The Rise of Brazil as a Global Development Power

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ABSTRACT Brazil’s influence is rising quickly in international affairs. Unlike those of China and India, its foreign policy relies heavily on non-military power—a characteristic of Brazil since at least the early 20th century. A mainstay of this policy has been the pursuit of ‘development’ for Brazil and the global South, with domestic discourse on the need to ‘develop’ buttressing this approach. Foreign policy under President Lula (2003–10) did this explicitly; President Rousseff (2011–) shows no signs of changing course. This article analyses three foreign policy issues—South–South cooperation, health, and environment—to demonstrate the use and assess the value of this strategy. Not only is the strategy serving Brazil’s national interests well, the analysis reveals, but it is also benefitting other developing countries (albeit asymmetrically), reinforcing Brazil’s capacity to influence international affairs.

Since the late 1990s Brazil has been emerging as an increasingly powerful state in international affairs. Although it does not possess significant military power, it is gaining influence through what Joseph Nye Jr and others call ‘soft power’. Brazil rarely uses direct threats (whether military or economic) to achieve its foreign policy goals; instead, it is focusing on forming and leading coalitions of developing states to strengthen shared values and normative commitments.

This article analyses Brazil’s efforts to extend its international influence by embedding the concept of development into its foreign policy. We assess three foreign policy issues to demonstrate the use and value of this strategy: South–South cooperation, focusing on Brazil’s role in building South–South alliances; global health, centring on Brazil’s leadership in preventing and treating AIDS and tropical diseases in the global South; and environmental issues, addressing Brazil’s advocacy of renewable energy, in particular biofuels in developing countries. The goal is to better understand how Brazil is using this strategy to gain, amplify and secure its interests on the
international stage—an approach that gained strength under President Luis Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva (2003–10) and that looks set to continue during President Dilma Rousseff’s tenure (2011–). In light of Brazil’s expanding regional and global influence, the need is growing for more fine-grained analyses of Brazilian foreign policy and the motives of its leaders.

Drawing on interviews, scholarship, policy reports and official Portuguese documents, the article aims to contribute to the underdeveloped English-based academic literature on Brazilian foreign policy. Innovatively it explores how and why Brazil has been strategically deploying the concept of development in its contemporary international strategy. This concept has been present in domestic policies since before World War II and has been part of the foreign policy lexicon and strategy since the early 1960s. The past decade, however, has seen it gain even more prominence, underpinning efforts to highlight shared values and normative positions as Brazil builds and leads coalitions within the developing world as a strategy of international leadership.

To begin we focus on Brazil’s position of power in international affairs. Building on this we then look at the country’s foreign policy, with a particular focus on the use of the concept of development. The last section analyses Brazil’s South–South alliances, health diplomacy and environmental leadership to reveal how development as an instrument of foreign policy is not only embedded in the domestic context, but also serves to enhance the country’s international power.

The power of Brazil

Brazil is an atypical global power. Its economy is growing rapidly. And its status in international affairs is rising quickly. ‘Brazil is on the short list of countries’, the US Council on Foreign Relations concluded in 2011, ‘that will most shape the twenty-first century’.1 It is a unique ‘emerging’ power, however: an ‘in between’ state in international affairs.

The idea that some states hold a ‘special’ ‘in between’ position in the international system dates back to at least the end of World War II. Literature on this topic took off as analysts began to reveal the growing influence of states below the Great Powers but above the majority of small and relatively weak states. G De T Glazebrook was one of the first to use the term ‘middle power’ (already citing Brazil as one), defining these in 1947 as ‘countries which make no claim to the title of great power, but have been shown to be capable of exerting a degree of strength and influence not found in the small powers’.2 Two decades later Robert Keohane refined the idea by conceptualising a middle power as ‘a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution’; he saw a small power as one ‘whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system’.3

Since then many others have researched and defined middle powers, with some rephrasing the idea to create a likeminded expression, such as:
‘middlepowermanship’; ‘great peripheral states’; ‘intermediate powers’; ‘new titans’; ‘second world’; and ‘swing states’. Regardless of the particular terminology, analysts have consistently put Brazil into the middle power rubric. The past decade has seen a growing trend towards understanding ‘emerging powers’ as a distinctive subgroup of middle powers, with the acronym BRIC or BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China plus South Africa—one of the most common ways to group them together. Many emphasise the shared characteristics of these states: extensive area; large populations; status as regional ‘pivots’; aspiration to a global role; growing economies; high GDP but relatively low GDP per capita; large domestic inequalities; and high absolute poverty levels.

