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**BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY
IN THE 21ST CENTURY (2005-2015):
AN ANALYSIS USING COMPLEXITY THEORY
APPLIED TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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An analysis using Complexity Theory applied to
International Relations**

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*An ever-changing world requires a
foreign policy with capacity of adaptation.*
Celso Amorim¹

¹ Amorim, Celso. 2010 'Brazilian Foreign Policy under President Lula (2003-2010): An overview' *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política* 53 (special edition): 214.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa busca analisar a política externa brasileira (PEB) dos últimos anos por meio do referencial teórico da teoria da complexidade. Parte-se do pressuposto de que uma linha-mestra histórica da PEB é a obtenção de um lugar de maior destaque para o Brasil na ordem internacional. No contexto do fim da Guerra Fria, a situação internacional e doméstica foi alterada, de modo a favorecer essa meta tradicional. Teoricamente, discute-se a limitação dos modelos conceituais lineares sobre política internacional, de modo a defender o referencial teórico da complexidade (não linear) como mais abrangente. Com base nisso, realizam-se dois estudos de caso. O primeiro é a histórica campanha brasileira pela reforma do Conselho de Segurança da ONU: argumenta-se que fracassou, entre outros motivos, por adotar uma abordagem linear, ineficaz para a abordagem de um “*wicked problem*”. Outro estudo de caso é sobre o *PAA-Africa*, um programa descentralizado, adaptativo e flexível, que logrou sucesso. A conclusão é que a recente prática diplomática brasileira mistura iniciativas lineares e não lineares, com resultados diversos, o que dificulta a obtenção de sua meta histórica de maior protagonismo.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Política externa brasileira, Teoria da complexidade, Relações Brasil-África, Reforma da ONU.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze Brazilian foreign policy initiatives using complexity theory's (CT) conceptual framework. The basic assumption is that a key Brazilian historical international objective is to achieve a greater international role as a global player. With the end of the Cold War, international and domestic settings changed in a favorable way towards the fulfilment of this objective. Theoretically, it discusses the limitations of linear conceptual models on international politics, while it asserts that CT's nonlinear conceptual framework is more comprehensive. On this ground, two case studies are made. The first is about Brazil's historic campaign to reform the UN Security Council: the argument is that it failed, among other reasons, because it adopts a linear approach, one that is unsuitable to deal with a “*wicked problem*”. The other case study is about *PAA-Africa*, a decentralized, adaptive and flexible program, which succeeded. The conclusion is that Brazil's recent diplomatic practice mixes linear and nonlinear initiatives, obtaining different results, and this is an obstacle for the country to achieve its goal of greater international protagonism.

KEY-WORDS: Brazilian foreign policy; Complexity theory; Brazil-Africa relations; UN reform.

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1. Introduction

The objective of the present work is to analyze Brazil's recent foreign policy initiatives on the basis of the country's self-declared aim of achieving greater prominence in the international arena. In order to do that, it shall try to answer the following research questions: i) Has Brazil achieved success in its declared intentions for international insertion? ii) What have been the reasons for this success, or lack thereof? The research hypothesis is that, although Brazil's role on the international stage has increased significantly during the last years, it has not achieved as much as intended, and as it could have done.

The main problem the present work deals with is that Brazil is failing to recognize its international insertion as a *complex issue*. Rather, it perceives it as *complicated*. According to Edwards (2004: 17), "in a complicated system it is possible to work out solutions and plan to implement them" whereas "this is not possible in complex systems where policies and interventions have unpredictable and unintended consequences."

During the last three decades, due to a combination of domestic and international issues, Brazil has changed its approach to the global arena from the quest of "autonomy through distance" to "autonomy through participation" (Fonseca Jr. 1998). More recently, it has been argued that Brazil has pursued "autonomy through diversification" (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007), making some analysts claim that "while it took Brazil sometime to live up to the backhanded maxim that it was 'the country of tomorrow and always would be,' there is little doubt that tomorrow has arrived" (Rothkopf 2009). During these years, it is certainly true that Brazil has increased its international visibility as well as its international status, through active participation in multilateral forums – either the established ones or the newly created groupings of "variable geometry" – and expanding its bilateral relations. Nevertheless, some issues remain unresolved, of which the most evident example is the failure to achieve United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform. Moreover, recently some analysts point to the fact that "Brazil's international relations (...), between 2011 and 2014, have been through a period characterized by a comparative decline in relation to the previous period (...), between 2003 and 2010 when it dealt with the concept of 'rise'" (Cervo and Lessa 2014: 133).

In other words, during Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government (2003-2010), Brazil seemed to have reached the apex of its international projection. Domestically, its

economy was growing fast, social inequality was being reversed and political institutions seemed to be working smoothly. Internationally, Brazil actively engaged in existing multilateral forums, was an important actor to the creation of new groupings, expanded its bilateral relations and its diplomatic network. As a symbol of the country's international rise, Barack Obama asked Brazil and Turkey to engage in diplomatic talks with Iran about the nuclear issue (Amorim 2015).

Nevertheless, throughout Dilma Rousseff's administration (2011-2016), this context began to change. Domestically, the situation became gradually more difficult: economic indicators turned negative and the political situation has gone through some instability. Internationally, the country adopted a more circumspect diplomatic approach (Gomes Saraiva 2014). As a sign of this change, even though it was invited to take part in Geneva II, the high-level international talks about the Syrian civil war, it did not send its Foreign Minister, but a lower ranking diplomat (MRE 2014). Thus, these last years have been labeled by Cervo and Lessa 2014 as "the decline."

One important example of this problem is the situation of the G-20. Brazil was an important player at the establishment of this group, within the context of the 2007-08 financial crisis. Then, it seemed that a more prominent role to Brazil, and other emerging countries, was almost inevitable. Nevertheless, since then, with developed nations improving their economic situation, we have witnessed a resurging of the more exclusive, traditional G-8, and, especially its more restricted configuration as G-7 (without Russia). This traditional, linear attempt of achieving more protagonism through closed door, high-level meetings has, according to this perspective, failed.

Therefore, we argue that, because it is pursuing a linear approach within a nonlinear system, Brazil has been unable to achieve a more prominent international role, as it had declared to be its intention. It has indeed achieved some success, but not as much as it desired and could have done. We assert that this happened because of a failure of Brazilian foreign policy to recognize the international system as a "complex adaptive system" (CAS) and, therefore, to plan and prepare itself "systemically". Rather, Brazil has gone about this issue in a linear fashion that prevents it from adapting to changing circumstances, as shown during the Dilma Rousseff's presidency, and making engagement in international affairs, as historically desired, sustainable across time and

space. In other words, Brazilian foreign policy has not been resilient enough to make further engagement a sustainable *policy of state*.

This paper, in the first place, reviews the last decades' transformation of Brazilian foreign policy at the global and national levels. Then, it presents Complexity Theory main tools of analysis in the International Relations domain, especially the concept of "complex adaptive systems" and its resulting policy implications. Finally, it will apply the key concepts of Complexity to two projects developed by the Brazilian diplomacy – the quest for a permanent seat at the UNSC and the *Purchasing From Africans for Africa* (PAA-Africa) –, in order to achieve its desire for greater international protagonism.

Initiatives in consideration are restricted to the period of 2005-2015. This moment is of special importance to the present work, for it encompasses both a movement of Brazil's foreign policy expansion (2003-2010), through inventive, assertive diplomatic initiatives, and another of a more cautious international insertion (2011-2015). The study of this period, therefore, can be helpful to analyze the potentialities and weaknesses of Brazilian foreign policy in a macro perspective.

2. Brazilian foreign policy after the Cold War

Brazilian foreign policy has pursued a few core objectives for a long time. These longstanding goals amount to the aim of becoming a more relevant global player, and being a country for which diplomacy is an instrument to reaching greater autonomy and development. With the end of the Cold War, the international and the domestic contexts became more favorable for the country to achieve this historical agenda.

2.1 Historical diplomatic agenda

Continuity is one of the main features of Brazilian foreign policy, according to many analysts and practitioners (Pimentel, 2013). First, there is a perennial search for *autonomy* at the core of Brazilian foreign policy discourse. Saraiva 2014 traces the concept's record at Brazilian foreign policy thinking, demonstrating how it has maintained a key role within it for a long time, although its emphasis oscillated according to the political contexts. Autonomy, an old concept which in Brazil has traced a different path in comparison to other South American countries, has been reframed by Brazilian foreign policy "actors and authors," and "at the beginning of the 21st century, it has been updated to be kept as the country's international insertion's arrow in time."²

Writing at the turn of the millennium, Fonseca Jr. (1998: 368) defined Brazilian diplomatic tradition of autonomy as "a desire to influence the open agenda with values that translate diplomatic tradition and capacity to see the international order with one's own eyes and fresh perspectives." More recently, Milani (2015: 64) conceptualized it as a "counter-hegemonic positioning of Brazil within an asymmetrical and unequal international system."

Alongside autonomy, search for *development* is another key concept of Brazilian foreign policy. According to Lafer (2001: 108), "development keeps its place (...) as the objective *par excellence* of our [Brazilian] foreign policy, as a public policy devoted to translating domestic necessities into external possibilities." As is the case with most of the elements of continuity in Brazilian foreign policy, it is presented as a legacy of Barão do Rio Branco, considered the "father" of Brazilian diplomacy. Lafer (2001: 81) argues that Rio

² All quotes extracted from sources originally published in languages different than English have been freely translated by the author.

Branco's vision of the future was about "development as a means to reducing the power asymmetries that were responsible for South American vulnerability."

