
Original Article

Neither balance nor bandwagon: South American international society meets Brazil's rising power

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Abstract This article examines the strategic positioning of Brazil in South America and how South America relates to Brazil's rising status both globally and regionally. It does so from the perspective of international society known as the English school. This perspective emphasizes how Brazil shares a number of values and institutions with its neighbors that offer the foundations for a distinct regional international society in South America. It thus challenges the materialist stance held by realism which envisages that secondary powers either balance or bandwagon the dominant pole and affirms instead that South America's strategies towards Brazil are more complex and nuanced than a simple polarity standpoint suggests.

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Introduction

Over recent years, an increasing number of International Relations (IR) studies have turned their eyes towards the analysis of regional powers and regional contestation. Somehow sympathetic with this 'regional turn', Realism has revisited the balance of power concept, be it in the classical form of 'hard' balancing, or the newer versions of 'soft' (Pape, 2005) or 'institutional' balancing (He, 2008 and 2015). Liberalism, instead, has examined the role of regions in providing regional security through rules-based arrangements (Kirchner and Dominguez, 2011). Constructivism has explored the normative and ideational dimensions in the social construction of regions and regional powers (Acharya, 2012; Rother, 2012). Last, English school advocates have also made the case to examine international society at the regional level (Buzan, 2012). As a result, a rich and growing literature has been applied to understand the many complexities of contrasting regional orders, including



Europe (Kirchner and Sperling, 2007), Asia (Beeson, 2009; Zhang, 2011), the Middle East (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009) and Africa (Flemes, 2009).

This conceptual discussion on regions and powers has pervaded much of the debate about power and norms in South America. In particular, there has over the past 10 years been a rapid growth of interest in Brazil's rising power and South America's reaction thereof. Yet available theories for examining Brazil's role in the region have left more questions than answers. Brazil has not played the power-political game in the way realist theory would predict (Hurrell 1998; 2004). Neither Brazil has played the role of benevolent hegemon providing institutional arrangements nor collective public goods in the region, as liberalism would predict. Last, the still often conflictive strategic rivalries in the region suggest that South America falls short of being a Kantian culture of anarchy accounting for the absence of balancing.

If these observations are sound, the South American pattern is puzzling and suggests that it is not possible to explain Brazil's rise, and South America's response to it, without considering how power in the region works upon a broader canvass of political and social arrangements that diminish systemic pressures towards balancing or bandwagon. It suggests, therefore, that balance of power is very much ameliorated by the workings of other institutions such as collective power management, diplomacy and international law.

This article examines the place of Brazil in South America and how South America relates to Brazil's rising status both globally and regionally. It does so from an English school perspective which emphasizes how Brazil shares a number of values and institutions with its neighbors. These values, it is argued, offer the foundations for a distinct regional international society in South America. This argument challenges the materialist stance held by realism which envisages that secondary powers either balance or bandwagon the dominant pole (Lobell, Williams and Jesse, 2015) and affirms instead that South America's strategies towards Brazil are more complex and nuanced than a simple polarity standpoint suggests.

The rest of the article will proceed as follows. First section briefly revisits English school's conceptualization of international society and balance of power. Second section examines Brazil's place in South America and the region's responses to Brazil's rise. Third section puts forward an English school explanation to understand how Brazil relates to South America. Last section concludes by summarizing the arguments and evaluating English school's contributions to the study of Brazil's rising power in South American regional interstate society.

Balance of Power in Regional Interstate Societies: An English School Approach

The balance of power concept has deep intellectual roots, yet it remains a contested concept fraught with competing theoretical claims. Given space consideration, this

section will not reassess the role that this concept has played in contemporary IR theory. It will rather introduce the balance of power as understood by international society scholars.

English school portrays the balance of power as one of the cornerstones and fundamental institutions of international society. Hedley Bull's understanding of balance of power is remarkably close to the classical, realist conceptualization offered by Hans Morgenthau, both depicting it as a central institution that helps to maintain the stability of international society (Little, 2006). Later conceptualizations within the realist tradition, however, evolved in rather contrasting directions. Firstly, balance of power is not the unintended outcome of the individual decisions made by each of the states seeking to ensure its survival. Bull denies that there is 'any automatic tendency for a balance of power to arise' (Bull, 1977, p. 111). For Bull, states 'are constantly in the position of having to choose between [...] maintaining or extending their international power position, and devoting these resources and energies to other ends' (p. 111).