In this context many analysts now portray Brazil as one of the fastest rising emerging powers. For Paulo Sotero, ‘by mid-2010, as the Lula administration entered its final months, the question was no longer whether Brazil had risen to a position of international pre-eminence, but how the country would assert and promote its interests as a newly recognised global actor’. Andrew Hurrell is equally emphatic in arguing that power has been shifting in global politics from the old G7 to a new group of emerging powers. For him today’s emerging and regional powers are an indispensable part of the global order: ‘It is impossible to conceive of managing climate change, nuclear proliferation, or economic globalization without institutions that included China, India and Brazil’.

Militarily Brazil does not fit the traditional notion of a great power: it is not a nuclear power; nor does it possess a strong conventional arsenal. Since independence from Portugal in 1822 it has never really had a globally significant defence force. It has only fought three wars against its neighbours, all during the Imperial regime (1822–89). Outside the South American continent it has only fought in World Wars I and II. Since then it has only participated in peacekeeping missions. Notwithstanding political tensions, Brazil has maintained largely peaceful relations with its 10 bordering countries, with whom it shares more than 17 000 kilometres of dry frontier—about twice the length of the US–Canada land border.

Nonetheless, today Brazil is prominent along other important dimensions. According to a recent report ‘the Brazilian economy has overtaken the UK economy in 2011 to become the world’s 6th largest economy’. It has the world’s fifth largest population. It is home to one-sixth of the world’s available freshwater reserves. It ranks as the world’s second biggest food exporter, the fourth biggest food producer, and the ninth biggest oil producer. And it has stabilised its multiracial and multiethnic society over the past 25 years.

So notwithstanding the undeniable importance of coercive instruments and practices in foreign affairs, to understand the case of Brazil’s power sources and foreign policy strategies requires one to go beyond a narrow conception of power. It reaffirms the argument that power can come from various non-military sources and be exerted through cooperative mechanisms.

Back in 1945 Albert Hirschman was already noting the importance of economic dynamism and influence as a source of power. By the early 1960s
Arnold Wohlfers was arguing that trying to influence friendly countries with promises or benefits was often a more effective instrument than making threats.10 In 1985 David Baldwin emphasised the need to observe both positive sanctions (actual or promised rewards) and negative sanctions (actual or threatened punishments) as means to exercise power, as the first were often overlooked as sources of power.11 Since then one of the best-known scholars looking at power outside of coercion and sanctions has been Joseph Nye Jr, who divides power into ‘hard’ and ‘soft’. Nye defines soft power as getting others to want the same outcome that you want by co-opting rather than coercing them.12 Although rather general, this definition does help in understanding Brazil’s ‘soft power’ diplomacy.

Primacy of the diplomatic corps over the armed forces is one of the strongest facets of Brazil’s foreign policy decision making.13 Baron of Rio Branco, the father of Brazilian foreign policy, engrained this norm in the early 20th century. Hailed for solving pending border disputes through diplomacy and the use of international law, he managed to extend Brazil’s territory by 900 000 square kilometres without firing a shot. All governments since have followed in this tradition of non-belligerence, negotiated solutions, multilateralism and a focus on legal standings—even during the military regime of 1964–84.14 President Lula’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (2003–10) Celso Amorim succinctly explained: ‘Brazil’s great skill is to be friends with everyone’.15

President Lula elevated the strategic focus on cooperation even further.16 His goal was to increase Brazil’s ‘weight’ in international affairs through coalition building in order to ‘soft balance’17 against structures that he saw as detrimental. Hal Brands captures this when he argues that the fundamental goal of Brazil’s grand strategy has been ‘to hasten the transition from the dominance of the developed world to a multipolar order in which international power balances and institutions are more favorable to the assertion of Brazil’s interests’. He believes that ‘because Brazil still faces, and will continue to face, a relative deficit of economic and military might, President Lula has resorted to a strategy commonly used by ‘middle powers’, countries that rely on multilateralism, coalition-building, and other such methods to achieve systemic influence’.18 The need to understand the mechanisms behind Brazil’s soft power resources remains, given that President Rousseff is following this same foreign policy path.