In 1963, then-minister of Foreign Affairs Araújo Castro, in what has become probably the most famous speech on Brazilian foreign policy, asserted that Brazil had three important goals in the international realm: disarmament, development and decolonization (Corrêa 2013: 233-252). Exactly 30 years later, occupying the same post Araújo Castro had before, and speaking at the same occasion – the opening of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) –, Celso Amorim presented a new version of the "3 D's", or Brazil main international goals. Upgrading it to the post-Cold War historical moment, Amorim described Brazil's view of the international agenda as centered on disarmament, *development* and democracy (Corrêa 2013: 685-695).

In 2015, it is not by coincidence that Mauro Vieira, in his inaugural address as Brazilian foreign minister, declared: "international relations constitute a fundamental field to achieving national development, understood in its broadest sense (...) as the participation of every Brazilian citizen at the effort of building this Nation" (MRE 2015). By the same token, his predecessor, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado, had written: "I understand foreign policy only as part of a broader project for national development and the country's sovereign insertion in the world" (Machado 2014).

Finally, according to the literature, *being recognized* by other countries, especially the great powers, as an important player is probably one of Brazil's most important and enduring international goals. In this sense, Lima (2005: 6) argues that "at the diplomatic discourse, this aspiration turns into foreign policy's very reason for existing." According to her, this is manifest by the multiple times Brazil tried to take part in multilateral forums dominated by great powers, a pattern which dates back to the European Concert, for "between 1864 and 1890, Brazil joined at least 12 agreements, conventions and international organizations of technical nature" (Lima 2005: 7). Lafer (2001) asserts that during this period Brazil felt uncomfortable with its marginal position, but this discomfort only began translating into greater demand for recognition at the 20th century. Two initial moments of this trend have been the Brazilian participation at the II Peace Conference at The Hague (1907) – when Ruy Barbosa made a case for the juridical equality of states, claiming a greater role for Brazil and criticizing the logic of the great powers – and at the Paris Peace Conference (1919) – when Brazil challenged the proposed distinction

between “powers with general interests” and “powers with specific interests” (Lafer 2005: 68-74). Since then, Brazil has been active in the multilateral sphere, and it has remained a consensus among its political elites that the search for international recognition is a core objective for Brazil. Therefore, it is not by hazard that “the uncertainties generated by the end of the Cold War and the following discussions about the construction of a new world order reignited on Brazilian elites the aspiration for an influent role for the country in the new order” (Lima 2005: 9).

2.2 International context: unexpected changes³

The second half of the 1980s saw a coming together of international and Brazilian domestic political events which created a unique opportunity for Brazil to work towards its longstanding goals of greater international prominence, recognition and autonomy.

At the international level, the end of the Cold War unleashed a series of changes which Brazil has sought to take advantage from. With the end of bipolarity, which structured international relations during the second half of the 20th century, not only was the international agenda expanded to encompass a series of new items, but a whole new set of actors enjoyed the possibility of a renewed role with greater international autonomy, including Brazil.

The beginning of the 21st century presented many challenges to the established powers, especially the United States and Europe. Early on, in 2001, the United States suffered the September 11 terrorist attacks on its own soil. The American reaction was to begin wars first in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. This, in turn, brought additional difficulties for the country, including an extremely high cost – both financially and in terms of American lives lost in combat – as well as the resulting growing public opinion dissatisfaction, at home and abroad. Additionally, during the last years of the first decade of the century, the United States, and soon its European partners, found themselves among the most severe financial crisis since the Wall Street crash in 1929 (Sinclair 2013).

It is precisely within this turbulent scenario for the rich, industrialized nations of the North that the phenomenon of the rise of emergent countries took place. While the traditional centers of power and influence were facing tremendous difficulties, new countries of the

³ Parts of this section are based on: Tibau, Victor. 2015 ‘Are The New International Forums of the Global South Anti-Western? Notes from historical and institutional perspectives’ *Revista História e Cultura*, 4 (1): 22-44.

so called “Global South” – including Brazil – attracted international attention. According to Benachou (2013: 199), the typical profile of an emerging country:

Is the one of a country which has achieved the diversification of its economy, developing mainly products which have greatest demand in the world market; which frequently enjoys an efficient financial intermediation with an efficient banking industry and a dynamic capital market; which has a strong agricultural basis (...); which has an opening policy – often selective, but evolutionary – which allows it to place itself in a regional and/or global labor division and which boosts growth with its technologies, its markets and its capitals, assuring a notable foreign investment flow and growing international destinations to its exports.

Although Benachou’s description is not sufficient, it focuses on the crucial issue of the emergence of these countries: their economic power. Nevertheless, albeit the fact that the economy is indeed a crucial element in the rise of emerging countries, it does not explain this phenomenon in its entirety. According to Zakaria (2012: 4), “the rise of the rest is at heart an economic phenomenon, but it has consequences for nearly every other sphere of life.” In part as a consequence of their economic success, emerging countries gained greater self-confidence, which has been translated into an assertive, creative and pragmatic diplomatic posture (Bisley 2013:14). Many situations exemplify this transformation, as in the year of 2008, when Brazil and India aligned themselves to block Doha Round negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Bisley 2013).

Observing this combination of increasing economic power with proactive political-diplomatic action, some analysts declared that we are witnessing “the crisis of global power”, which is a “consequence of the dynamic center of gravity [moving] from the West to the East” combined with a poor performance of the United States, at home and abroad, and a global “political awakening” (Brzezinski 2012: 5).

This process might be perceived in two different, although interrelated, domains. The first one is the role played by emergent countries within already existent international organizations. More confident, these countries claim these institutions were designed for an old world order, from the post-World War II era, which is not representative of the current international distribution of power. In this sense, for example, emerging countries have criticized the weighted votes at the IMF, claiming greater responsibility for themselves. The strongest critique to the existing international institutions, however,

refers to UNSC structure, in which only five countries hold veto power. Paul Kennedy (2010: 247) highlights the challenge imposed to the Council by the rise of emerging countries:

The power-political implications of the rise of, say, India and Brazil to greater economic and strategic influence inevitably challenge the stranglehold that the five permanent veto-owning members have had in the Security Council over the past sixty years. It was an axiom of the UN's founding fathers that great powers had somehow to receive special (if negative) rights in order to prevent them from leaving or blocking the international system, as happened in the 1920s and 1930s. It would be hard to deny that argument to India if its GDP sails past that of Britain and France over the next decade or so.

The second domain is the establishment of new international forums composed by countries from the Global South. About this process, Andrew Hurrell (2010: 62) observes that recently “there has been an increasing emphasis on different sorts of informal groupings, clubs, concerts and coalitions” which are forming “a complex mosaic of various groupings that are emerging in a process of ‘global à la cartism’ or ‘messy multilateralism’ (...) in response to shifts in global power.”

Taken together, all these facts represent an important challenge to today's international order. Emerging powers seem to be taking on the global stage, but exactly how it will happen – and whether it will at all – is still extremely uncertain. For Brazil – which sought both to reform the existing institutions as well as to take part in the development of new forums – it represented an especially powerful moment for it to try to achieve its desired foreign policy goals of having a greater international role, enjoying autonomy and working for the country's development.

2.3 Domestic context: Brazilian foreign policy after “re-democratization”

According to Hudson and Vore (1995: 228), within International Relations, Foreign Policy Analysis “theories seem to apply as much to the explanation and projection of *domestic* policy choice as to *foreign* policy choice.” In this sense, it is impossible to understand Brazilian foreign policy after the Cold War without taking into consideration its domestic transformations. More specifically, one has to consider that, a few years before the end of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Brazil had gone through a deep change in its political system, when, in 1985, the military government (which was

in power since the *coup d'état* in 1964) ended, in a historical period known as “re-democratization.”

Fonseca Jr. (1998) claims that, overall, while Brazilian diplomacy during Cold War aimed for “autonomy through distance”, after its end it pursued “autonomy through participation.” According to him, this new paradigm of international insertion might only be successful with democracy, which guarantees “a positive attitude in relation to human rights, social justice, search for peace, nonproliferation”, among others (Fonseca Jr. 1998: 374).

Nevertheless, some authors assert that it was only 10 years after the fall of the military regime that Brazil, during Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) presidency (1995-2002), changed its international behavior, abandoning the quest for distance. Vigevani, Oliveira and Cintra (2003) classify Brazilian foreign policy during Cardoso years as “the quest for autonomy through integration”, the apex of a process which had been taking place in three previous governments – Sarney, Collor and Franco. Throughout FHC years, Brazil’s rationale was to take part in globalization.

During the Cardoso administration, Brazil engaged actively with international organizations and regimes. Symbolically, it was in this period that Brazil signed the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in 1995, and ratified it in 1998. During the 1960s, when the treaty was negotiated, Brazil had refused to join, claiming it was an instrument of the great powers that promoted the “freezing of world power”. According to the Brazilian view, aiming at nonproliferation, instead of disarmament, created a group of distinguished countries, which contradicted one of the most important Brazilian foreign policy principles: the equality among states (Vargas 2013: 175-189). This distance from international agreements and regimes – as clearly demonstrated on the nuclear regime case –, which marked Brazil’s international insertion for decades, was only abandoned during the 1990s.

However, Milani (2015: 65), as well as other authors, argues that it was only during Luis Inácio Lula da Silva’s presidency (2003-2010) that “Brazil adopted a truly worldwide diplomacy, founded on a political narrative of denouncing international asymmetries, of demonstrated geopolitical dissatisfaction with its status in the global order and, therefore, of recognition demand.” According to Vigevani and Cepaluni (2007), some of the overall guidelines of Brazilian foreign policy in these years – a period which they label as

“autonomy through diversification” – were: search for a greater global equilibrium, to soften the United States’ unilateralism; strengthening of bilateral and multilateral relations, aiming to increase Brazil’s weight on international negotiations; expansion and deepening of diplomatic relations; and avoiding agreements which could threaten Brazil’s long term development.

