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Action against hunger and poverty: Brazilian foreign policy in Lula's first term (2003-2006)

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Action against hunger and poverty: Brazilian foreign policy in Lula's first term (2003-2006)

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Abstract

This paper depicts the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" launched by Brazil in the United Nations with the objective of identifying "innovative financing mechanisms" capable of scaling up resources for financing development in the poorest countries. The initiative is put in the perspective of the Brazilian foreign-policy under President Lula's first mandate and can be understood as pertaining to Brazil's own perception as an ascending middle-power whose interests were mediated by specific "frames" of self-enlightened realism.

Resumo

Este artigo descreve a "Ação contra a Fome e a Pobreza" lançada pelo Brasil nas Nações Unidas com o objetivo de identificar "mecanismos financeiros inovadores" capazes de mobilizar recursos adicionais para o financiamento do desenvolvimento dos países mais pobres. A iniciativa é vista sob a perspectiva da política externa do Presidente Lula em seu primeiro mandato e pode ser entendida como decorrente da auto-percepção do Brasil como potência média emergente, cujos interesses são mediados por "frames" específicos de um realismo esclarecido.

Introduction

On September 20th 2004, President Lula announced the launching of the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event, organized parallel to the opening session of the 59th General Assembly, counted on the participation of more than fifty Heads of State and Government, in addition to the UN Secretary-General, directors of international organizations, NGOs, and delegations from virtually all countries around the globe. The main message conveyed by the Brazilian President was simple: "hunger cannot wait". It was necessary to increase available funding if the Millennium Development Goals were to be fulfilled. Yet the motto was a compelling one. It was pronounced by a new leader from the South, who embodied the upsurge of a renewed Left and derived his charisma from a personal history of confronting poverty – a struggle he was now willing to take on as a state priority at home and abroad.

Two years later, the diplomatic mobilization stirred by Brazil and its partners – especially France, who embraced the action since the very beginning and worked in close cooperation with Brazilian diplomats – bore the first concrete fruits. An International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID) was put into service to combat the three diseases most commonly associated with hunger and poverty, namely, AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. More significantly, the Facility was based on the concept of innovative financing mechanisms as proposed in September 2004, mainly a levy on airline tickets.

Between 2004, when the Action against Hunger and Poverty (AHP) was launched, and 2006, when UNITAID was put into effect, Brazilian diplomacy devoted considerable human resources and consecrated strong political capital in an attempt to galvanize the international community into joining efforts to raise additional and predictable funding to fight poverty. The Brazilian government itself provided a financial contribution to the implementation of UNITAID – which, in spite of its symbolic amount, signalled the commitment to development assistance from a country not traditionally classified as a donor nation.

This paper aims at investigating the motivations that propelled Brazil to take up the fight against hunger and poverty as one of its foreign policy priorities in the period. The argument is that the "world view" of the country as an emerging middle-power in the international system, which has historical roots in Brazil's foreign policy-making thinking, was read through specific "frames" or "road maps" by those who came into power in 2003. The internationally systemic incentives for searching power and prestige was pursued through a flexible and dynamic foreign policy that, mirroring the priority attached to hunger alleviation at home, left enough room for an "enlightened" vision of self-interest that could accommodate a leadership role in a worldwide campaign against poverty.

It is not the purpose of this paper to offer a detailed analysis of the financing mechanisms taken into consideration under the AHP, nor will it focus on the technicalities of UNITAID and the heated debate among scholars over aid efficiency. More importantly, the paper will not describe the *petites histories* of Brazilian diplomatic manoeuvres put in place to gather further international support to the initiative. All these aspects will be narrated strictly to the extent necessary to understand the full context in which, under certain circumstances, a decision was taken to set in motion the specific policy in question.

In this sense, section 2 provides a brief account of the key elements pertaining to the initiative, as well as its major achievements in the diplomatic field. Section 3 points to the novelties innovative financing schemes introduce in the traditional framework of development assistance – in essence, in what they contribute to overcoming the well-known faults in aid flows and entail the embryo of a "global public good"; this section also reviews realist and idealist interpretations of donor countries' behaviour with regard to foreign aid. Section 4 develops the main argument of the paper, i.e., the idea of a "world view" being shaped by a specific frame of enlightened self-interest by policy-makers in Brazil.

The launching of the "Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative"

As largely disseminated during his electoral campaign, one of President's Lula top priorities after assuming the government in Brazil was to try and rid the country of the scourge of hunger. The so-called *Fome Zero* ("Zero Hunger") plan put forward a bold strategy aimed at unifying and further consolidating existing social programs – especially the "Bolsa Familia", a state allowance for familiar households representing the largest scheme for income transfer ever carried out in Latin America, which soon became of the pillars and leitmotifs of Lula's administration.

The policy of taking food security as a state priority was backed by institutional changes with the objective of strengthening the apparatus of the government and providing the necessary reach in the remotest areas of the country. The fight against hunger was envisaged as a personal commitment of a President whose own trajectory as a former proletarian from impoverished Northeast Brazil allowed him to incarnate the role of spokesman of the poor in his own country[1]. The new emphasis attached to social issues, and, in particular, to the crusade against hunger, could also be perceived as one of the most distinctive and counterbalanced traits of a centre-left coalition government that, under severe

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[1]The appointment of Mr Jose Graziano, an economist from renowned University of Campinas with close links to Lula, as the Presidency's Chief Secretariat for Food Security and the Fight against Hunger is in itself an indicator of the personal commitment of the President translated into institutional change. The institutional framework of the Zero Hunger evolved with the creation of the Ministry of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger in January 2004.

criticisms of its most leftist allies in the political spectrum, had early in the day succumbed to the orthodoxy of its predecessor in the economic realm.

Such an ambitious policy would not fail to find echo in the domain of Brazil's foreign affairs. Headed by foreign minister Celso Amorim, Lula's diplomacy veered towards what was perceived to be a more active, global and dynamic policy, based on the perception that a rising middle-income country such as Brazil could extend its growing influence over diverse arenas in order to maximize the country's national interests wherever they could be at stake. As detailed in section 4, government officials in Brazil have long underlined the "world view" of the country as an emerging middle-power destined to assume a more significant role in international affairs – something that could be achieved, first and foremost, by trumpeting the pivotal importance of economic development and trying to enhance its prestige in the international community. However, such a broader vision was "framed" by different values and ideas in the Lula administration. Rather than seeking adaptation to a given international order to infer greater credibility and prestige – a frame that required a positive correlation between foreign policy and domestic economic orthodoxy – Brazilian diplomacy voiced the importance of a more flexible foreign policy – one that made the case, for instance, for a diversification of economic partners and a leadership role in multilateral organizations so as to influence changes under way in the international order. In particular, the strong emphasis on social issues at home, magnified by the personal engagement of the President, could be associated with a frame of "enlightened self-interest" and "self-affirmation" giving rise to a peculiar version of the traditional "mediator role" between the North and the South – now translated into the promotion of policies that, while conferring greater status and prestige to the country, could yield concrete benefits to the poorest nations in the world.

