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Enlarging the donor base: an analysis of the World Food Programme's reform process and the Brazilian bridge diplomacy

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Abstract

Brazil became one of the world's largest food donors after the WFP went through a reform process. The reform allowed non-traditional donors to donate food provided that other partners paid for logistical costs. We analyzed the reform process through documental analysis and interviews to understand Brazil's role in this. The results show that both actors had complementary interests. However, whilst Brazil had ambitions of prominence in this area, it adopted a rule-taker position. The WFP's Secretariat was the main driving force in the process and, to some extent, co-opted Brazil.

Keywords: Humanitarian Cooperation; Emerging Donors; World Food Programme; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Graduation Dilemma.

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Introduction

Brazil was a global player in the fight against hunger during the Lula and Dilma governments (2003-2016). Besides the soft power accumulated through diplomacy, international cooperation for development, and domestic social policies in the realm of food security, Brazil also applied more hard power to its foreign policy. Engaging in humanitarian cooperation¹ was a way to 'punch according to its weight', as Foreign Minister Celso Amorim (2003-2014) recalled (Amorim 2016, 106). Thus, providing food to foreign populations became a tactical goal under the "Diplomacy of the Fight Against Hunger." In fact, during the Workers' Party

¹ While the traditional vocabulary of the international cooperation system usually uses terms like 'aid', 'donation', 'donor', 'recipient', Brazil used terms like 'cooperation' and 'partners', even for humanitarian purposes. We don't discuss the symbolic and policy implications of that differentiation here. For a discussion, see Milani and Duarte (2015).

(PT) governments, Brazil became one of the largest food donors in the world – although only for a few years. This was only possible due to the partnership with the WFP and third countries, which carried out the international logistics of food aid and paid the transportation costs for Brazil. Although allowed regimentally, this kind of triangular cooperation was an unusual move for the WFP because it traditionally required donors to bear all the operating costs of their donations (Santana 2018).

Based on those facts, we questioned how this path was opened in the WFP. Has Brazil successfully used its emerging hard and soft power to modify the multilateral food aid regime to better serve its interests? Was it evident that the emerging donors were, in fact, changing the international cooperation system (Manning 2006; Woods 2008; Quadir 2013)? Was that a case in which Brazil would have played a foreign policy of graduation by acting as a rule-maker within the international system (Milani et al. 2017)?

The Brazilian international cooperation in agri-food issues during the PT governments (2013-2016) was a rich and sometimes contradictory experience (Muñoz and Carvalho 2016; Albuquerque 2019). The humanitarian food cooperation itself was not restricted to the relationship with the WFP² and, thus, may have its contradictions. Amid this complexity, the present case study aimed to contribute to the debate about the capacity of Brazilian foreign policy to change the international cooperation system by focusing on the most important multilateral organization for humanitarian food relations.

Researches in the field of international agri-food cooperation found that Brazil was able to contribute significantly to changes in rules, norms, and practices of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Portuguese-Speaking Community of Countries (Milhorance 2020; Milhorance and Kouhun 2017), Latin American and Caribbean countries³ (Sabourin and Grisa 2018), and of the WFP (Marcondes and De Bruyn 2015; Dri and Silva 2019).

We worked with two hypotheses: a) Brazil played a major role in reforming the food aid regime; b) the WFP co-opted Brazil to strengthen its mainstream agenda. The research design was inspired by the ‘Graduation Dilemma’s (GD) typologies of foreign policy (Milani et al. 2017). Methodologically, this case study was heavily based on primary sources – such as official telegrams from the Brazilian Diplomacy and reports and documents from the WFP –, as well as semi-structured interviews with Brazilian diplomats and policymakers and WFP’s agents working with Brazil. Regarding the period under analysis, although our objective was to examine the PT governments (2003-2016), the empirical research drove us to cover the period from the 1990s to 2016.

² The series of official reports called ‘*Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional*’ (Cobradi) details numbers and actions of the Brazilian international cooperation in different domains. They are available at IPEA’s website: https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32420&Itemid=343

³ Engaging in the conceptual specification of terms like norms, rules, practices, etc. will not add value to this paper. Following Milani et al. (2017) we use the term ‘rule’ in a broad sense.

Following this introduction, section two discusses foreign policy strategies according to the GD. Section three explains the WFP's intention to expand its donor base. Section four examines the Brazilian role in the process of institutional change in the WFP. The fifth section presents the impacts that the adoption of the document called 'New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs: Expanding the WFP Donor Base' (NPMRN) had on Brazilian international food aid. It also addresses the domestic obstacles that impeded Brazil to follow a more autonomous foreign policy and made it dependent on the WFP triangular cooperation.

We conclude that, in this case, Brazilian foreign policy is better characterized as 'bridge diplomacy' instead of a 'foreign policy of graduation'. That is, Brazil strived to achieve global prominence in the humanitarian food aid system, but, unlike other experiences, it acted as a rule-taker and not a rule-maker that could eventually change the system.

