

Brazilian Foreign Policy and Family Farming: Internationalisation Processes through the Analysis of 'Forums and Arenas'

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Abstract: Brazil's federal government officially defined family farming (FF) as a public policy agenda in 1996; however, since then, Brazil's foreign policy in the field of agriculture has given priority to the role of agribusiness in the export of commodities and its contribution to the country's GDP and trade. While questioning the governmental narrative rooted in a dual agricultural structure (wherein FF and agribusiness would both be similarly relevant), this article also highlights the internationalisation processes of FF through the analysis of different forums in Brazilian foreign policy. Our goal is to understand how each of these forums and arenas has contributed to the international acknowledgement of FF as a 'best practice', but also to analyse the strengths and sustainability of what we label as the internationalisation resilience of FF, particularly when we consider the severe reflux of FF policies in Brazil since 2016.

Keywords: family farming, Brazilian foreign policy, internationalisation, dual agricultural structure, public policy.

Introduction

Brazil's federal government officially recognised family farming as a public policy agenda in 1996 by implementing the National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming (Pronaf). The label 'family farming' (FF) speaks for a wide range of social realities, landed properties, agricultural productions, and linkages with nature and environmental protection. In terms of key actors, FF represents not only traditional communities that are locally based but also technically skilful farmers connected with global supply chains. Moreover,

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its designation is centred on the nuclear family, so it applies to every family-based agricultural activity whenever it is at the centre of rural production, management, and labour.

Throughout the 2000s, Brazil's FF public policies gained international attention as they were often headlined as best practices for reducing economic inequalities while promoting social justice. The federal plan for agricultural development was formulated based on the asymmetric coexistence between FF and the agribusiness sector, the latter being capable of spreading its hegemonic influence on domestic economic and political structures (especially within the Legislative branch) and Brazil's global and regional foreign policy and trade.

In this context, our main research question is the following: how has family farming found its way as a policy agenda towards internationalisation under Brazil's dual asymmetric agricultural model? We claim that the answer to this question lies in the analysis of Brazilian foreign policy, mainly when we highlight the role of ideas in foreign policy-making. In the first section, we present our framework and methodology based on Eve Fouilleux's conceptual approach to 'forums and arenas.' Second, we briefly introduce the global context around FF, focusing on key intergovernmental negotiations and Brazil's contribution to the international diffusion of this policy agenda. Third, we explore the different ideational forums within Brazil's foreign policy specifically related to FF issues. We argue that FF as a foreign policy agenda must not be erroneously regarded as identical with FF domestic public policies, despite obvious interconnections between the two spheres. The forums and arenas within Brazil's foreign policy that deal with FF are different, as well as the players, narratives, and interests at stake. In the fourth section, we discuss the present reactive scenario and reflect on FF resilience abroad, since domestic Brazilian public policies have utterly declined in political relevance and budget-wise. In the closing remarks, we present the main results of our article, underline key findings, and build up research questions for future analysis.

Concepts and methods: building our analytical framework

Our main research question is part of a more substantial effort to review and update policy diffusion studies from a Southern perspective, emphasizing concepts such as policy resilience and policy competition. Theoretically, we situate our analysis within International Political Sociology, bringing together IR, Sociology and Political Science concepts under a relational and cognitive approach. As far as policy diffusion studies are concerned, while acknowledging the terminological diversity (diffusion, transfer and circulation), we agree with Porto de Oliveira and Faria (2017: 30) that 'diffusion is referred to a collective adoption of a public policy, and circulation is a longer and vaster flow, in time and space, that can also imply back and forward policy movements.' Nevertheless, as our present goal is to analyse how foreign policy decision-making fuelled FF internationalisation processes, we need to understand the roles and practices of different actors within distinct mechanisms, such as presidential leadership, diplomatic activism, multilateral engagement, and South-South cooperation (SSC).

While assuming that foreign policy is a public policy (Milani 2015), in this article, we build a bridge between international and domestic politics and argue that foreign policy depends 'on coalitions, bargaining, disputes, and agreements among representatives of diverse interests, which express the very dynamic of politics' (Milani and Pinheiro 2017: 284). In addition, we go 'from the analysis of the foreign policy decision-making process to a comprehension of the entire policy process, where 'the 'knowledge' variable takes a prominent place' (Faria 2003: 22, our translation). To underline the role of ideas in foreign policy-making, we have based our research on the French school of cognitive analyses of public policies. More specifically, we have focused on Eve Fouilleux's approach to 'forums and arenas', wherein understanding how ideas are developed and institutionalised is a major methodological step.

Conceptually, forums are composed of a myriad of actors (such as academics, think tanks, social movements, networks, technical officers, lobbyists, politicians, diplomats, among others) who embody the beliefs of a specific subsystem, thus making the heterogeneity of existing ideas around a public policy even clearer. The so-called 'central referentials' (Fouilleux 2000) are the result of a combination of ideas that are hegemonic in a given forum, and they vary according to interests, identity, power relations and institutional settings. Forums are the space for debating public policies, but Fouilleux's concept of forum unfolds into two dynamics: the ideational forum and the political forum. The former refers to the moment when relatively homogeneous actors deliberate, aiming to build a referential. The latter is shaped by different spokespersons coming from different ideational forums, each one defending his/her own referential. In the political forum, relatively heterogeneous actors deliberate together to build a political commitment towards a public policy or policy guidelines. This commitment does not imply reaching a perfect consensus, but while it remains, guidelines are maintained, and changes will only be incremental and marginal. In this article, the political commitment under scrutiny deals with the support given to FF and agricultural guidelines within Brazil's foreign policy until 2016.¹

Although Fouilleux's framework holds similarities with Paul Sabatier's advocacy coalitions framework (Sabatier 1998)², Fouilleux's framework is more relevant for the purpose of this article because of the very international dynamics and multilateral instances wherein policy diffusion unfolds. Forums represent the consolidation of an idea but also a 'waiting step of the negotiation process' (Fouilleux 2000: 288, our translation). From time to time, international organisations become arenas where each country must present its own position during a given negotiation process and when disputes among referentials gain strong visibility among domestic decision-makers, thus enabling new ideas to become institutionalised. Together, 'arenas (where policy negotiations take place) and forums (where policies are assessed and analysed, where policy impacts are measured) are key places where ideas are exchanged, and ideational power is exercised' (Fouilleux, Bricas and Alpha 2017: 4). FF overlaps and competes with other political, economic, and technological projects that are also being diffused internationally, making its internationalisation paths even more complex and adaptive. Such a dynamic context of competition and

resilience is crucial to understand how the domestic-international nexus and the politics of foreign policy affect the internationalisation process of the FF agenda.

