

Introduction: Special Issue on Brazil and the Global South

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Brazil has always occupied a liminal position both in its sense of itself as a nation between the Global North and Global South, as well as (and perhaps more so) because of the ambiguous or even contradictory circumstances of its liberation; its proclamation of independence was delivered by the son of its former coloniser's King, calling into question the extent to which this newly emerging Empire could consider itself independent of its colonial roots. Even for Simon Bolívar himself, Brazil had been too diligent a student of European colonial mores and imperial ambitions to take its place among the newly independent Latin American nations at the Panama Congress of 1826, taking Brazilian elites' self perception at face value (Bethell, 2010, pp. 462-463).

This liminality can be seen in a number of historical and contemporary examples, including several instances of regional expansion, particularly during the mid- to late- 19th century. We might cite Brazil's show of force during the invasion of Chiquitos and concurrent Cisplatine War, its role in the War of the Triple Alliance, or its annexation of the current-day State of Acre from Bolivia. From the mid-20th century, Brazil's regional endeavours played a direct role in shaping the course of the Cold War in the region by supplying military-authoritarian regimes with diplomatic support, credit, supplies, training, and by undermining left-wing politics more broadly, including by assisting Chilean authorities "in interrogating and torturing some of the 7000 prisoners held by coup leaders" (Harmer, 2012, p. 660). Brazil's material and ideological support for pan-Latin American dictatorships throughout the 1960's, 70's and 80's solidified the sense in which it occupied the place of the Global North within Latin America, rather than making common cause with its neighbours.

At the same time, Brazilians have played a noteworthy role in supporting and offering solidarity to resistance movements across the continent, and beyond. It was ordinary Brazilian activists, operating at a distance from the state, who provided material and ideological support to those resisting dictatorship in Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina during the Cold War. Brazil's political exiles, for example, anchored their activism and solidarity in a shared struggle with neighbouring countries (Grimaldi, 2022). Inside Brazil, in 1977, the organisation Clamor

(Comitê de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos para os Países do Cone Sul) was established to defend human rights in Latin America, particularly for political refugees fleeing authoritarian dictatorships in the Southern Cone.

Such efforts are not confined to the continent of South America or the region of Latin America. Brazil's social movements and thinkers, operating well below the level of the state, have historically recognised the social and historical conditions Brazil shares with its Global South neighbours and cousins, and have sought to highlight these shared conditions and coordinate analytical and practical responses to them. Critical spheres of knowledge exchange, such as academia, cultural-artistic productivity, and social movements have facilitated such connections. From the 1960s, thinkers such as the pedagogist Paulo Freire, theologians Leonardo Boff and Helder Camara, economists Celso Furtado and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, architect Oscar Niemeyer, or even filmmaker Glauber Rocha constructed identities, styles, methods, and conceptual frameworks explicitly in conjunction with the concept of the postcolony. Many also joined debates on non-alignment or Tricontinentalism circulating at the time, exploring the intersection of Global Southernness and Pan-Africanism in the process.

Whilst Brazil has shared the economic, political and postcolonial conditions of Global South nations, its elites have rarely seen it as belonging to the Global South, but rather as a culturally European emerging power and potential continental hegemon. At the same time, recent decades have seen Brazilian political elites attempting to mobilise Brazilian membership of a notional Global South, often through pursuing relationships with fellow former Portuguese colonies, these moves towards so-called 'South-South Cooperation' have responded more to the exigencies of soft power than a sense of shared political and economic outlooks in the form of diplomacy, trade agreements, development programs, and even peacekeeping military deployments. Nonetheless, these connections have been instrumental and have responded to particular political moments rather than evidencing a desire to orient Brazil's politics toward that of Global South countries.

Brazil is therefore a liminal imagined community in multiple senses; it stands at the threshold of development that would take it beyond the economic indices of Global Southernness; it has historically been held at the threshold of Latin America (even by Latin America's greatest partisans); just as it has been at the threshold of the Global South with whom it ultimately shares conditions of global subalterity mediated by coloniality.

Keeping this in mind, this special issue made a call to problematise and examine the relationship between Brazil and the Global South, particularly by employing a more expansive definition of the 'Global South' that goes beyond its conceptualisation as a geographically demarcated community. We sought to produce a holistic, interdisciplinary, and multi-methodological exploration of the following questions:

- How have Brazilian thinkers contributed to the conceptualisation of the so-called Global South?
- What is the relationship between Brazil's South-South Cooperation and the ideals of the Global South as a political project?
- How do Brazilian social movements transcend borders to engage with the Global South? What is the role of transnationalism in this context?
- What lessons are learned by and from the Global South in terms of Brazilian grassroots organisations and development projects?

The call brought together a number of submissions which engaged with the topic in multiple and even unexpected ways. Marcelo Alves de Paula Lima's text, *Brazil and the Afro-Asian World: a Decolonial Approach*, opens the issue by demonstrating the ways in which Brazilian elites' self-perception and assumption of belonging to the so-called 'West' manifested through portrayals of the Afro-Asian world during the 1950s -1970s. Unlike those regions that would constitute the Non-Aligned Movement and Bandung Conference, Brazil's (and indeed other Latin American nations') process of *emancipation* - as opposed to *liberation* - from the Portuguese colony did not complete the process of 'delinking'; its coloniality was not significantly challenged. When partaking in international diplomacy, de Paula Lima argues, Brazil was thus more concerned with avoiding disturbing Western powers' interests than it was with identifying and aligning itself with the so-called Global South.