As a matter of fact, Lula's "presidential diplomacy" proved to be instrumental in this process. Lula's image as an emerging and charismatic leader from a renewed left, capable of incarnating a new model of development – i.e., handling at home a sound economic policy and comprehensive social measures – enabled him to be regarded not only as a representative voice of the South, but also as a bridge between developed and developing countries in the pursuit of a more balanced, fair and equitable economic order worldwide. President Lula's easiness in dialoguing simultaneously at the Porto Alegre Social World Forum and at Davos Economic Forum was a symptomatic example of the legitimacy and prestige the Brazilian president enjoyed during his first months in power.

The argument largely aired by Brazil was that an international agenda dominated by issues of security and the "war on terror" had downgraded aspects of economic development to a second-order priority. It was therefore necessary to give a new impetus to the outmoded belief that international security could not be dissociated from economic development. The

numerous analogies employed by the president made it clear that hunger is a "weapon of mass destruction", "poverty stirs terrorism" and that "our war is a war against hunger"[2].

It was not until the beginning of 2004 that Brazil's argument in favour of a new economic order started gaining a more precise format. The signing of the Geneva Declaration in January 2004 by Lula, Ricardo Lagos of Chile, Jacques Chirac of France and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan gave birth to the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" initiative, which entailed important elements that would guide Brazilian diplomacy over the course of the next two years. First, the fact that leaders from both developed and developing countries had endorsed the Declaration was a sign that the initiative would be based on a shared sense of responsibility between rich and poor countries, thereby surmounting the traditional divide that usually prevail in discussions of this genre. Second, the participation of Kofi Annan signalled that the United Nations would be the preferred staging ground for the initiative. Third, the Declaration referred to the notion of "innovative financing mechanisms" as indispensable tools in the search for additional funding to tackle hunger and poverty.

These three elements seemed to be closely interrelated in the overall stance of Brazil's foreign policy. The idea of engaging both developed and developing nations in a collective effort leaded by Brazil in the United Nations reinforced Lula's intention to play a prominent role as a leading – and conciliatory – voice from the South, inasmuch as it strengthened Brazil's performance in the UN in a time when the campaign for a permanent seat in the Security Council seemed to be gaining momentum. The reference to "innovative mechanisms", rescued from paragraph 44 of the Monterrey Consensus, was an evidence that discussions on financing for development at the UN would be the exact venue for the initiative[3].

As foreseen in the Geneva Declaration, a working group was created, with the participation of representatives from the countries promoting the initiative and the UN Secretariat, with the mandate of exploring innovating sources of financing for development and fighting hunger and poverty. As Spain joined the initiative following the electoral victory of the Socialists under Zapatero, the group became known as "The Quadripartite Group"[4]. A domestic working group was set up in Brazil, counting on the contributions by Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, as well as the Secretariat-General of the Presidency and the Institute for Applied Economics (IPEA). The

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[2] See, for instance, the speech delivered by President Lula on the launching event of the "Action Against Poverty and Hunger" at the United Nations on September 20th 2004.

[3] Paragraph 44 of the Monterrey Consensus reads as follows: "*We recognize the value of exploring innovative sources of finance provided that those sources do not unduly burden developing countries. In this regard, we agree to study, in the appropriate forums, the results of the analysis requested from the Secretary –General on possible innovative sources of finance, noting the proposal to use special drawing rights allocations for development purposes*". Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development. Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002.

[4] Germany and Algeria also joined the Group in 2005. South Africa joined in 2006.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given the task of presiding over and coordinating the Group, engaged as it was since the beginning in the broader mission of moulding the ideas emanating from the Planalto Palace into workable diplomatic achievements.

The analysis by the "Quadripartite Group" resulted in the publication of the "Report of the Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms", which was formally presented on the occasion of the "World Leaders Meeting for an AHP" at the margins of the opening discussions of the 59th General Assembly in New York[5]. The meeting, convened by President Lula, marked the heyday of Brazil's efforts to mobilize the international community on development-related issues. The event counted on the participation of 58 Heads of State and Government, and the ensuing New York Declaration, which urged countries to take careful consideration of innovative mechanisms, was signed by more than one hundred delegations.

The report divulged in New York brought a series of proposals on innovative funding classified in three categories: 1) "Mandatory mechanisms", such as taxes on financial transactions and arms sales, the issuance of Special Drawing Rights by the IMF and the UK proposal to anticipate overseas development assistance (ODA) via an "International Financial Facility"; 2) Instruments of "Political Coordination", such as measures to avoid tax evasion and to enhance the flow of migrants' remittances; 3) and "Voluntary Mechanisms", like contributions with credit cards and socially responsible investments.

All mechanisms described in the report were said to share common basic fundamentals. First and foremost, they were identified as a means of providing resources to complement – and never to replace – existing ODA flows and commitments. This was regarded as a central and pervasive element due to technical and political considerations. As estimates show, the amount of resources available for financing for development should be increased by US$ 50 billion a year if the Millennium Development Goals were to be attained. The need to unambiguously emphasize the additional nature of resources to be raised was also key to mustering the support of the least developed countries, many of which took a cautious stance before the initiative, suspicious as they were of a plot to deviate attention from agreed targets and timetables for the disbursement of development assistance.

Secondly, innovative mechanisms were introduced as an ingenious form of addressing shortcomings in traditional ODA – seen as volatile in face of systematic budgetary constraints and the prevalence of political and strategic considerations over technical criteria. Inasmuch as the innovating fund would not be backed by budgetary contributions, resources made available would tend to be more predictable and perennial in

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[5] Report of the Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms. September 2004.

nature, and hence could better suit recipients in need of long-term projects. All funds would be distributed through existing multilateral institutions, so as to maximize disbursements in end activities and avoid new and costly administrative structures.