Brazil's contribution to the international diffusion of the family farming agenda

From 2019 to 2028, the United Nations celebrates the Decade of Family Farming (UNDDFF). The decade represents the apex of a collective effort involving different players (several UN agencies, governments, civil society organisations, social movements, private-sector leadership, among others) from all around the world who are interested in promoting policies and initiatives aiming 'to advance family farmers' position to lead the economic, environmental and social transformational changes that affect rural areas and the entire planet' (FAO 2020). Centred on the nuclear family, FF represents a myriad of experiences in both developed and developing countries, and thanks to the celebration, the UN intends to give it a substantial role in the socially and environmentally sustainable management of territories.

The UNDDFF arises from different engagement levels and political opportunities built throughout the past two decades, which includes the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) launched in 2014 and the IYFF+10 initiative. The mobilisation for the IYFF started in 2008. The engagement of different organisations, including UN agencies, helped to leverage the FF concept internationally, thus encompassing around FF the widest variety possible of farmers in the field, including peasant farming, small-scale fishing, pastoralism, and indigenous communities. The FF Knowledge Platform was yet another achievement, built as a 'repository of policy, scientific, legal, and statistical information on family farming that supports policy-making and exchange of experience at different levels' (FAO 2020). Together, these are emblematic examples of international driving actions in favour of FF³.

Brazil has had an important role in this diffusion cycle of FF both as a concept and a practice. The Brazilian government has leveraged a series of international commitments related to FF, especially after 2003. To the list, we can add the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which present in its SDG 2 (the 'Zero Hunger' goal) different FF targets and indicators. The 'Zero Hunger' goal is part and parcel of a broader global framework, wherein Brazil stands as one of the main leaders among Southern countries in an attempt to bring social and sustainable development issues to the forefront. Brazil's active participation in international forums started to decrease after the two terms of President Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva (2003-2010), and a sharp change in the country's international commitments took place after the 2016 controversial impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff. As posed by Casarões (2020: 91), different administrations consciously decided to change – and more specifically, to downgrade – Brazil's global and regional status since 2016. However, it was with the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 and the adoption of unprecedented anti-globalist rhetoric in the country's foreign policy that the leadership once claimed by Brazil in international forums gradually melted down as

it began to showcase a 'Christian religious fervour and a morally-driven conservative attitude' in those spaces (Lopes 2020: 9).

Moving to the national scenario, the FF concept and policies were all part of a wider project addressing Brazil's agricultural sector in the 2000s. The strategy was based on a dual asymmetric structure between agribusiness and the family farming sector. In this model, the agribusiness sector was hegemonic in the definition of rural and agricultural development policies, thus constraining the role of FF in the actual making of policies. Currently, we can affirm that the FF agenda has mostly been washed away from Brazil's federal governmental policies. Domestically, the FF agenda has disappeared from the policy agenda, as part of a systematic effort towards dismantling public policies that targeted vulnerable groups, including small-scale producers, peasants, indigenous and traditional communities. Internationally, the country shows no signs of maintaining any kind of political engagement with FF. Moreover, the country's narratives of a dual agriculture model simply do not apply anymore.

The FF agenda is currently under severe attack in Brazil; however, it still survives at the international level, as we can see through the example of the UNDFE. For more than a decade, Brazil has played a significant role in promoting and exporting FF concepts, instruments, practices, and policies. Its South-South cooperation programmes in many Latin American and African countries would almost always carry out FF projects and activities, not without generating contradictions in several cases (Beghin 2014). Together with parallel actions taken by non-governmental organisations, the Brazilian government influenced institutional reforms and supported the creation of new spaces that were crucial for FF internationalisation processes.

Since these are complex processes, in this article we will focus on Brazil's foreign policy and the ideational groups that were dealing with the agricultural agenda. Based on this method, we intend to understand FF internationalisation processes through the analysis of the different forums within Brazilian foreign policy and how each of them contributed to FF becoming global and acknowledged as a 'best practice.' The mechanisms and actions taken by the country in the field of FF must be interpreted under the existing asymmetries of its rural structure. As we consider the contradictions of this dual model, we can better understand 'how policy travels, is pushed and sold and borrowed, how it is adapted and translated, how it snakes across borders and inserts itself or is resisted and overthrown' (Hadjiisky, Pal and Walker 2017: 272). By acknowledging the asymmetry between FF and the agribusiness sector, we also embody the role played by 'norm entrepreneurs', who have advocated 'a minority position' and have used 'international norms to strengthen their position in domestic debates' (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 893). Therefore, the domestic forums for policy diffusion have clearly intertwined with the international arena.

Family farming going global: what are the ideas underneath its diffusion?

There are multiple definitions of FF in the specialised literature, including FF as ‘an intention’ (Picolotto 2011: 25), a ‘floating signifier’ (Cabral et al. 2016: 48), a ‘polymorphic reality’ (Lamarche 1998), a ‘synthesis category’ (França and Sanches 2015:11), an ‘umbrella’ concept (Van Der Ploeg 2014), a ‘political category’ (Sabourin, Samper and Massadier 2015: 607) or, simply, a ‘reality [...] consisting of a family working in agricultural activities under a piece of land’ (Schneider and Cassol 2017: 91). What they all have in common is the effort to understand FF as a reality that is plural and complex. Especially under the lens of internationalisation, we can also add adjectives such as ‘plastic, malleable and adaptive’ (Luiz 2018: 139, our translation). Depending on the international arena – if related to trade, food security or regional integration –, FF narratives have frequently varied, as we will see further on.