Secondly, Bull's distinction between 'system' and 'society' has important consequences for any analysis of the balance of power. Whereas a systemic balance of power is by definition 'essentially competitive or adversarial', a societal balance is 'essentially cooperative or associative' (Little, 2006, p. 99). Bull observes that the presence of a common culture shared by the major states is a social condition that facilitates contrivance and cooperation among states. Said otherwise, Bull's conceptualization points more towards thinking the balance of power as an inter-subjective arrangement between states which agree to maintain a society of states and, therefore, restrict their conduct.

Thirdly, Bull posits a robust association between balance of power and international law. On the one hand, the existence of a balance of power is an essential condition for the operation of international law inasmuch no power is preponderant enough to 'lay down the law to others' (Bull, 1977, p. 101). On the other hand, international law entails a normative dialogue among states wherein reciprocity lies at the heart of this practice and thus each state will avoid violations of international law for fear of receiving sanctions from other states.

And fourthly, English school poses a tension between balance of power and great power management, yet another of international society's purported institutions. While balance of power implies a certain amount of competition for avoiding hegemony, great power management entails a certain amount of cooperation for keeping up the international order. Hedley Bull remained rather silent on how these two institutions could eventually evolve in parallel and thus he saw in the 'anarchical society' the perfect oxymoron to grasp the 'unsocial sociability' among states.

Building on this conceptualization, this paper suggests that the propensity of any system of states towards balance of power is a function of the type of international society they form. Therefore, an international society witnessing growing levels of conflict and instability will tend to work more in favor of balancing strategies, and,



by contrast, an international society witnessing shared norms and understandings will tend to offer more room for joint management, diplomacy and international law. Although there is risk of circularity in the argument – that is, balance exists because states are in conflict and states are in conflict because they pursue balancing – one should be able, through process tracing and detailed historical analysis, to see how conflict formation is then followed by balancing behavior, or how cooperation arises and lead to more formal arrangements. Said otherwise, balance of power and great power management can be understood as a function of how tickly developed is an international society. Next section explores the contours of Brazil's rise and the response put forward by South American regional society.

Brazil's Rise in Global and Regional International Society

Before departing for Brasilia as US Ambassador, Thomas Shannon stated that Brazil had already 'emerged as a global player, a global power' (quoted in Sotero, 2010). Similarly, a 2011 report by the Council on Foreign Relations concluded that 'Brazil is on the short list of countries that will most shape the twenty-first century' (quoted in Dauvergne and Farias, 2012, p. 904). Although the classification of powers has always been a contested terrain, and there may be no more than a hair's breadth between 'regional', 'great' and 'middle' powers, there is no doubt that Brazil has gained global prominence.

Brazil is the largest country in South America in terms of population, GDP, territory and defence expenditures. In the last 10 years, it has experienced a remarkable economic growth averaging GDP growth of 4.5 per cent per year since 2002 and it is now the sixth largest GDP, the fifth largest country in the world and it is the world's fifth most populous country after China, India, the United States and Indonesia. At the diplomatic front, Brazil has become a more active member in United Nations, renewing yet again its longstanding claim to have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. At the IMF, Brazil led calls for greater voice for the developing members, achieving a moderate re-weighting of voting shares. Brazil has played an important role in the G20 as a bridge builder between different standpoints and has also been the main advocate of the BRIC group as well as of the IBSA forum.

Brazil's aspiration for increasing its power and gaining global prominence, however, is not new. It has been, and continues to be, a fundamental dimension of its international identity. What is relatively new, though, is the double movement unfolded by Brazilian diplomacy, namely to build up an expanded political voice for South America and to project itself globally as the best interpreter of the region. Since the 1990s Brazil has taken a more assertive role to reduce conflict and promote stability in South America. In his 2003 inaugural speech, Lula depicted Brazil as the region's 'natural leader' and stated that the country was 'ready to assume its greatness' (quoted in Sotero, 2010). Brazil promoted, among others, the setting up

of Mercosur, UNASUR, and the South American Defence Council. It has played important leading roles in some of the democratic crises that took place in the region, namely in Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Paraguay. It has also supported the creation of convergence funds within Mercosur's structure and has so far been the main source for funding this initiative. These initiatives are telling and highlight the ascending role that Brazil has been playing in the region during the last 10 years. Add to this Brazil's modern and growing defence industry, including the program to build nuclear submarines, and the picture becomes more complete.