Foreign policy strategy typologies and international cooperation with the WFP

Brazil's partnership with the WFP has been studied mainly regarding the South-South and Triangular Technical Cooperation. The focus is usually on the creation and performance of the 'Centre of Excellence against Hunger' established in Brasília in 2011. The Center is officially denominated as a global space for South-South policy dialogue and learning on school feeding programs and food and nutrition security. As Marcondes and De Bruyn (2015) and Dri and Silva (2019) explain, Brazil played an important role in creating this new instrument in the international food security system, a platform that is now being viewed as an example for similar experiences in other countries. Their findings corroborate the literature that reports Brazil as a rule-maker in the international food domain (see Milhorange 2020). Following the GD typology (explained later), Brazil would have conducted a foreign policy very close to that of Graduation in the Center of Excellence's case.

However, as far as we know, no study analyzes in detail the relationship between Brazil and the WFP in the humanitarian cooperation field. Tambourgi (2017) and others have examined general aspects of the Brazilian humanitarian cooperation in the 21st Century, but our research offers an original case study (Porta 2008). We take our point of departure in the typology of foreign policy strategies as conceived by Milani et al. (2017). For Milani et al. (2017), semi-peripheral actors with no nuclear capacity and experiencing a desire to ascension in the international hierarchy, which means "a political willingness to change global governance rules without making use of military power and without being an anti-systemic power" (Milani et al. 2017, 591), will "face a graduation dilemma whenever their key decision-makers have the opportunity to choose and the intention of choosing between different international strategies" (Milani et al. 2017, 585).

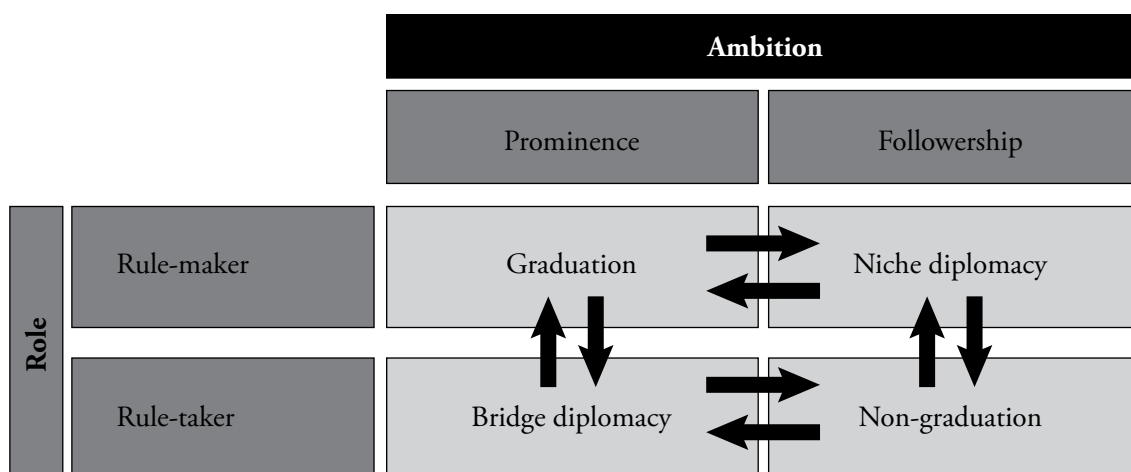
A Graduation foreign policy combines two ideal-types strategies. The ideal-types are extracted from two matrices designed upon two binaries each. Figure 1 shows the final model, and figures 2 and 3 present the strategies that compose the final model.

Figure 1. Expected patterns of state behavior

		Graduation	Non-graduation
Categories	Ambition	Prominence	Followership
	Role	Rule-maker	Rule-taker
Dimensions	Southern perspective on Noth-South relations	Geopolitical vision	Short-term imperative
	Relationship with the region	Integration	Interaction

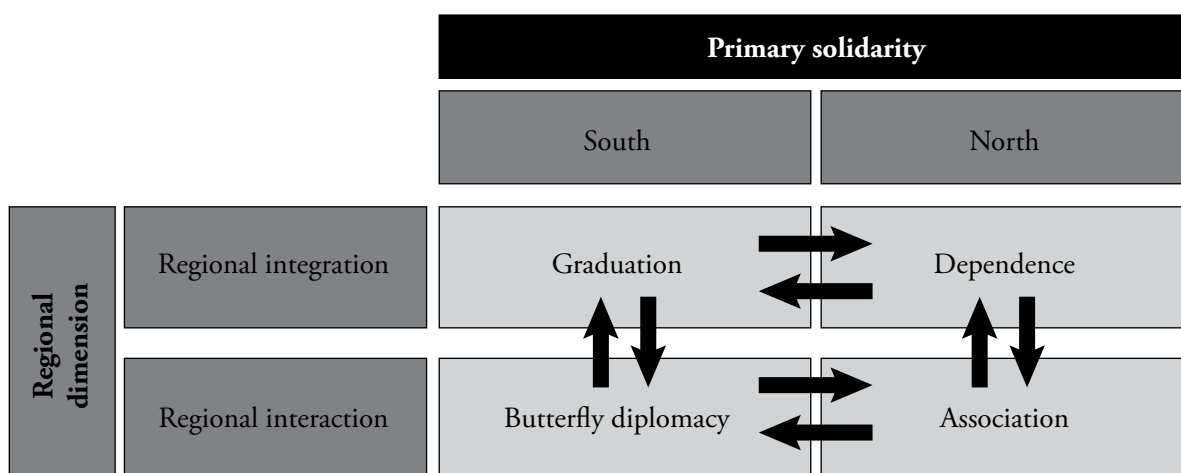
Source: Milani et al. (2017)

Figure 2. Ideal-types of foreign policy strategies



Source: Milani et al. (2017)

Figure 3. Ideal-types of regional strategies



Source: Milani et al. (2017)

Figure 2 deals with foreign policy strategy in general and is based on two categories: ambition and role. States are classified in these categories based on what policymakers project and implement for and through the state. Both categories are subdivided into two, which can be combined into a strategy.