Soon after the World Leaders Meeting, Brazil launched a comprehensive diplomatic strategy in an attempt to consolidate the notion of innovative mechanisms in the broader framework of financing for development at the United Nations – thereby allaying the aforementioned suspicions on the part of some least developed countries as well as the resistance voiced by the United States and other delegations from developed countries[6].

In the wake of intense negotiations, Brazil and its partners in the AHP were finally able to include a reference to the initiative and to the concept of innovative funding in the text of UN Resolution 883 of 2004 on the follow-up to and implementation of the Monterrey Consensus[7]. The resolution would then function as a valuable starting point in the rapid process of enlarging the political support for innovative funding within the UN system. It paved the ground for later insertions in other UN documents, as well as for further discussions on the issue at the ECOSOC High-Level Dialogues with the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO and UNCTAD in 2005 and 2006, largely reverberating the greater attention attached to the subject by the World Bank and the IMF[8]. The issue was also mentioned in the 60th and 61st General Assemblies, in addition to being quoted by Secretary General Kofi Annan in its report "In Larger Freedom"[9]. The coalition leading the initiative was also able to approve Resolution 60/206, which encouraged member countries to take bold measures to facilitate the flows of migrants' remittances and enhance their development impact in recipient communities. All these developments were interpreted in Brasília as positive signs of the significant political support the AHP was attaining in the United Nations.

While committed to promoting a broad international mobilization at the UN around the idea of innovative funding, diplomats in Brasilia were willing to promote technical work, alongside their main partners, on concrete mechanisms that could be put through in the short or medium terms. In these circumstances, Brazil wholeheartedly embraced the initiative by President Chirac to convene a Ministerial Meeting in Paris in February 2006 with the objective of further analysing the possibility of launching pilot projects in the field of

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[6] The US opposed to the initiative on the grounds that it could lead to the interpretation of the United Nations nesting the embryo of international taxation. In order to further clarify that the mechanisms proposed would not suggest surpassing the scope of domestic fiscal sovereignty, Brazil coined the expression "schemes of taxes domestically applied and internationally coordinated".

[7] The resolution mentioned in paragraph 7 that the General Assembly "*decides to give further consideration to the subject of possible innovative and additional sources of financing for development from all sources, public and private, domestic and external, taking into account international efforts, contributions and discussions, within the overall inclusive framework of the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development*".

[8] See, for instance, the document prepared for the Development Committee Meeting on April 2005: "Moving forward: financing modalities toward the MDGs". Background paper, April 2005.

[9] Page 51 of this document makes direct reference to the search for innovative mechanisms and the Fight against Hunger and Poverty. Report of the SGNU for decision by Heads of State and Government. "In Larger Freedom: towards security, development and human rights for all" September 2005.

innovative development assistance. The meeting led to the constitution of a new group, presided by Brazil and composed of 44 countries, with the mandate of exploring pilot projects that could demonstrate the feasibility of innovative schemes[10].

In particular, the group (called "Group on Solidarity Levies") was conceived as a forum for the exchange of information on a new proposal advanced by France concerning the adoption of a "solidarity contribution on airline tickets" to finance development. As evoked by the French government, such a contribution could provide a strong case for the very concept of innovative financing. Given its relative technical simplicity, especially if compared to other instruments of the same genre described in the "Quadripartite Report", the contribution could be launched in the short term in countries willing to do so – meaning that universality of participation would not be a prerequisite. It was designed as a tax with easy collection procedures that could generate a huge amount of resources with negligible effects on the industries of tourism and aviation[11].

Brazil also concurred with the French proposal that the revenues stemming from the solidarity contribution would be channelled to the establishment of the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID) to fight the three diseases that most affect developing countries, namely, AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis[12]. The UNITAID was formally launched by its promoters – Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the UK – during the opening session of the 61st General Assembly in New York. Consonant to the guidelines professed by the group of countries leading the process, UNITAID did not entail new institutions. It was designed as a fiduciary facility, hosted by the WHO, and working closely with its main technical partners, such as Unicef, UNAIDS, the Global Fund and the Clinton Foundation, with the objective of enhancing access of developing countries to drugs and stimulate competition and price reduction in the international market.

As of December 2006, out of the 44 members of the Leading Group, 20 had already adopted or committed to adopt in the short-term the solidarity contribution on air tickets. UNITAID had already approved the first allocations of resources in its main niche areas: the

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[10] The rotating Presidency of the Group is since September 2006 under the auspices of Norway. The members of the Group are: Algeria, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Burundi, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroun, Cape Verde, Chili, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxemburg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauricio, Mauritania, México, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, United Kingdom and Uruguay.

[11] For a technical discussion on this issue, see European Commission Staff Working Paper. "A Possible Contribution Based on Airline Tickets as a New Source of Financing Development: technical reflections in the run up to the UN High Level Event. Brussels, September 2005.

[12] Although not directly associated to initiatives in the field of nutrition, the idea of allocating resources to the health sector was welcomed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. First, because the three diseases the Facility is intended to address are the ones most commonly associated with poverty and hunger; second, because of the international recognition the Brazilian government had been able to attain around its domestic AIDS program; third, the strong political motivation of France, the first country to implement the air ticket levy and make resources available on a large scale, meant that the initiative would be ready for adoption in the short and medium terms, in line with the sense of urgency Brazil most emphasized since the inception of the initiative.

provision of second-line and paediatric ARVs, new drugs against malaria based on artemisine-combined therapies, second-line medicaments against tuberculosis, as well as investments in WHO-led program of pre-qualification of drugs. Via a presidential decree (*Medida Provisória* no. 323), the Brazilian Government disbursed US$ 6 million to UNITAID in 2006. Meanwhile, a bill was sent to the consideration of the National Congress to make the Brazilian contribution a permanent one, in an amount equivalent to a charge of US $2 per each passenger embarking in Brazilian airports to international destinations – a measure intended to frontload Brazil's contribution while the technical difficulties related to the implementation of the contribution in the domestic tax system are not surmounted[13].

The novelty of the initiative and theoretical explanations

Before diving into the motivations that galvanized Brazil into rallying international support for fighting hunger and poverty abroad, it is useful to assess the extent to which the initiative brought about novelties in the terrain of development assistance.

To begin with, as indicated above, the AHP was conceived as a means of redressing the well-known shortcomings in traditional ODA. The Quadripartite Report presented in New York echoed a vast array of literature on aid effectiveness claiming that the rather mercurial nature of contributions tends to harm – more than benefit – recipient countries they are supposed to help. It has been widely recognized that traditional ODA flows suffer from inherent instability, attached as they are to contingencies of all sorts stemming from donors' internal decisions on budgetary allocations. The uneven flow of resources is considered sadly detrimental to developing countries, whose own capabilities are dissipated into efforts to absorb money that may never result in purposeful end projects[14].