Neither balance nor bandwagon

With all this telling features, however, power balancing against Brazil has yet to occur. Secondary states (for example, Argentina, Colombia or Venezuela) are not ramping up military spending to counter Brazil's power, nor have these countries sought to pool their resources for counterbalancing. Take Venezuela. Between 2006 and 2009, Caracas' military purchases placed it fourth in the developing world. This buildup, however, is not under way to keep up with Brazil. It is aimed at a hypothetical US invasion in which Caracas would fight an asymmetrical warfare.

Venezuela's neighbor Colombia also followed suit in its buildup, but it is far from clear that Colombia's purchases are a direct reaction to Venezuela's spending or to Brazil's rising. Colombia's highest priority continues to be its internal conflict against FARC guerrilla. Besides, Colombia's strategic partner has not been Brazil but the United States. Between 2002 and 2010 Colombia's President Alvaro Uribe made the most of this strategic alliance. In turn, Bogotá has opposed Brazil's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Chile's relation with Brazil has typically been positive and forward looking. The often tense relations of Chile with Argentina, Bolivia and Peru have pushed the country to seek in Brazil a reliable partner to avoid encirclement from its neighbors. Moreover, Chile has publicly supported Brazil in its bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC. Yet these commonalities fall short of bandwagon and have to do with tactic convergence. Chile is wedded to a strong conception of sovereignty and autonomy in its decision making and does not seem eager to follow Brazil's standpoints across the board. In turn, Brazil has not expressed keen interest in supporting Chile's positions *vis-à-vis* territorial conflicts with Bolivia and Peru. Yes, Chile can play the role of a 'bad weather friend' of Brazil, but this is not the kind of alignment Brazilian elites have in mind when they look at the region.

Argentina, one of Brazil's closest allies, is more a counterpoint than a counterbalance. It combines recognition and respect for Brazil's performance with a cautious partnership unwilling to recognize Brazil's leadership. Given its past regional achievements, Argentina refuses to passively accept the idea of a powerful Brazil; therefore, it combines cooperation on certain areas (for example, trade,



nuclear energy or peacekeeping in Haiti) with some prudent distance (for example, UN reform).

So the patterns of interaction with Brazil exhibit convergence and divergence dynamics and therefore neither balance nor bandwagon has taken place in South America. While power politics still does much of its work in the region, particularly through still problematic dyads (for example, Chile-Bolivia, Chile-Peru, Colombia-Venezuela, Peru-Ecuador and Peru-Bolivia) balance of power has notably receded since the 1980s and great power management (in the hands of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela) became apparent.

Flemes and Wehner (2015) tell another story informed by neoclassical realism. They claim that the main foreign policy strategy in the region towards Brazil is soft-balancing. They affirm, however, that in relatively stable regions, domestic drivers do shape the accommodative strategies *vis-à-vis* the regional power. Hence, soft-balancing strategies depend both on systemic and domestic drivers.

This inclusion of domestic drivers is essential to understand foreign policy and help to explain why states similarly placed by their power may behave differently. English school lacks a foreign policy theory. Whereas structural realism has evolved into neoclassical realism and hence introduced domestic level variables, English school remains largely a structural approach to international politics. Hence, an English school rendition of South American regional society might be complemented by other theories examining variables at the domestic level. Yet my point of concern with Flemes and Wehner piece is not about predictors but about the outcome variable, namely soft-balancing. There are two problems with this concept. Firstly, balance of power theory is a systemic theory. It predicts that a systemic accumulation of power by a potential hegemon will trigger actions in the rest of the states to check it. We know (Paul, 2004) that balancing strategies can be external (for example, through alliances) or internal (for example, through the buildup of military capabilities). Whatever the strategy followed, an important overlooked observation is that balance of power is systemic, and thus 'it is not about dyads' (Wohlforth, 2004, p. 218). It follows therefore that state conduct 'unrelated to systemic concentrations of power [...] has nothing to do with balance of power theory' (ibid.). Surely, states in South America face multiple diplomatic disagreements among them, but these can hardly be depicted as soft-balancing, unless they are substantially related to systemic accumulation of power.

