

Strategic Culture, South-South Cooperation, and Soft Power Politics: Explaining Brazilian Foreign Aid

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Abstract

What drives Brazil to provide foreign aid to other developing countries? Historically part of the Global South, its active foreign policy strives to become a global power. While research has highlighted Brazil's foreign policy objectives in providing aid, such as expanding its diplomatic reputation and exporting its development experience abroad, little has been done to note the strategic properties that motivate the development assistance initiatives. Additionally, the emphasis on South-South Cooperation in Brazil's aid practice is relevant to the literature on the motives of emerging donors. This article assesses Brazil's act to provide foreign aid between 2003 and 2016 using the theoretical concept of strategic culture, which refers to the nation's historical norms and values that inform the strategic act of providing foreign aid. We use primary and secondary data that cover findings from official government sources, policy documents, and academic literature. We argue that cultural elements support the formulation of a foreign policy that seeks to expand Brazil's influence abroad through development assistance diplomacy. Using foreign aid to counteract its material limits, the goal is to raise Brazil's stature among developing nations and global affairs and maximize its soft power in the South-focused power structure within the post-Cold War multipolar global order.

Keywords:

Brazilian strategic culture; foreign aid; south-south cooperation; development assistance

Introduction

Brazil has become an emerging player in aid politics in recent years, giving away USD 1 billion annually worldwide as of 2010, according to Overseas Development Institute (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010). Through the establishment of the *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação* (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, ABC) in 1987, aid is given primarily to Portuguese-speaking African countries such as Mozambique and nearby Latin American neighbors. Collectively, Brazilian assistance joins the model of the South-South Cooperation (SSC), a term describing countries acting as donors of aid that are not part of the Western community and do not fully report its funding appropriations

to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). AidData shows that Brazil's foreign aid expenditures are estimated to reach approximately USD 1 billion per year as of 2010, ahead of smaller OECD-DAC donors like Finland, Ireland, and Portugal. While the amount and types of aid remain far from those of typical Western donors such as the US and the European Union, Brazilian foreign aid offers an alternative to assist development in the international order, where aid is typically considered a means for Western states to influence recipient states.

On its own, Brazil is simultaneously a donor and also a recipient of aid. According

to the World Bank 2012, Brazil received USD 1.29 billion in official development assistance in agriculture, education, government, and social welfare. Based on the US aid data maintained by the Department of State, in 2020, Brazil received USD 43 million, most of which was directed to basic health services, environmental protections, and emergency disaster response. Since 2014, Brazil has received an influx of refugees fleeing from Venezuela in the wake of the country's political and economic crisis, which imposed new burdens on food security, health care, and accommodation, which continues to be assisted by US agencies. Recently, it has begun accepting international assistance for curbing forest fires in the Amazon and maintaining the rainforest amid the construction of an industrial base. Additionally, the World Bank reports show that, between 2010 and 2019, Brazil received, on average, USD 75.5 million in foreign direct investments, accounting for 18% of its gross domestic product (GDP) (CEIC Data). According to a 2022 report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, these numbers are notably higher than the regional average as Brazil constitutes a significant portion of the Latin American domestic market for agricultural, energy, and mineral commodities and is one of the most diversified manufacturing sectors in the region. The amount of aid it receives indicates Brazil's current status as a country needing development assistance. However, the relatively large amount of aid it gives suggests brewing aspirations to become greater and shows that it could also assist other countries.

Acting as both a donor and recipient of aid raises questions about Brazil's position within the international system. How can these two statuses coexist? More specifically, what drives Brazil to become a donor when

it is also a recipient, participating outside the established structure of development assistance and presenting itself as a viable alternative? These are the questions we intend to answer in this paper. When countries become donors, there usually is a need or incentive that drives the decision to provide aid. The ABC website states several main characteristics that define Brazil's development assistance: catering to the demands of developing countries, emphasizing knowledge sharing of successful public policies in Brazil, being non-conditional, and providing mutual benefits. As a developing middle power, it adopts these unique selling points when more developed countries would not formulate aid policies without conditionalities that guarantee returns. Catering to the demands of recipient countries implies a willingness to forego material returns through the imposition of requirements in exchange for non-material goals. It exudes the confidence of developed countries by exporting development and public policy experiences for other governments to follow suit as if the success of its own centuries-long nation-building were already guaranteed. It is intriguing because, after being under the shadows of great powers for decades, Brazil has begun to demonstrate its soft-power capability and carve its influence in the Global South. We contend that the origin of this desire goes back centuries to a unique historical process that defined Brazilian beliefs and attitudes and the country's decision to participate in strategic foreign assistance policy.