**Development in Brazil’s foreign policy**

The concept of development has a long history in both Brazil’s domestic and foreign policies.19 Brazil’s constitution gives it priority not only in its preamble and Article 3—‘Fundamental goals of the Federative Republic of Brazil’—but repeats the term over 50 times throughout. And, although not all governments over the years have promoted developmental actions, the idea of development has long been a fundamental value with great political and policy resonance within Brazil’s political discourse.
The focus on development in domestic politics began when Brazil adopted the so-called ‘national-developmentalist’ paradigm in the 1930s, which became formally articulated in the late 1940s, particularly through the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL). This paradigm contained key concepts, including: centre-periphery; industry; internal market; and deterioration of the terms of trade. It also implied active state intervention in the country’s economy along with adopting an industrialisation model based on import substitution.

Many of these ideas spilled into foreign policy. The introduction of Política Externa Independente (‘Independent Foreign Policy’) in the early 1960s explicitly and fundamentally incorporated ‘development’ into Brazil’s foreign policy. The main priority throughout the 1960s and 1970s was the economic aspect of development—particularly foreign trade. Reflective of this was Brazil’s active engagement with multilateral initiatives with developing countries, such as the G77 and the call for a New International Economic Order. The overarching goal was to develop the country and its economy as a way to gain power in the international arena. Joao Augusto Araujo Castro, Brazil’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (1963–64), explains: ‘for Brazil the quickest, most direct path for the strengthening of its national power is the path of its own economic development and industrial expansion’.

Brazil’s efforts to promote development in its foreign policy slowed during the domestic economic crisis of the 1980s and the revival of the Cold War. By the 1990s the meaning and importance of development for domestic and international policy strategies were shifting. The path towards national development was detaching from the national-developmentalist economic model of state intervention and import substitution. Brazil’s financial instability was also undermining such efforts and pushing aside those wanting to position Brazil as a ‘leader’ of developing nations.

President Lula’s placing of development at the centre of both domestic and foreign policies should not, however, be seen as a rupture with Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s presidency (1994–2002), particularly when compared to his last years. The main differences between the two were the degree of priority given to development and the mechanisms seen as most ‘efficient’ to lead to sustained development. Cardoso, especially in his first term, focused on strengthening alliances with developed countries rather than on questioning the international status quo. Lula took a different approach, however, highlighting how asymmetric international structures were impeding development, as well as positioning Brazil firmly as a developing—and emerging—economy.

Lula’s strategy was not a surprise. The essence was already present in the Worker’s Party electoral campaigns for the presidency in the late 1980s. His commencement speech made his views clear: ‘in my government, Brazil’s diplomatic action will be oriented by a humanistic perspective, and will be, above all, an instrument of national development’. All multilateral fora, he added, need to ‘preserve the spaces of flexibility for our national development policies in the social and regional, environmental, agricultural, industrial and technological fields’. President Rousseff, from the same party as her
predecessor, has retained this same logic in her foreign policy. Antonio
Patriota, Rousseff’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, made this clear in his
commencement speech: ‘Brazil will have a foreign policy turned towards
development and peace that will seek to reduce the gap between rich and poor
nations’. Essentially, the broad idea is to try to unify, under a single
developmental agenda, the social and economic dimensions of public policies
adopted in both the national and international spheres.

In the end—except for brief exceptions—the ‘diplomacy of development’
has been an underlying theme in Brazilian foreign policy. Although the vision
of Brazil-as-developing-country and Brazil-as-champion-of-developing-na-
tions has ebbed and flowed in importance over the years, it remains a key
part of the current diplomatic lexicon.

The longstanding domestic concern with development suggests two key
points. First, its position as a foundational concept of foreign policy should be
seen as a reflection of internal policies. Second, the close national–international
connection has added legitimacy and helped to elevate it above mere rhetoric.
Combined, this has enhanced the capacity of the concept of development to
serve as a soft power glue for coalition building. The cases below demonstrate
the consistent efforts by both President Lula and (so far) President Rousseff
to advance development for Brazilian interests, efforts that have reinforced
the foundation underpinning the steady rise of Brazil as a global power.