The second problem follows logically from the first one and has to do with what Giovanni Sartori (1970) dubbed 'concept misformation'. Although soft-balance relies on non-military tools, such as economic statecraft or international institutions, 'it aims to have a real, if indirect, effect on the military prospects of a superior state' (Pape, 2005, p. 36). This distinction between tools and aims is crucial. Soft-balancing is not about just 'constraining' or 'binding' other state's strategies. If this were the case, then the only game in town in world politics would be soft-balancing

and thus it would be ‘identical to normal diplomatic friction’ (Lieber and Alexander, 2005, p. 109).

Upon these reasoning, the evidence of the South American case is telling in that there has been no discernible alliance formation against Brazil, nor any substantial domestic economic investment to match Brazil’s military prowess. Brazil’s status in the region becomes clearer when compared with South Asia, for instance, where both hard and soft balancing do take place. India and Pakistan, for instance, have been involved in three major wars, one tacit war and frequent border skirmishes and military standoffs. By contrast, the only war between Argentina and Brazil took place in the 1820s. Although India–Pakistan relation is still largely a story of nuclear contestation, military conflicts and identity politics, Argentina–Brazil relation is a story of nuclear cooperation, security dialogue and (arrested) economic integration. For a balance of power to take place, be it in a hard or a soft way, there must be first a perception of threat from secondary powers. In a purely materialist world, power concentration may always be perceived as a threat. In an international society, however, power concentration will be seen as a threat only when the major power aspires to ‘lay down the law to others’ (Bull, 1977, p. 101). The case of South America, again, is telling in that Brazil does not look like a threat. Compared with China, India or Russia, Brazil has no nuclear weapons and has no plans to build them. Compared with South Africa’s military interventions in its near abroad, Brazil has never sent its troops for a regional peace operation in South America. Brazil is a large, multicultural and multiracial democracy, like India, but its regional symbolic power resembles that of South Africa. In short, my observation is not that institutional binding, buffering and economic statecraft are absent strategies in South America. My only suggestion is that these strategies hardly amount to soft-balancing. In short, beyond the foregoing, often tense dyadic interactions it is difficult ‘to find evidence of balance of power behaviour in Latin America in the post-Cold War period’ (Barletta and Trinkunas, 2004, p. 334).

In contrast to Flemes and Wehner, Burges (2015) points to the more nuanced hegemony displayed by Brazil, first via a ‘consensual hegemony’ during the 1990s (Burges, 2008), and now via a transition towards a ‘cooperative hegemony’ (Pedersen, 2002) based on power-aggregation, power-sharing and commitment capacity. Yet Brazil has been reluctant to share its power and to delegate decision making towards regional bodies. It has also been reluctant to become the regional paymaster providing collective public goods such as credit, aid or security. Brazil’s political elites ‘are wedded to traditional understandings of national autonomy and do not consider pooling regional sovereignties into supra-national bodies’. Moreover, they are ‘equally reluctant to pay the costs of regional prominence, preferring to deal with smaller neighbours on an individual, *ad hoc* basis’ (Spektor, 2011, p. 192). In short, region formation is an expensive and burdensome undertaking and Brazil has so far been unwilling to pay the costs associated with it. As a result, ‘Brazil has been a difficult centre of power with which



to bandwagon', says Spektor, 'precisely because it is so unwilling to engage' (2011, p. 194). Therefore, 'neighbours do not necessarily look to Brasilia for regional leadership, and it is not clear that they think Brazil is a dependable catalyst to shape regional order' (Spektor, 2011, p. 195). In fact, says Leslie Bethel (2010), Brazil seems to be punching 'above its weight'; and Juan Tokatlian (2013) convincingly asserts that while Brazil's wherewithal has been growing, this does not mean that Brazil is 'powerful'. In fact, says Tokatlian, 'Brazil is less powerful than presumed' (p. 30).

Next section offers an English school perspective and lays out the contours of an alternative explanation for understanding the fundamental patterns of interaction in South America and how they accommodate Brazil's rise in a distinct manner.

