



Brazilian Foreign Policy in the Context of Global Climate Norms

MARCO A. VIEIRA

University of Birmingham

This article is an enquiry into Brazil's evolving responses to global climate change norms. Following an overview of the evolution of international normative frameworks of climate change governance, I examine the relationship between some of these international norms and domestic environmental politics in Brazil. Internationally, the analysis focuses on the North/South political debate about climate change and its role in shaping understandings about the impact and responses to global warming. Domestically, I explore the evolving relationship between state and private actors in the decision-making process. I argue that Brazil's official position on climate change negotiations is currently influenced by a nationalist/developmental approach based on the particular worldview of the dominant faction within the foreign ministry and backed up by private groups, powerful sectors in the military establishment, key ministries, and the presidency. Yet, this worldview has been increasingly undermined/permeated by other state and nonstate actors, who are more closely aligned with the environmental concerns of international stakeholders. The ensuing domestic conflict has important implications for the legitimacy and coherence of the Brazilian position in international climate change negotiations.

The growing concentration of green house gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere has reached a point whereby it is rapidly changing the Earth's climate systems, with potentially devastating consequences for the future. On its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) unequivocally shows that the current global atmospheric concentration of GHGs has been historically induced by human activity in developed nations since the outset of the industrial era (IPCC 2007a:37). However, climate change will have a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty in developing nations, which did the least to contribute to the global problem. The IPCC predicts that "the effects of climate change are expected to be greatest in developing countries in terms of loss of life and relative effects on investment and economy" (IPCC 2001:8). If not dealt with immediately, climate change is expected to throw an additional 80–120 million people at risk of hunger due to its impact on food production; 70–80% of these will be in the African continent alone. Recurring incidence of floods and droughts is already significant in many parts of Africa (IPCC 2007b:434). In 2009, unprecedented prolonged droughts in East Africa left millions of people dangerously dependent on UN's food aid. Similarly, developing countries in Asia, Latin American, and the Caribbean will have to contend with the devastating effects of changing rain patterns, extreme weather, and rising sea levels.

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Since its inception in December 1990, when the UN General Assembly set up the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in charge of preparing a Framework Convention on Climate Change, the global governance of climate change has been informed by an enduring North/South divide.¹ Formally established in 1992, at the UN Conference on Development and the Environment, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) makes clear the responsibility of developed nations to take the lead in reducing GHGs emissions, given their greater contribution to global warming. It is also based on the understanding that developing nations should not be prevented to promote socioeconomic development by restrictive international commitments on emissions (UNFCCC 1992). Yet, the United States, Japan, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and other industrialized nations argue that large developing countries should assume commitments on emissions reduction, given their present patterns of rapid economic growth.

Simply put, developing states argue that their developed counterparts owe a historical environmental debt to the international community and that they should take responsibility in leading and financing the fight against global climate change. They also argue that developed nations should provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to the impact of global warming. Industrialized nations, on the other hand, are divided into two groups: The first one, led by the EU, have already achieved some palpable progress in reducing GHGs emissions and are in favor of establishing aggressive binding targets to reduce GHGs pollution in 20–30% by 2020; the second group of developed nations, led by the United States, are unwilling to accept targets that would slow down their economic growth without similar commitments by rapidly growing developing nations. They claim that some developing countries, such as China, India, and Brazil, which are key players in climate change negotiations, barely fit in the category of poor nations and are also large emitters of GHGs (Roberts and Parks 2007).²

Brazil has played a fundamental and unique role in the negotiation process. If, on the one hand, it can stand out as the only example of a fast-growing developing country that mostly uses clean and renewable technologies to fuel its economic growth, on the other, the inability of consecutive governments to halt the deforestation of the Amazon region has been a source of harsh criticism by international environmental activists. Unlike other emerging economies such as China and India, which rely heavily on coal-burning power plants to sustain their energy consumption, Brazil has an energy matrix mostly based on renewable sources, such as hydropower and biomass.³ The country is also home of 60% of the Amazon rain forest, which represents almost half of the planet's remaining rain forests. The Amazon region supplies 20% of the planet's oxygen and 1/5 of its fresh water. In this sense, the forest provides an essential environmental service through continuously capturing carbon dioxide (CO₂) and transforming it into oxygen (Goulding, Bartthem, and Ferreira 2003).

Brazil shares around 4% of the global carbon emissions. The burning of the Amazon for land use is the main source of Brazil's emissions of green house

¹ Throughout this article, the terms “developing,” “South,” and “Third World” are used interchangeably. Likewise, “developed,” “industrialized,” and “North” refer mostly to Western Europe and the United States. This division is ideological/political rather than geographical, reflecting conflicting positions and worldviews between post-colonial developing states and industrialized Western powers on climate negotiations.

² In fact, research suggests that China has already overtaken the United States as the world's largest CO₂ emitter. For more on this, see “China Overtakes the US as World's Biggest CO₂ Emitter”. *Guardian* (June 19, 2007).

³ It is estimated that in 2006 about 38.4% of Brazil's energy came from fossil fuels, 15% from hydropower, 13% from sugarcane ethanol, 9.1% from gas, 6.4% from coal, and the remaining from other renewable energy sources. Brazil is the second largest producer of hydroelectricity worldwide after Canada. It originates something as 77% of the country's overall electricity consumption (International Energy Agency 2006).

gases (GHGs).⁴ Although deforestation is still extremely large in the Brazilian Amazon, it is consistently decreasing since a peak in 2004.⁵ The success of any Brazilian attempt to reduce its share of global GHGs emissions will largely depend on its ability to get Amazon's deforestation under control. It is not an easy task though. In Brazil, the issue of how to preserve this environmental treasury is wrapped in intense domestic political debate and conflicting economic claims over land use and rights. Moreover, the international portrayal of the Amazon as an essential part of the global environmental commons⁶ has generated heated nationalistic reaction by consecutive Brazilian governments.