This paper aims to analyze Brazil's foreign aid practice by unpacking the 'strategic culture' that shapes its foreign policy choices. The finding contributes to the emerging literature of Brazilian power within the international system and foreign aid as diplomacy. More specifically, this study aims to contribute to an

understanding of Brazil's identity and culture underlying its current role in foreign aid, which serves as a diplomacy tool to increase its power among other states.

In what follows, we present a literature review that plots the development of Brazilian power and foreign aid practices. Then, we present data on Brazilian foreign policies and statistics related to foreign aid practices. Next, we discuss the current practice of Brazilian foreign aid and how it relates to its strategic culture. In answering the question, we also provide directions for future policymaking.

Literature Review

States often seek to maximize their power, so they must think about how to increase their power to match or overcome the power of other countries to achieve a balance in the system (Mearsheimer, 2001). Aid and investments are foreign policies that aim to influence the policymaking of the recipient country and exert the donor's power and influence over the recipient's development. This means that aid can be used to secure the state's interests abroad, which sometimes cannot be done by military or diplomatic means (Morgenthau, 1962). In this case, aid is not different from diplomatic or military policy or propaganda. The provisions are governed by a structural power with political and economic objectives to enhance a nation's standing in international forums and benefit itself (Baldwin, 1966). Likewise, the policies are driven by the strategic interests of nation-states (Mughanda, 2011). In brief, realism asserts that aid and investments are tools to gain an advantage over its adversaries.

Brazil's growing international ambitions seem more than material haves and capabilities. Although it has a vast territory, diverse

demographics, economic gains, and regional influence, it desires a global position that is highly contingent, contested, and dependent on by other developing states with shared values and commitments (Spektor, 2022). Nonetheless, the consensus is that Brazil is a middle power. First, it is neither a nuclear power nor does it possess much conventional arsenal, far outside the traditional notion of great power. Second, its economy is larger than the UK and has a stable political society, compensating for its minimal military resources (Selcher, 1981; Chatin, 2016).

However, measuring Brazilian power remains debatable. Some argue it should be measured as a diplomatic practice, where power is the ability to mediate an international crisis, build consensus, and shape coalitions (Guimarães & Almeida, 2018). Others see it as a result of domestic political changes driven by the changing global order that weakens the systemic constraints (Stuenkel, 2016). Meanwhile, there are two consensus on the measures of Brazilian power on a system level, i.e., domestic, regional, and global boundaries where the power is exercised (Prantl, 2022). It is either shaky foundations with the lack of hard power and influence at global and regional levels (Malamud, 2011) or 'hybrid security governance' that balances between hard and soft power and common cooperation within the Latin American community (Villa et al., 2019). In both views, soft power prevails as Brazil's primary means of maintaining its influence abroad to compensate for its limited hard power.

The link between Brazilian power and the international system relates to the evolution of its foreign policy and its relation to the larger schemes of the international system. Following the end of the Cold War, the multipolar world

moved from the unipolar power held by the superpower to the 'uni-multipolar system' (Huntington, 1999). A realist believes that this new system emerges from the coalition of regional uni-polarities that seeks to balance the superpower (Schneenoni, 2016). These regional uni-polarities are a microcosm of the international system, with a leading power and multiple secondary powers in the region.

