

Foreign policy change in Brazil: drivers and implications

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SWP Research Paper

Claudia Zilla

Foreign Policy Change in Brazil

Drivers and Implications



Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
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- Even during his 2018 election campaign, Jair Bolsonaro promised a fundamental shift in Brazilian foreign policy. Since taking office as Brazil's president on 1 January 2019, foreign policy change has been ever present in Bolsonaro's discourse and, in some cases, is evident in policy decisions.
- Foreign policy change is not just about modified rhetoric, but rather about a targeted policy with ideational foundations and supporting actors. The change is being driven by members of the government's so-called ideological wing.
- Some of the shifts that have already taken place during this political change should be seen less as a break with the policies of the previous government than as an intensification of developments that had already been underway for several years.
- Some foreign policy goals of the ideological wing fail because of the interests and interventions of the other two government wings, the technocratic and the military wing. Several contextual factors, such as China's growing economic importance, also delimit the sought after foreign policy change.

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Foreign Policy Change in Brazil. Drivers and Implications

On the evening of 28 October 2018, after the results of the runoff election had been announced, the victorious presidential candidate appeared before the cameras. First, an evangelical pastor at his side improvised a short prayer, which he concluded with Bolsonaro's campaign slogan "Brazil above everything; God above everyone." Jair Messias Bolsonaro then gave a speech in which he promised, "We will liberate Brazil and the Itamaraty [the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, author's note] from the ideologically biased foreign relations to which they have been subjected in recent years. Brazil will no longer remain at a distance from the developed nations. We will seek bilateral relations with those countries from which Brazil can benefit economically and technologically. We will regain international respect for our beloved Brazil."

It is not surprising that a newly elected head of state holds out the prospect of a policy realignment, including that of foreign relations. Nor is it atypical for a Latin American incoming president to label the policies of his predecessors as ideological, while promoting his own plans as factual and serving national interests. However, this foreign policy announcement is part of a broader, highly disruptive political discourse. Bolsonaro won the presidential election with far right and populist rhetoric that has barely changed since he took office. It is in this context that foreign policy discourse must also be seen. Not only does it differ greatly from the approach of previous governments, which were led by the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) from 2003 to 2016. It also represents a break with basic principles that had long been part of the country's foreign policy conception.

Against this background, this study focuses on the following questions: (1) What does the change in foreign policy discourse consist of? Who is the driver of foreign policy change, and what are its ideational and institutional foundations? (2) In what areas of foreign policy is it manifest? Under what conditions does it concretise in terms of foreign policy decisions and positioning? (3) How sustainable are its implications, both as regards the change in foreign policy

personnel during the cabinet reshuffle of 2021, and if Bolsonaro is voted out in October 2022?

In foreign policy research on Latin American presidential systems of government, a change in the ideology and policy preferences of the head of state is considered a crucial explanatory factor for change in a country's foreign policy. Based on this assumption, this study combines two foci: First, it focuses on the role of the president, and is expanded to include further actors in the executive branch and other positions relevant to foreign policy. Second, it centres on change, whether it is promulgated (only) in discourse or realised by decisions. Brazil's foreign policy tradition as well as the foreign policy of previous governments under the PT serve as the benchmark. This dual perspective justifies the selection of the regions and thematic fields analysed.

Guided by these questions and selection criteria, the main findings of this study are as follows: President Bolsonaro's ideology and political preferences, supported by the ideological wing of his government, are decisive for the change in foreign policy. Its ideational foundations are shaped by a conservative current of political romanticism, cultural pessimism, right-wing populism and a belief in the superiority of the West and the vital importance of religion, including in politics. However, this major change in discourse manifests itself only to a limited extent in political practice. It is contained by the technocratic and military wings of the government. But contextual factors such as China's growing importance also make it difficult for Bolsonaro to pursue his ideological priorities. This foreign policy shift has intensified under Bolsonaro, but it had already partially begun before his presidency. Fundamentally, it means that Brazil is abandoning its claim to leadership in South America, ending its strategic relationship with Argentina and instead seeking a strategic partnership with the United States (U.S.). Contrastingly, there is continuity in its relations with China and the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Relations with the European Union (EU) and wide-ranging cooperation with Germany are overshadowed by the dispute over environmental governance issues, particularly concerning the protection of the Amazon region.

Thus the EU should not foreground this issue, because it often hides agricultural protectionist interests, which in turn can provoke defensive reactions on the Brazilian side. This also applies to international governance proposals that question Brazilian

sovereignty over its own territory. While Bolsonaro is president, it is also advisable for cooperation to be as broad as possible: it should cover a wide range of areas and be focused primarily on the technical as well as regional and local levels. At the topmost level "realistic cooperation" would be appropriate, allowing asymmetries and differences to be discussed. However, if — as polling data suggest — Bolsonaro is succeeded as president in 2023 by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the latter will not be able to resume his "old foreign policy" due to the greatly changed context. While members of the ideological wing are unlikely to have a place in a Lula-led government, it remains to be seen how willing the military will be to withdraw from civilian state structures.