The aim of this article is to shed light on the interplay between international and domestic incentives and constraints while shaping Brazilian evolving role on global climate governance. It begins by setting out the conceptual and theoretical framework that will guide the empirical analysis. After this, I look at the establishment of the international climate normative framework. The third part of this paper examines the changing dynamic of environmental politics in Brazil and its interaction with the international normative structures established to deal with global climate change. Finally, in the conclusions, I briefly discuss Brazilian policy choices and the challenges to developing nations in the current negotiations to replace the expiring Kyoto protocol.

Concepts and Theory

This section outlines (and briefly discusses) the conceptual and theoretical framework that will guide this article's empirical analysis. The argument draws on a variant of social constructivism that focuses on the norms of international society and the manners in which they influence/shape the identities and interests of states (Finnemore 1996). I adopt a definition of "international (climate) norms" as a comprehensive set of policy prescriptions, rules, and principles formally accepted by states in their collective effort to fight global climate change. As a way to avoid intangible definitional complexities, I opt for a minimalist conceptualization of norm in terms of an internationally agreed prescriptive framework promoted with the help of states, international organizations, and transnational advocacy networks. I accept Krasner's (1982:186) definition of norm as "standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations." This is slightly different from rules that comprise the application of norms to particular situations. As Kratochwil (1984:687) notes, "the regime literature emphasizes this important difference in arguing that rules deal with specific problems while norms are more general prescriptions." Since climate change norms present characteristics of both, the subsequent discussion conveys in a single definition the above understandings of norms and rules.⁷ Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:888) argued that international norms develop in a three-stage process or "life cycle":

⁴ According to Brazil's Initial National Communication to the UNFCCC of November 2004, deforestation accounts for about 61% of Brazil's total emissions while agriculture contributes 19% (Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology 2004).

⁵ Data released by the Brazilian government show a reduction in deforestation from an annual average of 27,000 square kms in 2000–2004 to 7,008 square kms in 2009 (Brazilian Ministry of the Environment 2010).

⁶ A global common represents a natural endowment of global relevance that can either cover the entire planet (such as in the case of climate) or be circumscribed to the national jurisdiction of states but with cross-border externalities. For more on this, see Ostrom (1990).

⁷ The concept of "regime" is analytically more inclusive than the concept of norm. For example, Krasner (1982:186) provides a definition of international regime which encompasses a "set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations."

- In the first stage, a new norm is created as the result of the work of “norm entrepreneurs” with strong views about appropriate behavior in a particular issue-area. According to these authors, “norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even create issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatises them” (1998:897).
- In the second stage, a “critical mass of states” (1998:901) is persuaded to adopt the new norm.
- In the third and final stage, the norm becomes institutionalized within international organizations as the “only game in town,” which makes its general acceptance almost uncontested.

The life cycle model helps to explain how international climate change norms first emerged and later became institutionalized in the form of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, which is the formal international regime accepted by a large number of relevant states. I argued that the final stage of the life cycle, whereby the norm becomes widely accepted, has not been achieved due to ongoing dissent between developing and developed states on how to share responsibility and act upon the global warming problem. Although the norm set out in Kyoto of “common but differentiated responsibilities” has become a milestone for developing states in multilateral negotiations, it has not been translated into widely accepted binding agreements. The analytical focus is on two interconnected normative components of the climate regime with a resonance in Brazil’s environmental politics: (i) The first one concerns the North/South divide on the norm of “common but differentiated responsibilities” and (ii) the second relates to multilateral debates over types of financial incentives to conserve carbon stocks in forests and nationally appropriate forest preservation actions.

I argue in this article that, to unveil the complexities involved in current attempts to reinvigorate norms in the area of climate governance, it is important to assess the particular positions of key developing states which either enable or constrain the “cascading” of international climate norms. Finnemore’s and Sikkink’s model implies that the creation and promotion of international norms is an exclusive prerogative of actors who have already been socialized within Western normative frameworks and that these actors ultimately have the moral authority to promote standards of good international behavior. However, in the case of climate change, Western powers are considered the main perpetrators of the planet’s environmental degradation and resulting climate change. This is reflected, for example, on Northern states’ attempts to pressure forest-rich developing nations to tackle deforestation when forestry resources in many highly industrialized countries have already been irreversibly depleted. In this sense, the moral high ground belongs to developing nations, which still retain valuable natural resource endowments and are only now moving toward fast industrialization (Williams 1993). These states’ proactive stance in global climate change negotiations can have the effect of changing the “rules of the game” according to their pre-defined interests and particular moral and ideological commitments. In this sense, it is my claim that the establishment of an authoritative negotiating position, fully backed by domestic stakeholders, is a central element in building Brazil’s leadership role in multilateral climate talks.

The model also assumes developing countries as passive recipients of norms who will eventually move toward “positive change.” The Brazilian case shows that, notwithstanding the intensifying pressure of domestic and transnational movements, successive governments managed to resist change by maintaining a similar direction on their climate change policies. However, since the 12th Conference of Parties in 2006, when Brazil deviated from its traditional view and

suggested the creation of a global fund to tackle deforestation, the Brazilian government has been promoting a gradual change in the Brazilian negotiating position with clear implications in terms of domestic environmental policy (Viola 2009). As shown later, this process reveals an interesting example of “norm negotiation” whereby Brazil’s traditional resistance to climate norms has been increasingly contested by domestic environmental actors and their international allies leading to compromise and the resulting reformulation of the country’s position. Yet, at the same time, the Brazilian government has managed to sustain and even reinforce Brazil’s political/normative alliance with the G77 bloc of developing countries largely due to the influence of the “third worldist” ideology traditionally underpinning Brazil’s position in climate negotiations.