In terms of foreign policy, the literature shows that Brazil has aspired to emerge in the international system for a while, i.e., prior to World War I, during the economic boom of the 1970s, and in the decline of Cold War competition at the turn of the century (Hurrell, 1992; 2010; Mares & Trinkunas, 2016). This outward-facing aspiration stems from multiple sources, i.e., the cultural heritage of being the only Portuguese-speaking country in 'Spanish America,' the relatively stable polity since independence in 1822, and the foreboding sense of threat upon its vast territory. In modern times, Hurrell highlights two predominant views on Brazil's foreign policy under Lula's government (2003-2010). First, Brazil's legitimacy in the world order rests upon its achievements in tackling domestic issues, such as poverty, inequality, and racial discrimination. Second, the nationalists view Brazil as a developing country that fears the dangers of its close alignment with the US to the country's autonomy. These views have shaped the contemporary understanding of Brazil's foreign policy, with a national focus on self-autonomy and multilateralism (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007). Most importantly, the policy capitalizes on the country's soft power shaped by its cultural heritage, a historical sense of 'otherness,' and a projection of its inevitable relevance on the global stage (Kalil & Braveboy-Wagner, 2016).

In terms of foreign aid, Brazil has positioned itself as an emerging donor for development assistance and an alternative to traditional donors, which comprise the OECD-DAC countries (Inoue & Vaz, 2012). This distinction concerns the motives and means behind the aid provision. Past research on foreign aid has shown that assistance from traditional donors is motivated by political and strategic agendas. However, emerging donors may have slightly different motives concerning power differentials (Mawdsley, 2012; Pauselli, 2021). The distinct characteristics of aid from non-DAC donors are the absence of governance and human rights conditions, the non-interference and respect for sovereignty, and the focus on mutual benefits (Bergamaschi et al., 2017). However, these motives do not necessarily translate into being highly responsive to the recipients' needs. As a tool of foreign policy, aid from non-DAC donors remains vested with self-interests, although it may not be as much as that of traditional DAC donors (Dreher et al., 2011; Fuchs & Vadlamannati, 2012). Emerging donors may not always be united by a shared vision of development. Each may have a specific development agenda and conceptualization with regard to human rights, justice, democracy, and other issues (Quadir, 2013). Thus, it is necessary to assess Brazilian foreign aid on its own and as part of the Global South and the South-South Cooperation (SSC). While the literature on political history has shown Brazil's outward-facing inclination, this has not been factored into the motives of giving development assistance.

Literature on strategic culture has explored its two constituent components, i.e., culture and strategy. Gertz (1973) describes culture as a historically transmitted pattern of

meanings embodied in symbols by which people communicate and develop knowledge and attitudes toward life. Subsequent developments see culture as symbolic vehicles of shared meaning that facilitate common perceptions in communications and actions (Lantis, 2002) and as inherited collective programming and value-latent behaviors in a social system (V., 2020). Meanwhile, a strategy is a planned manner of achieving political objectives through the coordination of resources with ambiguity on the consensus of means (Baylis et al., 2013). Therefore, strategic culture is a strategy to guide actions in order to achieve a desired political objective, which is informed by culture. However, literature reconciles the two concepts differently, resulting in four definitions. The first is that the differences in strategic actions are caused by differences in geography, historical experience, and political culture (Gray, 1999). The second definition expands the first definition beyond a deterministic view of strategic culture and distinguishes strategies into two types: declaratory, which the state announces but does not actually follow up, and operational, which underlies the decision-making process (Klein, 1988). The third definition provides a methodological basis for the first definition by distinguishing strategic culture from strategic behavior to explain the state's non-rational behavior (Johnston, 1995). The fourth definition appeared in recent decades in response to an excessive focus on homogeneity and introduced the possibility of multiple strategic sub-cultures that inform the decision-making following strategic environment changes (Bloomsfield, 2012).