When Dilma Rousseff succeeded Lula in 2011, there were important changes on foreign policy. Certainly, since both Lula and Rousseff were governments of the Workers Party (PT), the general guidelines of Brazil’s international insertion remained the same: the idea of foreign policy as an instrument for national development; revisionism concerning international organizations; the importance given to multilateralism, to South-South relations and to South America, among others (Gomes Saraiva 2014). Nevertheless, according to Gomes Saraiva (2014: 34):

Objectively, Brazil diminished its weight on international politics after Dilma Rousseff’s first term. The proactive role assumed during the previous government and its participation in debates about diverse issues of the international agenda were substituted by spasmodic movements that lacked continuity and a strategic long-term international insertion project. On the decision-making process, the agenda-setting role, which could have been played by the President or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ended up being played by no one.

It was an expressive change of posture: from Lula and Celso Amorim’s “active and bold foreign policy” (Amorim 2010: 239), Brazil adopted a more cautious, even timid diplomacy. On what is important to the present research, it signifies a setback: the country seemed to have finally reached the possibility of concretely achieving its long desired global player role (2003-2010) but its foreign policy lacked resilience when it faced with a change of government and domestic and international unexpected changes and instability. The problem here is that Brazil’s foreign policy lacked adaptability, which is a key characteristic to operate within complex adaptive systems.

3. Complexity Theory: a conceptual framework for analyzing change

Decades after it was over, it was possible to conclude that the end of the Cold War brought about the reshaping of international order, first to a unipolar moment and later to what seems to be a transition towards multipolarity, but which is still undefined. To contemporary observers, however, it meant an analytical challenge: for those concerned with International Relations the abrupt, unexpected end of the USSR and, consequently, of the bipolar world order, was shocking, for none of their theories had predicted what was to come. It was precisely in this context that IR researchers turned to the growing field of studies using Complexity Theory to try to better understand the nature of the international system (Gaddis 1993). The problem at the origin of this conceptual shift was that:

Efforts theorists have made to create a "science" of politics that would forecast the future course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results: none of the three general approaches to theory that have evolved since 1945 came anywhere close to anticipating how the Cold War would end. (Gaddis 1993: 53)

Moreover, Gaddis (1993: 55) explains this failure by pointing out to the fact that:

Theorists of international relations are using the methods of classical science when they conduct their investigations exclusively along a behavioral, structural, or within the evolutionary approach – a linear or cyclical axis of analysis. They are excluding other variables and controlling conditions in order to produce theories from which they can forecast events. (...). But generalizations of this kind perform badly when applied to the real world, which functions along behavioral, structural, and evolutionary axes *simultaneously*.

Finally, he concludes that “the ‘scientific’ approach to the study of international relations appears to work no better, in forecasting the future, than do the old fashioned methods it set out long ago to replace” (Gaddis 1993: 56). Therefore, “if today's physical and natural sciences can benefit from, and even enrich themselves by, a recognition of how imperfectly the old scientific method ‘modeled’ the real world, then surely the social sciences can do the same” (Gaddis 1993: 58).

3.1 Theoretical assumptions

Since the 17th century, under the influence of Rene Descartes' and Isaac Newton's ideas, science has been ruled by positivism's "orderly paradigm." This approach is based on four basic assumptions: i) *order*: some variable x might be pointed as the causal responsible for an effect y , always and invariably; ii) *reductionism*: it is possible to understand the functioning of a system by first understanding the individual behavior of its composing units, since "the whole is the sum of the parts"; iii) *predictability*: the future course of a system's events can be predicted; and iv) *determinism*: process always follow orderly and predictable paths, with a well defined beginning and an expected, rational ending (Geyer and Rihani 2010: 13). This approach has undoubtedly achieved a remarkable success in providing scientific explanations for a wide array of events. It has also fostered the perspective according to which more knowledge would always lead to a great ordering of reality (Geyer and Rihani 2010: 13).

Nevertheless, after some time, researchers started to realize that not all phenomena could be explained by this "orderly paradigm," and did not follow predictable paths. In the face of this, one theoretical reaction was the idea of post-positivism, which, briefly, emphasizes the disorder and chaos of the world we live in. According to it, reality is unpredictable, irreducible and indeterminate; along with rationality, both are understood as relative and as a result of the changing, cultural and temporal individual experience (Eagleton 1996).

A different approach has been offered by the conceptual framework of Complexity. In simple terms, it proposes a comprehensive understanding of reality and its phenomena, by overcoming the dichotomy between positivism and post-positivism: it recognizes that both approaches explain some elements of the world, but not its entirety.

Specifically, what is understood today as Complexity Theory had its beginning as a paradigmatic alternative within the hard sciences, as a result of diverse researches, notably the work of Edward Lorenz about climate patterns (Lorenz 1993). Broadly, Complexity Theory depicts the world as simultaneously formed by elements of order, disorder, and complexity, each interacting with the other within the context of particular local circumstances (or local boundary conditions). Its most important theoretical formulation is about "complex adaptive systems" (CAS), i.e., systems which: i) posses a large number of semi-autonomous elements ii) that interact locally among themselves, on

time and space, iii) influencing and being influenced by others, iv) often in a nonlinear way. These systems are complex because they are formed by a large quantity of internal elements, including orderly, complex and disorderly ones; they are dynamic for their overall behavior is defined by local interactions among its elements. Because CAS suffer feedbacks – both positive (which amplify small perturbations, potentially turning them into a larger scale effect) and negative (which act on the opposite way, neutralizing disturbances to the system) – they are only partially predictable. Finally, CAS evolve according to local conditions, often acting in ignorance of the behavior of the system as a whole. Such systems have a history which is critical to their future development and the possibility of influencing them. (Harrison 2006; Kavalski 2007; Nussenzveig 2008; Geyer and Rihani 2010; Lehmann 2011)

Uncertainty, thus, is an inherent element of reality. From this, it follows that it is possible to get a greater knowledge about reality – which, however, does not necessarily translates into more order – as the positivist approach has advocated for. Nevertheless, it highlights that reality, itself, is always in constant and unpredictable evolution. Thus, there is no end to knowledge, which ought to be seen as a necessary ongoing process, and this for its turn, raises the necessity of adopting a flexible mix of research methods, both quantitative and qualitative (Geyer and Rihani 2010: 32).

3.2 Complexity's conceptual framework applied to International Relations Theory

When thinking about global affairs through CT, one must acknowledge that theoretical perspectives in the field of International Relations are embedded in the traditional scientific paradigms (especially positivism), and therefore suffer from its explanatory limitations. For instance, Geyer and Rihani (2010: 20) demonstrate how Thomas Hobbes' thinking – whose ideas would, in the future, become the assumptions upon which the so called Realist Theory of IR would be developed – was based on a mechanistic vision. Hobbes' approach aimed to order society, saving mankind from chaos and civil war through the establishment of the state.

It is possible to perform a similar comparison in relation to the work of Hans Morgenthau, who Ramo (2009: 26) claims that “was trying to shuffle all the quirks of the global system into some sensible order, to explain wars with the precision that Darwin, say, had brought to Biology or Newton to Physics.” Within this orderly paradigm, and scientific aspiration, Morgenthau developed “an entire Physics of global affairs based on the idea that power

worked in such direct and almost predictable ways,” conceiving that the international “system should be predictable, since its actors were all rational,” also because it was “a system of power that reflected the Physics of Newton: capable of equilibrium, predictability, linearity” (Ramo 2009: 27-8).

These orderly models of international affairs have for a long time aimed to explain the functioning of the world. However, when the overall system stability dismantles abruptly, as Gaddis (1993: 6) demonstrates in relation to the end of the Cold War, “no approach to the study of international relations claiming both foresight and competence should have failed to see it coming. None actually did so, though.” It was then that some researchers of International Relations turned to Complexity Theory’s conceptual framework.

Ramo (2009: 10) defines the current transformations on the international order as “the start of what may become the most dramatic change (...) in several centuries, the biggest shift since (...) the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.” He also recognizes that, to attempt to understand this moment of global transformation, “a new way of thinking (...), one that takes complexity and unpredictability as its first consideration and produces, as a result, a different and useful way of seeing our world” is necessary (Ramo 2009: 13). A few years earlier, Rosenau (2003) had similarly argued that, in search of a better understanding of global changes, of the international system and of its inherent uncertainty, it was mandatory to stop being restrained by the common parsimonious previous theoretical models and to stop ignoring the lessons from Complexity Theory.

The application of the central concept of Complexity’ framework– complex adaptive systems – to the international level is pretty straightforward in a conceptual sense: the international system is composed of a large number of units – either only states or states and a wide array of non-state actors, depending on each researcher’s theoretical affiliation – which interact among themselves, influencing and being influenced by each other, in a process which creates new, unpredictable events, with a sum that is larger than the simple addition of the units.

Lehmann 2012 divides the evolution of CT’s emergency in IR in three distinct stages, the first being, precisely, this movement of describing and defining the international system as a complex adaptive one, as a way of explaining changes within it. As a result emerged what Kavalski (2007) calls “Complex International Relations Theory” (CIR), i.e., “a new way of thinking about how global politics unfold” in an environment of uncertainty”

(Kavalski 2007: 443). Complexity Theory applied to International Relations, therefore, assumes that patterns of order (linear), disorder (alinear) and complexity (non-linear) coexist at the international system (Kavalski 2007).

Kavalski (2007) even claims that the emergence of CT into IR produced the discipline's fifth debate, both epistemological and ontological, by confronting linear approaches to its nonlinear vision. The distinction between CIR and traditional IR theories lies on the CIR's three principles: i) the dialogic principle (simultaneous maintenance and transcendence of aporetic duality, e.g. agent/structure); ii) the principle of recursivity ("causes are simultaneously effects"), and; iii) the hologrammic principle (unities are "both wholes and parts of ever greater wholes, simultaneously and at all times") (Kavalski 2007: 444).