Looking at Brazilian macro politics, the agricultural sector has always been historically relevant and influential in national policy-making due to the role played by the country as a supplier of feedstock and raw materials. When FF emerged as a policy agenda in the 1990s, Brazil was facing a massive debt crisis that was overcome also thanks to the weight of the agribusiness sector in the country’s balance of payments. Thereafter, agribusiness has become an ‘indispensable’ partner for national macroeconomics and organised itself as a political player in the Executive and Legislative branches (Delgado 2012: 88). However, the ‘indispensable’ role played by agribusinesses to stabilise hyperinflation relied on domestic food consumption features, mostly built upon FF.

The 2017 agricultural census shows that 77% of Brazilian rural establishments correspond to FF. The sector is also responsible for almost 70% of the rural working force and most of the basic products consumed by the Brazilian population (such as beans, rice, cassava, greens, and vegetables). Due to land concentration, only 23% of the total rural productive areas correspond to FF, which highlights the importance of the sector, despite its absolute lack of funding in comparison with the agribusiness. The 2006 census showed that 70% of the internal food consumption was produced by FF, and ‘by supplying most of the food consumed in Brazil, family farming contributes to long-term price stability in the overall national economy’ (Müller 2014: 223)⁴. In general, we can affirm that the contributions of FF to the national economy, food security, job creation and environmental protection are substantial. Especially in the 2000s, FF gained public space as a model capable of eradicating poverty and hunger, while contributing to the reduction of social inequality.

Pronaf was the first FF public policy launched in Brazil (created in 1995, then officialised in 1996). The range of FF public policies increased throughout the years (at least until 2014), with more than 30 federal programmes and projects. For 20 years, different perspectives were incorporated into FF public policies to account for productive, territorial, and social differences. According to Grisa and Schneider (2014), from 1996 to 2014, three generations of FF public policies were implemented. The first one was based on credit concession (i.e. Pronaf). The second-generation inaugurated social and technical

assistance measures associated with economic actions. As FF is a complex concept, policy adjustments were progressively made to include a larger range of small farmers who did not yet qualify as family farmers⁵. The last generation amplified the comprehension of the FF field to a new set of integrated public policies, including food security and territorial development. This development from 2003 to 2014 took place under the Lula and the Rousseff administrations, both from the Workers' Party (PT)⁶, and coincided with the push for FF internationalisation.

Even before the creation of Pronaf, international actions had already been deployed in the field of FF, but not by Brazil's federal government, neither as part of its Ministry of Agriculture nor as a Brazilian foreign policy agenda. Contacts among social movements, technical experts from the civil service and international agencies regarding 'small-scale family producers' had been intensive across the South Cone borders, exactly where FF had its historical roots in the Brazilian context. The Common Market of the South (Mercosur) has since then been part and parcel of that story. In the 1990s, its goal was mainly to promote greater competitiveness of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay in the international market. At the beginning of the regional integration process, agriculture accounted for 50% of the total global trade of these countries (Favero 1996: 294). Despite national differences, the four countries share important commonalities in the rural area.

Given Mercosur's trade liberalisation and its impacts on small-scale production, sixty leaders of small-scale farming organisations from South America met in Porto Alegre in 1994, aiming to strengthen ties and co-ordinate transgovernmental efforts. Together, they created the Mercosur Confederation of Family Farming Organisations (Coprofam). The core issue of Coprofam at this first phase was to foster 'the categorical recognition of the coexistence of two distinct agricultural models, agribusiness and family farming, in South America' (Luiz, Carvalho and Teixeira 2020: 52). Coprofam highlighted the sectoral paradigmatic dispute that came into being in the 1990s.

In the same context of Mercosur, several other international negotiations were taking place (such as Alca and the transition from Gatt to WTO), and all of them had an extraordinary impact on the Brazilian agricultural sector. In fact, this period launched a new phase in Brazilian external relations by bringing 'awareness of the potential articulations and tensions between domestic policies and Brazilian foreign policy' (Milani and Pinheiro 2017: 281). The formation of large agro-export conglomerates and their influence on ongoing international negotiations changed the well-established common sense that Brazilian foreign policy was bureaucratically insulated from other domestic agendas. Following this trend, transformations were seen in Itamaraty's bureaucracy: for example, it created, in 1992, the Division of Agriculture and Commodities (DPB) within the Department of International Trade Policy (DPC). DPB specifically took care of the agricultural component of different ongoing negotiations, highlighting the importance of the topic within the national foreign policy.

Since the 1990s, the agricultural sector has clearly improved its presence in foreign policy agendas. Regarding the FF agenda, internationalisation was still embryonic and punctual in the 1990s. It was only after 2003, under the Lula administration, that the agenda

was structured around federal initiatives and policies. The implementation of the 'Zero Hunger Project' was part of this process, which concretely contributed to the strengthening of FF both as a domestic public policy and as a foreign policy agenda. Fighting for hunger eradication was a powerful banner in the domestic realm. Internationally, it could also band together with several Northern and Southern countries around the Brazilian initiative.

The 'Zero Hunger Project' was perfectly suitable for Brazil's ambitions as a global player. Indeed, the government decided to put the issue of hunger on the political agenda 'by removing it from the narrow limits of technical options or optimal solutions' (Maluf, Santarelli and Prado 2014: 19, our translation). The project became a true Brazilian branding abroad and FF was part of that broader foreign policy strategy. Nonetheless, this was only possible because the FF sector presented some degree of convergence with the agribusiness sector. The dual agricultural model – at least its official narrative – was also part of the broader foreign policy strategy that opened different political opportunities for FF internationalisation.