Methods

This paper employs a qualitative approach to examine Brazil's motives behind its foreign

aid disbursement, with data collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the country's foreign aid official data and government documents available online. The secondary sources comprise academic sources, such as books, policy reports, and journal articles. The analysis utilizes the theory of strategic culture to examine how Brazilian identity and culture shape the current practice of aid provision. However, it should be noted that there is no uniform theoretical formulation of strategic culture. This study uses a framework to explain Brazil's motives and actions in aiding other developing countries. We adopt the framework developed by Johnston (1995) that describes a central paradigm and the state's strategic preferences. The central paradigm refers to the 'system of symbols' that provides information to reduce uncertainty in the strategic environment. The information comes from historical sources relevant to the current environment. Meanwhile, strategic preferences leverage historical experiences in the strategic choices, which may not align with 'objective' variables such as technology or other present material capabilities.

This study uses a case study for two reasons. First, understanding the strategic culture behind Brazil's foreign aid policy requires examining data and documents that rationalize it. Identifying which aspects of culture are strategic is subjective and context-dependent, i.e., how they emerged in the host nation's consciousness, which differs between countries even if the logic behind the aid provision is superficially similar. Second, the foreign aid policy issued by Brazil encapsulates national self-interests and priorities. We limit the research period from 2003, when President Lula from the Labor Party took office for the first time, to 2016, the end of the Rousseff

presidency. We answer the question by outlining our arguments along the theory of strategic culture, as presented in the following section.

Results

Brazil's Central Paradigm and Strategic Preferences

Brazil's strategic thoughts have largely focused on the country's position in the international arena. It aspired to become a great power following the end of the empire in the late 19th century. The Minister of Foreign Affairs José Maria da Silva Paranhos Jr., known as the Baron of Rio Branco in Brazilian political history, combined all strategic elements to shape his geopolitical view of a powerful and united yet peaceful Brazil. He believed that Brazil was destined for greatness, which inspired generations of diplomats and policymakers (Lafer, 2000, p. 146).

The country's great size brings challenges and benefits, leading to a sense of both security and insecurity (Stuenkel, 2021, p. 3). The Amazon rainforest covers most of the country except in the southeast, which makes it difficult to control the borders and poses a barrier to developing its hard power. As such, Brazil's sovereignty submits to international norms and institutions because the global order gives a sense of predictability. The international governance also recognizes all sovereign states in equal stature. The country's vast geographical area can also protect sovereignty because the huge distances provide a barrier to invasion. Brazil has retained this territorial integrity and domestic stability without waging exhaustive wars due to peaceful separation from the colonial power, Portugal, in 1822 (Mares & Trinkunas, 2016, p. 25). It quickly established itself as an empire governed in

a centralized manner—mirroring its former monarchical overlord—with less political violence than its neighbors.

The political stability and a secure geopolitical position also meant that Brazil never expanded its military power to project its strength abroad. This has made Brazil's military relatively weaker than other countries with great power status. In 2016, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute placed Brazil as a country with the 13th highest military expenditure in GDP percentage, which remained lower than most Western countries it seeks to achieve parity with (Tian et al, 2017). Brazil faced threats from within throughout the 20th century, culminating in the military assuming power in 1964 until the democratization in the 1980s. In terms of the economy, Brazil has been reluctant to employ its exercise its powers abroad in the form of rewards or sanctions. It chooses to focus on developing its own local economy instead. As such, Brazil has been successful in growing its national development bank, the BNDES, to become a significant regional player since the 1950s, whose lending volumes are higher than the World Bank in South America (Trinkunas, 2015).

In essence, Brazil has mostly engaged in soft power discourses and attempted to distinguish itself from the world's leading powers. During the imperial period, Foreign Affairs Secretary José Bonifácio proposed integration of the Indians and the abolition of slavery, directly challenging the white-centric Western order (Lafer, 2000, p. 211-212). A century later, in 1963, Foreign Minister Araújo Castro championed decolonization, development, and disarmament at the United Nations, highlighting Brazil's post-colonial goal to construct a new order with more equity