The current constructivist literature on norms’ creation and diffusion neglects the particular normative dynamics of developing countries in handling attempts by international norm entrepreneurs to penetrate these states’ domestic decision-making structures (Acharya 2011). Similarly, the unitary logic of most IR theories misses the empirical ground in which human decision makers act both singly and collectively. In this regard, the “actor-specific focus” (Hudson 2005:1) of foreign policy analysis (FPA) offers an interesting conceptual complement to structural IR perspectives, including social constructivism, in terms of its focus on human and institutional agency (Hudson 2005).

The following empirical analysis offers a case study from the developing world that precisely highlights the institutional practice of norm negotiation, contestation, and feedback. The examination of climate change politics in Brazil provides an interesting example of intergovernmental (bureaucratic) politics (Allison and Zelikow 1999), as a source of explanation for environmental policy inconsistencies, and the role of ideology in shaping the worldviews of key individuals and foreign policy institutions. The combination of analytical tools from social constructivism and FPA helps to shed light on the precise location of, and interaction between, domestic political actors and the resulting international impact of Brazil’s negotiating position in multilateral climate debates. In a sort of simultaneous and interacting “two-level games logics” (Putnam 1988), the Brazilian climate policy has evolved to the current negotiating position, expressed in December 2011, during the global climate conference in Durban, where for the first time ever the Brazilian negotiators were willing to accept legally binding reduction targets yet ingeniously (and, to some extent, contradictorily) avoiding to put at risk Brazil’s “normative alliance” with other emerging economic powers from the developing world. The outcome was an incipient agreement that brings together developing and developed nations into a common framework which is aimed at eventually replacing the Kyoto protocol along the lines of equal treatment rather than differentiated responsibilities for large emitters.

The Contested “Life Cycle” of Global Climate Change Norms

The inclusion of the environment in processes of international norm creation should be understood in the broader context of an increasingly complex and interdependent global economic system, especially from the last decades of the twentieth century. On the back of the historically unprecedented expansion of market-oriented capitalism, including in traditionally agrarian and isolated economies such as China and India, the over-exploitation of the planet’s natural resources and the potentially devastating impact of uncontrolled environmental degradation exposed the urgent need for comprehensive rules to manage the global commons. Environmental issues have progressively become a relevant dimension of international politics since they first emerged as a global concern in the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (Carter

2010:52). In fact, the emergence, evolution, and consolidation of multilateral environmental principles and norms can be traced back to a number of major UN conferences.

This section will examine the negotiation process that eventually led to the establishment of the Kyoto protocol in 1997, which is the formal regime setting mandatory yet differential obligation on governments to reach targets for GHGs reduction (O’neill 2009:79). It focuses on the North/South deadlock around the idea of “historical responsibility” as a defining feature of global climate negotiations. The subsequent analysis also looks into the particular issue of multilateral policy approaches to deforestation and degradation (known as REDD+), which have become prominent since the Bali Action Plan of 2007, and had a direct impact on Brazil’s policy initiatives and evolving international positions.

The United Nations Conference on Human Environment, held in Sweden from June 5 to 16, 1972, was the first high-profile international meeting organized by the UN to address the impact of economic development on the planet’s environment. This conference defined the initial set of guidelines, principles, and institutional structures for multilateral action on environmental issues. The adoption of the Stockholm Action Plan and the subsequent creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were the most important results of the meeting. In Stockholm, the terms of the North/South debate, which defined global environmental negotiations in subsequent decades, were firmly established. The key topics in the agenda of negotiations were influenced by Northern states’ concerns with demographic growth in the Third World, pollution and the management and access to natural resources. Prior to the 1972 Conference, international environmental norms were clearly dominated by developed states’ demands, and they did not really address the interconnection between natural conservationism and the Southern states’ concerns with distributive justice and economic equality.⁸

The Brazilian position in Stockholm, shared by the G77 bloc of developing states, was that any foreign attempt to use international environmental negotiations to hinder national development projects was unacceptable. Instead, developing states claimed that environmental protection could not be divorced from economic development. They blamed developed nations for the most serious global environmental problems and vigorously defended their sovereignty over natural resources (Lago 2006). These initial dynamics of norm contestation happened in the backdrop of a growing Third World activism during the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the popularity of Non-Aligned principles and the influence of dependency theory in the political economy of developing countries.⁹ In the mid-1970s, the North/South conflict gained further impetus with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (Alden et al. 2010).

Twenty years after Stockholm, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, raised the concept of “sustainable development” to the forefront of the international environmental agenda. The release of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Report) two years prior to Rio, which coined the sustainable development concept, strengthened the view that developing states should receive substantial financial and technological support to achieve the goals of economic development with environmental sustainability. After Rio, the interdependence between economic/social

⁸ In the early 1970s, The Club of Rome raised public attention to the issue of demographic growth in the developing world and the impact of economic growth on the planet’s resources in two influential reports: “The Club of Rome Project on the Predicament of Mankind” (1971) and “The Limits of Growth” (1972).

⁹ For more on this, see Alden, Morphet and Vieira (2010).

development and environmental quality became widely accepted and formally embedded in the institutional/normative framework that prescribes the rules of appropriate behavior in global environmental issues.¹⁰ The Summit also adopted the UNFCCC which was signed at the time by 166 nations (currently 194 states are signatories). The conference was marked by the proactive role of developing nations who set forth the idea that the global degradation of the environmental commons was first and foremost the responsibility of wealthy countries. Their better articulated position favored the acceptance of the norm of “common but differentiated responsibilities,” which implied mandatory GHGs emission cuts by industrial nations.

During the Rio Conference, the US delegation, under the leadership of George Bush Senior, strongly resisted attempts to include mandatory emission targets for developed nations. Bush went on to unequivocally state that “the American way of life was not negotiable.” From 1995, international discussions seemed to lean more clearly toward developing countries’ claims. The then US president Bill Clinton accepted that developed nations would have to set targets for reducing carbon emissions. However, he was unfalteringly rebuffed by the US Congress which voted unanimously against the proposal.