When we go back to Eve Fouilleux's approach based on 'forums and arenas', we identify four ideational groups related to the Brazilian foreign policy for agricultural matters during FF internationalisation processes: the family farming forum; the food security forum; the political-diplomatic forum; and the agribusiness forum. First, the FF forum was represented by family farmers and small-scale organisations (such as the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers - Contag), public officers (mostly from the Ministry of Rural Development - MDA), politicians (such as the Parliamentary Front for Family Farming), rural development academics, among others. The debate within this forum was mostly around the supply-side of agricultural production. Second, the food security forum was represented by social movements (such as the Landless Workers Movement - MST), non-governmental organisations (such as transnational organisations like Oxfam and ActionAid), experts and networks debating the theme of food security (such as the Food and Nutrition Security National Council - Consea), etc. In this case, the dominant referential was based on the demand-side of agricultural production, including hunger and malnutrition.

Third, the political-diplomatic forum was represented by diplomats from Itamaraty and other technical officers working in issues of foreign affairs (such as Brazilian Cooperation Agency - ABC), intellectuals and scholars discussing Brazilian foreign policy (such as the International Relations Reflection Group - GRRI), key advisors of the Presidency, among others⁷. During the PT years in government, we saw a direct and personal commitment of President Lula in reaching international arenas too. The dominant referential of the political-diplomatic forum was based on foreign policy principles, including multilateralism, peaceful dispute settlement, and non-intervention in the affairs of other countries. Fourth, the agribusiness forum was represented mostly by technical officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Company (Embrapa), specialists from agricultural think tanks (such as Agroicone), agricultural associations (such as National Confederation of Agriculture - CNA), large agricultural

conglomerates and retailers, and the Parliamentary Front of Agriculture (FPA), among other players. The dominant referential was agricultural trade liberalisation, basically connected to global agri-food supply chains.

After 2003, Brazil reaffirmed its international profile as an agricultural power in three active political forums where these ideational groups interacted: the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and United Nations agencies (mostly the Food and Agricultural Organisation - FAO) at the global level, and Mercosur at the regional level. Apart from these international political forums, there were also other diffusion initiatives deployed by FF agents in their internationalisation processes, which included South-South cooperation programmes, where civil society organisations and businesses played an important role. While constructing SSC as a foreign policy tool, 'the Brazilian foreign policy community has strived to change the perception the international community kept about Brazil [...] establishing moral authority in some specific areas of international policymaking' (Esteves, Zoccal and Fonseca 2020: 196).

It is important to acknowledge South-South cooperation, the 'Zero Hunger' programme and other mechanisms as important gateways for the process of policy diffusion; however, multilateral organisations also had normative influence and catalyst power for FF policy circulation and internationalisation. Moreover, multilateral spaces also offered 'forums for policy discussions and arenas for negotiation' (Fouilleux, Bricas and Alpha 2017: 15), as domestic delegations often need to present their international position on an issue, transforming the forum into an arena. On those occasions, a window of opportunity is opened for ideational groups to re-negotiate national political commitments.

In addition to the articles on this Special Issue that address policy diffusion processes, several studies explore the internationalisation of Brazil's social innovations, either by targeting a specific agenda (Sabourin and Grisa 2018), highlighting the role of policy networks (Esteves, Zoccal and Fonseca 2020), or analysing more deeply the foreign policy interests and the country's ambition in a particular multilateral venue (Lima and Santana 2020). Our contribution seeks to bridge foreign policy decision-making in multilateral venues and domestic politics, highlighting how the ideas underneath this process may impact the internationalisation of the FF policy agenda. Due to FF's characteristics, we also intend to explore elements of policy resilience and policy competition during the internationalisation process.

Hereafter, we have organised our analysis of FF internationalisation outcomes within WTO, FAO, and Mercosur around three dimensions: (i) the ambition of the political-diplomatic forum to become a global leader side-by-side with its commitment to social participation; (ii) the participation of the FF and food security forums in different spaces; and (iii) the game of engagement and disengagement of the agribusiness forum.

(i) The ambition of the political-diplomatic forum

In the early 2000s, the government of Brazil showed a political eagerness to promote the country's foreign policy not as a peripheral power but 'rather by "harden[ing]" its soft

power' (Pinheiro and Lima 2018: 18). Under the Lula administration between 2003 and 2010, particularly during his second mandate, an autonomous foreign policy implied an improvement of bilateral, multilateral, and interregional partnerships with other emerging powers, with a geopolitical emphasis on South-South cooperation, and an open commitment to take on a role of a global player in multiple chess boards, including security.

In his speech at the World Economic Forum in January 2010, Lula mentioned that a new international economic order was not only considered 'an act of generosity, but mainly, an attitude of political intelligence' (da Silva 2010, our translation). The 'Zero Hunger' global projection and the presidential activism gave the country an impressive gain of diplomatic scale. The positive results of national social policies contributed to showcasing Brazilian good practices as an inspiration to the rest of the world, even though domestically both health and primary education still presented low-quality indicators when compared to neighbouring countries and other rising powers. The diplomatic machine was organised to place Brazil as one of the key southern representatives in multilateral settings. Brazil's participation in global spaces improved substantially: innovative South-South cooperation strategies, new concepts (such as non-indifference), new arenas (such as Brics, IBAS, South America, Africa, and Arab countries summits), new modes of policy-making (calling in social movements and civil society organisations to the domestic forefront) were put together alongside the growth of diplomatic staff and new consulates or embassies in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Together with Lula, José Graziano da Silva also engaged as an FF 'ambassador' (Porto de Oliveira 2020a), circulating among international organisations to advocate for the 'Zero Hunger Project' (which included FF public policies). Graziano da Silva became FAO Latin America director in 2006 and FAO general director in 2012, upscaling Brazilian influence from the regional space to global institutions. The 'upgrade' also happened in other fields such as trade and environment, with Roberto Azevedo at WTO and Bráulio Dias at the UN Biodiversity Commission.