for all races (p. 213). This development, and the consequence of this vision, is nation-building for Brazil to integrate its national sovereignty through development. The foreign policy of the junta military that ruled from 1964 to 1985 also sought to address the disparity in the international system by prioritizing goods produced in underdeveloped countries. The Itamaraty's work regime also supported global disarmament and was in favor of the banning of nuclear weapons in Latin America via the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In the 1950s, Brazil's recognition of its lack of socioeconomic power led to a patronage relationship with the US that lasted for at least two decades. However, in the 1970s, Brazil started to pursue strategic autonomy and refocused its foreign policy on other developing countries. Mares and Trinkunas (2016) observed that Brazilian thoughts on the international order have largely been in the diplomatic, economic, and security, which was linked to the development agenda and vice versa. More recently, Brands (2011, p. 29) observed that, under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil pursued a multilayered diplomatic strategy to compensate for its lack of military and economic power. At the global level, the president sought to strengthen Brazil's international norms and organizations to balance out the powers of global hegemony while forging bilateral and multilateral partnerships to improve diplomatic and economic leverage. On an ideological level, Brands suggests that Lula relied on methods such as multilateralism and coalition building typically used by 'middle powers' to achieve systemic influence. The ultimate goal is to accelerate the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, which is more favorable for Brazil. The new order moves away from the

post-Cold War international order, which was prejudicial to developing countries.

Domestically, Lula's macroeconomic policies in 2003-2006 managed to strengthen the Brazilian economy. The policies were designed to combat hyperinflation and capital flight that occurred at the start of his administration. This resulted in modest growth, a gradual reduction in the ratio of net public debt to GDP, and quick disinflation. On a public level, these improvements were coupled with a rise in real wages; reductions in income inequality, unemployment, and poverty rates; and a moderate boost to personal consumption rates. This gave Lula enough political capital to broaden his electoral support by 2006, prior to winning a second term in office and the public's confidence to implement Lula's foreign initiatives. Between 2003 and 2010, Lula's administration signaled the prioritization of South-South relations by implementing a broad Brazilian SSC agenda ranging from intense cooperation through multilateral negotiation spaces (such as the G-77 and G20) to support for interregional dialogues (Africa-South America Summit). The government also focused on the financing of infrastructure projects and cooperation in policymaking and technical knowledge between governments, agencies, or other public and private actors. Lula's calls for more involvement of developing countries in international negotiations led to the creation of development treaties and multilateral bodies. Agreements were signed in 2003-2009 between Brazil and Mercosur and African countries, such as South Africa, Algeria, and Egypt, to grant privileges in trade and education. In 2006, high-level meetings between four developing economies—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—led to the creation of BRIC in 2009. South Africa was then included in BRICS in 2010.

Lula's foreign policy initiatives continued under Rousseff's administration. In 2016, the interim Minister of Foreign Relations, José Serra, outlined Brazil's modern foreign policy, which includes representing national interests in all foreign matters, bilateral agreements to open new markets abroad, a focus on 'new partners' in Asia, and a 'South-South strategy' with Africa in the form of commercial, investment, and technology partnerships. Most notably, while then-President Rousseff was reluctant to engage more in foreign affairs and focused more on domestic issues, the impeachment in 2016 reversed the course and brought the outward-looking foreign policy back on track. By this time, Brazil's cooperation model with recipient countries has been co-opted as a platform by the Labor Party, aiming to depart from decades of alignment with the US and intensify SSC relations. The underlying assumption was that it would 'correct' the global asymmetries in power. President Lula described this logic in a speech he made to welcome the Zambian President, Rupiah Banda, in November 2010 (see *Discurso do Presidente da República, 18 de novembro de 2010*):

"In the 1960s, we were fighting the remnants of colonialism. Today, the deficit of the legitimacy of global governance stands out... In an interdependent world, we need more democratic institutions and more equitable solutions. We must speak with a common voice in building a world order that listens to our aspirations for freedom and social justice."