After this first moment, mainly analytical and descriptive, Lehmann 2012 points to foreign policy analysis as the second phase of CT emergence into IR. This stage happened when another moment of uncertainty dominated the global stage: the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States. Although this second moment advanced from the phase in which it was applied to the study of foreign policy (and not only characterizing the international system as a CAS anymore), it also kept a key feature of the initial moment, trying to understand events that had already happened in the past. Thus, it is precisely to overcome this chronological restriction that emerges the third, and current, stage, which aims to apply the conceptual framework of complexity to the formulation of foreign policy.

3.3 Policy implications deriving from CT conceptual framework

Adopting the conceptual framework of Complexity to analyze foreign policy presents new challenges, both to the analyst and to practitioners. In this world in which the international system is a complex adaptive one, it is necessary to recognize that predictions – on a best case scenario – will be at most limited. Taking into consideration how CAS function, those who wish to act in the international arena have to always face uncertainty, the idea that one action will end up producing unintended and unexpected consequences. As Axelrod and Cohen (2000: XVII) put it: "the hard reality that the world we must act is often beyond our understanding."

Nonlinear behaviors are undoubtedly challenging, and therefore some critics have accused that adopting CT would be a "recipe for doing nothing" (Geyer and Rihani 2010:

183). Nevertheless, this view is not only wrong, but potentially misleading. If one conceives of the international system as a CAS, this recognition must be taken into consideration when formulating policies. These policies, for their turn, must be in touch with this complex scenario if one aims to take greater advantage of it.

It is important to realize that many analysts – even some that were not specifically working with CT framework – have worked with this same idea. According to Zakaria (2008: 268), for example, in this new, evolving world of emerging powers, “international life is only going to get messier. Being accommodating, flexible and adaptable is likely to produce better results on the ground.” Axelrod and Cohen (2000: 7) advocate for a broad way of dealing with this phenomenon, which they label *harnessing complexity*, i.e., “deliberately changing the structure of a system in order to increase some measure of performance, and to do so by exploiting an understanding that the system itself is complex.” These authors argue that it is not only possible to “use complexity to do better” but also that “to harness complexity typically means living with it, and even taking advantage of it, rather than trying to ignore or eliminate it” (Axelrod and Cohen 2000: 9).

During the last years, research on CT applied to policy planning has advanced in a number of ways. A very prolific strand is agent-based computational modeling, which uses softwares to simulate the nonlinear interaction among multiple actors in a CAS (Cederman 1997; Miller and Page 2007; Epstein 2007). Beyond that, a number of tools have been developed, such as “cascade of complexity”, “balance and range of outcomes”, “complexity mapping”, “fitness landscaping”, and the “Stacey diagram” (Gigerenzer and Selten 2002; OECD 2009; Geyer and Pickering, 2011)

Although these theoretical and methodological advancements are of the utmost importance for a comprehensive understanding of the impact caused by CT emergence into IR, the present work is not based upon them. The main reason for that is our focus on Brazilian foreign policy in a macro perspective through an understanding of what are the *policy implications* which arise once the international system is conceived as a complex adaptive one.

Some authors present specific policy recommendations based upon insights about how to act in such unpredictable environment. One broad tendency is to advocate for, precisely, *flexible policies that are able to adapt to changes*. Haynes (2003: 130) writes: “complexity theory implies that engagement in strategy and planning in the public sector

is a very dynamic process, where success in strategic planning paradoxically depends on an awareness and appreciation of disorder, risk and uncertainty.” One way of doing this is engaging in a *decentralized decision-making process*, one that takes into consideration the inputs from a wide range of actors. This policy implication comes from the idea that, in CAS, multiple actors interact autonomously, creating processes which might – through feedback mechanisms – produce systemic effects. Therefore, Lehmann (2012: 408) observes that “proponents of complexity have argued that policy-makers have to encourage locally based processes of development”, while Haynes (2003: 119) writes that “complexity implies that participation needs to be pursued on two additional fronts, first the need for ‘ongoing’ involvement and interaction with participants over time, and second the need to incorporate a diversity of participants as combatants in representative issues.” Moreover, Haynes (2003: 119) asserts that “participation is not solely about consulting individuals at key points in the cycle, but rather about forming an institutionalized level of engagement that allows stakeholders to define their own approach to long-term issues.”

This participatory, decentralized policy process, however, must be guided by *scenarios* that include well-defined goals, but with the availability of multiple *alternatives* to be employed in its pursuance. Ford (2011: 3) describes scenario-based planning as “a method of trying to cope with the unpredictable nonlinearity of one’s operating environment that does not tie an organization’s fate quite so dangerously to the linear assumptions of traditional trend extrapolating strategic planning.” Ford (2011: 3) also points out that, although not all scenario-based planning take CT into account, those that do can “better prepare one to *handle* unforeseen events, by encouraging the development of *institutional and psychological agility* and a maximally broad repertoire of adaptive behaviors which can be drawn upon in unanticipated situations”. Finally, Feder (2002: 122) presents some of the positive effects of a scenario-based planning:

It requires a critical examination of the forces likely to shape future developments. This promotes a deeper understanding of situational dynamics. Second, it makes explicit the key uncertainties, reducing the likelihood of surprise. Third, it highlights developments that are inevitable. Many of these inevitabilities are rarely obvious. Fourth, it indicates ways in which a system can change and ways in which it cannot. Fifth, it requires analysts and, we hope, decision makers to consider ways to deal with contingencies.

4. Case studies

According to Doratioto and Vidigal (2014: 2), “the goals that Brazilian diplomacy intends to accomplish in the coming years have been shaped throughout its historical trajectory, from the formation of the national state and Brazilian nationality to its performance in face of globalization forces.” As mentioned above, the very idea of continuity is one of the main axes of Brazilian foreign policy. It is, therefore, based on this assumption – that Brazil’s current diplomatic objectives are determined by the country’s historical international agenda – that the following case studies shall be analyzed.

The main objective of the present study, however, lies not in understanding the objects *per se* of the case studies – namely, Brazil and the UNSC and international humanitarian cooperation. Rather, its focus is on understanding the *approaches* deployed by Brazil while attempting to achieve these purposes, which have longstanding historical traditions within its diplomatic agenda.

4.1 Brazil’s long campaign for a permanent seat at the UNSC

The current Brazilian advocacy for a reform of the UNSC, to include a permanent seat for itself, is embedded within Brazil’s long diplomatic tradition of seeking a place in the core of global governance architecture. In accordance with the transformations of global order, it has been manifested in multiple occasions throughout the 20th century: the II Peace Conference, the Paris Peace Conference, the League of Nations, the post-World War II conferences and, now, the UNSC.

There appears to be a consensus in the literature that Brazil’s participation at the II Peace Conference at the Hague (1907) marks the country’s debut on the international multilateral arena (Garcia 1996; Amorim 2007; Cardim 2013; Doratioto and Vidigal, 2014; Viegas, 2015). Having declined an invitation to take part in its first edition (1899), it symbolizes the moment when Brazilian foreign policy’s scope expanded from regional to global concerns (Cardim 2013: 500).

Scheduled to address “peace issues” such as weaponry control and the law of the war, the Conference’s most contemptuous discussion item was the proposed creation of a Permanent Court of Arbitration. The original project, presented by the United States with German and British support, advocated for it to be composed by 17 judges, 9 of which permanent (one from each of the then-great powers – UK, US, France, Germany, Italy,

Russia, Japan and China – plus one from the hosting Netherland) and 8 to be rotated among the remaining countries (Viegas 2015). Brazil staunchly opposed this proposal – labeling the rotation system a “proclamation of inequality” (Viegas 2015: 92), criticizing “selective representation” (Garcia 1997:110) which “discriminated countries by ‘importance levels’, without clear or consensual criteria” (Amorim 2007: 6) – and presented its own counter-proposal. Brazil’s argument was based on the principle of legal equality of states, opposition to unequal treatment of nations and defense of a way of “democratizing the international system” based on the primacy of right over might (Amorim 2007; Viegas 2015).

These principles argued for by Brazil in 1907 have since turned into an “enduring feature of Brazilian diplomacy” (Viegas 2015) and they became its “new international insertion paradigm” (Cardim 2013: 500). Concerning the analysis of the country’s campaign for a permanent seat at the UNSC, Viegas (2015: 90) argues that the concepts formulated then “apply perfectly to the current situation.” Moreover, it must be noted that in addition to this idealistic stance, Brazil was acting in search of a greater international status: when it was placed in a position its policymakers deemed inferior to its stance, Brazil aimed at achieving a permanent seat for itself, for which the defense of nations juridical equality seemed the best mean (Garcia 1996:109-111). Cardim (2013: 500) also notes that at the Conference Brazil not only “criticized the current international system, but also assumed its own responsibility in reforming it.”

A few years later, World War I broke out in Europe. After some Brazilian ships were sunk by Germany, and the US had entered the Great War, Brazil also joined the conflict, being the only Latin-American country to do so (Doratioto 2012: 163). For that, it gained the right to take part in peace negotiations, which took place in Paris, 1919. Already in the first days of the gathering, Brazilian representatives realized their participation was constrained by the great powers, and positioned itself against the division between powers with “general” and “limited” interests, in a critique also to the “old diplomatic practices” (Garcia 2007; Doratioto 2012). It was a demonstration that Brazil was keeping up with foreign relations principles it had proclaimed at the II Peace Conference, as well as “an attempt to make Brazil project itself prominently at the international arena” (Garcia 2005: 33). Even though there was no concrete outcome from this complaint, by stating “that it has ‘general interests’, i.e., a vision about the world and its functioning”, Brazil placed itself at the core of the international debates, in a way that became “a lasting feature of its

international identity throughout the 20th century” (Lafer 2001: 74). Furthermore, with the endorsement of the US, Brazil was elected as a temporary member to the League of Nations’ Council, what has been “cheered by the Brazilian government as a sign of recognition for its contribution” (Garcia 2007: 13), marking Brazilian foreign policy’s apogee at the beginning of the 1920’s (Doratioto 2012: 165).