‘Developing’ leadership

Brazil’s rapid economic growth over the past decade has allowed for some
impressive development gains—at least on some measures. Between 2002 and
2010 the number of poor people in Brazil fell by 51 per cent. In the 2000s,
while the per capita income of the country’s richest 10 per cent increased by
10 per cent, the per capita income of 50 per cent of the poorest rose by 68 per
cent. In this same period the income of black citizens increased 43 per cent
(while the income of white citizens went up 21 per cent), and the income of
women rose 38 per cent (compared to 16 per cent for men). Brazil is now
recording its lowest GINI index (which measures inequality) since estimates
began in 1960. While it is true that many important social and development
problems remain, Brazil can claim more than ever to be a legitimate
international voice for development. This is helping the country to position
itself as the ‘emerging among the emerging’ when it comes to real solutions
for social development.

 Presidents Lula and Rousseff have actively sought to transform Brazil’s
domestic social and economic successes into power on the international
stage. Both administrations have promoted the country as a legitimate and
innovative voice for development to build coalitions overseas, especially
within the global South. Three factors differentiate the Lula–Rousseff use of
development in Brazilian foreign policy from the 1960s/1970s period. First,
Brazil has been able to draw on concrete achievements to justify and
legitimate leadership in international development, and not just rely on
rhetoric or ideological commonalities. Second, while the economic dimension
of development remains high on the agenda, the social components of development—such as mitigating poverty and eradicating hunger—have been incorporated and brought to the forefront (not particularly the case in the earlier period). Third, Brazil has in many aspects moved beyond the ‘traditional’ role of calling for development to being in a position to draw on its own experience to offer development solutions. The cases below serve to illustrate how the Lula and Rousseff administrations have been able to increase Brazil’s power and influence in international affairs.

Building South–South alliances

President Lula’s foreign policy placed great importance on defining Brazil not only as a developing country but as a leader among them. This was apparent in a series of initiatives to bolster South–South cooperation. Brazil was able to strengthen its ties to other countries in tandem with ‘development-as-goal’ and ‘development-as-identity’.

Former foreign affairs minister Celso Amorim saw efforts to fortify relations with other developing countries as critical to advancing Brazil’s international position: ‘South–South cooperation is a diplomatic strategy,’ he wrote, ‘that originates from an authentic desire to exercise solidarity toward poorer countries. At the same time, it helps expand Brazil’s participation in world affairs’. For him, cooperation among equals was the best way to enhance Brazil’s stature and strengthen its hand in trade, finance and climate negotiations. In his words ‘building coalitions with developing countries is also a way of engaging in the reform of global governance in order to make international institutions fairer and more democratic’.\(^{31}\) Solidifying this stance, the Rousseff administration’s foreign affairs minister, Antonio Patriota, reiterated early in his tenure that South–South policy will continue to be a key part of Brazil’s foreign policy strategy.\(^{32}\)

Technical Cooperation (TC) agreements are ‘a central instrument’ of Brazil’s foreign policy, particularly for bilateral South–South relations. TCs are not a synonym for ‘developmental assistance’ or ‘foreign aid’. They deal with the exchange of knowledge and practices, not monetary transfers. They do not place conditionalities on the receiver. And they do not include financial aid (such as grants and loans). Although their use as a tool of Brazilian foreign policy goes back decades, the number of projects and countries involved has grown markedly over the past decade. Brazil is well ahead of any other developing country (even China and India) in systematically using TC agreements. Substantively Brazil’s ‘South–South’ TC agreements revolve around transferring its knowledge gained from ‘successful’ social and economic development experiences—notably with regard to health, agriculture and professional qualification—where Brazil sees TC agreements as able to play a ‘key role in promoting capacity development in developing countries’.\(^{33}\)

Through TC agreements Brazil has been fortifying its bilateral relations in the global South. The official assessment of Brazil’s foreign policy during the tenure of President Lula explains the role of TC agreements with developing
countries as a way to ‘strengthen Brazil’s bilateral relations with the rest of the world, thereby elevating the country’s profile in the international realm’. Two examples of Brazil’s leadership in multilateral alliances are the building of coalitions within the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the creation of the India–Brazil–South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA Forum) in 2003. The logic is the same in both cases (among many others): to identify and coordinate as developing countries.

During the Lula–Rousseff period Brazil has positioned itself as the main (or ‘co-main’) representative of those identifying as developing countries. This can be understood as part of a strategy of ‘autonomy through diversification’—an adherence to international norms and principles by means of South–South alliances and agreements with non-traditional partners. The IBSA Forum is an interesting example. It was established by Brazil, India and South Africa in 2003, which all share a historical foreign policy focus on development. Documents express the three as being great developing countries, ‘destined’ for more international influence with the economies emerging so quickly. The idea is more than a ‘traditional’ South–South initiative; rather it is a cooperation strategy of ‘system affecting’ middle powers.