A graduation strategy occurs when the state becomes a rule-maker and the policymakers' ambition is to achieve prominence in world affairs. The 'bridge diplomacy' occurs when ambition for prominence is combined with a rule-taker role. In this case, the state becomes a broker or intermediate between "countries of the North and South, or between developing countries possessing very unequal material power" (Milani et al. 2017, 592). These intermediations on the global arena pervade through manifold different issues, from development agenda aspects, like climate change and humanitarian aid, to security questions.

The 'niche diplomacy' strategy intersects with a rule-taker role with an Ambition to be a follower. This kind of strategy implies "concentrating on foreign policy arenas where the country has a greater comparative advantage in terms of resources, expertise, and experience" (Milani et al. 2017, 593). Acting through a niche diplomacy strategy, the state never opposes ongoing hegemonic visions of the world order, grounded in Western political and economic values.

Regional strategies are also considered important to determine when a state is pursuing a more autonomous or dependent foreign policy. To categorize a state's regional strategy, the authors use two axes: primary solidarity and regional dimension. The first is subdivided into South and North, and the second in regional integration and regional interaction.

In the authors' scheme, the combination of a geopolitical South vision with a one based on regional integration defines a state in the course of graduation. This means a long-term strategy regarding the Global South, and a need for the deepening of policymaking, social, educational, infrastructure and other aspects in the region. The 'butterfly diplomacy' appears when primary solidarity is driven to the geopolitical South, but the regional relationships oscillate between integration and interaction. Whenever the primary focus is on the North, the foreign policy cannot be perceived as a graduation strategy.

Finally, some conditions are necessary if the country is willing to graduate:

"The first is an increase in relative material capabilities (mainly economic and/or military), which results in some degree of differentiation with respect to other peripheral countries. The second is a political will to graduate expressed in foreign policy actions, government decisions and development strategies. [...] The third condition is recognition by major powers and peers. This recognition is crucial in times of peace, and can be manifested in invitations to participate in informal groups [...], in the demands for the state to take on certain international responsibilities, and in the acceptance of norms created by the candidate to graduation. [...] A fourth condition is cohesion among government elites and strategic elites, that is, business groups, trade unions, the mainstream media, academia and civil society networks and movements. The fifth condition is the existence of societal backing for the

graduation process, including the inherent costs of graduation (for example, greater involvement in global issues, international cooperation) and electoral support for the graduation policy platforms inevitably associated with greater international ambition.” (Milani et al. 2017, 598)

Thus, in the case of the WFP’s Center of Excellence, Brazil in large measure pursued a graduation foreign policy because it demonstrated an ambition for prominence and performed a rule-maker role by working on a new platform to fight hunger globally. This effort was clearly focused on the Geopolitical South, and although it supported regional initiatives in Mercosur, it did not result in a regional integration project, thus suggesting a butterfly diplomacy. Partnerships with the North were established in the course of this process and, more importantly, the cooperation with the WFP itself – an international organization historically dominated by the North (Shaw 2011) – shows that the initiative is not anti-systemic. As regards the necessary conditions, fiscal resources were enough to launch and maintain the Center, and the material support of foreign governments and of the WFP itself demonstrate that the country was recognized as a relevant partner. Besides, the Center’s creation was incentivized by the high demand of developing countries that sought inspiration from Brazilian experiences in their own social policies (Leite et al. 2015; Dri and Silva 2019). Lastly, it is difficult to calculate social support for this initiative, but we can say at least that no adversary coalition was able to dismantle it so far.

What about the cooperation with the WFP in humanitarian affairs? With the conceptual parameters defined, the following sections engage in a two-legged in-depth empirical investigation: the WFP’s reform process and the Brazilian foreign policy for food security. Those two legs overlapped in the case study on Brazil’s relationship with the WFP in the humanitarian field. They show why, in this case, Brazil performed a bridge diplomacy: an ambition for prominence and a rule-taker behavior.

Our first hypothesis was that Brazil decisively influenced the change in the WFP rules. Nevertheless, our empirical findings showed that the WFP’s reform was decided before Brazil became an acknowledged voice, and that it was the WFP that tried to bring Brazil to its donor base. For reasons we explain later that movement also interested Brazil, as the foreign policymaking process reached an unbreakable domestic obstacle: Congress did not provide the Government with adequate budget and legal framework to carry out an autonomous food aid policy.

WFP and the expansion of the donor base

In the 1990s, the WFP experienced a sharp decline in its food stocks: from 16.9 million metric tons in 1993 to about eight million in 1998 (World Food Programme 2015). In fact, there was a general decline in the volume of donations to the whole UN system in the post-Cold War scenario. That decline had to do with the end of the logic of proxy conflicts and of the need to

conquer allies in the context of the bipolar struggle. Also, the ascension of the neoliberal agenda and the weakening of the rationale for state intervention in the economy in the 1990s contributed to the lowering of the flow of resources to the international system of cooperation for development (Pessina 2017). The impact was also felt in the humanitarian system.