The League had a dual structure: it was composed by a Council – eight members, being four permanent (Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan) and four temporary – and an Assembly with all member-states. In spite of being a temporary member since 1920, and repeatedly reelected for the post, Brazil postulated continuously for permanent membership (Cervo and Bueno 2012: 240). The fact that the US was out of the League, as a result of its Congress’ refusal to sign the Versailles Treaty, boosted Brazil’s argument that it ought to be the representative of the American hemisphere. Since 1921, nevertheless, the Council repeatedly denied, in secret meetings, Brazil and Spain’s claim to a permanent seat (Cervo and Bueno: 241). Brazil continued determined, and in 1923 it proposed the inclusion of two new permanent members – the US and Germany. Knowing that the entrance of the US in the League was “virtually impossible”, this would mean Brazil’s *de facto* permanent membership, based on the argument of representing the Americas, but it was stalled by British opposition (Viegas 2015: 98).

Even though aware that obtaining a permanent seat would “not bring concrete outcomes”, Brazil kept its campaign, essentially seeking international prestige (Cervo and Bueno 2012: 241; Doratioto 2012: 166; Viegas 2015: 96). In 1924, therefore, it was the first country to establish a permanent representation to the League, and sent an envoy “to Europe in search of support for the Brazilian candidacy” (Doratioto 2012: 166). The following year, when Germany signed the Locarno Agreements, representing its reinsertion at the European system – with an understanding to its adoption at the League with a permanent seat at the Council –, Brazil decided it was the perfect opportunity to become, itself, a permanent member, and threatened to use its veto in case its proposition failed. It was a clear diplomatic mistake, but Brazil was obstinate, in such a way it was even considered blackmail (Cervo and Bueno 2012: 242). The Europeans, that initially supported Brazil, went from empathy to indifference and, finally, to discomfort; the Latin-Americans, who had already labeled Brazil’s standing as “arrogant”, showed public opposition (Viegas 2015: 98). The result was Brazil’s exit from the League, what was justified on the basis of the country’s then-decades old arguments: it was Eurocentric and

America was unfairly underrepresented at an almost exclusively “great powers’ League” which acted according to 19th century diplomatic practices (Cervo and Bueno 2012: 243-44).

Therefore, later, when World War II was still going on, and initial talks about a future international organization to be created first appeared, Brazil considered it as its chance for a “new beginning on universal scope multilateralism” (Garcia 2012: 84). Brazilian president, Getulio Vargas, had already attached the deployment of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force to “Brazilian capacity of exerting influence at the peace negotiations”, thus “the ‘world restructuring’ was a recurrent theme on his speeches”, for Brazil considered its presence at international decision-making structures a “legitimate right on which it was not up to quibble” (Garcia 2012: 85-88). Even though president Franklin Roosevelt supported Brazil’s aspirations, and advocated on its behalf, the UK and the USSR opposed it, and Brazil ended up excluded from its desired permanent membership (Arraes 2005; Garcia 2012).

The country, instead, advocated for a nonpermanent seat for itself, and got one for the 1946-7 period. From then to the 1960s, it was elected four other times, until it distanced itself, staying two decades outside the UNSC, at a difficult moment at home – the military dictatorship – and abroad – Cold War’s “freezing of world power” context (Vargas 2013). When both these event were already over, Brazil was finally elected again to the Council, to the 1988-89 term, beginning what Vargas 2008 calls its “permanent campaign” for permanent membership. According to him (Vargas 2008: 54):

Brazil’s advocacy for a UNSC reform is relatively constant since the end of the Cold War. Even though some emphasis and tactics variations have occurred, the search for a permanent seat at the Security Council seems to have turned into a heritage, although not an undisputed one, of Brazilian foreign policy, in spite of the government and ministerial changes the country has been through.

According to Vargas 2008, Brazil’s campaign is built upon four essential arguments. The first is the “general legitimating argument”, which basically states that turning the Council into a more representative body would also give it greater international legitimacy: the reform of the UNSC, therefore, is important for every UN-member state, once a more representative Security Council would be a more effective one. There is also the domestic version of the “legitimating argument”, this one used to justify to Brazilians

why a reform (and Brazil's campaign for one) is important for them, i.e., aiming to justify that the benefits that Brazil would derive from permanent membership are larger than the costs it would incur into. Thirdly, there is the "credential argument", which highlights Brazil's adequacy for a permanent seat, which often includes its commitment to multilateralism/the UN and its physical capabilities. Finally, Vargas points to the "regional argument" Brazil makes use of, in an attempt of convincing its neighboring countries it would be also beneficial for them: in it, Brazil presents its candidacy as a gain – rather than a threat – for the whole region.

Similarly, Lima 2010 argues that it was during Sarney's presidency (1985-89) that the reform of the UNSC entered into Brazilian diplomatic discourse, and since remained. Nevertheless, she adds that Brazil's official intention of joining as permanent member became explicit only in 1994. Indeed, the mid-1990s, as well as in mid-2000s – more specifically around the UN's 50th and 60th anniversary, respectively – have been moments of special ebullience regarding the reform of the organization (Lima 2010).

In anticipation for the 60th anniversary, for instance, Brazil began to articulate internationally, trying to build momentum for its candidacy. In 2002, it supported Russia's membership at the World Trade Organization, and in return received Russian support for its UNSC bid – the first one it received from a permanent member of the Council (group known as the P5) (Arraes 2005: 15). In the same year, Brazil and Germany mutually endorsed their candidatures (Arraes 2005). In 2003, with the *Brasília Declaration*, the then-created India-Brazil-South Africa Forum (IBSA) argued for the necessity of reforming the UNSC (Neto n.d.: 13). Then, the invasion of Iraq by the US, despite the lack of endorsement of the UNSC, propitiated "unprecedented political support" to the CSNU reform proposal, according to then-Brazilian minister of foreign affairs, Celso Amorim (Amorim 2005). Also in 2003, Lula, in the first year of his presidency, addressed the UNGA claiming that "Brazil is encouraged to continue advocating for a Security Council that better reflects contemporary reality" (Corrêa 2013: 833).

In the following year, Brazil strategically began its ninth term as nonpermanent UNSC member. In that position, it came together with Japan, Germany and India, forming the G-4, a group of candidates for permanent membership in a possibly enlarged UNSC – the most concrete step in its campaign so far. According to Amorim (2005), the G-4 aims to

“jointly develop a proposal to increase the Council’s representativeness, making it more democratic.” Based on the assumption that a “balance of strengths which better reflects the ensemble of [the UN] member-states will improve the organization’s responsiveness”, it advocates for the necessity of “incorporating big developing countries, with territorial and demographic credentials, diplomatic articulation capability and consistent and meaningful contribution toward international peace and security” (Amorim 2005). In regard to this last aspect, it ought to be noted that, in 2004, Brazil’s acceptance to take part and lead the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti – Minustah – is pointed by analysts as a landmark in Brazilian foreign policy. The country – which until then used to be criticized for its lack of deep involvement in the UN’s collective security mechanism – seemed to be acting to strengthen its credentials (Lima 2010: 190).

Finally, in July 2005, the G-4 presented its proposed UNSC reform to the UNGA through project of resolution A/59/L.64: six new permanent members – to be elected by the UNGA, two from Africa, two from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean and one from the Western Europeans and Others Group – and four non-permanent – from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, one from each. In regard to the controversial issue of the veto, it recommends to be discussed in the future. In addition, the proposed resolution also envisions a review of the reform after fifteen years (Amorim 2005). Brazil seemed to believe that the context in 2005 was propitious to UNSC reform, and sent envoys to about 50 countries, bearing a letter from president Lula in defense of its candidacy (Neto n.d.: 17).

Since 2005, thus, Brazil has been articulating its proposed UNSC reform through the G-4. In 2008, France and the United Kingdom expressed support to the group’s campaign. The G-4, in turn, had its first ministerial meeting since the presentation of the proposed resolution A/59/L.64 only in 2010, and again in 2013 and 2014. In 2011, it handed a letter to the UNGA’s president pointing to the more than 80 national supports it had already received as a key to the advancement of negotiations. Finally, in 2015, G-4 chiefs of state had their second summit, the first since the group’s foundation, when they reaffirmed the inadequacy of the UN’S structure after 70 years since its origin, and the necessity of reforming it, with them as permanent members of the Security Council.⁴

⁴ The updated chronology of negotiations towards UNSC reform can be found at a website created by Brazil’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs dedicated exclusively to this issue: <http://csnu.itamaraty.gov.br>

4.2: The campaign for UNSC reform: sticking to linear approaches, failing to recognize complexity

On its campaign for the reform of the UNSC, Brazil has failed to achieve its goal. Taking into consideration CT's conceptual framework, one of the main explanations to this would be the country's incapacity to recognize this issue as a "wicked problem" and, instead, sticking to traditional and linear approaches.

The concept of "wicked problems" was proposed in a, since then, influential article by Rittel and Webber (1973). These authors claim that policy planning problems are of a different kind than those they label as "tame problems". While tame problems – typical positivist/linear issues, as mathematical equations – are "definable, understandable and consensual", policy problems are wicked, because for them "there are no 'solutions' in the sense of definitive and objective answers" (Rittel and Webber 1973: 155-6). Rittel and Webber claim that tame problems' solutions are "based in Newtonian mechanistic physics, [and] are not readily adapted to contemporary conceptions of interacting open systems" (Rittel and Webber 1973: 156): according to CT conceptual framework, thus, these are linear solutions, unable to deal with nonlinear, complex phenomena.