Alongside these high-level ambassadors, different individuals acted as 'norm entrepreneurs' for FF socialisation and institutionalisation. Inside or outside the governmental structure, these agents were part of a complex norm circulation dynamics. Their roles brought attention to the 'necessity of observing the interplay between (local, national, and international) institutions and individuals as actors, as this combination was crucial to setting Brazil up as a global social policy exporter' (Porto de Oliveira 2020b: 266). In foreign policy for the FF agenda, in turn, the role played by norm entrepreneurs highlights another layer of the political-diplomatic forum, which is its level of commitment to social participation.

The 1990s were fundamental years for the emergence of the FF category, but it also represented a new global, national, and sectoral wave in terms of development debates with social participation. The openness for social participation during the Cardoso administration was transformed by the Lula administration into a government commitment. In foreign policy, the level of concrete participation of civil society during the PT years is debatable, but its growing representation allowed for better monitoring of the decision-making process in international forums, notably in trade negotiations. When we look at

Itamaraty, a symbol of that commitment was the General Coordination of Humanitarian Cooperation and Fight Against Hunger (CGFome), created in 2004. CGFome was built to be the international interface of the Brazilian 'Zero Hunger Project' (Rondó and Lopes 2016), recognised as the main gateway of social movements and civil society organisations for accessing Itamaraty (Luiz 2018: 280). Another gateway was the General Secretariat of the Presidency, which reflected a strategic commitment for social participation within high-level political spaces. In both cases, the history of social engagement of those in charge accounted for this commitment to social participation. Consea's role in activating both gateways was also of great relevance in these processes. In addition, Brazil has shown commitment to opening international spaces for social participation. That was the case with FAO and Mercosur political forums, the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the creation of the Specialised Meeting on Family Farming (REAF).

(ii) The participation of the FF and food security forums in different spaces

The FF and food security forums shared several commonalities and interdependencies. As previously said, they reflected the supply and demand side of agricultural production. They also shared the willingness to face social inequality and poverty. Their best synergies could be seen in programmes such as the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (PNAE) and Food Acquisition Programme (PAA). The template of both programmes foresaw that, given the limited capacities of small-scale farmers, the government should use public procurement - for schools, hospitals, or humanitarian donations - to overcome the bottleneck of small farmers on the demand side, allocating a percentage of the public food acquisition to purchase FF production. PNAE and PAA were globally known and diffused experiences and then recognised as best practices for ending hunger and poverty while promoting rural development.

Structural changes were made at MDA (that dealt directly with FF public policies) and the Ministry of Social Development – MDS (that dealt with the 'Zero Hunger' national strategy)⁸. Both created international secretariats, whose actions were not always co-ordinated, which contributed to the low levels of policy dialogue between the FF and the food security forums. MDA set up the International Affairs and Commercial Promotion Advisory (AIPC) in 2003 as a direct response to the upcoming WTO ministerial conference in Cancun, showing that the Ministry had identified the need to guarantee policy space in trade agreements, since FF programmes were essentially subsidised policies. Concerning Mercosur, because the Mercosur-European Union Agreement was then being negotiated, the FF forum actively worked for guaranteeing its regional policy space as well.

Whereas the FF forum was very active in trade negotiations, the food security forum remained mostly inactive in these arenas. This does not mean that the issue of food security was less relevant (Luiz 2018). Under the food system scrutiny and its goal to eradicate hunger, the demand side had a prominent position when compared to the production side. In fact, FF public policies have managed to grow in Brazil and abroad due to their recognition in the 'Zero Hunger Project' and the fulfilment of food security goals by FF

public policies. Due to the subordinated character of FF, the most synergetic relation between FF and food security forums was seen at FAO, where the food security forum had a more relevant role (debates on the right to food, nutrition, food security, food sovereignty). At FAO, family farmers were agents and guarantors of food security, which reinforced the subordination of FF to food security. At WTO and Mercosur, the fundamental referentials built were based on the economic, social, and political weight of the small-scale farmers within the dual agricultural model, by highlighting their relevance for internal food production.

Turning to the international political forums, the engagement of the FF forum in Mercosur was emblematic. First, the forum was active at the Working Sub-Group n° 8 of Mercosur, a space focused on agricultural technical issues. Later and with the support of the political-diplomatic forum, Mercosur approved the creation of REAF in 2004. The new regional space helped to consolidate the existence of FF beyond Brazilian borders, while also contributing to the circulation of Brazilian FF public policies. Despite appearing in the latest cycles of REAF, food security has never been the main discussion among REAF participants (Luiz 2018). Domestically and internationally, our application of Fouilleux's framework shows the relevance of both the commitment of the political-diplomatic forum and the close relations between the FF and the food security forums.

(iii) The agribusiness forum's game of engagement and disengagement

The FF agenda gained international traction thanks not only to its instrumentality in the development of the 'Zero Hunger Project', but also because it was part of the 'successful dual agricultural model' officially promoted by Brazil. The two fronts were part of the same context, in which economic growth and social justice should ideally walk side-by-side to promote national development. The concrete convergence of the two agricultural models is controversial, as the political economy of agribusiness was (and still is) hegemonic in relation to FF. However, at least in the construction of the narrative and at the institutional level, FF and agribusiness experienced a period of 'institutional cohabitation' in the PT years (Sencébé, Pinton and Cazella 2019: 4).

Although the MDA was created during the Cardoso administration, the dual model was strategically used only after 2003, when the country started to 'export its contradictions' in terms of rural development (Maluf, Santarelli and Prado 2014: 39). The asymmetric coexistence had powerful implications for FF diffusion, mostly because its dissemination capacities were dependent on agribusiness. For example, in SSC projects partners were not exclusively interested in FF policies, but also in the dual model of Brazilian agriculture, to increase foreign investments and generate short-term gains in their own countries (Goulet, Gabas and Sabourin 2013: 94). Moreover, without funding FF cooperation was less prone to develop robust and long-term programmes, being mostly promoted through pilot projects and via seminars to share experiences. Agribusinesses had a more structured capacity for promoting technical cooperation which overlapped with private interests of Brazilian companies in developing countries (Cabral and Shankland 2013).