In Grotius' Footsteps: South American *Concertación* Meets Brazil's Rise

South America constitutes a genuine puzzle for scholars working in the intersection of IR with Area Studies. It exhibits a distinct pattern of region formation, showing typical features of post-colonial peripheral regions, for example, weak states or outward-oriented markets, but it is closer to the Western culture and values than Africa, Asia or the Middle East. Andrew Hurrell observes (1998, p. 260) that the region 'provides important grounds for doubting that regional "anarchies" are everywhere alike' or even that we can 'meaningfully talk of a Westphalian system whose essence remains unchanged and whose logic applies universally'. Following Hurrell, Charles Jones (2008) refers to South America as a 'microcosm' with its memories, institutions and *habitus*. 'South American republics', he affirms, 'provide an almost unique example of a society of states readily comparable to Europe because of shared history and culture' (2005, pp. 6–7). Similarly, Arie Kacowicz (2005) defines Latin America as a 'Grotian society' and Cameron Thies (2008) as a 'Lockean interstate culture'.

The main argument of this section is twofold. Firstly, it suggests that the dominant international institution in South America is neither balance of power nor hegemony but *concertación* (literally concertation). Secondly, it argues that *concertación* has so far accommodated Brazil's rise in a way that the country does not present neither a challenge to check nor hegemony to follow. The first part develops the idea and practice of *concertación*. The second part examines Brazil's diplomatic culture and how it relates to *concertación*.

Concertación is a key practice that forms the core of diplomatic culture in Latin America. It can be defined as a loose form of (regional) international organization based on consensus-seeking and peaceful settlement of disputes. Its normative instrumental follows predictable lines, namely *uti possidetis*, non-aggression, non-intervention and international arbitration.

In terms of an English school perspective, *concertación* is an institution that can be placed somewhere between diplomacy and great power management. *Concertación* resembles great power management as it is based on the active role played by the most powerful states in the region, and thus it is premised on a sense of hierarchy. But *concertación* comes closer to diplomacy inasmuch it downplays the power-political dimension and enhances the more formal, legal institutional arrangements.

As an institution, *concertación* does not advocate the need for transcending sovereignty and the nation-state nor does it rely on a strong state nationalism. It has been, and continues to be, one of the most significant mechanisms for conducting interstate conflicts within a framework of settled rules. The concept and practice of *concertación* depicts Latin America as *Gemeinschaft*, a continental community, or a *Patria Grande*, sharing a language, a religion and a homogeneous cultural trait. The underlying assumption in this narrative is that a region possessing a thick diplomatic culture enjoys a backdrop of trust, shared ideas and linguistic understandings that provides the cement to avoid escalation and allows more space for prudence and pragmatism. Arie Kacowicz (2005, p. 63) examines how *concertación* has limited the recourse to interstate war and explains ‘the relatively peaceful settlement of disputes that has characterized the international relations of the region, especially in South America, since 1883’.

Concertación is the result of three longstanding regional patterns. Firstly, there is the challenge posed by the cohabitation with the United States (Paradiso and Luna Pont, 2003). The distinctive feature of this coexistence has been ‘the failure of regional balancing’ in the Western Hemisphere (Jones, 2008, p. 85) and thus the ascendancy of the United States to a regional and global preeminence. Unipolarity, coupled with contrasting normative standpoints regarding sovereignty and individual rights (Grandin, 2012) left the permanent need on the side of South America to somehow constrain US inroads in the region. *Concertación* thus offered a venue to collectively convey Latin American interests at the different hemispheric/regional gatherings. This tradition started with the Congress of Panamá, a Simón Bolívar’s initiative in 1826, and followed a long road through diplomatic initiatives at Contadora, Esquipulas and Rio to end up regional and domestic conflicts. *Concertación* is evidenced today in its ‘hard’ standpoint via ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) in its ‘soft’ version via UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) and in its newer, still very much informal initiative, that of the CELAC (Latin American and Caribbean Community). These three initiatives can be seen as clear examples of ‘institutional balancing’ as understood by He (2015) yet the target state is not Brazil but the United States.