Ten years after the Rio Summit, George W. Bush reiterated the US’ previous negotiating position. Like his father, he rejected any deal that would impose legally binding restrictions on carbon emissions (Price 2010). In spite of US opposition and its eventual withdrawal from the Kyoto protocol in 2001, the Southern-promoted principle of differential obligations was agreed in the aftermath of Kyoto’s third Conference of Parties (COP-3) in 1997. The Kyoto protocol sets clear emission reduction targets for industrialized nations (Annex 1), but excluded least developed and developing countries (Non-Annex 1). It remains in force until 2012.

The Brazilian government has consistently resisted attempts to establish international mechanisms that provide Annex 1 states with carbon credits or rights to emission for “avoided deforestation (AD)” in forest-rich countries (Person and Azar 2004:iii; Pesket et al. 2006). According to the Brazilian view, these mechanisms entail a transfer of responsibility for emissions reduction to developing nations and they represent an unduly interference in sovereignty through international oversight, the external setting of standards, and monitoring of activities (Viola 2004). AD has not been included as an acceptable activity under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which is defined in article 12 of the Kyoto protocol as an instrument that assists Annex 1 countries to meet their emission reduction targets by implementing emission reduction projects in developing countries (UNFCCC 2011). This position contrasts with that of other countries with large forestry resources, like the USA, Canada, Russia, Australia, and some of Brazil’s neighbors in Latin America, namely Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru, which have campaigned for the inclusion of AD as part of CDM-funded activities (Viola 2009:34).

The exclusion from the Kyoto agreement of market initiatives for reducing deforestation in Non-Annex 1 countries can be considered another important diplomatic “victory” from the perspective of Brazilian negotiators. Yet, in COP-15 (2008) and COP-16 (2009) held in Copenhagen and Cancun, respectively, developing countries have actively engaged in negotiations to implement a credit market mechanism, similar to the CDM, aimed at reducing emissions from forest loss and degradation (REDD+). It draws on the REDD agreement reached during COP-14 (2007) in Bali. In the Durban meeting of December 2011, although Brazil vigorously pushed for the establishment of an international fund mostly

¹⁰ March and Olsen (2004:3) invoked a “logic of appropriateness” to develop a social constructivist explanation of human action as driven by norms that are considered “natural, rightful, expected, and legitimate.”

based on donations, the issue of long-term financing of REDD+ schemes was still unresolved (Centre for International Forestry Research 2011).

As seen next, the decision to exclude AD from Kyoto has been the source of much controversy and political infighting in Brazil, particularly between the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Relations, and a clear illustration of the normative/ideological divide in Brazilian environmental politics. Despite Brazil's more accommodating stance on deforestation since 2006, when the government for the first time declared its disposition to discuss emissions from deforestation, Brazilian negotiators maintained their opposition to carbon markets for forests until the Copenhagen meeting of 2009, when the administration of Lula Da Silva (from now on Lula) seemed to finally distance itself from the Foreign Ministry's entrenched position (Hochsteller and Viola 2011:12).

In the most recent major UNFCCC conference held in Durban in December 2011, industrialized nations actively engaged in negotiations with the world's largest developing economies to find a replacement for the now waning Kyoto protocol. These meetings have achieved some palpable but still insufficient results. The BASIC group of emerging nations (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) have persistently argued that their per capita emissions of green house gases (GHGs) are relatively low in comparison with developed nations and that their contributions to global emissions' reduction should be voluntary and not hinder their central priority of promoting economic development (Giddens 2009:221). As negotiations proceeded, there was growing pressure on emerging economies to accept mandatory targets and immediately initiate strategies to reduce GHGs emissions. In the language proposed by the Brazilian delegation,¹¹ a last-minute agreement was signed including all 196 signatories, which sets out a negotiation pathway to Kyoto's eventual replacement. The drafting of the new legally binding document should be completed in 2015 and ratified by all participants by 2020. It will include developed and developing countries, which is a major change from the previous Annex 1 and Non-Annex 1 split of the Kyoto protocol.¹²

This section addressed the evolving political tensions between North and South states in shaping global environmental norms. It showed that international negotiation dynamics on climate change norms have been permeated from the outset by conflicting moral/ideological arguments between developed and developing nations. In this respect, the widely acceptance, institutionalization, and further cascading of the norm of "common but differentiated responsibilities," with clear and mandatory GHGs reduction targets for developed nations, can be seen as a reflection of Southern states' alleged moral authority on climate negotiations. This disproves theoretical presuppositions in the social constructivist literature on international norms which assumes the moral/normative advantage point of Western actors in creating and promoting norms of good behavior in international relations.¹³ After Durban, the Southern principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" seems to have moved toward a new stage of normative accommodation to the demands of Northern powers. In this case, however, political and coordinated pressure from other developing nations facing major existential threat from climate change, particularly the African Group and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), played a fundamental role in pushing the BASIC countries to accept a more comprehensive and legally binding agreement to replace Kyoto. It was also the result of emerging economies', like

¹¹ "Solucao brasileira 'salva' reuniao do clima do fracasso". *BBC Brasil*. http://www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/noticias/2011/12/111211_cop17_negociacoes_brasil_eric_rw.shtml (Accessed November 30, 2011).

¹² "Why Durban is different to climate change agreements of the past". *Guardian* (December 11, 2011).

¹³ The volume edited by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999) *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, is a seminal example of the centrality given by social constructivist authors to Western normative frameworks in promoting normative change in Third World States. For more on this, see also Acharya (2011).

Brazil and China, more active and successful implementation of environmental policies with an impact on climate change. This provided these governments with greater assurance (and international self-confidence) that they will be able to significantly reduce their GHGs emissions in line with globally accepted targets.