The concept of innovative financing mechanisms, based on non-budgetary contributions seemed to implicate instruments that are better suited to address the challenges of development assistance, to the extent that resources would be channelled in a perennial and "automatic" manner, detached from the unpredictable process of budgetary policy-making[15]. The enforcement of a contribution on airline tickets and the creation of UNITAID stand as practical demonstrations of an innovative way of conceptualizing development assistance. Earmarking resources collected from a tax of this genre does more than just signal the assignment of resources on a continuous and stable basis inasmuch as it makes clear that, at the end of the day, it is the the actual citizen – who may either live in a

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[13] Brazil estimates to donate around US$ 12 million per year starting in 2007, while UNITAID's total budget is estimated to reach US$300 million, France being the main contributor.
[14] See also LANDAU, Jean-Pierre. Rapport à Monsieur Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, December 2004.
[15] For a detailed account of most relevant aspects pertaining to many proposals of innovative financing, see ATKINSON, A.B. New Sources of Development Finance. Oxford University Press, 2005.

developed or developing nation – who is making his or her contribution to poor people overseas. The drawing of a UNITAID decision board with the participation of civil society and representatives of recipient countries, by the same token, seemed to reveal a political commitment to channelling resources to the areas they are mostly required, in an attempt to ward off vested interests that are seen as traditionally predominant, especially in the field of bilateral official development assistance[16].

The fact that both developed and developing countries took active part in an initiative of this nature hints to a sense of collective responsibility to world poverty that could be interpreted – even though this was never explicitly mentioned by any of the countries behind the initiative – as the embryonic provision of a "global public good" in financing for development[17]. As a matter of fact, President Lula and Minister Amorim recurrently emphasized that poverty ought to be seen as a problem of universal proportions, since its spill-over effects, implied in either a downturn in an increasingly interdependent international economy or a threat to political/security stability in the post-9/11 world, could potentially reach all nations[18]. The reverse also holds true: the eradication of poverty would yield positive externalities that would accrue to all nations alike. Such argumentation places the "AHP" in line with two characteristics that traditionally define the notion of "public goods", i.e., a good that is non-rival in consumption (meaning that it is technically, economically or politically impossible to exclude one actor from accessing it) and whose benefits are non-excludable (in the sense that one actors' consumption does not impair its availability to others)[19].

These considerations add an element of complexity to an already puzzled debate in the specialized literature on donors' stance towards development assistance abroad. The decision to surrender control over the allocation of domestic resources – via an automatic instrument of money collection – to an international stance such as UNITAID, in an effort to offer goods whose "publicness" could eventually give rise to collective action problems usually referred to as a "free-riding" behaviour, stands in clear contradiction with dominant explanations of official development aid. In the case of Brazil, the question must be

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[16] According to the UNITAID Constitution, the board is composed of one representative of each founding country, one from Africa, one from Asia, two from civil society networks (NGOs and communities living with the diseases and one representative of WHO.

[17] For a very good explanation of the most important aspects of global public goods, see KAUL, Inge and CONCEICAO, Pedro (eds). The New Public Finance: responding to Global Challenges. Oxford University Press, 2006.

[18] For instance, at the opening session of the LXI UNGA, President Lula emphasized that "*where there is hunger there is no hope; there is despair and pain. Hunger feeds violence and fanaticisms; a world of hungry will never be a safer place.*" The argument itself, however, is not a new one. For example, the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944, which resulted in the ILO charter, stated that "poverty anywhere constitute a danger do prosperity everywhere".

[19] The fact that the initiative bears a highly political nature only adds to this line of interpretation. As Kaul, Conceicao, Le Gouven and Mendoza indicated, the decision on what makes a good a "public" one is inherently a political decision. KAUL, Inge, CONCEICAO, Pedro, LE GOULVEN and MENDOZA, Ronald U. Providing Global Public Goods: managing globalization. Oxford University Press, 2003.

formulated in terms of investigating the reasons why a middle-income power, so far lacking any tradition when it comes to providing ODA, would devote so much political capital and a considerable amount of its relatively scarce diplomatic resources to try and mobilize the international community on such an enterprise, even allowing for the fact that, in the end, Brazil's own financial contribution to UNITAID turned out to be a symbolic amount and not yet fully compatible with the concept of an innovative financing mechanism. Although the implications of the Brazilian commitment could not be gauged in financial terms, it would still be useful to look into the way theories try to explain the provision of ODA, since they bring insights on countries' motivations to stand in favour of poorer nations that could be important to grasp Brazil's policy.

The predominant paradigm in international relations discards unselfish actions on the part of countries. Governments that eventually decide to support other countries simply observe rational calculations of economic, political or strategic advantages. Such an interpretation pays tribute to a realist reckoning of countries behaviour – given a context of Hobbesian-like international anarchy, states are primarily concerned with their "interests defined in terms of power", in the classical formulation of Hans Morgenthau[20]. The inherent tendency to competition and the quest for power reflects a pessimistic look on human nature[21] and tends to take state interests for granted – either because they are embedded in the encompassing and ultimate desire for power in models of "billiard-ball" international systems or, following the lines of neorealist authors, the international "structure", defined solely by the distribution of capabilities among like units, determine behaviour[22]. In these circumstances, moral judgement looks inappropriate in the minds of policy-makers anxious to maximize their utility function, or it simply does not fit into a power-oriented international structure.