Secondly is the challenge of modernization and development. Latin America’s path towards modernity has been plagued by contradictions and ambiguities and has exhibited, and continues to exhibit, a social and temporal heterogeneity. Yet beyond these complexities in the social and political domains, the most fundamental challenge for Latin America has been overcoming domestic and international



obstacles that impede development and emancipation. Simply put, the central stake in Latin America continues to be development, not power or interstate security. Therefore, the uneven development of globalized capitalism poses a more constraining dimension than the decentralized anarchic structure of international politics. As a result, the language of 'high politics' is typically understood through the grammar of development. Peripheral development, therefore, made of *concertación* an instrument for cooperation among South American states in the area of trade and investment. Yes, *concertación* in the economic domain exhibits a substantial gap between ideas of unity and limited achievements. As Gian Luca Gardini (2011, p. 250) asserts, 'Latin America is divided between a rhetorical, almost theatrical, support for continental solidarity and integration and a strong, practical preference for national sovereignty and interest, accompanied by a traditional aversion to supra-nationality'. Yet the challenge is not to answer why Latin American regional integration is so fragile but to explain its inextinguishable strength or, as Andrés Malamud aptly framed it, it is 'neither failure nor success: inconsequential endurance is what theory ought to explain' (2010, p. 643).

And thirdly, is the legalist tradition. Legalism in South America was fundamental in the construction of a regional society because it came to represent the very idea and practice of Western civilization. Arnulf Becker Lorca (2006, p. 284) affirms that international law 'played an important role [...] in laying down one of the languages through which Latin Americans have discussed and contested their identity, politics, and place in the international world'. International law has played, and continues to play, a central role in structuring international relations and giving meaning to the conflict of political interests among states. International law systematically provided *concertación* with a language and a mechanism for the application of political reasoning to problems of regional order and conflict. As a result, and in comparative terms, 'Latin America sustains a world record of adjudication and arbitration' (Kacowicz, 2004, p. 199). 'Disagreements', says Isacson (2011, p. 63), 'almost never come close to violence. In the worst cases, they end up in the Hague'. Moreover, some of today's international norms are Latin American contributions: *uti possidetis*; the ban of conquest as a valid mode of territorial possession; the limitation to the exercise of diplomatic protection in favor of foreigners (Calvo Doctrine); the prohibition of foreign intervention for collecting debts (Drago Doctrine); diplomatic asylum, the ruling out of colonialism and the extension of sovereign rights for coastal states.

In sum, South America is a regional society in which the logic of power, the logic of capitalism and the logic of normative dialogue have all converged in the institution of *concertación*. This interpretation of *concertación*, contentious and contestable as it probably is, put forward three important issues in our understanding of South American international society. Firstly, *concertación* is not the result of a superficial, almost theatrical sentimentalism inspired by *la hermandad latinoamericana* (or Latin American brotherhood). *Concertación* is in part the result of material systemic

pressures, namely US hegemony and globalized capitalism. Secondly, *concertación* is also the result of a diplomatic culture firmly anchored in the formalist, legalist tradition inherited from Spain and Portugal. And thirdly, *concertación* is the way South America has attempted to restrain US influence; to further economic integration and to solve regional conflicts through peaceful means. These three dimensions have been pervasive all the way down in South American international relations and have shaped Brazil's rise.

Brazil's Rise in a Concerted South America

For much of its modern history, Brazil has shown a distinct diplomatic tradition made up of institutions, ideas and patterns of behavior. Andrew Hurrell (2004, p. 7) refers to Brazil's 'unspoken assumptions' about its conduct of foreign policy, namely the idea of Brazil as 'geopolitically satisfied country'; the idea of Brazil as having a 'vocation for peaceful conflict resolution' and, finally, the idea of Brazil as a 'natural mediator'. Celso Lafer (2000, p. 64) points to a 'constructive moderation' and a 'Grotius-inspired' understanding of international affairs. Brazil is reluctant to create bilateral tensions with any regional third party and prefers to engage in consensus-based arrangements to mitigate conflict and instability. In sum, Brazil has shown, and continues to show, a tradition of 'non-belligerence, negotiated solutions, multilateralism and a focus on legal standings' (Dauvergne and Farias, 2012, p. 906).

Secondly, there is the quest for autonomy and Brazil's consistent efforts to enhance its independence. A particular dialogue between realism and dependence theory yielded a blend of nationalism and developmentalism which informed Brazil's foreign policy for many decades and served as the intellectual support for carving out autonomous policies across the board. Vigevani and Cepaluni (2007) have recently sorted out this tradition by conceptualizing three strategies, namely autonomy through 'distance' (explaining mainly the military period up to the 80s), 'participation' (accounting for Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration) and 'diversification' (describing Lula da Silva's years). In all these strategies, US-Brazil relations stand out as a problematic. On the one hand, Brazil sought to enhance its autonomy from the Western core, including the United States, as a way of promoting its national interests. On the other hand, however, Brazil looked towards the United States in search for recognition, investment and technology transfer. Typically, Brazil-US relations have 'resulted in frustrations on both sides' and so the key words for understanding this relations have been 'prudent coexistence', 'possible collaboration', and 'minimal collision' (Soares de Lima and Hirst, 2006, p. 33).