The following discussion looks into domestic factors that explain Brazil's evolving position on global environmental negotiations. It argues that Brazil's adaptation to (acceptance of) international prescriptions, particularly with regard to controlling deforestation, has been slow and only incrementally adopted due to the ubiquitous and powerful resistance of domestic stakeholders, such as cattle ranchers, the agro-industry, politicians, and high-ranked civil servants, especially in the foreign policy establishment. The unresolved tension between the so-called environmental and developmental camps still characterizes domestic climate/environmental politics in Brazil today. The article concludes with the analysis of the revitalization of the nationalist/developmental line since Lula came to power in 2003, yet mitigated by the implementation of important changes in climate policy, particularly in the months prior to the Copenhagen meeting.

Brazilian Responses to Global Climate Change Norms: The Politics of Resistance and Adaptation

The Brazilian government has been a key player in multilateral climate change debates (Johnson 2001:178). Its positions and interests in the negotiation process have been shaped by developmental, ideological, and security considerations. These relate to the country's growing energy sector, economic and geopolitical concerns in the Amazon region, and the principles of Third Worldism. Brasilia has been particularly interested in four interrelated areas of international climate change discussions:

- The first one, which is shared by other leading developing nations, concerns the question of who should reduce GHGs by how much and within what time frame;
- The second issue deals with the creation of effective global governance mechanisms that will concede to developed nations some flexibility in meeting their emissions targets by providing technical and financial support to developing nations;
- The third area concerns the problem of deforestation and land use, which is by far Brazil's large source of GHGs emissions.
- Finally, the Brazilian government has been especially concerned with growing foreign activism in the Amazon region and the implications it could have on territorial and resource control.

Brazil has historically assumed a defensive position in environmental debates. The official view of the Brazilian government under the military regime (1964–1985) was that environmental protection should not get into the way of achieving the goal of rapid economic development (Kasa 1995). The ideas of dependency theory, which stressed the peripheral position of Southern states and the dominant position of core Northern nations, infused the foreign policy thinking of the foreign ministry (known as Itamaraty) during this period. This view was further reinforced by strong nationalist values of the military establishment and its emphasis on material power and diplomatic pragmatism (Hurrell 2010:131).

The end of the military dictatorship combined with the resurgence of environmental concerns in the post-Cold War global agenda promoted a significant shift on domestic perceptions about how to engage with international partners in global negotiations. The traditional worldview of the Brazilian government was also mitigated by a more inclusive political system. As a result of democratization,

policymakers became more sensitive to both sub-state and international actors and their efforts to influence decision making on environmental policies (Barbosa 2000). The transition to democratic rule led to a power shift within the Brazilian foreign policy establishment with the rising influence of previously excluded political actors who favor international engagement on environmental affairs (Viola 1997). The further consolidation of Brazilian democracy allied with a more active and better organized civil society led to intense domestic political debate resulting in advances in the programmatic agenda of environmental groups. Similarly, growing transnational pressures by state and nonstate actors have also contributed to important compromises by Lula's administration. In this respect, domestic activist groups connected with the global environment movement played a critical role in highlighting the environmental problems in Brazil and influencing the change in domestic environmental policy. The Brazilian office of the c (WWF), the Greenpeace, and the local green NGO, Amazonia Brasileira, are just a few examples of nonstate actors that became more effective after democratization in targeting, lobbying, publicizing, and promoting environmental issues in the Brazilian domestic system. For example, indigenous communities living in remote forest areas, who are affected by large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the construction of dams for hydroelectric power plants, have little capacity to access domestic channels. In such cases, green NGOs have played a pivotal role in representing and advancing the political agendas of these communities in Brasilia and abroad.

Yet, the twin processes of improved multilateral cooperation in environmental issues after the end of Cold war and the democratization of Brazil's domestic system were not sufficient conditions to promote a radical rupture with traditional diplomatic worldviews that feared growing foreign involvement in the Amazon region. The paradigmatic resilience of deep-rooted diplomatic ideas is a particularly important feature of how Brazil's foreign policy objectives have been constructed and institutionalized.¹⁴

During the Kyoto negotiations, Brazil displayed a strategy that combined aspects of its traditional foreign policy of assertive defence of sovereignty and the right to develop, especially with regard to deforestation in the Amazon region, with a liberal orientation that promoted collective governance mechanisms to effectively enhance environmental sustainability. Despite the more receptive domestic environment to international liberal norms, the Brazilian government has consistently opposed the view that developing countries should be included in emissions reduction. In 1997, during a regional conference of Amazon states held in preparation to Kyoto, the then president Fernando Henrique Cardoso reiterated the view that Brazil should not commit to emission targets until developed nations have taken concrete steps to tackle their own emissions. On his words:

We are making efforts to preserve the environment and promote sustainability because we are aware of the importance of the Amazon for us and for the world. Now, the developed countries must assume their share of responsibility and not ask us to pay for the destruction they have caused. (Quoted in Johnson 2001:191–192)

In July 1999, Cardoso established the Inter-ministerial Commission on Climate Change (CIMGC in Portuguese) with the mission of developing an agreed position among the various domestic stakeholders, including civil society representatives, "with a view to meeting Brazil's commitments under the UNFCCC" (Friberg 2009:399). It was chaired by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST), which had previously played the coordination role on issues related to

¹⁴ For more on the notion of "paradigmatic resilience" in Brazilian foreign policy, see Vieira (2001).

the newly created CDM. It worked in close association with the Itamaraty, which was the national focal point for the UNFCCC and historically the leading institution representing the Brazilian government in international environmental negotiations. As it was conventionally the case in the Brazilian decision-making process, the Ministry of the Environment (ME) was conspicuously absent in sharing responsibility for the CIMGC (Friberg 2009:399).