Indeed, the overwhelming majority of literature focused on ODA emphasizes donors' own calculations of political, economic or strategic self-interests. Schraeder, Hook and Taylor dispel the rhetoric of aid as an altruistic tool of foreign policy and shows empirical data demonstrating that ideological, strategic and trade interests largely prevail[23]. Hoadley argues that the much common tendency of "tying" aid is an act of self-interest aimed at protecting donors` balance of payments, stimulate their exports and return part of the expended funds back to the issuing treasury[24]. Ngaire Woods gives evidence that concerns

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[20] MORGENTHAU, Hans. *Politics Among Nations: the struggle for power and peace.* Knopf, New York, 1973.
[21] "As a result of this insatiable drive for power, every human action is tringed with evil, and no human action is truly unselfish". MORGENTHAU. *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics.* The University of Chicago Press, 1946.
[22] WALTZ, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics.* London : Addison-Wesley, 1979
[23] SCHRAEDER, P.J., HOOK, S.W. AND TAYLOR, B. "Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows". World Politics - Volume 50, Number 2, January 1998, pp. 294-323
[24] HOADLEY, Stephen. Small States as Aid Donors. *International Organization*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter, 1980), pp. 121-137

over security affairs have largely influenced aid allocations over the past years, in particular after the attacks of September 11th, 2001[25]. Alesina and Dollar claim that factors such as recipients` past colonial ties with donors and voting patterns in the UN account for much of disbursements in development assistance[26]. Even middle-income countries not traditionally classified as donors, such as India, are seen as deploying incipient aid policies to attain political and commercial interests[27]. Some authors take the argument to its extremes and claim that aid has been used to control recipients` behaviour or policies and constitutes "a primary form of positive sanctions and a primary tool of statecraft"[28]. Morgenthau goes as far as to compare aid initiatives to the common habit of giving bribes for political favours in the past and states that "*a policy of aid is no different from diplomatic policy or propaganda. They are all weapons in the political armoury of the nation.*"[29]

In contrast to the dominant realist paradigm, however, adherents to an "idealistic" conception of international affairs affirm that countries do have moral obligations towards people living beyond their borders. Idealists have greater sensitivity to cosmopolitan values, in the understanding that men share a common destiny in increasingly interconnected economic, political and cultural realities. According to Charlez Beitz, there exist substantial moral principles that make the terrain of international policy-making a domain of intrinsic moral choice[30]. Instead of taking state preferences as given artefacts, idealistic authors understand foreign policy as a malleable construct capable of being shaped in accordance to moral guidelines – which in turn sets the basis for a normative theory of international relations[31]. Despite the many variations in idealist thinking, authors tend to draw on a more positive inception of human nature, appeal to consciences of national leaders, highlight the role of domestic politics and public opinion in delineating an international environment in which matters of reputation come into force to make states cooperate with and support other countries[32].

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[25] WOODS, Ngaire. *The Shifting Politics of Foreign Aid*. Working Paper. Global Economic Governance Programme, Oxford University. February 2005.

[26] ALESINA, Albert and DOLLAR, David. Who Gives Aid to Whom and Why? *Journal of Economic Growth*. Springer Netherlands. .v5n.1 March 2005.

[27] VOHRA, Dewan C. *India's Aid Diplomacy in the Third World*. New Delhi : Vikas Pub. House, 1980

[28] BALDWIN, David A. Economic Statecraft. Princeton University Press, 1985.

[29] MORGENTHAU, Hans. A Political Theory of Foreign Aid. The American Political Science Review, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Jun., 1962), pp. 301-309.

Robert Gilpin, another major figure of international realism, assign some role for humanitarian values but reaches a similar conclusion: "*The donor's desire to establish spheres of political influence, to bolster military security or to obtain economic advantage have influenced the nature and patterns of aid.*" GILPIN, Robert. The Political Economy of International Relations. Princeton University Press, 1987. pp.311/312.

[30] BEITZ, Charles. Political Theory and International Relations. Princeton University Press, 1979.

[31] For a good overview of normative theory, see FROST, Mervyn. Ethics in International Relations: a constitutive theory. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[32] Mc ELROY, R.W. *Morality and American Foreign Policy: the role of ethics in international affairs*. Princeton University Press, 1992. Along the same lines, Helen Milner makes the point that domestic forces push governments into granting money to multilateral aid institutions, and surrender much of the clout on its disbursements as compared to traditional bilateral programs. MILNER, Helen V. *Why Multilateralism? Foreign Aid and Domestic Principal-Agent Problems*. Columbia University, February 2004.

Untied foreign aid can be seen as typically a case of what Kaufmman and Pape call "costly moral international action", i.e., an action that not only can be justified on moral grounds but actually impairs the material interests of the acting state[33]. The reasons for benevolent behaviour seem to be associated with domestic humanitarian values, which contribute to generating a public opinion momentum largely supportive of aid disbursements. This is why, according to Lumsdaine, countries with greater public approval of aid policies usually have more solid and efficient aid programs in the long-term[34]. Similarly, Stokke points out that foreign aid can be seen as an extension of sociopolitical values that underscore welfare states in donor countries[35] – an argument endorsed by Pratt, who shows how aid policies of middle-powers are widely responsive to cosmopolitan values disseminated internally[36]. The tendency for a country to project values that define its national identity abroad unleash powerful systemic forces that, according to Lowenheim, compel countries to reinforce their "moral credibility" among their peers[37]. Failure to pursue such important attribute can cause a country to "*damage his moral prestige, wear out his legitimate authority and through shame prevent the fulfilment of his identity*"[38].

The intermingling of domestic values in a chain of internationally shared principles eventually blurs the concept of states' interests, as cherished by the realist tradition. The transposition of these values to the international sphere paves the ground for a constructivist view of international relations: along these lines, authors such as John Ruggie attributes to ideational factors like culture, norms and ideas primacy over utility functions – to the extent that they acquire a decisive role in shaping the way by means of which states define their own interests[39]. Such a perception has led constructivist authors to focus on the growing role of transnational networks of advocacy experts in diffusing ideas and shaping interests

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[33] KAUFMANN, C.D and PAPE, R.A. Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-year Campaign Against the Atlantic . *International Organization*, Cambridge University Press, Volume 53, Issue 04, October 1999, pp 631-668.

[34] LUMSDAINE, David. *Moral Vision in International Politics: the foreign aid regime: 1949-1989*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

[35] STOKKE, Olav. *Western Middle-Powers and Global Poverty: the determinants of aid policies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden*. Uppsala, Sweden: The Scandinavian Institute for African Studies, 1989.

[36] PRATT, Cranford (ed.). *Middle-Power Internationalism: the north-south dimension*. Kingston ; London : McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. Olsen reached similar results analyzing the case of Danish aid. OLSEN, Gorm Rye. "The aid policy process of a 'humane internationalist': the Danish example. *Journal of International Development*, 10 607-619, 1998. A very similar argument can be found in NÖEL, Alain and THÉRIEN, Jean-Philippe. From Domestic to International Justice: the welfare state and foreign aid. *International Organization* 49, 3, Summer 1995, pp523-53.

[37] LOWENHEIM, Oded. Do Ourselves Credit and Render a Lasting Service do Mankind: British moral prestige, humanitarian intervention and the barbary pirates". *International Studies Quarterly* 47(1), 2003 pp. 23-48. See also BUSBY, Joshua W. From Benign Neglect to Moral Awakening: donor responses to HIV/AIDS. Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University May 2006.