The quote implies Brazil's insecurities in the present international order as it remains without a voice. Hence, the president seeks to band together the nations belonging to the 'South' to remedy this. Luiz Alberto Figueiredo

Machado, then Minister of Foreign Affairs during Rousseff's administration, stated in 2014:

"The South-South dimension of our diplomacy was not an ideological option... It started from a clear diagnosis that the South was an active participant in global geopolitics and economy." (Amato, 2014)

Brazil's effort to seek outside help to develop the country was responded to with suspicion, particularly by the US; even more so as Brazil sought an autonomous foreign policy in the 1970s. During his term, President Cardoso criticized the Bretton Woods system, calling it 'asymmetrical globalization,' which highlights the unequal impact of poor governance on industrialized and emerging countries, as they lose the most in case of global instabilities (Cardoso, 1998). This view sees globalization as a constant struggle between the wealthy North and the poor South. The asymmetry widens the gap between the South by the North, with a high probability of the North dominating the South. Therefore, Brazil's strategic thinking is to 'leverage' the gap produced by the asymmetrical hierarchy in the international power structure. It aims to capitalize on soft power, bridging the state's security and development. Therefore, the country's 2005 National Defense Policy (PND) document states that its primary purpose is to search for a peaceful resolution of disputes, respect the sovereignty of other states, and intensify cooperation with other countries. The PND's authority in defense planning is the highest. With the emphasis on soft power, Brazil will avoid coercion and violence. The document presents three assumptions: the rejection of violent warfare, the establishment of interconnectedness between defense and

development policies, and the desire to achieve greatness without domination.

Overall, several factors underline Brazil's claim to great power status, which drove the act to provide foreign aid. First, we attest that, according to Brazil, its enormous size compared to other states in the region informs its thinking about sovereignty and, ultimately, the survival of the state and nation. Second, Brazil sought to promote development both domestically and abroad, (a) to reduce its vulnerability and (b) to establish its patron status among developing countries. Lastly, Brazil sought to supplement its hard-power capability by using its soft power to formulate international rules with a new bloc emerging against the more established powers.

The key elements of strategic culture can thus be summarized as follows. First, regarding the central paradigm, Brazil makes development a focal point of its security, aligning with a great power and encouraging development in other developing countries using its own expertise and experience. This perspective can be traced back to its historical and cultural roots: being the largest country in Latin America, having the most powerful economic and political influence, and believing that it could grow as a great power on its own through diplomatic and economic means. In pursuing this national objective of becoming a great power, Brazil has embraced 'development as security' and relied less on its military power. This pursuit of greatness also relies on international order and multilateralism. The manifestation of this strategic preference based on the country's traditions, values, and historical roots is the peaceful settlement of disputes and the rejection of forceful foreign policy. It is noteworthy that offensive realism, as described by Mearsheimer, does not subscribe to the multilateral approach. However, its focus on

power and the centrality of pursuing hegemonic status and security account for the possibility of achieving hegemony through non-military power.

Data on Brazilian Aid and Overseas Development

In assisting developing economies, the fiscal value of Brazil's aid is smaller than that of the more established OECD-DAC donors. However, the sectoral, regional, and growth priorities in the aid provision remain clear. Data on Brazilian aid and overseas development in this study is taken from official Brazilian government sources in the ABC and Itamaraty instead of intergovernmental sources such as the OECD because of the distinct methodology used to measure the aid program. The tables below represent data gathered from official sources from 2003 to 2013.

Table 1.
Growth of the number of projects and/or activities related to South-South Cooperation

Years	# of projects and/or activities of cooperation
2004	30
2005	66
2006	147
2007	175
2008	263
2009	386
2010	472

Source: Obtained from the website of Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC)

Table 1 shows the total number of projects and cooperation activities between Brazil and recipient countries located in the Global South obtained from the ABC website. The trend from 2004 until 2010 increased steadily, which indicates success in attracting recipients' interest and allocating investment in the

projects and activities. In six years, the initial number of thirty projects in 2004 grew to 472 in 2010, an increase of roughly 1500%. However, Table 1 does not show the fiscal value of the projects, only the growth in the number of projects Brazil undertook abroad.