The CIMGC was the first government agency created to solely focus on building the Brazilian negotiating position on international climate change negotiations. However, tensions between different Ministries hampered its effective functioning (Viola 2009). The key source of conflict was Itamaraty's opposition to the inclusion in the CDM's provisions of tradable carbon credits to tackle deforestation. Itamaraty's main concern was the involvement of private (domestic and international) actors in using their financial clout to shape rules and direct deforestation projects in the Amazon. It instead favored the use of public funds from developed countries through the CDM to support governments in developing countries who are proven successful in reducing deforestation. Conversely, the Ministry of Environment was more receptive to establishing clear targets for reducing GHGs emissions based on external private and public financing for tackling deforestation (La Rovere 2002).

Consistent with Allison's bureaucratic model, the Brazilian case shows that inter-organizational conflict was a crucial factor driving the decision-making process during this period. It was also compounded by the growing involvement of domestic environmental groups and their international backers such as the Greenpeace whose political agendas clashed with the still pervasive nationalistic/ideological views from the diplomatic establishment (Viola 1997). Ultimately, the Brazilian official position attempted to conform to both stances by fiercely defending national sovereignty, autonomy, and the "right to develop" at the same time actively engaging with international environmental norms and their supporters. The historical evolution of the Brazilian position on global climate change norms can be summarized as follows:

	Dictatorship/ Cold War (1972– 1992)	Democratization/End of Cold War (1992– 2002)	Lula's Period/Multipolarity (2003–2010)
Brazilian position on global climate change norms	Nationalism and resistance	Partial concession and policy change	Nationalist reassessment combined with policy accommodation

Next, the argument focuses on the period of Lula's administration (2003–2010).¹⁵ The analysis shows that norm entrepreneurship on environmental issues in Brazil has been effectively countered by a number of "institutional filters" which served as ideological and political strongholds against the perceived threat of foreign interference in domestic affairs. The protection of "sovereignty" over the Amazon rainforest by the foreign ministry and its allies in the public and private sectors is in this regard a central element in understanding the only partially successful role of environmental norm entrepreneurs in Brazil. It does not mean, however, that significant progress has not been achieved. In this respect, the following analysis looks into Lula's climate policy initiatives (which were sustained by the subsequent administra-

¹⁵ The other two periods are well documented in the literature on Brazilian environmental politics. See, for example, Johnson (2001) and Lago (2006).

tion of Dilma Rouseff) created to conform to the demands of environmental actors.

Nationalist Reassessment and Environmental Policy Change (2003–2010)

In the first years of the twenty-first century, Lula's administration reinforced foreign policy values akin to the great-power nationalism of the military regime, which were grounded on the vision of Brazil's independent and sovereign role in international affairs.¹⁶ Lula's foreign policy doctrine laid emphasis on Brazil's Southern identity in international relations. It had its origins in the "independent" foreign policy of the early 1960s, which drew heavily on the ideas of Cold War neutrality, non-intervention, and the anti-colonialism of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It was further developed by the military regime following the *coup d'état* of 1964.

It is my contention that this particular ideational understanding of the role of Brazil in the international scene has strongly influenced the Brazilian position on climate change under Lula's administration.¹⁷ The traditional central role of Itamaraty in the decision-making process has imbued foreign policy, including environmental policy, with strong ideological overtones. With the election of Lula, a number of senior left-wing diplomats, inheritors of the aforementioned tradition, who had been ostracized during Cardoso's administration, raised to the forefront of Brazil's foreign policymaking. This is precisely the case with Lula's Minister of Foreign Relations, Celso Amorim, and his second in command, Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães. The powerful position assigned to Guimarães, as Itamaraty's Secretary-General and Lula's chief foreign policy ideologue, is the evidence of the strong leftist and anti-Western undertones of Brazil's foreign policy. During his diplomatic career, Guimarães has consistently laid the case for a nationalist, developmental, anti-American foreign policy with clear implications in climate change negotiations.¹⁸ In 2005, for example, he firmly rebutted declarations by the former Trade Commissioner of the EU and current chairman of the World Trade Organization, Pascal Lammy, who defended the establishment of binding international rules for the management of global collective public goods, such as tropical forests, fishery, and the ozone layer.¹⁹

However, as democracy deepens its roots in the country and a wide range of different private actors became more involved in foreign policy issues, the grounds for the autonomy of the Itamaraty became more restricted (Hirst 2006). One of the outcomes of Lula's election was the further political strengthening of domestic actors committed to the conservation of the Amazon both within civil society, the business community, and the central and local governments. The nominated Environment Minister, Marina Silva, a vocal politician and environmental activist from a community of rubber tappers in the Amazon state of Acre, received strong support from the new president to advance an ambitious agenda of environmental reform. However, from the outset, Lula's government had to contend with the difficult task of promoting massive development pro-

¹⁶ Some authors downplay the importance of shifts in the Brazilian government position on environmental issues. They claim that environmental concerns did not significantly impacted on Brazil's deeply ingrained foreign policy goal of achieving great power recognition in global affairs. See, for example, Romano (1998).

¹⁷ This does not mean, however, that more conventional interest-based factors were not present in the decision-making process. I discuss these in conjunction with normative/ideational issues, which are central to this article's argument.

¹⁸ Guimarães' (1999) book, *Quinhentos Anos de Periferia* (Five Hundred Years of Periphery) is an interesting example of his ideological thinking on Brazil's position and challenges in contemporary international politics.

¹⁹ "Brazil Marshalls Defenses to Fight Amazon Internationalization." Environment News Service, <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/apr2005/2005-04-11-04.html> (Accessed October 17, 2010).

jects at the same time addressing the environmental concerns of international and domestic stakeholders.