[38] LOWENHEIM (2003). op.cit. p. 28.

[39] RUGGIE, John H. *Constructing the world polity: essays on international institutionalization*. London: Routledge, 2nded, 2000. See also Finnemore, Martha. Norms, culture and world politics: insights from sociology's institutionalism. International Organization 50, 2, Spring 1996, pp 325-47.

everywhere[40]. As Ruggie points out, "*there can be no mutually comprehensible conduct of international relations without mutually recognized constitutive rules, resting on collective intentionality.*[41]"

As authors of various orientations have noted, however, given the pervasiveness of aid programs in the international scene since the end of the Second World War – however uneven and unpredictable the quality and scope of resources may be throughout time – it is highly plausible that diverse explanatory variables co-exist as fundamental reasons underneath donors intentions to take policies supportive of others and provide development assistance, even though it is also plausible to ascertain the prevalence of one specific variable in a given time and context[42].

First, this means that it is possible to explain the launching of the "AHP" through a framework that takes into consideration developments at all levels of analysis in international relations – the national leader, the domestic bureaucracy and the international structure, which correspond to the classical "images" put forward by Kenneth Waltz in "Man, State and War"[43]. Pointing at the concomitant importance of the three images will not prevent, as seen below, to underline the primary role of the international structure in setting the incentives and constraints states are subjected to. The argument is that the way policy-makers react to forces emanating from the systemic level are translated differently into concrete policy options, according to the ideas and values espoused by policy-makers in a specific situation. Secondly, one can rely on realist theory to understand policy outcome in this domain, as long as the assumption of the state as a unitary and monolithic actor, responsive in a limited and automatic manner to systemic effects stemming from power distribution, is relaxed. As suggested below, ideas and values can serve as a powerful tool to assess state interests – and define the selection of policy undertaken, among an array of different options – in a way that leaves enough room for what could be called "enlightened self-interest" on the part of states. This is possible to achieve by keeping emphasis on the state as the fundamental unit of analysis, that is to say, without having to adhere to notions of transnational advocacy groups that would play a decisive role in prompting countries into endorsing shared humanitarian and moral values in favour of mankind as a whole.

The framework used in this paper takes on Goldstein and Keohane's concept of "ideas as road maps"[44]. These authors claim that policy-makers are often faced with incomplete information when it comes to selecting strategies that would lead to their

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[40] HAAS, P.M. Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination. *International Organization* 46(1): 1-36.
[41] RUGGIE (2000), op.cit. p.33.
[42] LUMSDAINE (1993); STOKKE (1999); MORGENTHAU (1962).
[43] WALTZ, Kenneth. *Man, State and War: a theoretical analysis.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1959.
[44] GOLDSTEIN, Judith and KEOHANE, Robert. *Ideas and Foreign Policy: beliefs, institutions and political change.* Ithaca, NY. London: Cornell University Press, 1993.

preferred outcomes. Ideas hold by individuals act as important elements behind specific policies undertaken – even if overall preferences were already set clear and governments are still motivated by pure self-interest. Goldstein and Keohane make use of three categories of ideas: "world views", i.e., basic loyalties and emotions and linked to concepts of individuals' own identity; "principled beliefs", i.e., specific criteria useful to the evaluation of policies as right or wrong; "causal beliefs", linked to cause-effect relationships and stemming from shared consensus among political elites. As the authors acknowledge, such a categorisation is largely abstract, to the extent that in social life all of kinds of ideas may appear intermingled. For the purposes of this paper, the most important is to apprehend the role of ideas, especially "world views", as "road maps".

This approach is similar to the one underscored by Cingranelli, who embraced Alexander George's concept of "operational code", defined as a set of assumptions and a philosophic reading on the world that tends to determine how national leaders react to external events[45]. In particular, the "operational code" sets the stance policy-makers in developed countries take on aid disbursements to the poor. The values they take into account, combined with the estimation of the scope of the population to benefit from their policies, forms the basis for a categorization that largely predict solutions for moral dilemmas: leaders who do not perceive any sort of shared global values would have their behaviour classified as "nationalism" or "exceptionalism", depending on whether the beneficial effects of their policies are geared towards its own citizens only or peoples in other countries as well; similarly, leaders who accept the existence of moral shared values would carry out "progressive" or "radical progressive" policies. If one takes on the argument that world leaders dismiss transnational shared beliefs while at the same time support poor people overseas, it turns out clear that an "exceptionalist" kind of policy must be prevailing.

More significantly, Goldstein and Keohane's framework resembles the notion of "frames" developed by Van der Veen[46]. According to the author, a "frame" consists of informational objects that allow actors to order different pieces of information in a coherent manner. "Frames" therefore include default values and assumptions at the disposal of policy-makers for use when appropriate data are not available; they are classified as an "intermediate" category of ideas that gives practical sense to the "national identity" of a country, understood as a basic world view that informs the position a nation aspires to in the international system, as well as the very values a nation intends to project among its partners.

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[45] CINGRANELLI, David L. *Ethics, American Foreign Policy and the Third World.* New York: St Martin's Press, 1993.
[46] VAN DER VEEN, A. Maurits. *National Identity and the Origins of Development Assistance.* Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania. August 18, 2002.

Van der Veen identifies seven different "frames" of relevance to understanding the politics of development assistance: security, power and influence, economic self-interest, enlightened self-interest; self-affirmation and reputation; obligation and duty; and humanitarianism. The first three frames are usually associated with realist accounts of ODA, as shown above; the latter two frames seem to be more related to an idealistic and constructivist way of interpreting international affairs. The frames that seem most relevant for the purposes of this paper regards to enlightened self-interest, self-affirmation and reputation. An "enlightened self-interest" frame fits the behaviour of leaders trying to use aid as an instrument for the pursuit of global public goods, while a "self-affirmation" frame is identified with leaders willing to project their national identity, enhance their international status or look for a particular kind of reputation.

As shown in the next section, Brazil's main motivations to take the lead in the AHP – although not translated into a huge amount of resources made available to poor countries in the manner other traditional donors would be expected to do – can be seen as part of a broader strategy of a middle-power aspiring to ascertain its influence abroad, in conformity a certain "world view" long accepted by Brazilian leaders on the appropriateness of upgrading positional status in the international system. The fact that such a perception was scanned through specific ideas reflecting more proactive social policies in the country reconciles the explanation both with what can be seen as an "enlightened" realist approach and a multi-level interpretation of foreign policy.