And thirdly is the quest for development. Given Brazil's positive geopolitical condition, the country opened up the possibility for developing 'an ideology and practice of modernization and national development that was largely inner-directed,



responding to domestic failures and aimed at integrating national territory, at upholding domestic order, and at promoting economic development' (Hurrell, 2007, p. 100). After the II World War, Brazilian elites started to see Brazil's dependent development as essentially a function of the international system. Since then, the ideology of national autonomy and development has been constitutive of Brazil's understandings of its place in the world. As Soares de Lima and Hirst (2006, p. 22) claim, foreign policy in Brazil 'has always had a strongly developmentalist component'. This ideology played, and continues to play, the function of a narrative drawing together, albeit uncomfortably, Left and Right wings.

When putting these continuities together, it becomes apparent how Brazil's diplomatic tradition reflects many of the norms and institutions present in the region. Cohabitation with the United States has been a constant challenge for Brazil and the policy dilemmas between alignment and soft-balancing have been translated in Brazil as a recurrent tension between 'Americanism' and 'Globalism' (Pinheiro, 2004). Brazil has consistently been conscious of its peripheral location and the need to make of foreign policy an instrument for national development. Brazil has also embraced the norms of *concertación* and legalism, developing an *ethos* 'to deal with both conflict and cooperation by means of diplomacy and the rule of law' (Lafer, 2000, p. 94). It has consistently avoided the display of hegemonic pretensions in the region and has opted for alternative collective power management. Yes, it also played power politics, mainly with Argentina. But hatred and dire war have been typically excluded from the policy menu.

In sum, Brazil's rise should be understood within the broader canvass of South American society and in terms of Brazil's own longstanding diplomatic culture. Both dimensions, which are inextricably intertwined, work against hegemony and favor a more concerted regional order. These observations, as obvious as they may seem, have received scant attention in the literature on Brazil's foreign policy. Simply put, my argument is that when Brazil acts multilaterally; when Itamaraty displays its soft power; when it abides by the law; when it quests for development; when it supports regional integration, and when it refrains from taking the moral high ground, it is not acting as any other rising state would act in other regions, nor it reveals a Brazil-style exceptionalism. Instead, Brazil's foreign policy reflects a longstanding diplomatic culture that has so much characterized South America.

Conclusion: Resisting Facile Categorizations

The main argument of this article has been built upon a set of interrelated claims. Firstly, it examined Brazil's rise and it suggested that it has been, and will continue to be, plagued by dilemmas and tensions. My only point to add here is simply that Brazil's continued rise will make more apparent its own dilemmas on how to accommodate order and justice in South America.

Secondly, it analyzed Brazil's standing in South America and observed that Brazil has been too self-interested to be followed and too weak to threaten its neighbors. Andrés Malamud (2011) depicts Brazil as 'a leader without followers' and Sean Burges (2015) refers to a 'quiet crisis for Brazilian leadership in South America'. Yet it might be the case that Brazil's underperformance is not unique. Alden and Schoeman (2015) refer to South Africa's weak record in effective leadership, something also hinted by Blarel and Ebert (2015) about India's contested hegemony. Simply put, regional powers might share a degree of unrealized regional hegemony (Prys, 2010).

Thirdly, it suggested that balance of power and hegemony are overrated institutions both in diplomatic and academic circles and that an English school perspective opens up the possibility for understanding the region through the complex interplay between international law, diplomacy and great power management which converge on the idea and practice of *concertación*. From an IR perspective, South American regional society goes beyond power politics yet it stops short of institutionalized cooperation. Yes, there are subtle strategic rivalries working on, but a purely realist world is not active today in South America. Governments in South America conduct their foreign policy as if the most serious long-term threat they face is not domination by an aspiring regional hegemon but domestic failure and external marginalization. Simply put, Latin America's diplomatic culture contains much more than the realists would admit and much less than the liberals would prefer.

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