Regarding food aid, besides all those factors, one had been closely related to a problem seen since the beginnings of this cooperative practice: the international donation of food has historically been deeply dependent on the agricultural surpluses of major donor countries. This created much instability in the humanitarian system, because agricultural surpluses available for donation (because of lack of buyers or adverse climatic conditions, for example) can be very volatile (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Shaw 2011). There were several attempts to solve this problem. An important one was the Food Aid Convention (FAC), signed by the main food donors in 1967, aimed to provide a higher level of forecasting on the performance of international food aid. However, “there have been cuts in donor commitments to the FAC in the 1990s and, consequently, in “donor commitments to the regular budget of the” WFP (Clay et al. 1998, 7). Also in the 1990s, the result of the GATT’s Uruguay Round of trade negotiations for the liberalization of agricultural markets encouraged the destination of food to the market instead of international cooperation projects. Lastly, scholars and policy analysts started to consider financial aid as a better option compared to in-kind food aid (Clapp 2012; Clay et al. 1998).

Concerned with the sustainability of its programs, the Executive Board’s Strategic and Financial Plan (SFP) for 1998-2001 defined that the improvement of fundraising strategies was a priority. Among the strategies was the expansion of the WFP’s donor base, in order to reduce its dependence on the select group of traditional donors (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Clapp 2012). After some years of discussions amongst members-states and of intensive leadership of the WFP’s Executive Director, James Morris, the WFP decided to institutionalize a policy to incentivize the donation of foodstuffs by non-traditional donors (World Food Programme 1999a; World Food Programme 2001). The discussion on expanding the donor base was largely driven by the UN General Assembly Resolution 56/201 (2001), which emphasized the need to avoid dependence on a few donors by creating partnerships with non-traditional partners, including private donors (United Nations General Assembly 2001).

Morris presented his recommendations on that issue in 2002. Facing a 25% decline in global food aid in the 2000-2002 triennium, he emphasized the need to “invite additional countries, especially those that have recently become net exporters of food, to become food aid donors, thereby broadening global solidarity and support for combating hunger” (World Food Programme 2003a, 31). The Morris Report was adopted at the 2003 Annual Session of the Executive Board with some significant modifications. First, the replacement of the term ‘to become food aid donors’ in Morris’ recommendation for ‘to become donors’ shows the desire of the member-states to increase the influx of food, but also of monetary resources. Probably for the same reason, they removed the phrase that suggested a preference for new food exporters from Morris’ recommendation. Besides, by inserting the term ‘facilitating this process for them’, the

Board showed that some reform was necessary to attract new donors (World Food Programme 2003a; World Food Programme 2003b).

In this sense, the inclusion of emerging countries heated the debate. In a 2003 document, a topic called ‘Emerging Donors’ made the following record:

“[...] the delegation from India responded to a suggestion of some members that WFP discourage contributions from Member states with food security problems, as it was felt that those states should use their resources to feed their own populations first. He stressed that this was fraught with consequences that threatened to create a division between rich and poor donors. He reminded the Board that broadening the donor base was one of the most important objectives of the Programme, and explained that the problems of distribution in a food-insecure country were separate and distinct from those associated with production and surpluses. [...] Other members echoed these points and expressed support [...]” (World Food Programme 2003d, 11).

Although the document does not present the context in which some members opposed the engagement of donors with internal food security problems, the strong positioning of the Indian delegation suggests a scenario of polarization. That is, expanding the donor base through the insertion of non-traditional donors was not consensual. The citation also shows support for the approach advocated by Morris, who played an important role in the establishment of the debate, as recalled by the diplomat Fernandes⁴ who represented Brazil at the sessions at the time.

Fernandes, however, considered that the theme had been placed as one among many and not as something revolutionary. As for Brazil, the country was not one of those that explicitly supported India, since it acted as an observer and, during that period of 2003, still had little involvement within the Executive Board. In fact, the Lula government had just begun and the diplomacy of the fight against hunger was still in its infancy. In addition, our analysis of the diplomatic correspondence indicates that the initiative to attract emerging countries into the WFP donor base emanated from the Secretariat itself and not from emerging donors such as Brazil. However, Brazilian diplomats started to recognize the benefits of this engagement at least in the year 2000, that is, before the PT governments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2000a).

Patrícia Canuto⁵ highlights that the global scenario at the time was important to elicit the debate about new donors. The increase in the demand for grains resulted in a decrease in food stocks and, consequently, in the reduction of surpluses made available for humanitarian aid. In addition, the depreciation of the dollar in 2002 diminished the purchasing power of the WFP, which started to consider new methods of fundraising. In that context, the Secretariat suggested holding informal consultations with WFP members to address strategies for expanding the Programme’s donor base and to bring in emerging donors. The Executive Board endorsed the suggestion in 2003 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2004a; World Food Programme 2003d).

⁴ Interview, Counselor Arnaldo de Baena Fernandes (REBRASFAO/WFP) in September 29, 2015.

⁵ Interview, Patrícia da Rocha Canuto (Brazilian Cooperation Agency/Embassy of Rome/WFP) in November 4, 2015.

The mentioning, for the first time, of specific mechanisms for engaging emerging donors, such as *twinning*, demonstrates the shifting of the discussion from the conceptual to factual level, and indicates that the polarized environment had turned into a more favorable understanding of emerging donors' role.