The ProSavana in Mozambique, the Cotton-4 project in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali and the Senegal rice-growing project are some examples, as well as the creation of the Embrapa international office in Ghana in 2006.

For the political forums, the agribusiness forum worked mostly as a veto-player. In the case of Mercosur, the absence of a clear engagement of the agribusiness forum seemed to have been an important element in facilitating the diffusion of FF policies (Luiz 2018). At FAO, the agribusiness forum was active only in two spaces, the Codex Alimentarius and the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, both very technical ‘norm-setting bodies’, which means that the rules approved in both spaces are accepted as rules within the WTO. Besides these two cases, the agribusiness forum was not actively engaged in the political discussion taken at FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) or the WFP. For instance, the federal government approved the creation of agricultural aidance in 2008. Until 2019, there was no agricultural attaché in Rome, where the three agricultural branches of the UN are located.

The participation of the agribusiness forum is completely different in the case of WTO, where its strong presence shaped the decision-making process. The agribusiness commitment was towards trade liberalisation, while the FF forum was fighting for – basically – protectionist public policies. Therefore, WTO was the arena where the ‘institutional coexistence’ formula was harder to harmonise, and it is worth noting the role played by the political-diplomatic forum to promote a viable arrangement among them, based on the agricultural duality narrative (Luiz 2018). The outcome of this political commitment was seen with the emergence of the G-20 (Blustein 2011). Whereas we acknowledge the relevance of the political-diplomatic forum, the coalition inside the Brazilian delegation at WTO only remained while the agribusiness forum accepted this political commitment. In the following ministerial conference meeting (Hong Kong), the consensus was already fragile. The 2008 crisis changed the international context and WTO negotiations stalled. In a nutshell, the disengagement of the agribusiness forum was clear in international spaces where FF agenda managed to further develop; the role played by the political-diplomatic forum was critical to sustaining the narrative of economic development linked to social justice. Our reflections in this section highlight the different ideational forums related to agriculture and their impact on FF internalisation: the subordination to ‘Zero Hunger’ and its institutional coexistence with the agribusiness sector. Nevertheless, as the Brazilian context has changed dramatically from 2016 onwards, the international and domestic resilience of the FF agenda is at stake.

The dismantlement of Brazilian public policies versus FF resilience abroad

From 2003 to 2016, the ‘institutional coexistence’ of the FF and agribusiness sectors was part of the rural bureaucratic scenario. Despite their huge disparities in terms of budget, political influence, and capacities, MDA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA) still represented the dual agricultural model. After Rousseff’s

impeachment in 2016, MDA was institutionally downgraded and became the Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agrarian Development (SEAD). This downgrading was followed by budget reduction, which undoubtedly affected the continuity of FF public policies, as they systematically demanded financial resources and regular technical support. As for 'Zero Hunger Project', the FF policies promoted under MDS were also severely constrained. Within Itamaraty, CGFome was extinguished in 2016. The agendas promoted by CGFome were transferred to other departments inside MRE, mainly to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency.

Since Rousseff's impeachment and the political polarisation that followed, Brazil has been facing a deeply seated economic recession added to political turmoil and a series of governmental instability events. The ultraconservative agenda that has gained the political domain since 2016 took a dramatic twist after Jair Bolsonaro's election, thus bringing to the spotlight a far-right ideology and regressive proposals to several policy areas. The foreign policy agenda followed the same path and Brazil has been turning its back to traditional and constitutional foreign policy principles.⁹ Claiming to have a foreign policy 'free of ideological aspects', the government has posed itself as an anti-globalist and an anti-Communist sponsor in the international realm. Bolsonaro's Minister until March 2021, Ambassador Ernesto Araújo, started a cultural war against human rights, gender, social movements, climate change, and promoted open persecution of minorities and indigenous peoples. All this in defence of an international order rooted in Christian and Western values.

Such a backlash in domestic and international public policies has produced important spill-over effects on the FF agenda. In 2019, SEAD was turned into the Secretariat of Family Farming and Cooperativism, an entity inside MAPA, which means that the previous demotion has already been converted into an annexation, and that the institutional narrative based on a dual model has been abandoned. In fact, the current government reinforces the 'one agriculture' motto. In her first speech as Minister of MAPA, Tereza Cristina stated that 'we are convinced that agribusiness and family farming are the same type of business' (Zaia 2019, our translation). Thus, specific FF characteristics disappear as it mingles with the agribusiness commodities-export sector and their hegemonic demands. For the 'Zero Hunger Project', MDS does not exist anymore, and some of its programmes are now under the Ministry of Citizenship, a super-ministry that absorbed MDS and the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Sports and part of the Ministry of Labour. In general, the Bolsonaro administration does not consider social inclusion policies and FF public policies as a priority.

The agribusiness sector increased not only its economic weight but also its political influence. Within the national Congress, FPA is currently composed of more than 200 parliamentarians and is one of the most influential groups in the Legislative branch. The sector exerts the same degree of political clout in the Executive branch, as its representatives occupy key governmental positions in ministries and federal agencies. In the foreign policy field, the sector continually influences Bolsonaro's government to avoid conflicts with China, which is not part of the Western and Christian international order

but happens to be the largest importer of Brazilian commodities and a growing investor in strategic economic sectors.