What is significant here is how these three countries without a history of strategic partnering—with benign but thin relations—came together in a process of mutual identification. The IBSA Forum is intended to strengthen trilateral relations and cooperation (especially through practical and technical cooperation agreements), as well as to develop a platform to voice common goals of developing countries. ‘IBSA,’ explains a joint statement, ‘aspires to make a significant contribution to the framework of South–South cooperation and be a positive factor to advance human development’.

Promoting global health

President Cardoso laid the foundations for Brazil’s ‘health diplomacy’, and efforts began to intensify in the late 1990s. President Lula’s foreign policy continued to emphasise health as a core issue of international affairs: one that was a human right and vital for any country’s social development. Over the past 15 years Brazil has established numerous health-related technical cooperation agreements with developing countries. It is sharing policy and practices related to public health campaigns. It is combating tropical diseases and supporting technicians in epidemiological control. And it is arranging an ‘epidemiological shield’ in South America to promote health and disease surveillance capabilities on a regional scale. Such cooperation, explains Lula’s foreign affairs minister Celso Amorim, ‘reinforces the ties that Brazil seeks to build with developing countries and strengthens our position with the international community’.

In 2003 Brazil’s leadership contributed to the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, as well as to the Commission on Human Rights adopting resolutions recognising that access to medications in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria is a
fundamental right.41 In the same year Brazil played the lead role in negotiating the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.42 It was one of the leading countries to create UNITAID in 2006, an organisation dedicated to improving access for the world’s poorest people to medicines for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Brazil is also one of the seven signatory countries of the 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration on Global Health, an effort to bring together health and diplomatic agendas more effectively. Brazil—along with other member states—recognised that health ‘is a key element of any strategy aimed at promoting development and combating poverty’ and that it is ‘the main component of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which point to the interconnectedness of the structural causes of poverty and under-development’.43

Brazil’s domestic and international policies to combat HIV/AIDS have had particularly significant impacts. The Brazilian constitution states that health is a social right (Art 6), declaring that ‘health is a right of all and a duty of the state, guaranteed through social and economic measures that aim to reduce the risk of diseases and other ailments and provide equal and universal access to actions and services for its promotion, protection, and recovery’. In 1996 the national government passed a law to provide free access to anti-retroviral (ARV) ‘cocktail’ medications to every person in Brazil infected with HIV/AIDS. The government then began producing off-patent ARV drugs in state-run pharmaceutical facilities. Two years later Brazil’s Minister of Health proposed at the 1998 World AIDS Conference that universal access to ARVs be recognised as a human right.

In 2001 the Brazilian National AIDS Programme won the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)’s Human Rights and Culture of Peace Award. That same year, however, the USA requested a panel at the WTO, claiming that Brazil’s 1996 ARV law violated patent laws under the Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), as it allowed for the compulsory licensing of patents under special conditions (eg public health emergencies). Brazil responded by stating that its law was built on humanitarian values and the human right to health, arguing that life was more important than profit from patents. Brazil argued further that the US claim would negatively affect developing countries, particularly least developed ones.

Brazil was able to gain support from a multilateral and multi-actor alliance, including not only many states (particularly developing ones) but also NGOs such as Oxfam and Médecins Sans Frontières) and international organisations like the WHO and UNAIDS. As pressure mounted, the USA dropped the claim. Since then Brazil has worked consistently to ensure that ARV drugs are as cheap and available as possible, placing it in a position of being ‘perhaps the rising power that is strategically most successful in connecting its global health initiatives [such as those related to HIV/AIDS] with a declared foreign policy objective of becoming a global player in international affairs’.44

For health, as Lee et al argue, Brazil has ‘defied orthodox thinking on development’ by combining economic growth with progressive domestic
social policies. It was the first developing country to offer free ARV treatment to HIV/AIDS patients—despite a World Bank assessment that such a policy was not cost-effective. For Kickbusch et al Brazil’s exercise of soft power, through moral leadership and the use of ‘opinion-shaping instruments’, suggests that a new kind of diplomacy is emerging to achieve collective action on shared challenges such as global health. In their view Brazil is contributing to a ‘significant power shift within global health diplomacy’ by forming and leading coalitions of developing countries.