Brazil and the AHP

The reasons for Brazil to embark on the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" initiative can be drawn from the Brazilian foreign policy-making tradition of asserting the country's position as an ascending middle-power in the international arena. This is an element of systemic traits, related to the distribution of power and prestige, that is read by policy-makers through specific frames – in the case, through one of "enlightened self-interest" and "self-affirmation", deployed to achieve particular political outcomes.

It is true that the literature on middle powers does not reveal a fully precise explanation of the expected behaviour a particular country would follow by virtue of being qualified in such a categorization in the international hierarchy of states. Indeed, there is even no consensus on what would be the attributes that would entitle one country to figure in the range of "middle-power".

According to Chapnick, scholars interested on this subject tend either to resort to a functional/behavioural or a hierarchic analytic framework[47]. Adherents to the latter usually put the emphasis on material capabilities such as economic and military power. As many authors have argued, however, such a route is problematic in the sense that no one could point to which (and how much of each) ingredients would produce a middle-power[48]. Chapnick admits these criticisms and proposes a hierarchic framework that takes into consideration power defined in terms of prestige, reaching the conclusion that veto power at the UN Security Council would be a good parameter for identifying middle-powers. This scheme, however, in addition to being arbitrary, would leave aside countries traditionally – and almost unanimously in the literature – seen as middle-powers, such as Brazil, India and so on.

A more interesting way of assessing the role of middle-powers bears on functional/behavioural analysis, which highlight first and foremost countries' ability to exert some influence in international affairs on specific and limited issue-areas (functional) or emphasize their tendency to pursue their interests through multilateral channels, act as mediators in situations of conflict among greater powers and address matters of moral concerns worldwide (behavioural). Underlying analysis of this nature is a perception that middle-powers' ultimate objective consists of seeking enhanced prestige and recognition of their status in the international system – a perspective largely consistent with what realist theories of international relations would infer. Such a line of argumentation, however, must ward off the possibility of tautology – one may arguably point to the fact that the list of states that would come out from such a standpoint would include but countries scholars already believe to form part of the "middle-power" club. As elucidated by Andrew Hurrell, this risk could be circumvented by avoiding excessive emphasis on objective and material circumstances and centering on self-constructed identities or ideologies that would define the appropriate route for action in each country. In this sense, "*midde-powermenship becomes an embedded guiding narrative*" that is socially built, has historic roots and can be related to broader aspects in the realm of domestic affairs and state bureaucracy.

Along the same lines, Keohane defines a middle-power as a "system affecting state", i.e., a country that "*cannot hope to affect the system alone but can nevertheless exert significant impact on the system by working through small groups or alliances or through universal or regional international organizations*"[49]. Keohane also recognizes that this

[47] CHAPNICK, Adam. The Middle-Power. *Canadian Foreign Policy*, vol. 7, n. 2 (winter 1999), pp. 73-82.
[48] HURRELL, Andrew et alli. Paths to Power: foreign policy strategies of intermediate states. Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, march 2000. p.1. See also JORDAAN, Eduard. The concept of middle power in international relations: distinguishing between emerging and traditional middle powers". Politikon, (November 2003), 30(2), 165-181.
[49] KEOHANE, Robert. Lilliputians' Dilemmas: small states in international politics. *International Organization*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring, 1969), pp. 291-310

definition would be made workable as long as what he calls a "psychological dimension" be added; objective factors alone are not capable of determining state behaviour straightforwardly. States would acquire the potential to influence the system if their leaders believe so and are convinced that they could do much more by teaming up with their peers and advancing their vital interests through multilateral institutions[50].

For the purposes of this paper, the important argument is that a country's position as a "system-affecting" state in an international system marked by a hierarchic distribution of capabilities sets *per se* certain structural incentives for policy-makers to act in a manner consistent with their aspirations for enhanced prestige and legitimacy. Such structural and perennial incentives, captured in one country's perception of "world view", is to be read through the lens of specific "frames" or "ideas as road maps" that determine the way the country will translate its aspirations into concrete policies.

Lima echoes the view that a typical middle-power, in addition to possessing a certain amount of material capabilities, is defined by its auto-perception as such and also in relation to the degree of international recognition it is able to muster, particular on the part of the great powers, about its status[51]. In the case of Brazil, the quest for international prestige and legitimacy has been a permanent characteristic of the country's foreign policy over the course of more than one hundred years. It denotes a consensual trait that is deeply rooted among political elites and bureaucracies, to the point of being linked to the very notion of "national identity". Consensus runs deep on the appropriateness of Brazil's age-old behaviour as a mediator between smaller and greater powers – in particular, as a country being able to identify itself with the first while wishing to acquire the status necessary to be seen as one of the former[52].

The consensual "world view" of the country as an emerging middle-power is also associated to Brazil's willingness to influence international regimes primarily by means of its "soft power". As Lima recalls, given that the country was able to solve out all its relevant territorial disputes with neighbouring nations in South America in the earliest years of the 20th century, it has consistently relinquished ambitious to accumulate military capabilities and, by contrast, has focused its diplomatic skills on addressing its main external

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[50] Other categories defined by Keohane are the following: a "system determining state", i.e., "one that plays a critical role in shaping the system"; a "secondary power" would be described as one that "cannot expect individually to dominate a system but may nevertheless be able significantly to influence its nature through unilateral as well as multilateral actions"; a "small power" would equal "system ineffectual states" that "can do little to influence the system-wide forces that affect them, except in groups which are so large that each state has minimal influence and which may themselves be dominated by larger powers. Foreign policy is adjustment to reality, not rearrangement of it".
[51] LIMA, Maria Regina Soares. A Política Externa Brasileira e os Desafios da Cooperação Sul-Sul. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional.* 48 (1) 2005 pp 24-59
[52] LIMA, Maria Regina Soares. Brazil as an intermediate state and regional power: action, choice and responsibilities. *International Affairs* 82, I, 2006 pp 21-40

vulnerabilities – which have been allegedly concentrated in the economic realm[53]. This is why Brazil's foreign policy has long had a developmental component; diplomatic movements have been perceived as an useful instrument to defend economic interests – either through trying to maximize its interests in a given world economic order or seeking to influence the dawn of an order that would best fit Brazilian interests.