According to this perspective, there are ten defining-features of a wicked problem, and all of them are contrasted to tame problems: i) there is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem; ii) wicked problems have no stopping rule; iii) solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad; iv) there is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem; v) every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one shot operation' – because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly; vi) wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan; vii) every wicked problem is essentially unique; viii) every wicked problem can be considered a symptom of another problem; ix) the existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways – the choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution; x) the planner has no right to be wrong (Rittel and Webber 1973).

The conundrum of UNSC reform is a typical wicked problem. For instance, taking into consideration the first characteristic above mentioned, this assertion becomes clearer. While for tame problems "an exhaustive formulation can be stated containing all the

information the problem-solver needs for understanding and solving the problem”, for wicked problems “problem understanding and problem resolution are concomitant to each other”, thus “knowledge of all conceivable solutions is required”, meaning that “every specification of the problem is a specification of the direction in which a treatment is considered” (Rittel and Webber 1973: 161). In the case of UNSC reform, for example, how could one, therefore, define the problem and its possible solution? By convincing the veto-holding P5 members? By persuading Latin-American countries that Brazil is the best candidate to represent the region? By stressing Brazil’s capabilities which enable it to assume a permanent seat? By trying to change the United for Consensus grouping maximalist demands, which in practice work against the reform?

In other words, there is no definitive conceptualization of the nature of the problem of UNSC reform, as well as there is no clear policy initiative that could, therefore, solve it: depending on the perspective adopted, a different essence of the problem and a different way to tackle it will arise. Thus, the classical, linear “assumption that a planning project can be organized into distinct phases” (Rittel and Webber 1973: 162) is not useful to dealing with wicked problems, as is the case of UNSC reform.

Moreover, because for wicked problems “any solution, after being implemented, will generate waves of [unpredictable] consequences over an extended – virtually an unbounded – period of time”, and because “every implemented solution is consequential” (Rittel and Webber 1973: 163-4), there is a larger degree of resistance of the involved actors in pursuing a solution to the problem. It is not difficult to notice this characteristic reluctance to change in almost all actors relevant to UNSC reform (with the exception of its own proponents, as the G-4).

Finally, an additional difficulty lies on the fact that a wicked problem can be considered a symptom of another problem. In the case of UNSC reform, for instance, it is possible to think of it as a symptom of global asymmetries of power. Rittel and Webber (1973: 165) assume that “the higher the level of a problem’s formulation, the broader and more general it becomes: and the more difficult it becomes to do something about it”, and that “one should not try to cure symptoms.” To the case study into consideration, this conclusion means that working for UNSC reform, without changing the global power architecture that underlies it, would be unsuccessful.

In face of this situation, two important questions arise: What has Brazil been doing so far to try to solve this issue, and what results it has produced? What, according to CT's framework, it could do, instead, to achieve different results?

As previously mentioned, since 2004 Brazil's strategy to advocate for UNSC reform is to act through the G-4. The most important actions have been, so far, high level meetings between heads of state and diplomatic encounters. Brazil, with that, has achieved important support from many countries, but there is no perspective for real reform in the near future. It can, thus, be understood as a linear approach that fails to recognize the intrinsic complexity and wickedness of this problem. It assumes that a strategy of "problem identification" (What has to be done to get a permanent UN Security Council seat?) and persuasion (What do I have to do to convince others of my right to have a permanent security council seat?) followed, eventually, by action (change the structure of the Security Council) would be able to deal with the issue. It is a classic linear approach: identifying "Problem A", defining "action B" to, eventually get to desired "result C". Its actions, however, have been unable to revert the paralysis which characterizes this issue. Moreover, it should be noted that, even though rhetoric for reform is constantly present at the diplomatic discourse, there was a 10-years "interval" between the two G-4 heads of state's meetings.

For a wicked problem "there is no rule or procedure to determine the 'correct' explanation or combination of them", since the "choice of explanation is arbitrary in the logical sense" (Rittel and Webber 1973: 166). Therefore, considering that "in the pursuit of a wicked planning problem, a host of potential solutions arises; and another host is never thought up", (Rittel and Webber 1973: 165) to enlarge the available set of options would mean involving more stakeholders. Camillus (2003), for instance, explicitly advocates that an organization which aims to tackle a wicked problem "must go beyond obtaining facts and opinions from stakeholders (...) [and] should involve them in finding ways to manage the problem."

By insisting in a linear approach to the matter, however, Brazil fails to enlarge the set of policy options it could develop to try to tackle the issue of UNSC reform and its national bid for a permanent seat. This is not to say that involving more stakeholders into the Brazil's UNSC reform bid would certainly create positive results. Even Rittel and Webber (1973: 169) assume that, not only, none of the tactics they envisioned in their article

would “answer the difficult questions attached to the sorts of wicked problems planners must deal with”, but also that there is no theory “that might dispel wickedness.” Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that, by not recognizing the intrinsic complexity and wickedness of this issue, Brazil fails in coming up with possibilities to improve its chances of achieving one of its most relevant historical foreign policy goals: securing a place of prominence for itself in global governance structures.

4.3 PAA-Africa and Brazil-Africa relations

Brazil-Africa relations can be roughly divided in five periods (World Bank and IPEA 2011). The first goes from the 16th century until Brazil’s Independence (1822), when the relation was based upon transatlantic slave trade. From 1822 until the 1950s, there was a “gradual marginalization of relations between Brazil and Africa.” Throughout the 1950s, in the context of African decolonization, the third phase of the relationship was marked by Brazil’s “hesitant support to anti-colonialism, constrained by traditional relations with former colonizers.” This detachment was overturned in 1961, when Brazil adopted an “active political and economic rapprochement with Africa” which lasted until the 1980s. From then until now, the 5th phase is the one in which “Africa has become one of the major fronts of Brazil’s international agenda.”

This origin of Brazil-Africa relations date back to when Brazil was considered as “Portuguese America.” The main bond, then, was slave trade, in such a massive scale that African slaves formed not only one of the basis of Brazil as a colony –being the “amalgam of the colonial society” – but also one of the foundations of the 19th century Imperial state’s organization (Saraiva 2012: 14). It is noteworthy that early in 1648, when Portugal decided to conquer back Angola from the Dutch, Luso-Brazilian troops – which included Brazilian indigenous people – departed from Rio de Janeiro (Alencastro 2000). Due to intense commercial, human and cultural fluxes, Portuguese colonies in Africa, at the beginning of the 19th century, were closer to Brazil than to Portugal. This worried Portuguese political elites so much –who feared its African domains might decide to break away and join the newly created Empire of Brazil – that it conditioned the signing of the 1825 independence reconnaissance treaty to a clause in which Brazil compromised on not annexing them (Cervo and Bueno: 2012).

Later, throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, Brazil-Africa relations stalled, at a moment when Africa suffered with European imperialism, while Brazil was

distracted with the United States and the *Río de la plata* region, besides its own domestic issues (Saraiva 2012).

Although recognizing that there is a “virtual consensus” in the literature pointing to the 1960’s – during the “independent foreign policy” – as the turning point of the relation, Saraiva 2012 argues that the roots of the rapprochement lie on the previous decades. Then, the main contact point was Brazil’s search for external partners, which could support its national development project. During Juscelino Kubitschek’s government, nevertheless, Brazil “watched silently” to the wave of decolonizations in Africa (Saraiva 2012).

It was only in 1961, within the context of the so called “independent foreign policy”, that Africa reappeared firmly as an important point of the Brazilian diplomatic agenda. In that year, president Janio Quadros addressed the Congress about the importance of this relationship, defining Brazilian foreign policy as “an instrument against colonialism and racism”, sustaining that Brazil and Africa had “shared aspirations” and advocating for the right of Africans to self-determination. Institutionally, 1961 was also the year when Itamaraty inaugurated its Africa Division, included a specific chapter on Africa in its annual report, developed sub-working groups to propose ways to deepen the relationship and started to expand its diplomatic representation network at the African continent (Saraiva 2012: 37).

This Brazil-Africa rapprochement was briefly abandoned after the military coup, in 1964, when the relationship was framed into geopolitical considerations about the defense of the South Atlantic against communism. Some years later, however, still during the dictatorship, Africa regained its importance to Brazil’s diplomacy. The visit of then-foreign minister Mario Gibson Barboza to nine African countries in 1972, and its resulting agreements, signs the resumption of the relationship. Moreover, in 1975, Brazil was the first country to recognize the independence of Angola from Portugal: besides marking the detachment from Portugal’s colonialism – which have characterized Brazilian foreign policy to Africa so far –, the fact that a military, right-wing government was engaging with a Marxist movement (the MPLA) demonstrates how Brazil-Africa relations had been definitely embedded into the country’s diplomatic priorities, overcoming ideological/political barriers. (Saraiva 2012)

During the 1980s, even facing an economic crisis, Brazil kept its policy towards Africa. The last president of the military regime, João Figueiredo, was the first South American

chief of state to officially visit the “black Africa” in 1983. Even re-democratization did not change Brazil’s stance. In 1985, president José Sarney signed a law imposing sanctions to the *apartheid* regime in South Africa, which had been the closest African ally of Brazil for a long time. Furthermore, Brazil championed, at the UNGA, the 1986 resolution creating the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS) – enhancing its cooperation with African countries –, in opposition to the NATO-like South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO), proposed by South Africa, which also expected to lead it. (Saraiva 2012)

There was a decline in Brazil-Africa relations during the 1990s, when Brazilian political elites advocated for special relations with rich, Northern countries, while African nations were suffering with domestic crises. Nevertheless, in 1996 was established the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), which since then has been one of the main multilateral forums used by Brazil to articulate with African countries (Ribeiro 2010).