The informal consultations took place on May 5 and July 13, 2004. At the occasion, the WFP Secretariat presented a paper containing detailed guidelines. By comparing this paper with the final document approved by the Board we clearly see the influence of the Secretariat on the issue. Two policies in this *paper* deserve mentioning: (a) policy regulation to support compliance with the Full-Cost Recovery (FCR) standard of donations; and (b) establishment of a new definition for a WFP donor (World Food Programme 2004a).

Note that the WFP General Regulations establishes that all contributions made by states to the organ should comply with the FCR rule. That is, donors must bear all costs associated with financial, service, and food donations (World Food Programme 2000; Canuto 2013). Exceptions to the rule could be conferred on developing countries, economies in transition, and non-traditional donors under the Regulation General Rule XIII.4. Theoretically, these countries would only be able to donate commodities to the WFP if the WFP or other country covered the costs associated with it, or if they used the money obtained through the sale of part of the donation (World Food Programme 2000). Nevertheless, it must be clear that this was not the practice.

While the idea of using exceptions seemed legitimate, the diversification of the WFP's contributory sources needed to be regulated in a way that would enable its operationalization. The first step was to consolidate the name "twinning" to the partnerships with the FCR exception. The twinning would be "matching an in-kind contribution from a donor eligible for special efforts to meet FCR with a contribution from another donor to meet the associated costs of the contribution" (World Food Programme 2004a, 11). Countries would be eligible for twinning if ranked by DAC/OECD as least-developed countries, low-income or lower-middle-income countries, based on their GDP per capita (World Food Programme 2004a).

In addition to cash support from partner states, the Secretariat placed multilateral funds such as the Immediate Response Account (IRA), the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), and the Emerging Donor Matching Fund (EDMF) as potential support for emerging donors (World Food Programme 2004a). EDMF, created by Morris in 2003, was a special account to eventually finance the associated costs of emerging donor contributions to the WFP (World Food Programme 2006). This initiative by Morris' reinforces the Secretariat's importance in consolidating the debate on the inclusion of emerging countries in the WFP.

Beyond the issue of costing, the definition of donors also deserves attention. Until 2004, the WFP donor definitions were based on the 1999 Guide to WFP's Resource and long-term Financing Policies. According to this document, a traditional donor would be "a contributor that has normally provided contributions to WFP on a FCR basis and was included in Lists D or E of the FAO Member States Listings for Elections for the WFP Executive Board [...]" (World

Food Programme 1999b, 11). The non-traditional donor would be one who did not fit into that definition. However, in the 2004 consultations, the Secretariat argued that this segregating definition no longer made sense in view of the donor inclusion strategy. It was then proposed to replace the terms traditional donor and non-traditional donor by the simple term donor (World Food Programme 2004a).

Finally, the outcome of the informal consultations was consolidated in the document ‘New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs: Expanding the WFP Donor Base’ (NPMRN) (WFP 2004), which was submitted for approval at the Executive Board’s Third Session in 2004. Almost all guidelines of the informal consultations document were maintained in the NPMRN. There were some relevant additions but almost no withdrawal. One important addition was the possibility of donors, by supporting twinning arrangements, “to determine on a case-by-case basis the recipients and countries with which they would like to twin in full or in part” (World Food Programme 2004b, 7). As demonstrated later, the Brazilian government saw this possibility as something very important to guarantee its engagement with the WFP.

The Board’s Third Session of 2004, held in October, endorsed the NPMRN. Analysis of the session’s drafts highlights a number of points: (i) member states particularly appreciated the new definition of the WFP donor, reiterating that all states could become regular donors; ii) they also emphasized the importance of maintaining the FCR standard in the regulation of the body (unchanged by the NPMRN); iii) multiple appeals were made for states to increase their contributions under the twinning arrangement; iv) several countries supported the idea of using per capita GDP as the eligibility criterion for exceptions to the FCR (World Food Programme 2004c; 2004d).

The NPMRN guidelines were included in the Board’s Strategic and Financial Plan 2004-2007 (World Food Programme 2004c; 2004d). By moving from the FCR standard (food donations with all transportation and additional costs guaranteed by the donor) to the donation through various modalities (such as twinning, monetization and partnership with the private sector), the WFP became open for different kind of donors, including emerging donors as Brazil.

The Brazilian role in the WFP reform process

We identified in the diplomatic correspondence of Brazil’s Representation in the FAO, WFP and IFAD (REBRASFAO) that the rise of Brazil as an agri-food power called the attention of the WFP Secretariat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2003a; 2003c). Also, the creation of ZHP by President Lula (2003-2009) and the transition to a profile of provider of international cooperation for development strengthened the Brazilian soft power in international agri-food relations (Brasil 2013; Albuquerque 2019). We found, however, indications of rapprochement between Brazil and the WFP before the PT governments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2000b).

A brief historical overview helps to understand the need for rapprochement. The WFP began its activities in Brazil in 1964, most of which consisted of supporting development projects such as financial support to the National School Feeding Program (PNAE). Resources were also channeled into emergency food operations. In this relationship, Brazil was a recipient of food aid but contributed sporadically to donations to the WFP. The interaction between Brazil and the WFP deteriorated throughout the 1990s as the activities carried out by the Programme in the country were finalized and the government ceased to contribute to the agency. The WFP office in Brazil, established in 1987, was closed in 1996. Brazil made its last contribution in 1995. The lack of information from the WFP about the fate of the Brazilian contributions was a factor that discouraged the continuity of the transfers. More important, maybe, was that Brazil was experiencing a severe budget crisis. In 1999, Brazil ended its mandate on the Executive Board and became an observer (Fernandes 2013).