However consensual the "world view" of Brazil may be, the perception of the structural position of the country as a middle-power has given rise to two categories of policies that fundamentally differ in what such a position actually mean. According to Lima, adherents to a scheme that could be called "in search for credibility" advocate that Brazil does not enjoy a "surplus of power" and then should stick to multilateral channels as a means of counterbalancing the overwhelming influence of great powers; policies should be aimed at conforming its international interests to its effective capabilities, meaning that adaptation to international regimes would be key to acquiring trust and credibility on the part of other countries; external policies would appear strongly connected to domestic orthodox economic policies. By contrast, adherents to a model called "in search of autonomy" would prefer to combine Brazil's aspirations for power and prestige with a more flexible foreign policy orientation – which would be linked to a more proactive and assertive view of development; external policies could be pursued irrespective of the orientation of economic policies applied domestically[54].

While both models would still be broadly consistent with a certain "world view" of the country as an emerging middle-power ("system-affecting" state) it is interesting to notice that the first would include elements of what Keohane calls "system-ineffective" state, whereas the more ambitious nature of the second refers to aspects of the upper category of "secondary state". Such a large difference in perception within the same "world view" is an indicative that policy makers read incentives stemming from abroad through different "frames", which relate to the way the political elite make use of their inherent "ideas as road maps" in particular domains.

It has been argued that President Lula's diplomacy has veered substantially in the direction of a "search for autonomy" strategy – a movement that is easily demonstrated by looking into some of the main diplomatic initiatives undertaken in the first years of the administration[55]. The launching of the IBSA initiative reflected a more dynamic stance

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[53] LIMA (2006), op.cit.
[54] LIMA (2005), op.cit.
[55] In so doing, according to Lima, the *"parameter of foreign policy turn out to be past experiments of the 'Independent Foreign Policy of the 60's and of the 'Responsible Pragmatism'' of the 70's, with the necessary adaptations to the international context of 21st century".* LIMA, Maria Regina. Na Trilha de uma Política Externa Afirmativa. *Observatório da Cidadania*, 2003. p. 97. [quoted from the original in Portuguese: *"O parâmetro de referência passou a ser os experimentos anteriores da política externa independente da década de 1960 e do pragmatismo responsável da de 1970, com as adaptações necessaries para se inserir na conjuntura internacional do início do século 21"*]

towards South-South cooperation, alongside the manifold efforts to revitalize Mercosur and to create a South American Community of Nations. Favouring closer economic ties with African and Middle-Western countries is also an example, such as the leading role of Brazil in the establishment of the G-20 in an attempt to reactivate Doha trade round in the WTO. In the political realm, the deployment of peace-keeping troops to Haiti, the enhanced role in East-Timor and the campaign for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council are also indicative of Brazil's intend to rally international recognition of its emerging role as a middle-power.

The image of Lula as a leading voice from the South acting as a mediator between rich and poor nations – symbolically magnified on the occasion of the President's back-to-back appearances at the World Economic Forum in Davos and the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre – can also be understood following the explanatory route of a middle-power willing to pursue its autonomous foreign policy in search of international recognition of its status. The "frame" instrumental for this projection referred to the enlightened self-interest of a country trying to project itself in the international scene, mirroring humanitarian values long held by the political elite that had came into power in 2003 – including the President himself, who incarnated the role of the ascending working class warrior against poverty, whose first manifestation in the domestic arena concerned the strong priority attached to social programs and the so-called "Zero Hunger" strategy.

The campaign for an AHP through innovative financing mechanisms fits well this overall context of a more "autonomous" foreign policy, embedded as it was in a broader attempt to change the tone of an almost monothematic international agenda around the "war on terror". The initiative is far from a novelty if seen through the lens of Brazil's long record in making use of foreign policy tools as means of advancing interests vested in terms of economic development and playing the mediator role between the rich and the poor in the pursuit of a fair international economic order through multilateral diplomacy. The crucial difference is that the Brazilian diplomacy gave one step further in this direction: rather than simply trumpeting a conciliatory development-prone tone, Brazil actually teamed up with other countries in an attempt to identify innovative tools capable of raising resources that would not benefit its own development – but would be destined to the poorest countries on the globe – in an effort that succeed in surmounting the traditional divide between donor and benefiting countries in the world of development assistance.

Conclusion

This paper depicted the "Action against Hunger and Poverty" in the overall context of Brazilian foreign policy in the first mandate of President Lula. The main argument is that a

traditional view of the country as an emerging middle-power in the international system was interpreted through specific frames and ideas that allowed for acts of enlightened self-interest on the part of a government whose priority attached to the fight against hunger domestically was one of its most distinctive policies.

As with attempts to explain donors' willingness to put into practise traditional official development assistance programs, Brazil's leadership role in promoting innovative financing mechanisms to eradicate hunger and poverty cannot be understood solely via a single framework of analysis. The explanation presented here resembles idealistic theories of international relations in what it associates domestic humanitarian policies with achievements in diplomacy – even though it does not take the logical step further of pointing to the influence of transnational humanitarian values on foreign policy-making and spots the co-existence of enhanced social policies with conservative orthodox economic measures at the domestic level. In general, however, the analysis would come closer to traditional realist beliefs in the sense that it envisages the perceived distribution of capabilities in the international system as the main source of systemic incentives to Brazilian policy makers – seen through the perspective of an emerging middle-power constantly in search of power, prestige and recognition of its status. The fact that such incentives were read through frames and ideas that made possible enlightened self-interest actions does not vacate the centrality of rational-realist calculations. Gauging the extension of the pure humanitarian/idealistic side of the initiative depends on a counterfactual analysis that would be hard to tackle, i.e., whether the same objectives could be achieved by means of different actions and initiatives, though within the same set of frames and ideas. Morgenthau wrote that

> *"To act successfully, that is according to the rules of political art, is political wisdom. To know with despair that the political act is inevitably evil, and to act nevertheless, is moral courage. To choose among several expedient actions the least evil one is moral judgement. In the combination of political wisdom, moral courage, and moral judgement, man reconciles his political nature with his moral destiny".* [56]

To be sure, the issue-area of development assistance looks very different in nature from the hard-power politics world of war and peace Morgenthau most often had in mind. Even the most fierce realist author would agree that considering every political act in this field inevitably evil would be a bit too much. But the quotation does hint at the possibility that, in a self-help anarchical world, standing in support of the development of other countries could be, under certain circumstances, an act of rational self-interest capable of putting together political wisdom and moral judgement.

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[56] MORGENTHAU (1946), op.cit.

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