACAS, the EU and the US would be advised to wait for them to lose steam. The general lack of commitment on the African side and the absence of jointly securitised threats mean that such initiatives run idle in the absence of a committed leader. By contrast, engaging in confrontation carries the risk of reinforcing their antagonism with NATO.

Regarding development aid, the EU and the US should engage in more triangular cooperation with Brazil on the African continent. Brazil's expertise in development policies and technologies make it a capable partner. This is particularly valid in the PALOP, where Brazil has a strong presence and working knowledge, both of which offer manifold complementarities. At least in the short term, the EU and the US can take advantage of the dire situation of Brazil's public budget, which requires institutions such as ABC and EMBRAPA to rely more on external funding in order to maintain their operations. Triangular cooperation, where Brazil is contracted to implement EU and US development programmes on the ground with African beneficiaries, can also be an incentive for Brazil to adopt the OECD's rules for development aid. This would conversely reduce the likelihood of Brazil operating outside the OECD framework and facilitate common standards and aims with the EU and the US. In addition, it would offer the EU and US an opportunity to circumvent their own restrictions concerning a direct aid presence in Africa, particularly in countries that no longer qualify for ODA due to their income level or their political regime. Triangular cooperation thus helps to ensure a broad presence in Africa and to establish more coherent development norms both globally and specifically in Africa.

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