However, it was only in the beginning of the 21st century that Brazil’s “African policy” (Filho and Lessa 2007), “Brazil’s Atlantism” and “Africa renaissance” (Saraiva 2012) converged, turning the relationship with Africa into one of the cornerstones of Brazilian foreign policy. The most visible face of this process is the mutual enlargement of diplomatic representations: while in 1974, there were only fifteen African embassies in Brazil and six Brazilian ambassadors posted to sixteen African countries (Saraiva 2012; 22), there are, today, 37 Brazilian embassies in Africa and 33 African embassies in Brasília (21 and 16 of which have been established since 2003, respectively) (Milani, Muñoz, Duarte and Klein 2014: 61). Also, many high level visits have occurred in both directions, with highlights to presidents Lula da Silva 2009 and Dilma Rousseff’s 2013 official visits to African Union’s (AU) Summits. Multilaterally, Brazil and Africa became engaged through the South America-Africa Summit (ASA), created in 2006 by a joint Brazilian/Nigerian initiative. Moreover, South Africa’s inclusion in the BRICS, a measure supported by Brazil, demonstrates the importance given to the African continent (Visentini 2013: 144-5). Today, Brazil has an overarching network of initiatives towards Africa, developing a “solidary diplomacy through technical cooperation” (Visentini 2013: 123), marked by an important “dimension of citizenship and knowledge” sharing (Saraiva 2012: 100). It is in this context that the PAA-Africa program is embedded.

PAA-Africa was conceived at “Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security, Fighting Hunger and Rural Development” seminar, which took place in Brasília, 2010. Then, the Brazilian government committed, alongside the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Program (WFP), and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), to cooperate with African countries on the realm of food security, relying upon lessons learned from Brazil’s Zero Hunger Initiative. Five sub-Saharan African countries, “representing the different regions of Africa”, were selected as partners: Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal. (Brazil, FAO and WFP, 2013; PAA-Africa 2016)

It is an “international version” of a Brazilian domestic public policy called Food Acquisition Program (PAA), created in 2003. Its essence is to develop a “twin track” approach to food security and development: it establishes a policy of government purchases from smallholder farmers, whose destination are schools, therefore incurring in multiple beneficial effects, such as fostering economic growth and fighting food insecurity. In Brazil, PAA is grounded on an inter-sectorial government structure – based on the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry for Agricultural Development– and is actively engaged with civil society, through the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) (WFP 2015).

Rural poverty “is particularly high in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly one-third of the world’s extremely poor rural people”, and 239 million undernourished people, live (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013: 2). Thus, when Brazil became deeply engaged on “solidary diplomacy with technical cooperation” with Africa (Saraiva 2012) it was almost a natural step to extend the lessons it had learned from PAA to its relations with the continent. According to PAA-Africa’s Funding Agreement (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013: 3), it “represents a strategic opportunity to exchange, with the UN and other African governments, Brazil’s experience in implementing the PAA program.” Furthermore, the WFP (2015: 17) highlights that “South-South cooperation is a pillar of the program and offers a cycle of continuous exchange and learning among developing countries”, which also enables “opportunities for triangular cooperation with donors and multilateral UN agencies.”

Concretely, during its first phase (2012-13), “PAA-Africa supported 5,500 farmers, who supplied 130,000 students with locally produced food” (PAA-Africa 2016). On the

second phase (2012-16), so far it “has been supporting 11 300 farmers and 158 000 students”, and it expects to “reach over 30 000 farming households and over 400 000 school-aged children” from 2016 to 2019 (PAA-Africa 2016). To monitor and evaluate its achievements, the program has developed a wide range of tools: reports of project implementation; meetings at regional, district and community levels (“to review the progress of the project, share lessons and jointly plan forthcoming project initiatives”); focal points in regional and district agriculture offices; monitoring workshops; international seminars; and multi-stakeholder experts exchanges (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013: 5-6).

PAA-Africa intends to be an innovative program, aiming to replace “the traditional emphasis on technology transfer, aid and assistance initiatives” with an effort to build on and strengthen “existing institutions, production systems and local community and social networks” (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013: 3). It awards high priority to mutually sharing knowledge among partners, strengthening local actors (both governmental and non-governmental ones), working to complement the achievements already obtained by the WFP, promoting national ownership and working through partnerships (both international and local) (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013). It does not apply a unique model everywhere, but, instead, “prioritizes the best tailored solution for each context”, constantly reviewed according to the findings of its monitoring and evaluation system (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013).

4.4 PAA-Africa: an adaptive policy advances a historic diplomatic goal

According to Geyer and Rihani (2010: 137), “complexity views development as an uncertain, open-ended, and long-term process driven by a large number of interactions that generate self-organized stable patterns capable of adaptation.” It is clearly a complex, non-linear phenomenon, in which “the most effective actions happen at the lowest possible level” (Geyer and Rihani 2010: 137). As we are using CT’s conceptual framework, thus, we shall evaluate PAA-Africa according to this benchmark. In this sense, therefore, it is striking to notice, from the beginning, that Brazil’s focus on Africa, back in the mid of the 20th century, has been interpreted as a “more *flexible* and pragmatic Brazilian diplomatic action” in response to the uncertainties of the international context (Hurrell 1988, *apud* Saraiva 2012: 44).

One of the most important policy implications derived from CT's conceptual framework is the importance of adopting a "decentralized decision making process", which leads to the necessity of incorporating "inputs from a wide range of actors" in "locally based processes of development" (Lehmann 2012: 408) based on "ongoing involvement and interaction with participants over time" (Haynes 2003: 119). PAA-Africa's "multi-stakeholder approach" seems to suit with remarkable property to these benchmarks.

First, it is institutionally grounded on a diverse network of international partners. Brazil, that originally designed the policy, established partnerships with the WFP and the FAO, both international organizations with great expertise on the subject, and a wide network of contacts and infrastructure on the ground. While FAO "provides technical assistance to farmers and farmer associations", the WFP "purchases food from farmer associations and distributes it to local communities" (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013). Another element of this partnership is the UK's DFID, which also has a significant record in implementing cooperation initiatives throughout the developing world, and, like Brazil, "offers technical expertise and financial support" (Brazil, FAO and WFP 2013). Finally, governments of the African countries where the project is being implemented are considered partners, and not mere passive recipients. PAA-Africa's network, therefore, encompasses developing and developed countries, as well as international organizations: its diversity enhances its legitimacy and efficiency, for it is representative of the wide spectrum of global governance participants.

Nevertheless, PAA-Africa's partnerships expand well beyond this core institutional arrangement. It must be noted that the original PAA, as a Brazilian public policy, is governed by the "managing group", an inter-ministerial setting which encompasses the ministries of: Social and Agrarian Development; Agriculture, Livestock and Supplies; Finance; and Planning, Budget and Management. At the African countries, civil society organizations and local governments are also crucial partners in the implementation process: multiple stakeholders, as farmers' associations and subnational governments, play crucial roles (Gyoeri, Miranda and Soares 2016: 12).

It is thus very important to emphasize the essence of decentralization which characterizes PAA-Africa. It encompasses national governments and international organizations; many different governmental levels at the African countries; civil society organizations. Moreover, in Brazil, the original policy – the PAA –, as well as the whole food security

agenda more generally, are coordinated by CONSEA, which is characterized by a democratic/participative approach to the issue. It is a council which interacts constantly with civil society in order to promote food security throughout the country.

In addition, it is noteworthy that PAA-Africa's approach is not "one size fits all", as it is usual in international aid programs in which a unique policy/initiative is implemented throughout the globe, not taking into consideration local peculiarities. On the contrary, PAA-Africa's "implementation approach varies across the five implementing countries, according to the existing framework of national policies and programs, as well as the engagement and capacity of national governments to play an active role in implementation and/or coordination" (Gyoeri, Miranda and Soares 2016).

It is remarkable how this decentralized, flexible/adaptive model is in line with the policy prescriptions which arise from applying CT's framework to political settings, as mentioned earlier. In a CAS, its numerous constitutive elements interact freely among themselves: a decentralized implementation approach, thus, is the best way to advance a program. Besides that, it is important to notice the expanded Brazilian diplomatic network in the African continent, which also goes in the same direction. A greater diplomatic presence offers the possibility of interacting with diverse actors on the terrain, giving more flexibility to foreign policy initiatives.

PAA-Africa may be considered a success in itself if we consider that it has achieved its dual goal of working to promote food security and enhance the economic situation of the families it encompasses, as has been demonstrated by the decision of scaling up the actions in the five countries and expanding it to Kenya and the Gambia in its Phase III (2016-2019) (Gyoeri, Miranda and Soares 2016). Nevertheless, in the present work its relevance must be assessed in relation to the way the diplomatic processes related to it have been designed and deployed. In addition to its decentralized, participative nature and its diverse architecture of partnerships already highlighted, there are two additional relevant features.

The first refers to the fact that PAA-Africa is a program in constant evaluation. Different expert groups from the countries and organizations involved are constantly assessing, with different methodologies, the impacts of the programs to its intended beneficiaries. The results of these studies are taken into consideration at the design of the successive phases of the program, which intends, precisely, to be flexible. Besides this concrete

contribution, this characteristic is also in accordance with CT's idea that there is no end to knowledge, which is an open and enduring process.

The second feature is how the diplomatic processes deployed in this case study have contributed to the larger Brazilian goal of having a closer relationship with Africa. In this case, however, it is important to notice the difficulty in assessing it concretely, but there are important conclusions which arise. Certainly, Brazil has achieved a better relation with the five African partners, with which it has established continuous exchanges. Moreover, Brazil advocated for a non-imposing approach, one that takes at its cornerstone the agenda of the beneficiaries and their concerns, in a solidarity and cooperative essence. This has brought Brazil and Africa together and, even though Brazilian diplomatic discourse denies this kind of initiative as an instrument for a larger global power dispute, it has certainly contributed to enhancing Brazil's stance on the global arena. The main concrete impact which might be noted is the election of Brazilians at head posts of international organizations – José Graziano at the FAO in 2011, and Roberto Azevêdo at the WTO in 2013 –, with expressive support from African countries.