Advancing renewable energy

For many tangible reasons Brazil is well-placed to position itself as an ‘emerging environmental power’. It is home to the world’s biggest tropical rainforest. It has one of the world’s largest renewable reserves of freshwater. It contains the planet’s most diverse stock of biodiversity. It has one of the cleanest energy matrices among major economies. And it is a pioneer in using ethanol as fuel on a mass scale, doing so since the late 1970s. The country has played a key role in global environmental negotiations, hosting, for example, the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. During an official visit to Brazil in June 2011 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was counting ‘on Brazil’s leadership’ on ‘sustainable development’ at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (also called Rio + 20).

As one would anticipate, Brazil frames its positions on environmental and climate change around the concept of development. According to Brazilian scholar Amado Cervo, ‘in the view of Brazilian foreign policy, the environmental issue encompasses three other issues: the planet’s survival; development; and hunger’. Lula’s presidency firmly attached itself to the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ over environmental commitments, taking into account the developed world’s historic responsibility for causing environmental problems and the need to ensure the right of poor countries to develop.

A strong domestic–international connection is clear in the case of renewable energies. Brazil’s 2008–11 Pluri-Annual Plan states that ‘global challenges, such as environmental degradation, climate change and energy security demand an active posture from Brazilian diplomacy. The use of renewable and clean sources—such as biofuels—is part of Brazil’s development project, with benefits to be shared with other countries.’ During her first days in power, President Rousseff presented 13 governmental guidelines, with energy policy placed under: ‘Give continuity to a national development project that ensures an extensive and sustainable productive transformation of Brazil’. More important was the detailing that it should ‘emphasize the production of renewable energy...and continue with the internationalization of its energy policy’.

Brazil portrays biofuels as a means of national development, with great potential to help developing countries as long as they are produced sustainably. Brazil and the other BRIC leaders have issued a joint statement
that biofuels can be an effective tool of sustainable development by constituting ‘a driving force for social inclusion and income distribution mainly in the impoverished rural areas of developing and least developed countries’.55

Where biofuels are concerned, Brazil wants to ensure that ‘no international norms result in the limitation or questioning of a country’s options for economic and social development’.56 It aims to shape an international biofuel market—one presumably that favours Brazil. Since the early 2000s the country has been promoting the worldwide use of biofuels (particularly ethanol) through both multilateral and bilateral actions.57 For Brazil biofuels represent part of the solution to three of the world’s greatest challenges: ‘energy security, climate change and combating hunger and poverty’.58 The following statement synthesises well how Brazilian leaders tend to frame the potential of biofuels: ‘We have learned to explore the extraordinary potential of ethanol and biodiesel in terms of generating energy, generating employment and income and the reduction of emissions. We now propose that they be seen as a promising alternative for over 100 developing countries’.59

To date Brazil has bilateral technical cooperation agreements on biofuels with 45 countries, two with multilateral institutions (the Economic Community of West African States and the European Union), plus three trilateral agreements: Brazil–EU–Africa; Brazil–EU–Mozambique; and Brazil–USA–Central America and the Caribbean. The total number of countries with direct and indirect TC biofuel agreements now tallies over 70—with the great majority being developing countries.

**Conclusion**

‘The time is past when the decision-making power in international relations was restricted to the understanding among a few developed powers’, state Brazilian scholars Amado Cervo and Antonio Lessa.60 Even if Brazil is not a ‘great power’ in the traditional military sense, its influence on the global stage is now undeniable. It has a longstanding tradition of attracting allies and support with soft power behaviour, emphasising cooperation, multilateral initiatives and diplomacy. And even as its economy grows, it continues to focus on soft power resources—such as legitimacy, political values and knowledge—to achieve its foreign policy goals. In this light it does not seem farfetched to call Brazil ‘the soft power great power’.

The examples in this article are just a few in a broad foreign policy strategy that prioritises the concept of development. The breadth and depth of this strategy still leaves plenty of room for further investigation. Connecting development with security, for instance, has also been common for many decades. For some 30 years it has served as the reason for not signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is the basis for a security zone in South America and for recent initiatives in Haiti. And it underpins efforts to try to influence agendas and debates in the UN Security Council. Brazil’s growing presence on the international stage means its concept of development vis-à-vis national and human security, as well as its understanding of the
‘securitisation’ of development, is becoming increasingly relevant to international affairs.