Individuals, Ideas and Institutions

In the beginning was the word, that is, a change in discourse. Jair Bolsonaro's discourse is conspicuous due to its tone and content in the context of democratized Brazil. First, this discourse contains contemptuous and exclusionary narratives, and is saturated with racism, misogyny, and homophobia. Second, it has strong recourse to violence: During his election campaign, Bolsonaro presented himself as an advocate of using a heavy hand against crime and a supporter of military dictatorship and torture.¹ Third, his hostile rhetoric is directed against a leftist, corrupt enemy: Bolsonaro emphasizes that he wants to resolutely fight communism, socialism, or cultural Marxism, which seek to turn Brazil into another Venezuela or Cuba. Fourth, Bolsonaro uses a moralizing, socially conservative and religious discourse: The heteronormative family and traditional values are meant to form the basis of national identity. He wants to give God and Christianity more weight in politics. Moreover, he interprets the fact that he survived a knife attack during his election campaign and then won the presidential election as a miracle and a sign that the redemption of Brazil is his task.

These discourse components also determine foreign policy argumentations. This increasingly amplified foreign policy discourse,² which deviates considerably from the traditional Brazilian consensus, was already clearly audible during the election campaign. In addition to Bolsonaro, it has been promoted by those actors who gained political strength under his presidency. The impetus came primarily from the foreign policy team, a small group of men who belong to the

so-called ideological wing of the government. The narratives these actors advance are based on the one hand on a conservative current within political romanticism, and on cultural pessimism. Even if Catholic or belonging to an evangelical denomination, the members of this group strive for a reevaluation of Christianity in Brazilian politics. On the other hand, the populist style of politics plays an important role, propagating friend-foe antagonism and the idea that it is necessary to fight back in order to survive. However, since most representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not adhere to such schools of thought before Bolsonaro's presidency, these ideas were only able to gain ground through personnel changes and institutional reforms in Itamaraty. During the first half of Bolsonaro's term, all but one of the group's members found themselves in key executive and legislative positions. However, some of them lost their strategic positions around mid-2021, including during cabinet reshuffles. As a result, the ideological wing also lost some of its influence on foreign policy in favor of the technocratic and military wings.

The three government wings and the foreign policy team

Even though Bolsonaro had sat in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies for 27 years, he presented himself during the election campaign as an outsider who does not belong to the political elite. Moreover, he always made disparaging remarks about it. He called for "more Brazil and less Brasília", in other words, for the liberation of the people from a political caste that governs only in its own interests and at the expense of the common good. This populist rhetoric encompassed his contempt for the political parties, which in his eyes were virtual specialists in corruption. After the major corruption scandals of *Mensalão* and especially *Lava Jato*, which came to light under the PT

¹ His campaign symbol consisted of holding up both hands with two fingers extended, mimicking two pistols.

² On foreign policy change in the Latin American context, see Federico Merke, Diego Reynoso and Luis Leandro Schemoni, "Foreign Policy Change in Latin America: Exploring a Middle Range Concept", *Latin American Research Review* 55, no. 3 (2020): 413–29.

governments and in which numerous political parties from both the government and the opposition were implicated, Bolsonaro's criticism of the parties fell on fertile ground in Brazilian society.

Bolsonaro's party ties are extremely weak. He does not see himself as a party politician, but as a military man, since he used to be a paratrooper. During his long parliamentary career, he belonged to nine different parties. In search of a vehicle that would carry him to the presidency, it was not until early 2018 that he joined the small Social Liberal Party (Partido Social Liberal, PSL), whose candidate he became that same year. Once in power, he announced the formation of an "Alliance for Brazil" in November 2019, but switched to the Liberal Party (Partido Liberal, PL) two years later with a view to running for president again in 2022.³ In his 2018 election campaign, Bolsonaro promised to govern with virtually no party participation in the cabinet and not to depend on parties in his governance. Unlike his predecessors in the highest office, he refrained from formalizing an electoral alliance that could have later become a governing coalition with a parliamentary base. Brazil's party system is highly fragmented, and party discipline and loyalty are diminishingly low. Therefore, heads of state secure legislative support for their own initiatives and thus capacity for action by forming coalition governments and distributing posts and financial resources to other parties.

Bolsonaro's government consists of a military, a technocratic, and an ideological wing.

Thus, Bolsonaro's consolidation of power and formation of a majority were based less on parties than on groups of people or interests. There are three of these within his government: the ideological, technocratic and military wing. The main figure of the military wing, the largest of the three, is thought to be former general and current vice president Hamilton Mourão. In Bolsonaro's 23-member cabinet, nine departments are headed by members of the military (and only two by women). In total, more than 6,000 civilian positions are filled by active or retired

members of the armed forces or reservists; 46 percent of them in the national executive.⁴ In addition, more than one-third of the 46 state-owned companies that report directly to the federal government are now run by military personnel. This includes the oil company Petrobras,⁵ which was last headed by a military man in 1980. This military presence in the state apparatus under Bolsonaro is even greater than it was during the military dictatorship of 1964 to 1985.