4.5 The importance of systemic thinking: institutional changes so that Itamaraty can harness complexity

Through the two case studies presented here, it is possible to observe that current Brazilian diplomatic practice are, at times, traditional/linear approaches and, at times, complexity-inspired ones, and their records are distinct. Concerning its relationship with Africa, the country has achieved positive results with policies that were not only successful in themselves but have also advanced its overarching goal of guaranteeing a special place in the global governance architecture. This was done by using an adaptive approach, which has been able to adapt to changing particular circumstances.

Simultaneously, however, Brazil stuck with a linear approach in its permanent campaign for a permanent seat at the UNSC, being unable to recognize the issue as a wicked problem, and therefore being held up by the paralysis that marks this issue. In this section, thus, the objective is to draw some conclusions from the comparison of both case studies, and the current Brazilian diplomatic practice, aiming to expand it to the whole foreign policy's macro level.

One of the main conclusions from the previous reflections is that in a CAS, as is the case of the international system, decentralized, flexible policies are better to deal with its inherent uncertainty and constant changes. This was demonstrated by the analysis of PAA-Africa. Nevertheless, beyond this specific program, Brazilian foreign policy has been demonstrating a trend towards decision-making decentralization and direct contact with multiple actors which goes in the same direction of CT's policy prescriptions.

Take as an example the classic Cheibub (1985) study about the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) historical evolution. It states that MRE has been going, throughout its history, through a process of gradual institutional strengthening, which includes the increase of its capacity of controlling, conducting and formulating foreign policy. Doing a historical examination, and concluding that there is a "slow and gradual rationalization and bureaucratization of MRE", Cheibub asserts that at the 1980s has occurred a "process of Itamaraty's expansion, i.e., a wide movement of diplomats to other governmental agencies" (Cheibub 1985: 130).

It is precisely this flux of diplomats throughout federal government agencies that, in addition to the continuous internationalization of public policies from other Ministries and the rise of new international agendas and actors, is taken as the foundation of Milani and Pinheiro's argument that foreign policy is public policy. These authors claim that Brazilian foreign policy is going through a process of "politicization", understood as "the intensification of debates about ideas, values and interests about policy choices", due to the fact that the national interest is neither homogeneous nor continuous; instead, it is the result of political and social transformations (Milani and Pinheiro 2013: 30).

Puntigliano 2008 is another author who recognizes the importance of the changes Brazil and the world are going through, and the impact it has to its diplomatic institutional architecture. On the one hand, the author recognizes that "Itamaraty is not just a Ministry among others, [for] it is an institutional line of continuity from the very conception of the Brazilian state (...), and expresses this as a watchdog of national foreign policy" (Puntigliano 2008: 30). On the other hand, he concedes that "the post-Cold War period implied an erosion of state centeredness due to the strengthening of new kind of inter- and transnational 'spheres of authority'" (Puntigliano 2008: 28). What, then, are the implications for Brazil's foreign policy from these phenomena? What is the role for Itamaraty in such scenario?

In a CAS, where multiple units interact freely among themselves creating unpredictable outcomes, one of the most important strategic actions is to “think systemically”, which means a nonlinear “understanding of a phenomenon within of a larger whole” (Ison 2008: 142). Systemic thinking is especially important in a CAS due to the great connectivity which characterizes it and makes so that even small changes might end up causing greater impacts. Therefore, the role of MRE as the cornerstone of Brazil’s diplomacy is reassured, but under different perspectives.

There is a double process required. On the one hand, Itamaraty’s tradition of being an insulated, centralized bureaucracy is incompatible with the decentralized decision-making process that is adequate to operate within a CAS. In addition, the inclusion of new actors and new agendas, as noted above, as well as the internationalization of almost all sectors of public policy, highlight even more the necessity of incorporating multiple stakeholders into foreign policy’s formulation process. On the other hand, this decentralization is not something radical, which would turn Itamaraty unnecessary. On the contrary, as Rittel and Webber (1973: 164) argue, to deal with wicked, complex problems, a larger set of options – derived from a larger set of involved stakeholders – might be beneficial, but, in the end, it is “a matter of *judgment* which of these solutions should be pursued and implemented.”

A similar rationale has already been advocated for by Pinheiro (2009: 24):

Brazilian foreign policy’s contemporary agenda seems to demand the building of a new institutional culture that, through greater synergy, succeeds in bringing together specific and diverse competencies to the benefit of common objectives, as well as a democratic debate about the country’s choices of priority and the set up of action strategies that are inclusive, cooperative and that promote Brazil’s development.

To sum up, a decentralized foreign policy decision-making process, which is adequate to deal with complexity, would change the nature of Itamaraty, but would also reinforce its importance. From this perspective, being insulated from multiple stakeholders is unproductive, but this does not mean waving the institutional autonomy of foreign policy formulation. Instead, MRE should adapt its structures taking into consideration the good practices that it already has – as was demonstrated with PAA-Africa’s approach – in order to involve as many stakeholders as possible, but using its institutional capabilities when finally deciding how to turn these inputs into foreign policy concrete initiatives. A

renewed role, thus, essentially one of coordination, seems to be the best option for Itamaraty.

5. Conclusion

Finally, after going through the previous sections, it is possible to return to the original question presented at the beginning of the present work: has Brazil achieved success in its goal of becoming a global player and achieving a more prominent place on the global arena?

The country has a longstanding tradition of trying to insert itself in core positions of the international architecture. It has been so since the II Peace Conference (1907), and included moments such as the Paris Conference (1919), the League of Nations (1920s) and post-World War II summits. Moreover, search for autonomy, in order to ensure its development, has been a continuous feature of Brazilian foreign policy in the last decades.

The end of the Cold War yielded conditions to the country to advance this agenda, both domestically and internationally. On the one hand, the end of the bipolar world order, first to a brief unipolar moment but, gradually, towards a multilateral setting, has opened up the international system to new issues and, more importantly, to new actors: notably, emerging powers such as Brazil. On the other hand, the end of military dictatorship and the return of democracy helped the country's legitimacy in international forums. Therefore, on the last decades, Brazil has displayed increasingly active diplomatic initiatives.

Simultaneously, it has been argued that traditional, linear paradigms of international politics and foreign policy, nevertheless, are not sufficient to explain global changes and patterns. They fail to capture the unpredictable nature of the international system as a CAS, i.e., a system in which, due to diverse units interacting freely among themselves and to positive and negative feedbacks, the outcomes are essentially unexpected. An important evidence of the insufficient explanatory capacity of the traditional framework was that no theory was able to foresee the end of the Cold War, and it was precisely then that analysts turned to the conceptual framework of complexity. Therefore, on the policy domain, one consequence is that theoretical models on which foreign policy decision making processes rely upon must also be questioned. Briefly, while traditional frameworks are essentially linear, complexity's framework highlights the importance of self-organization, adopting flexible policies able to adapt to change, designing a decentralized decision-making process and working with scenarios.

It was demonstrated by a historical overview of diplomatic initiatives that obtaining a place of preponderance at the center of multilateral forums and establishing a greater relation with Africa are Brazilian foreign policy's longstanding goals. Nevertheless, the evaluation made of the two recent case studies, one in each area, demonstrated different outcomes. It is important to highlight, however, that this is not a comparative research, i.e., its goal was not to compare each case study's nature with one another. The main goal, instead, was to take into account different ways that Itamaraty has been deploying to advance some of its traditional agenda items, and draw some conclusions from this approach.

Finally, then, it is possible to try to answer the research question, but for that, it is important to take into consideration the difficulty of defining "success". This is not a study for which there are clear, objective benchmarks upon which a definitive conclusion might arise. Even so, there are some observations which might be presented.

There is no doubt that Brazil's aim of reforming UNSC and ensuring a permanent seat for itself has failed: no reform has happened and, so far, there seems to be no indicative it might happen in the near future. PAA-Africa, however, might be considered, at least in itself, a success: the program has gradually developed and is becoming larger, encompassing more partner countries and beneficiaries. Moreover, we have argued that, even though a straightforward, causal connection might not be set (and it would be considered an instrumentalization of the program, which is emphatically denied by Brazil's diplomatic discourse), it has helped Brazil to develop a closer relation with Africa. In addition, this has boosted its central goal of becoming a more prominent international player, since African support was crucial for the elections of Brazilians as heads of two important international organizations: the FAO and the WTO.

Generally, Brazilian foreign policy has shown a lack of resilience. In essence, this means that its "withdrawal" under Dilma Rousseff shows that the change instigated throughout the last decades could not be scaled through the system. These changes could not be solidified to become a "policy of state" which could survive the changing of a government or adverse changes to domestic circumstances. According to the analysis pursued in this work, it is due to the fact that linear thinking does not allow for adaptation to changing circumstances. It is here that systemic, nonlinear approaches are of the utmost importance.

Hence, it might be concluded that the linear approach adopted by Itamaraty at its campaign for UNSC reform has failed, but where it has adopted a flexible, adaptive, decentralized policy – namely, at PAA-Africa –, it has succeeded. To observe this is not an attempt to present a normative, handbook-like approach to foreign policy-making: even CT's framework would advocate against it. It is possible to argue, however, that focusing on initiatives such as PAA-Africa, which are feasible and already being done, may, even indirectly, and on the long run, impact positively Brazil goal of a greater international insertion. When acting in a CAS, one has to develop systemic thinking, and this means knowing that even smallest initiatives might have systemic impact.

To sum up, Brazil has had a mixed record on its intentions for achieving a greater role: on some initiatives, it failed; on others, it succeeded. It is remarkable that success happened on programs designed in accordance with policy implications which arise from complexity's framework. It seems, thus, that pursuing this flexible, adaptive and decentralized policy approach may serve well the country's longstanding diplomatic goals, especially in the current moment of global changes.

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