Note that in October 2000, the WFP Regional Director for South America, James Conway, visited the Brazilian Ambassador in Peru, José Viegas, to talk about WFP's interest in discussing the possibility of a Food Aid Plan for emergency operations. The Plan foresaw that the donation of food by developing countries would have its associated costs covered by traditional donors (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2000a).

Ambassador Júlio Cesar Santos, then Permanent Representative of REBRASFAO, commented on that Telegram reaffirming that the growing indifference of traditional donors to the pressing needs of less affluent countries would be forcing the WFP to diversify the source of its contributions. In that context, Director Conway had been entrusted with obtaining additional donations from Latin American countries. Ambassador Santos pointed out that the 'Contingency Plan to Prevent Hunger in Emergencies' presented by Conway would only interest Brazil if the ten million USD estimated to cover the operational costs of food donations were actually obtained by the WFP, and if the packages could be directed to countries with which Brazil had an interest in making closer trade and political relations.

The issues addressed in these Telegrams provide important information for understanding the WFP's institutional reform process and the Brazilian foreign policy. First, the Secretariat had already thought about the possibility of regulating an instrument such as the twinning at least in the year 2000. Second, with regards to Brazil's position, the coverage of operational costs by traditional donors was a prerequisite for its re-engagement with the WFP. Third, Brazil sought some degree of freedom in deciding the recipients of its donations. As demonstrated in the previous section, the NPMRN document approved those two possibilities to food donors (World Food Programme 2004a; 2004b).

Note that, in 2000, the condition to choose a recipient by the Brazilian government seemed to be motivated especially by commercial and political interests (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2000b). At that time, it seemed to be a reaction to potential opportunities rather than a comprehensive foreign policy strategy. According to the Brazilian ambassador to the FAO in the 1990s, Mitzi Costa, as defended in her doctoral thesis, Brazil did not have a food aid policy

and, based on historical examples of traditional donors, lost opportunities by not using food systematically as a power resource (Costa 2000).

Prior to Lula's presidency, Ambassador Flavio Perri, who replaced Santos as Permanent Representative to REBRASFAO at the end of 2002, argued that Brazil had little political authority in the WFP because it had been absent for years from the Executive Board membership and did not play the role of donor. For Perri, this position should be altered due to the Zero Hunger Program (ZHP) in Brazil, which was gathering attention from foreign countries and international agencies. In Telegrams sent (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d) after the electoral victory of Lula in October of 2002, but before his inauguration in January 2003, there was a strong articulation between FAO and the bureaucracy in Brasilia to deepen partnerships based on the ZHP.

In this regard, Ambassador Perri encouraged Brazil to take a more participatory stance in the WFP. The more active stance would bring greater political coverage to the national moment of mobilization in the fight against hunger and poverty, presenting an international position consistent with the domestic social policies and demonstrating the Brazilian solidarity with foreigners subjected to similar conditions of misery. The Brazilian government could also gain influence along with traditional donors, confirm its leadership among Latin American and Caribbean countries, and still strengthen its prestige with developing countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2003a).

Subsequent diplomatic correspondence showed that Perri's position was widely supported by the WFP Secretariat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2003b). The communications show that the WFP viewed Brazil as an agri-food power and an emerging economy, and therefore acted to co-opt it to its donor base. The attitude of the WFP continued to be reported in later diplomatic correspondence. As the WFP directors committed themselves to engaging Brazil, the Brazilian government responded positively, demonstrating an attitude of cooperation with the Programme due to its own (Brazilian) interests.

An example of this positive reaction from Brazil was the articulation by REBRASFAO of a visit by the Minister of Agrarian Development, Miguel Rossetto, to James Morris in Rome. During the visit, Morris emphatically declared his admiration for President Lula's work on food and nutrition security, and listened carefully to Rossetto's presentation of aspects of the Brazilian agrarian/rural process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2003d).

As mentioned before, the apex of the 2004 institutional reform process were the informal consultations and the approval of the NPMRN document. Brazil was one of the countries represented in the informal consultation held by the Secretariat on May 5, 2004. Brazilian Ambassador, Maria-Theresa Lazaro, explained in her report that both the informal consultations and the draft-paper distributed at the meeting resulted from initiatives of the Secretariat, approved by the Executive Board, and that the Secretariat had advocated in favor of the twinning and the EDMF to increase the donations of countries with limited financial capacity. Lazaro also said that the initial reaction of traditional donors like Norway, Holland, Denmark, and Germany was of evident reticence and that they seemed to be concerned with losing the ability to determine the use of the resources

of the Programme with the implementation of the new mechanisms (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil 2004a). Lazaro also confirmed the position shown by some members of the Executive Board at the Second Session of 2003, as we described. To overcome the resistance of traditional donors, the Secretariat ensured that the list of countries that would benefit from such instruments as twinning would be agreed by all members of the Board.