If we go back to the elements for FF diffusion, we emphasised three dimensions in the previous section, all absent today. In terms of the country's activism, the choice of engaging with the topic was mostly seen in the two terms of President Lula. Moreover, the agro-export sector has increased its power of influence, as well illustrated by the approximation of the President to the Senator and later Minister of MAPA, Kátia Abreu, representative of Brazilian agribusiness and President of CNA. However, the same channels and fronts opened for FF before were still active during Rousseff's period. The governmental activism may no longer be present, but the narrative was, as well as important figures such as Lula and Graziano that were actively operating abroad, as ambassadors of public social policies.

Even though presidential and diplomatic activism had cooled down, the mechanisms previously created were operating on their own (under diplomatic normalisation). Progress on regionalism is an important aspect of the existing theoretical approaches that discuss the diffusion of international norms by developing countries. As affirmed by Amitav Acharya, 'an important part of the role that international institutions and multilateralism play in world politics comes from regionalism. Hence, regional institution-building should not be relegated to being the poor cousin of global-level multilateralism' (Acharya 2014: 10). REAF highlights the case where regional policy circulation and articulation 'from below' promoted a spill-over effect of FF public policies regionally. Circulation mechanisms were put on track despite direct active agency from high-level stakeholders. The 2008 food crisis accelerated existing contacts and REAF became a reference for other regional institutions, such as the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). In fact, this space has become a model outside South America and has been acting not only as a space, but also as an actor, circulating ideas, projects, and institutional designs to other spaces within the region and from other regions (such as the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries - CPLP), contributing to the densification of the FF global political agenda.

To conclude on the lack of ambition of the political-diplomatic forum, after the 2016 coup - with the disappearance of federal spaces such as CGFome - Brazil lost its visibility and recognition as a representative leader of the South. However, the FF agenda was already being discussed internationally, fostered by international networks and alliances, which reinforces the fact that internationalisation is not just a foreign policy endeavour. The examples of the AIAF, AIAF+10, and UNDFE presented at the beginning of this article indicate the internationalisation of FF, regardless of Brazil's reduced ambition (although still present until 2016).

Looking back to the domestic realm and FF's relation with the food security forum, the type of bureaucratic spaces created/opened for both helps to explain their dismantling under governments that are less progressive and democratic. As previously explained, the narratives for FF and food security compose different sides of the same equation and

ending hunger and poverty could be pursued by targeting both demand and supply sides of agriculture. In fact, the spreading of the 'Zero Hunger Project' across both sides of the equation was key for achievements such as Brazil no longer being part of the FAO Hunger map. The 2014 survey showed that the country had achieved – for the first time in history – the goal of less than 5% of its population in food insecurity (in 2017, Brazil returned to the Hunger Map). FF public policies, despite not being completely harmonious with the narrative of the food security forum, benefited from the entire 'Zero Hunger Project', which had an important social participation component.

The spaces created for both cases, at least at the federal level, had low bureaucratic rooting. For example, councils such as Condraf and Consea were dependent on the political openness of the federal government, no longer seen after 2016. The Family farming Law (Law nº11.326/2006) does not provide mandatory resource allocation for FF public policies¹⁰. Therefore, budget allocation also depended on political openness. Spaces such as CGFome highlighted the exceptionality of these spaces: first, they were heavily identified with the PT administration and, second, were less seen as regular bureaucratic spaces. The case of CGFome is notorious, as it was created inside the General Secretariat of the Ministry, at the top of the hierarchy. In the case of Itamaraty, which has a strong hierarchical component, the political status of CGFome potentially compromised the assimilation and capillarity of its social issues within the rest of the bureaucratic structure.

After 2019, conditions for maintaining public social policy are inexistent in Brazil. The process of policy dismantling is usually gradual rather than abrupt. As posed by Sabourin, Craviotti and Milhorange (2020), three stages are usually seen in the policy dismantling process. The first is the maintenance of institutions, but changes in their mandates, positions, and responsibilities, beyond budget reduction; the second phase is a severe institutional and budget contraction; the third and last phase is the real suppression of institutions in addition to the criminalisation of social movements. The authors emphasise that the dismantling process usually depends on the analysis of costs and benefits: the greater the number of veto-players, the fewer are the opportunities for policy dismantling. For FF spaces, two reflections must be made: the first concerns the lack of bureaucratic rooting, as mentioned earlier; the second is the lack of political weight of the FF sector to be represented as a countervailing power – a veto-player – to the agribusiness commodities export sector, which brings us to the level of disengagement of the agribusiness forum.

As the dominant economic model in the history of the country, the agribusiness sector has become 'indispensable' for the country's foreign relations after the 1990s. Even during PT years, 'the support of governments and banks that was given to the agribusiness commodities-export sector remained untouched' (Sabourin, Craviotti and Milhorange 2020:16). In fact, the hegemonic power of the agribusiness sector has never been questioned and the 'institutional coexistence' was part of that agreement. The structure built for FF public policies were designed under the dual model system and its internationalisation was responsive to that reality. The overlapping conflicts 'remained unresolved and ultimately left space for the dismantling of actions when new administrations reached power' (Sabourin, Craviotti and Milhorange 2020:17).

In the domestic scenario, the opportunities for FF public policies were severely reduced after 2016, while the dominance of the agribusiness sector has become even more evident. In the international realm, it is noteworthy how the ‘anchoring points outside of Brazil gave an extra-resilience to the FF domestic policies’ (Luiz 2018: 375, our translation). This is the case of CFS in FAO, for example, as the institutional reform gave Brazilian rural movements the right to participate in the international decision-making process. Of course, it is debatable if their social inclusion and participation have truly empowered them with substantial capacities to bring concrete changes in their territories. This issue is beyond the scope of this article, demanding further research. Nevertheless, ‘resilience is the ability to adapt to major internal/external perturbations’ (Sabourin, Craviotti and Milhorange 2020: 2), and FF agenda is somehow being able to resist internationally (as the case of UNDIFF), bringing us back to the ‘plastic, malleable and adaptive’ aspects of the FF concept. The questions that will remain unanswered in this article are how long this resilience will endure and how much the FF agenda can be adapted to keep itself active.