Table 2 specifies the regional distribution of the total federal expenditure on international technical cooperation, as part of Brazil's foreign development assistance, between 2011 and 2013 in constant USD. The regions are sorted in a descending manner based on the amount of expenditure listed in the official report. Combined with Table 1 above, we suggest that if there is a linearity between the total number of projects and the total federal expenditures, ignoring the difference in the period used, then most of these projects are located in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Table 3 captures the total amount of aid based on Brazil's cooperation activities per region in 2007. This is a more inclusive category of aid, unlike Table 2, which focuses only on technical cooperation expenditure. Nonetheless, the pattern remains, with most aid funds going to Africa, South America, and the Caribbean, and the least to Asia/Oceania. The allocation to these regions is most likely driven by the high levels of extreme poverty,

i.e., millions in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean. Table 3 also shows that aid was focused on regions in the Global South in 2007, with over half allocated to Africa. South America and the Caribbean received almost half, and Asia/Oceania and Central America received the remaining. Itamaraty distinguished Lusophone countries and other countries through the addition of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). However, the group received a relatively insignificant amount of aid allocation compared to other categories. It suggests that Brazil not only wishes to expand its influence toward Lusophone countries but also other countries with no Portuguese colonial heritage.

Regarding the specific policies covered by Brazilian aid in the Global South, Table 4 describes the categories funded between 2004 and 2010. Health policies, administration, and services ranked first (30.23%), followed by vocational training (29.17%) and agricultural development (17.26%). The data also suggests that categories that can be viewed as highly political—conflict prevention and resolution and government administration—were the lowest two categories to receive aid. Similarly, data on development projects show that most work is aimed at supporting health,

Table 2.
Federal government expenditures on international technical cooperation by region 2011-2013 in USD

Regions	2011	2012	2013	Total
Africa	4,211,962	3,795,288	3,989,852	11,997,102
Latin America and the Caribbean	4,792,985	4,017,338	2,947,103	11,757,426
Oceania	419,531	335,210	213,541	968,282
Europe	228,184	226,194	243,941	698,319
Asia and the Middle East	96,599	143,787	68,990	309,376
North America	46,753	48,196	20,047	114,996
Total	9,790,647	8,566,013	7,414,552	25,845,501

Source: Obtained from a report titled *Cooperação brasileira para o desenvolvimento internacional (Cobradi) 2011-2013*, released by the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Ipea) and Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC) (original report uses Brazilian Real (RD), converted to United States Dollars (USD) in current value)



Table 3.
Cooperation activities carried out by Brazil by continent in 2007

Continent	Amount of aid (in USD)	Percentage of total
Africa	11,430,640.15	52.01%
The Middle East	81,951.37	0.01%
Asia/Oceania	2,150,810.80	9.79%
South America	4,034,705.64	18.36%
Central America	563,543.26	3.23%
The Caribbean	3,567,226.73	15.56%
Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP)	147,595.58	0.67%
Arab Countries	2,452.00	0.01%

Source: Report for South-South Cooperation Activities Carried out by Brazil released by the Under Secretariat General for Cooperation and Trade Promotion of the Itamaraty in July 2007

Table 4.
Top ten purposes of Brazilian assistance based on the total number of projects in constant USD, 2004-2010

Categories	Commitment amount	Percentage of commitment	Number of projects	Percentage of projects
Health policies, administration, and services	USD 14.552.987,80	30.23%	108	29.43%
Agricultural development	USD 8.307.559,97	17.26%	99	26.98%
Social welfare services	USD 2.722.661,96	5.66%	42	11.44%
Conflict prevention and resolution	USD 779.803,68	1.62%	34	9.26%
Economic and development policy/planning	USD 5.150.043,94	10.70%	33	8.99%
Government administration	USD 2.588.389,20	5.38%	26	7.08%
Vocational training	USD 14.042.311,50	29.17%	25	6.81%

Source: Obtained from AIDData 2.1 dataset adjusted by the authors. Some categories had been concatenated to streamline the stated purpose of aid. For example, health policies, administration, and services include basic health care, medical services, reproductive health care, and vaccination.

agricultural, and social welfare policies. However, funds were also allocated to a significant number of projects in highly political categories, as mentioned previously. Ultimately, Table 4 suggests that Brazil's aid is mainly allocated to policy categories the recipients need foreign assistance, which means that the aid considers the recipients' needs and concerns. For example, with most assistance going to African countries as shown in Tables 2 and 3, the aid focuses on the healthcare and agriculture sectors without engaging much in the recipients' internal affairs.