Based on those communications, it is our understanding that Brazil has not acted actively to reform the system. At least, we have not found any information that points to Brazil's active role in the diplomatic correspondences. This conclusion was reinforced by an interview with diplomat Fernandes⁶, who asserted that Brazil played a very modest role in the sessions of the Executive Board during the NPMRN preparation period, including in 2004. However, Brazil's discrete position may have been tactical, since the proposal defended by the Secretariat was frankly favorable to the Brazilian interests, as assessed by Ambassador Lazaro in October 2004.

Lazaro's specification that the initiatives had been set up as something 'offered to' and not 'sought after' by Brazil is noteworthy. This undermines the hypothesis that Brazil, as an emerging donor, had sought to modify the international cooperation system to better meet its food aid policy, acting as a rule-maker. At the same time, it reinforces the comprehension that the reform sponsored by the Secretariat created a stimulus for Brazil to be a donor.

Nevertheless, if on the one hand, Brazil was not a force that promoted change in the *modus operandi* of the WFP, on the other hand, both the Programme's Secretariat and the actors of the Brazilian government got mobilized to strengthen relations in view of the opportunities that would be opened with the reform. This is evidenced by Morris' visit to Brazil in 2004, where he met with President Lula, different Ministers, Legislators, and the Special Councilor of the Presidency and coordinator of one of the axes of the ZHP, Frei Betto. Brazil increased its international projection with the agenda of fighting hunger and poverty, which made it an even more desired partner for the WFP.

Resumption of Brazilian donations to the WFP: limitations and the prevalence of the WFP model

The impacts of the NPMRN's reform were considerable in terms of enlarging the WFP's donor base. Stace White (2011) highlights the sudden increase in the support of emerging donors such as China, India, Russia, and Brazil to the WFP since 2006. China became a WFP top five-donor in 2007 and 2012, a position that used to be occupied by countries such as Australia, Japan, and Canada (World Food Programme 2008; 2012). In 2008, for example, 2.5% of all government donations received by WFP came from twenty-two non-DAC donors (Smith 2011). This number seems small, but we must put it into perspective. Except for the

⁶ Interview, September 29, 2015.

U.S., which alone provides more than 50% of all WFP's resources, historically the individual contributions of other major donors like Japan and Australia usually reach around 3% of all donations received by the Programme.

The WFP Executive Board's data shows that from 2004 to 2014, forty-seven countries donated 2.2 million tons of in-kind food commodities valued at \$667 million through a twinning partnership (World Food Programme 2014). Almost 90% of those countries were non-DAC donors, from emerging countries such as India and South Africa, but also countries like Mozambique and Cambodia. Note that those countries would not be able to donate food to the WFP if they had to apply to the old FCR rule.

In that context, the relations between Brazil and WFP deepened, both in terms of humanitarian and assistance projects. Nevertheless, Brazil effectively contributed to the WFP only in 2007. Financial and food contributions were made to the Country Office of Bolivia to help with the catastrophe caused by floods. In 2008, the government - first through its Air Force, then by the Navy - sent donations of food and medicines to Cuba, Jamaica, and Haiti, which had been hit by hurricanes (Fernandes 2013). In the beginning of its return to the multilateral food aid system, the Brazilian government covered all the costs associated with its donations.

In 2009, however, national economic crisis and budgetary constraints led Brazil to make its first contribution under the twinning arrangement, and from that year and onwards, twinning became the main instrument for making Brazilian donations to the WFP. The first operation was financed with contributions from Spain and from the EDMF (Canuto 2013). In 2011, the possibility of financing its own transportation was eliminated by the Law 12.429, which specified that freight and other costs associated with donating food from national public stocks should be provided by the WFP or reimbursed through monetization of part of the donation. This law reinforced the need to use the WFP's tools - twinning and monetization - to comply with the FCR exemption.

The twinning allowed Brazil to be the 10th largest government donor in 2011. The 2011 Annual Performance Report mentioned the Brazilian boost. In 2012, Brazil increased its prominence by being among the five largest government donors (World Food Programme 2012). After that, however, Brazilian humanitarian food cooperation declined for reasons we cannot elaborate here. Suffice it to say that a) Brazil did not have sufficient grain surpluses to donate anymore, and b) that from 2014 and onwards, economic and political crises resulted in a retraction of the Brazilian South-South cooperation in general terms (Lima 2018).

Nevertheless, it is important to examine two relevant constraints that the government faced in this process in order to understand the limits of the Brazilian international cooperation policy and its relationship with the WFP in the humanitarian field. First, logistics. According to the information presented by IPEA & ABC (2016), the total value of food donated by Brazil from 2011 to 2013 corresponded to approximately US\$ 177 million. To make these donations viable, more than US\$ 180 million were spent by other WFP members, multilateral funds and,

in a smaller scale, the private sector. Brazil funded approximately US\$ 1.9 million in freight in this period.

These numbers clearly show that the transportation costs were expensive and that Brazil and the WFP reached a balanced partnership (at least in terms of money) through the twinning.⁷ Note that during Brazil's ascension as a top donor, Congress passed law 12,429/2011 prohibiting spending on the international transportation of food aid. That is, were it not for triangular cooperation through WFP's twinning, more than 350,000 tons of Brazilian food would probably be distributed between 2008 and 2015. Thus, it also demonstrates the material and societal limitations that the government needed to address to gain a more significant role in the humanitarian aspect of the international fight against hunger.