As a response to the growing international prominence of environmental issues and the increasingly intractable inter-ministerial disputes between the “environmentalist” and “developmentist” camps, in 2007 Lula replaced the blocked CIMGC by the Committee on Climate Change (CIC in Portuguese), head by the Office of the President of the Republic. It currently includes 17 ministries, a number of state agencies, and the Brazilian Forum on Climate Change, an umbrella organization involving NGOs, and business and state actors. The previously obfuscated Ministry of the Environment plays a central coordination role in CIC (Brazilian Forum on Climate Change 2008:6). Reflected within the committee, the domestic debate on climate change has been broadly divided along ideological differences between (and material and political concerns of) two opposing groups:

- The traditionally hegemonic group of those who resist global warming discussions that include international regulation in the Amazon conservation (moved by nationalistic, economic, and sovereignty motives). This group is led by the Itamaraty and includes the following: MST, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, the Brazilian Petroleum Company (Petrobras), sectors in the Military, and the so-called *ruralista* lobby in the Congress led by soya, logging, and cattle farmers.
- The second group supports the view that Amazon should be included in global negotiations provided that international funds help to protect the forest. This group is allied with international advocates of forest protection and represents the main entry point for international environmental norms. These include the Ministry of the Environment, most of the scientific community, governors of some states in the federation, the ethanol lobby in the Brazilian Congress, renewable energy producers, a growing number of multinational corporations based in Brazil, local business associations, and international/domestic environmental NGOs.

Marina Silva resigned in 2008 after repeatedly clashing with Ministers from the “development” side of the debate, including Lula’s Chief of Staff and his chosen successor, Dilma Rousseff. In August 2009, Silva withdrawn from Lula’s Workers’ Party (PT), after 30 years of political militancy, and joined the Brazilian Green Party (PV). The former Minister ran as PV’s candidate in the 2010 presidential elections with a strong environmental platform. Her decision to leave PT “was taken based on the dream to achieve sustainable development in Brazil, which should not be anymore just a marginal issue in the government’s agenda”.²⁰ Silva’s participation in the electoral contest temporarily brought the climate change issue back to the political debate and increased the influence of proponents of climate change issues in Brazil. However, environmental issues were virtually absent in the campaigns of the two presidential candidates during the second round of voting, which was eventually won by Lula’s protégé, Dilma Rousseff. According to Sérgio Leitão, from Greenpeace’s Brazilian office, the difficulties faced by Silva in implementing the government’s environmental agenda, which eventually led to her resignation, indicate that “the government has now made it clear that the idea of development at any cost is what will win out”.²¹

²⁰ “Marina Silva Anuncia Saida do PT e Diz que Negociara Ida para o PV.” *Globo*. (August 20, 2009).

²¹ “Fears for Brazil’s Rainforest after Environment Minister Quits.” *Guardian* (May 15, 2008).

The belligerent disputes around the construction of the Monte Belo hydroelectric dam complex in the Xingu River, in the Amazon state of Para, is also revealing of the political struggle between “developmental” and “environmental” claims in Brazilian domestic politics. The Brazilian government claims that the massive dam will provide clean, relatively cheap, and most needed energy to boost the country’s economic growth. International and domestic environmental NGOs, indigenous people, and the Ministry of the Environment questioned the environmental sustainability of the project given its clear impact on local ecosystems and in the traditional (and sustainable) everyday life of local indigenous communities. After allegedly political pressure from the federal government, the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) issued an environmental license that enabled the beginning of preliminary construction.²²

In the buildup to the Copenhagen meeting in 2009, the environmentalist camp stepped-up pressured on the government to reassess strongly entrenched foreign policy ideas about Brazil’s path to great-power status through achieving fast-paced economic development. Unlike Itamaraty’s prevalent hostile perceptions with regard to the meddling of the international community in domestic affairs, increasingly influential domestic players claimed that, in the context of the climate change crisis, Brazil’s international recognition would derive from its adaptation to new models of cooperative governance which would help to facilitate the transition to a global low carbon economy. This coordinated challenge to Brazil’s traditional view on environmental issues has produced some palpable results.

In May 2008, Lula enacted the *Plano Amazônia Sustentável* (Sustainable Amazon Plan), and in December, he launched the *Programa Nacional para as Alterações Climáticas* (National Climate Change Plan). Under the strong leadership of Marina Silva (2003–2008) and Carlos Minc (2008–2010) in the Ministry of the Environment, the Brazilian government further developed institutional capacity, created a more stringent system of law enforcement, and effectively implemented conservation strategies in endangered areas (Hochsteller and Viola 2011:12). These government initiatives were in line with the normative/political agenda of international and domestic NGOs. The almost identical “principled-beliefs” (Goldstein and Keohane 1993) of consecutive Environment Ministers during Lula’s administration and international and domestic environmental activists helped in the establishment of more cooperative strategies. This was the case with the Greenpeace-led “Articulação Soja” (Soy Articulation) which brought together several stakeholders, including big supermarkets, the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Producers (ABIOVE), and the fast-food chain McDonald’s, to establish an international moratorium on soybeans from land that has been illegally cleared to grow soy in the Amazon forest.²³

The Climate Change Plan established mandatory and ambitious goals aiming at dramatically reducing illegal deforestation in the Amazon by 2020 (Brazilian Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change 2008). At COP-15 in Copenhagen, the Brazilian government voluntarily offered an 80% reduction in deforestation by 2020. This commitment places Brazil in the leading position in reducing GHGs emissions, since deforestation amounts to roughly 60% of Brazil’s overall carbon emissions.²⁴ Another sign of the Brazilian government’s serious pledge

²² “Brazil Grants Environmental License to Belo Monte Dam.” BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8492577.stm> (Accessed March 11, 2011).

²³ For more on this, see “Soy Industry Joins Efforts Against Amazon Deforestation.” IPS News. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=34095> (Accessed December 2, 2011).