Indeed, the previously existing ideational forums for agriculture in foreign relations are no longer the same. As Brazil loses its democratic credentials abroad, the two-level game at the international political forums is being reshaped. The country’s leverage in international forums - even in Mercosur - is now scarce, and in the Covid-19 pandemic context, Brazil is seen as a global pariah. The current national destruction of the environment, particularly the Amazon, is generating a global reaction and retaliation. The context seems to be pressing the agribusiness sector for changes. As the sector amplifies its participation in international forums (such as UN agencies where an agricultural attaché is now allocated), issues of sustainability and climate change are changing the global governance of agri-food systems.

Since the mid-1950s, the global agri-food system has been based on the ‘productivist trap.’ The past decade brought new dimensions of the agri-food system, including poverty, hunger, and nutrition. However, the 2008 food crisis served as ‘an opportunity for agricultural institutions to re-legitimise their productivist approach on the international stage’ (Fouilleux 2017: 15). Nevertheless, if the productivist trap is present, other global challenges are being added to the agriculture equation, such as climate and environmental changes, because of the high negative impact of some agricultural models on natural resources. Other challenges include changes in consumer behaviour and pressures for transformations at the supply side of the equation. The mandatory rules on sustainability within the Mercosur-European Union agreement and the recent international boycott of trademarks that foster deforestation are examples of a new consumption trend. Whether the demand side and consumption patterns will affect FF and other rural development policies nationally and abroad is an issue to be debated in this ongoing research agenda.

Concluding remarks

In this article, we have presented the internationalisation process of the FF agenda through the analysis of Brazilian foreign policy and the ideational forums directly related to agricultural issues. Based on Fouilleux's approach to 'forums and arenas', we have identified four ideational forums: the family farming forum; the food security forum; the agribusiness forum; and the political-diplomatic forum. The positive outcomes for FF internationalisation were explained in three dimensions of policy action: (i) the ambition of the political-diplomatic forum to be a global leader side-by-side with its commitment to social participation; (ii) the participation of the FF and food security forums in different spaces; and (iii) the (dis)engagement of the agribusiness forum.

As the Brazilian context changed dramatically from 2016 onwards, the conditions that have enabled the internationalisation of the Brazilian FF agenda no longer exist. However, the agenda still survives internationally, counting *inter alia* upon the support of Brazilian agents who work as international civil servants in multilateral organisations. Moreover, transnational campaigns by rural social movements and new younger activists notably engaged with environmental protection and climate change agendas also push forward and uphold the broad interests of FF in the international realm. How such campaigns and actors create linkages between FF and a political ecology of climate change is still understudied. Finally, the international resilience of the FF agenda and the way that it will relate to the current Brazilian context is another open question for further analysis and research.

Notes

- 1 To understand the internationalisation process of the FF agenda, this research relied on the literature review of various topics related to FF, collection and analysis of primary documents, participatory observation of key meetings and events, field research and, lastly, interviews with 70 representatives from different sectors that, in some way, were involved in the foreign policy process of the FF internationalisation undertaken by the Brazilian government. These interviewees represented institutional spaces such as the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as international arenas, such as Brazilian representatives located at Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), etc. Besides public officers, there were also leaders of civil society organisations, social movements, non-governmental organisations, networks of transnational activists, as well as scholars and researchers. More details can be found in Luiz (2018).
- 2 Advocacy coalitions are defined as political actors who share certain ideas and co-ordinate themselves in a functional way to suggest specific issues and influence the decision-making process.
- 3 Towards the end of IYFF 2014, rural organisations and other key stakeholders decided to extend the movement for 10 additional years.
- 4 Since 2016, national political instability has been provoking many changes. We may cite, for instance, the methodological disputes around the 2017 census, including the aggregate data for internal food consumption, which was not incorporated into the questionnaire.
- 5 Pronaf was broken down into different groups, according to the economic and productive capacity of each family (Pronaf A, B, A/C, C, D, E).
- 6 Dilma Rousseff was re-elected in 2014; however, from January 2015 to August 2016, the political and economic situation hindered federal attention and efforts towards FF.
- 7 GRRI was an ad hoc group of foreign policy experts from different sectors. The group held a series of

meetings, seminars and conferences from 2012 to 2018 and it was particularly active during PT years. GRRI advocated for the creation of a participatory council on foreign policy at the federal level.

- 8 Other ministries were part of the strategy, including the Ministry of Education (MEC), which was responsible for PNAE, and the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), which was responsible for the Environmental Education and Family Farming Programme (PEEAF).
- 9 In this article, we do not engage with potential changes after Ernesto Araujo's dismissal from Itamaraty.
- 10 An exception is Law nº11.947/2009, which determines that at least 30% of the amount transferred to subnational entities by the National Education Development Fund (FNDE) for the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) must be used in the purchase of groceries directly from FF.

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Política Externa Brasileira e Agricultura Familiar: Processos de Internacionalização através da Análise de ‘Fóruns e Arenas’

Resumo: O governo federal brasileiro definiu oficialmente a agricultura familiar (AF) como uma agenda de política pública em 1996; entretanto, desde então, a política externa brasileira no campo da agricultura tem dado prioridade ao papel do agronegócio na exportação de commodities e sua contribuição para o PIB e o comércio do país. Questionando a narrativa governamental enraizada em uma estrutura agrícola dual (onde a AF e agronegócio seriam ambos igualmente relevantes), este artigo também destaca os processos de internacionalização da AF através da análise de diferentes fóruns da política externa brasileira. Nosso objetivo é entender como cada um deles contribuiu para o reconhecimento internacional da AF como “melhor prática”, mas também analisar os pontos fortes e a sustentabilidade do que rotulamos como resiliência da internacionalização da AF, particularmente quando consideramos o grave refluxo das políticas de AF no Brasil desde 2016.

Palavras-chave: agricultura familiar, Política Externa Brasileira, internacionalização, estrutura agrícola dual, política pública.

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