It is important to register that in order to access the twinning instrument, Brazil had almost to quit its preferred public policy of international food aid. The Brazilian government's original idea was to procure food produced by Brazilian small family farmers and donate it to foreign populations (Lima 2018). In this arrangement – which would be in the spirit of South-South Cooperation –, two developing countries' populations would be assisted: the foreigners, who would receive food, and the poor Brazilian family farmers. The problem was that the WFP's operational standards made this plan unfeasible. As a CONAB official explained in an interview, there were two fundamental obstacles. First, the production of small family farming did not reach the quantity and uniformity required by the WFP. Second, because small family farmers are numerous, more geographically dispersed, and with organizational difficulties, they could not afford the packaging costs to meet the WFP standard, nor could they afford to transport the food to the port where the Programme would take control of the logistics.

These WFP's technical standards were not made flexible and we have not identified any negotiation in this regard between the Brazilian government and the Programme. Hypothetically, that would be an opportunity for Brazil to perform a rule-maker role. In any case, by that time large-scale agribusiness was interested in participating in government purchases of food aid because national grain stocks were high, there was an oversupply of some commodities, and prices were low, especially for rice - which eventually became the most donated commodity by Brazil. Thus, it was mostly by mobilizing the surpluses of the agribusiness to the detriment of the production of the small family farmers that Brazil became one of the biggest donors in the world (Lima 2018).

Implemented in this way, the Brazilian insertion in the international food aid system was meteoric, but ephemeral. As food surpluses fell and commodity prices rebounded, agribusiness interest in selling to the government's food aid policy dissipated. At the same time, the low profile of Rousseff's diplomacy, national instability from 2013 and onwards, and the impeachment that followed in 2016 evaporated the soft power of Brazilian foreign policy and, thus, the ability to attract partners. Brazil lost its ambition for prominence in the global fight against hunger.

⁷ The cost of transport services covered by partners exceeded the value of donated food. High spending on freight, in fact, gives some support to criticisms of 'tied' food aid (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Clapp 2012).

Conclusion

Was the relationship between Brazil and the WFP cooperative or based on cooptation? The answer does not need to be exclusive. On the one hand, the analysis shows that Brazil and the WFP developed a cooperative relationship based on self-interests which were largely complementary. The WFP needed to enlarge its donor base because of the decline of the contributions of traditional donors. Hence, it modified the concept of 'donor', abolishing the distinctions between traditional and non-traditional donors. All donors became able to donate food to the WFP through the twinning mechanism, and not only those that could abide by the Full Cost Recovery rule. This reform allowed Brazil and other developing countries to be part of the WFP international food aid. One of our hypotheses was that Brazil could be one of the main driving forces in the process, but the empirical evidence we found only permits us to state that the WFP's bureaucracy was the most relevant actor in pushing for the reform. As for Brazil, evidence shows that it was no more than an observer and a desired partner. On the other hand, Brazil was co-opted by the WFP system to some extent. Brazil's limitations excluded the possibility of providing international food aid according to its preferred policy, that is, donating abroad food acquired from Brazilian small family farmers. The food donated by Brazil was produced, for the most part, by large-scale agribusiness.

The typology of graduation is useful to understand the limits Brazil faced in this particular case, and the constraints it may have to deal with if it wants to expand its role as an emerging power in the international cooperation system. Brazil had a considerable – but not autonomous – material capability to become a big WFP food donor due to its consolidation as an agri-food power. The WFP Secretariat recognized this potential, and worked for at least nine years (2000-2009) to include Brazil in its donor base. However, Brazil could not sustain the high levels of food donation over time because the market would absorb almost all its production. Plus, the government's financial capacity to sustain the transportation of food was very limited. Thus, while Brazil only partially fulfilled the first necessary condition for a country willing to graduate - to have considerable hard power -, the WFP Secretariat's behavior clearly demonstrated that Brasília was recognized as a relevant actor by major powers and peers, which is the third condition to graduation.

Furthermore, we can affirm that the second condition - the political will to gain prominence - also was fulfilled in the PT governments. These administrations tried to perform an autonomous food aid policy, but as the Executive was not fully supported by Congress with the adequate budget and legal framework, the government embraced the partnership with the WFP to accomplish its international cooperation objectives. So, Brazil acted as a rule-taker, and Brasília had to abandon its preferred policy, which was buying food from family farmers and distributing it to foreign populations in humanitarian need.

The fourth and fifth necessary conditions were partially met. The Brazilian government kept ephemeral cohesion with the interests of the strategic elite, especially those of the agribusiness sector: when the surpluses disappeared, the support for the humanitarian cooperation also vanished.

And although the government did get legislative support to implement a policy that had made Brazil one of the largest global players in humanitarian cooperation, the government lacked the political strength to approve a law to implement an international cooperation policy based on inputs from small family farmers. In other words, societal backing was evident, but not enough to empower the government to achieve its policy preferences.

In sum, the PT governments had an ambition for prominence and a considerable - but not sufficient - hard power and societal backing to pursue a more autonomous humanitarian cooperation policy. Maybe that is the reason why the government has not adopted a position of rule-maker at the WFP's reform process. Rather, it assumed a rule-taker position. But we cannot ignore that the direction of the reforms brought about by the NPMRN was in accordance with the Brazilian government's interests. In this sense, the combination between an ambition for prominence and a rule-taker role results in bridge diplomacy. This term describes a foreign policy marked by the building of bridges between the North - both in terms of countries and of mainstream international organizations - and the strategic interests of a country with a Global South perspective.

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