An analysis of how Brazil has been using the concept of development to attract and sustain coalitions helps to reveal its rising global influence. To be sure, Brazilian foreign policy to promote development serves Brazil’s own interests. ‘The foreign policy of a country is more than its projection onto the international stage’, explains President Rousseff. ‘It is also an essential component of a national development project, especially in a world that is increasingly interdependent. The internal and external dimensions of a country’s foreign policy are then inseparable’. Nevertheless, one of the greatest strengths of Brazil’s strategy is that its efforts do benefit other developing countries (even if asymmetrically) at very little cost to them, which serves to attract even more support for Brazil as a development leader and global power.

Notes

5 P Sotero, ‘Brazil’s rising ambition in a shifting global balance of power’, Politics, 30(s1), 2010, p 73.
7 Brazil was involved with Argentina over Uruguay during the Cisplatine War (1825–28) and the Prata War (1851–52), and fought against Paraguay between 1864 and 1870.
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19 The concept of development has run through Brazilian political discourses in two main (non-exclusionary) ways. First, it has been used as a noun to state a particular action (‘development is the goal’; ‘the country needs development’) or prefaced by an adjective to specify a focus area, such as in ‘sustainable development’, ‘regional development’ and ‘social development’. Second, it is also widely used as an adjective to contrast ‘developing’ with ‘developed’ economies.

20 It is important to note that, while national-developmentalist ideas were translated into foreign policy, dependency theory was not. Most of the prominent scholars in this area—such as Theotonio dos Santos, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto and Ruy Mauro Marini—were forced into exile during the country’s military government (which began in 1964). As Bresser-Pereira explains, not only did dependency theory have a Marxist base but it was focused on exploitation structured upon class—not foreign—relations. For more, see Bresser-Pereira’s ‘Do ISER a da CEPAL a Teoria da Dependência’, in CN de Toledo (ed), Intelectuais e Política no Brasil: a Experiência do ISER, Rio de Janeiro: Revan, 2005, pp 201–232.


22 This approach was explicit in Fernando Collor de Mello’s tenure (1989–92). Considerable debate still exists, however, over how far President Fernando Henrique Cardoso—one of the main contributors to dependency theory—consciously followed this approach during his first term (1995–98). One can also argue that the need and effort to stabilise Brazil’s fragile economy curtailed Cardoso’s ability to manoeuvre freely and challenge the ‘neoliberal’ international order.


24 President Lula ran unsuccessfully for the presidency three times before being elected in 2002 (and re-elected in 2006): in 1988 he lost to Fernando Collor de Mello; in 1994 and 1998 he was defeated by Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

25 Translated from President Luiz Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva, Commencement Speech, Brasília 1 January 2003, emphasis added. In this speech ‘development’ (and derivative words) is one of the most common expressions, appearing 18 times in the document, ranking above other important concepts such as ‘social’ (16 times), ‘change’ (14), ‘justice’ (five), ‘sovereign/sovereignty’ (five), and ‘liberty’ (absent).

26 Translated from Antonio Patriota’s commencement speech as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Brasília, 2 January 2011, emphasis added.


28 This was particularly the case during the presidencies of Castelo Branco (1964–67), Collor de Mello (1989–92), and (arguably) during the first tenure of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–98). For a thorough assessment of Brazil’s foreign policy since its independence, see C Bueno & AL Cervo, Historia da Política Exterior do Brasil, Brasilia: UnB, 2008.


32 Antonio Patriota, interview (in Portuguese) given to Carta Capital (São Paulo), 14 February 2011.

45 Lee et al, ‘Brazil and the framework convention on tobacco control’, p 1.
48 Over the past three decades the production yield of sugarcane has almost doubled; currently close to 90 per cent of all passenger vehicles produced in Brazil are ‘flex-fuel’ (supporting a combination of gasoline and ethanol), with these representing over two-fifths of the country’s total motorised fleet.
51 Translated from Amorim, ‘Brazilian foreign policy under President Lula’, p 220.
56 Section 3.2.11: ‘Temas Multilaterais—Energias renováveis’, subsection 2.1: ‘Descrição: Atuação internacional do Brasil na área de energias renováveis, incluindo biocombustíveis’, Balanço de Política
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