Building on this historical approach to understanding barriers to Brazil's association with the Global South is Tamiris Pereira Santos and Polianna Almeida's text, *One step forward and two steps back: addressing Brazil's structural constraints to proceeding with the Global South as a political project*. Bringing the debate into more contemporary practices of diplomacy, the article problematizes the concept of 'South-South Cooperation' (SSC) and the inconsistent nature of its implementation through bi- and multilateral projects. In the context of Brazil, the authors

demonstrate how this obscurity permeated efforts to incorporate SSC into the country's diplomacy - particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s -, limiting the country's ability to meaningfully and consistently engage with the Global South as a political community and project with interests and operational challenges distinct to those of the rest of the international community.

In *Políticas de identidade no ensino superior: lusofonia e diferença cultural na UNILAB*, Wellington Ricardo Nogueira Maciel and Antonia Iara Adeodato look to a fascinating example of official efforts to recognise and mobilise Brazil's place in imagined multicultural communities of the Global South through higher education. Through interviews with students of the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB), the authors explore tensions between the officially assumed and promoted sense of belonging to an imagined lusophone community, which seeks to homogenise, and the lived experiences of its pluricultural student body. The article thus offers an innovative on-the-ground perspective on how projects attempting to engage, integrate with, and offer solidarity to the Global South are challenged by social differences through everyday exchanges.

The general articles of the issue, although not speaking directly to the matter of the Global South, uncovers facets of Brazil's relationship with the world and with itself that provide equally provocative food for thought on the matter of Brazil's liminal position between North and South. Hayle Gadelha's contribution, based on his doctoral research, evaluates the diplomatic power of artistic exchange between Brazil and the UK through two exhibitions: one organised between 1944 and 1945, and another, its recreation, in 2018. *The Art of Diplomacy: Restaging a Wartime Brazilian Initiative of Public Diplomacy in the United Kingdom* thus provides a picture both of how Brazil attempted to portray itself in line with its own foreign policy goals as well as how it was perceived by UK audiences. In the context of Brazil's contribution of troops to the Allied efforts of WWII, both iterations of the exhibition emphasise Brazil's association with Western modernism.

In *O Pesadelo Brasileiro: Conservadorismo, Neoliberalismo e Neoextrativismo Intenso* by Alfredo Gugliano, Carlos Alberto Seifert Jr., Guilherme de Queiroz Stein and Bruna Fernanda Suptitz, the focus is on how the government of Jair Bolsonaro fits into broader global waves of conservatism, neoliberalism, and neoextractivism, but also on the distinct conditions with which these arose and consolidated themselves in the Brazilian context. These political markers seem to identify Brazil not only with the Washington Consensus-era project with which they

are associated, placing it at the service of the capitalist project of the Global North, but also in line with a recent dilemma seen across Latin American nations: how to manage vastly exploitable natural resources under the developmental conditions and constraints felt by most nations of the Global South.

Finally, and in dialogue with *Brasiliana's* Issue 10 Volume 2 (2021), is Maria Genailza Chaves, Francisco Pereira Smith Júnior, and Ana Lilia Carvalho Rocha's *Militares e sua Atuação Política: Uma Leitura Interdisciplinar da História Ditatorial no Brasil e o Conto O Leite em Pó da Bondade Humana de Haroldo Maranhão*. Through a multidisciplinary analysis of Haroldo Maranhão's work "O Leite em Pó da Bondade Humana" (The Powdered Milk of Human Kindness"), the authors reflect on the recurrent theme of torture and violence (physical and psychological) as a testimony of tools of oppression employed by the country's military dictatorship of 1964-1985. By examining a work that sits between historical narrative and fiction in this way, the authors provide for a debate about how Brazil has constructed shared memories of a time in which the state attempted to align itself with the economic behaviour of the United States whilst punishing those fighting to recognise Brazil's subjective victimhood of those same economic policies.

There are multiple angles from which aspects of Brazil's identity in relation to the Global South as a community and political project have been approached here; through history, international relations and diplomacy, domestic policy, and even cultural and artistic exchanges. But there are many more possibilities. The puzzle that is Brazil's relationship with the Global South - and, relatedly, with the Global North - could never be fully excavated in the space of this single issue, but we hope that this has provided a starting point for further discussion and collaborative and critical analysis. This is a theme that we hope will continue to be explored by scholars working across and between disciplines, and something we intend the multidisciplinary environment of the journal to facilitate through future issues.

On the topic of *Brasiliana's* future, it is with great pleasure that I can announce I will be taking on the role of Chief Editor of the journal beginning with this issue. Having worked as an editorial assistant here for the past seven years I am excited to be overseeing the journal as it begins a new chapter. I look forward to being part of the coming issues and working with guest editors to take *Brasiliana* in new directions.

References

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