Discussion

It is important to note that the provision of Brazilian aid is possible owing to two decisions

informed by the nation's strategic culture. The first is the continuous support of political elites towards Brazil's foreign policy outlook and ambitions. The second is the country's efforts in establishing an international environment that facilitates participation among countries in the Global South to pursue development.

Brazilian elites have championed foreign policy initiatives that project Brazilian power abroad since the empire era. More recently, it shows the country's strong economic conditions. These elites shape their perspective on the international system based on their history and culture. For example, the country's geographical size has been considered a national pride, yet it can be a source of vulnerability to its sovereignty. It enjoys the benefit of

the great distance as a buffer zone against neighboring countries, while promoting development in its foreign policies. The deficiency in hard-power military capabilities is compensated with resourceful diplomatic strategy, such as distinguishing itself from the great powers by promoting policies in anti-racism, decolonization, and disarmament.

Brazil has no qualms in accepting aid or submitting to a patronage relationship with other countries such as the US to address its developmental challenges in the middle of the 20th century. In contemporary times, President Lula's achievements in managing the economy provided him with the space to pursue his foreign policy objectives. The data in the previous section show a broadening of the SSC agenda suggesting that more resources have been poured into overseas development since 2003. This allocation suggests Brazil's intent to improve its position among emerging economies. It also shows a clear focus on overseas development in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean. Assistance was provided to projects in the healthcare and agriculture sectors, which are less political than other categories, such as conflict resolution and the economic sector (see Table 4).

Brazil's refusal to submit to the conventional hierarchy of donor-recipient like in traditional DAC relationships signifies Brazil's stance to reject inequality in the current international order. It shows that its aid is not tied to policy reforms, structural economic changes, or requirements to implement good governance, but rather the principle of non-interference in the internal political and social issues of the recipient countries (Quadir, 2013, p. 325). Brazil employs the narrative of SSC to counter the existing structure dominated

by traditional donors, which may harm the interests of developing countries. This strategy also aims to promote development in the Global South and foster the horizontal relationship between Brazil and its partners. The opposition to the system includes establishing multilateral efforts such as BRICS, which suggests a commitment to establish an entirely separate international structure, excluding traditional donors from the Global South cooperation. Beyond the narrative, its national security policy emphasizes a strategic preference for peace and the rejection of forceful influence.

One issue that is apparent in the data is the absence of a central organization governing the coordination, management, monitoring, and evaluation of development assistance, unlike the traditional DAC donors. Typically, traditional donors allow their government agencies, in addition to a specialized foreign aid agency, to negotiate and administer aid with other governments, which is monitored and evaluated by DAC. Brazil prefers to rely on ad hoc approaches to address the needs and concerns of recipients. The country coordinates much of its aid efforts via the ABC, an Itamaraty organization, leaving it at risk of overextension in monitoring and evaluating the aid use. If it intends to build long-lasting influence, Brazil must move beyond the narrative of opposition and establish a lasting structure that coordinates foreign aid practices among the Global South, taking leadership of the emerging coalition seeking to pursue autonomy from the North. If the country wishes to achieve national security by promoting development abroad, it will benefit more from institutionalizing the new relations established since 2003 and becoming the leading power in international development.

Conclusion

This paper argues that Brazil's strategic culture underlies its decision to provide aid to other developing countries. The central paradigm of its strategy views development as the focal point of national security and the belief in the ability to emerge as a great power without military force. Brazil employs a strategic preference for peace and resourceful diplomacy to create systemic impacts in the current international power structure. The country is both a donor and recipient of aid, ensuring that it has enough resources to promote development at home while assisting other developing countries in exerting the influence of emerging economies. Without sufficient hard-power capabilities, it distinguishes itself from great powers by challenging the dominant international system, building an SSC narrative focusing on the development of the Global South, and pursuing autonomy free from conditionalities set by the North.

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