²⁴ “Brazil Commits to 80% Reduction in Amazon Deforestation by 2020.” *The World Forum*. <http://www.ethical-markets.com/2009/10/27/brazil-commits-to-80-reduction-in-amazon-deforestation-by-2020/> (Accessed July 13, 2011).

to drastically reduce emissions was that the Senate approved and Lula subsequently signed the Climate Bill, which is Brazil's first legally binding commitment to the decarbonization of the Brazilian economy (Viola 2009).

These measures signaled an important policy shift given the traditional reluctance of the Brazilian government to set up clear targets to halt deforestation and to legally commit to tackle climate change. It was also a palpable victory of the Ministry of the Environment and its domestic and international allies vis-à-vis the traditionally more influential Ministries of Agriculture, Science and Technology, and Mines and Energy. More importantly, it signaled to a more inclusive decision making in environmental issues and a clear challenge to the all-powerful Itamaraty and its conservative position with regard to international interfering in domestic policies to tackle deforestation.

Brazil's relative success in tackling deforestation since 2005, when the historic pattern of escalating deforestation was undoubtedly broken in the Amazon, led to a more proactive engagement in international norms' negotiations. The traditional defensive and non-committal position of the Brazilian diplomacy was replaced by a more purposive stance. In 2006, during COP-12 in Nairobi, the Brazilian proposal to create a global fund for helping countries cut down on deforestation indicated an important change in Brazil's long-standing resistance to link national deforestation policies with global financial mechanisms.

As a result of unrelenting lobbying from the rural bloc, in June 2011, the lower house of the Brazilian Congress overwhelmingly voted in favor of reforming Brazil's forestry code, which will allow increases in legal deforestation and will give amnesty to all historical illegal clearing of protected forest. At the time of writing this article, the Senate was debating a new version of the Forest Code which had already passed in the lower house. There are still a number of loopholes in the current draft that allow farmers, who illegally cleared forest, to dodge fines and obligations to reforest and states to indefinitely postpone action on deforestation. These are significant issues that cast doubts on Brazil's continuing ability to achieve its deforestation commitments.²⁵

Conclusions

This article offers a theoretically grounded empirical analysis of the interactive and mutually constitutive character of domestic and international normative systems. Most of the current constructivist literature implies that internationally recognized norms, supported by industrialized democracies of the West, will promote "positive" change in developing states in the Third World. By contrast, this body of scholarly work has been mostly silent on cases in which influential emerging states from the South are actively engaged in international normative bargaining based on their pre-existing association with a competing norm (Cortell and Davis 2005:4). This is precisely the case of Brazil's long-lasting engagement with international environmental norms and their domestic promoters.

Given the particular feature of paradigmatic dominance of the Brazilian diplomatic establishment, external normative influences have been constrained and effective change on environmental policies only incrementally adopted. The article shows that in Brazil the institutionally embedded diplomatic paradigm of a nationalistic, autonomy-oriented, and developmentalist foreign policy has been an effective normative barrier to the full internalization of international environmental norms. However, the Brazilian foreign policy on environmental issues—like in other areas of Brazil's international affairs—has become less the realm of diplomats and more linked with other actors and processes. From the 1990s, the slow but sure opening of the foreign policy decision-making process created new

²⁵ For more on this, see "Protecting Brazil's Forests," *Economist* (December 3, 2011).

entry points to domestic and international “norm entrepreneurs” with alternative views on a number of important international issues. Moreover, the Brazilian government’s successful adoption of neoliberal economic stabilization policies combined with the prevailing globalization rhetoric of the early post-Cold War system led to a period of close scrutiny of Brazil’s traditional foreign policy paradigms (Burges 2009). This had clear implications in terms of Brazil’s shifting position in climate negotiations.

Yet, in the early 2000s, the strong reassertion of “national-developmentalism” by Lula’s administration reignited the domestic debate on environmental issues. Given the reinvigorated power of Itamaraty’s “nationalist bloc” under Lula, concerns over sovereign jurisdiction over national resources, especially with regard to the Amazon forest, strongly resurfaced in Brazil’s negotiating position. Domestic environmental actors, such as the Ministry of the Environment and a coalition of international/domestic NGOs, and business and other private actors strongly and systematically resisted Itamaraty’s entrenched position. As shown earlier, the coordinated pressure of environmental actors set off a shift in climate policy which coalesced with international normative prescriptions. It was also the result of the Brazil’s more effective domestic policies in dealing with deforestation which helped to move Brazil away from the uncomfortable position of “norm violator,” increasing its political leverage in international negotiations.

Although there are significant areas of inconsistency in Brazil’s international behavior with respect to climate norms, the Brazilian government is currently engaged in grafting a positive relationship between international climate norms and domestic environmental politics. This is an extremely difficult balance which (and contrasting to the prior predominant and isolated position of Itamaraty in foreign policymaking) demands coordination among a growing number of policy participants. In broad terms, social constructivist authors (Underdal 1998; Checkel 2001; Hurd 2007; Acharya 2009) are right to note that international norms do not produce behavioral conformity if they are not purposively adapted by political actors (norm entrepreneurs) to conform to societal values. Unlike the long-standing US political stalemate on climate policy, an active process of policy adaptation, domestic political compromise, and international negotiation is currently underway in Brazil. The centrality of the national debate among Brazilian political elites on how to maintain high levels of economic growth without compromising the environment is evidence of the importance given to environmental sustainability in the Brazilian democracy and its increasingly openness to international normative influences on environmental issues.

Ultimately, Brazil’s contribution to the further integration of Southern principles of distributional equity and sustainable development into global environmental norms will depend upon the establishment of a grand domestic compromise between the Brazilian government’s genuine concerns with sovereignty and economic development and the environmental agendas of previously marginalized sectors of the state, civil society, and the business sector such as environmental activists, corporate organizations, and government agencies.

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