The technocratic wing focuses on economic interests. They are represented by experts and people with close ties to the primary and secondary sectors. Bolsonaro, who promised a supply-oriented economic policy and tax cuts, received broad support from these circles during his election campaign. But the business sector does not form a monolithic bloc that would stand united behind the president. Domestic market-oriented actors welcome Bolsonaro's policy of expanding agricultural areas and promoting the exploitation of natural resources whilst limiting protection of the rainforest, the environment and indigenous rights. Others, however, who profit from the export sector and foreign investment in Brasília, express concern that the president's anti-democratic, anti-indigenous, and anti-environmental discourse could damage Brazil's international reputation and thus affect business abroad. Among the members of the technocratic wing are Paulo Guedes, minister of finance, and Tereza Cristina Corrêa da Costa Dias (Tereza Cristina for short), originally a member of the Democrats (Democratas, DEM) and Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply until March 2022.

3 Marcelo Silva De Sousa, "Brazil President Joins Centrist Party with Elections Ahead", *AP*, 30 November 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/elections-campaigns-biden-cabinet-brazil-jair-bolsonaro-a4218d0ca3cd9ee766a7efe33525a14c> (accessed 12 April 2022).

4 Antonio Jorge Ramalho, "Bajo el manto de la ambigüedad: Los militares y la gobernabilidad en la transición democrática brasileña" [Under the cloak of ambiguity: The military and governability in the Brazilian democratic transition], *Militares y gobernabilidad. ¿Cómo están cambiando las relaciones cívico-militares en América Latina?* [Military and governability. How are civil-military relations changing in Latin America?], ed. Wolf Grabendorff (Bogotá: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Colombia [FESCOL], 2021), 283–312 (310), <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kolumbien/18384.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2022).

5 Vinicius Sassine, "Com geral na Petrobras, militares comandarão um terço das estatais com controle direto da União" [With a general in Petrobras, the military will command one third of state companies with direct control of the Union], *Folha de S. Paulo*, 23 February 2021, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2021/02/com-general-na-petrobras-militares-comandarao-um-terco-das-estatais-com-controle-direto-da-uniao.shtml> (accessed 12 April 2022).

Finally, the ideological wing represents the religious or radical right,⁶ which includes nationalist, Christian conservative and reactionary ideas (the following chapters will consider their worldview in more depth). This component of the government includes, for example, the lawyer and evangelical pastor Damascos Alves, Minister for the Woman, the Family and Human Rights until March 2022, and the lawyer Ricardo Salles, Minister of the Environment until mid-2021. Both exerted influence on Brazil's positions in international forums. Even more decisive for shaping foreign policy, however, is the role of a small group belonging to the "ideological wing", the foreign policy team (see below).

Although Bolsonaro's self-image, ideas and positions overlap with all three wings of government, he functions neither as a unifying figure nor as a coordinator between them. Judging by his discourse and decisions, the president belongs to the ideological wing in foreign policy matters. In his election campaign, Bolsonaro (born in 1955), who was originally a Catholic but was baptized an evangelical in the Jordan River in May 2016, had already held out the prospect of profound change for Brazil's foreign policy.⁷

To this end, the new president appointed Ernesto Araújo (born 1967), a diplomat and Catholic, as foreign minister. The latter had most recently headed the Department of U.S., Canadian and Inter-American Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had never headed a Brazilian embassy abroad. In his inaugural speech⁸ on 2 January 2019, Araújo echoed Bolsonaro's promise to give Brazilians back their country. In line with that, Araújo said he also wanted to bring Brazilian foreign policy back to Brazil, after a long period of serving the global order and non-governmental organizations. With Bolsonaro's presidency, he declared, the fatherland would be reborn,

and the Foreign Ministry would have a significant role to play in this. But just over two years later, on 20 March 2021, Araújo submitted his letter of resignation to Bolsonaro.⁹ This was in response to ever-louder calls for his removal following accusations that he was leading Brazil away from the country's foreign policy tradition and into international isolation. These critical voices were heard in the National Congress – especially in the Senate, which must approve the appointment of ambassadors – in the Foreign Ministry itself and other areas of government, and notwithstanding the private sector. After his resignation, Araújo remained active in shaping public opinion through public appearances, his blog (deleted shortly thereafter) and his YouTube channel.

Filipe G. Martins (born 1988) belongs to a Pentecostal church and was initially the Foreign Affairs Secretary of the PSL, with whose support Bolsonaro successfully ran for Brazil's presidency in 2018. After Bolsonaro's election, the latter brought Martins to Brasília as deputy adviser and promoted him to chief foreign policy adviser in June 2020. Since then, he has headed the Special Advisory Office for Foreign Affairs in the Presidential Office, a department also called the "Office of Hate" by opposition deputies. Martins considers it an important task of Brazilian foreign policy¹⁰ to clearly communicate to the world that President Bolsonaro is committed to restoring the traditional values and customs of Brazil, a Christian nation.¹¹

Eduardo Bolsonaro (born 1984) is the president's son and has been a PSL deputy in the National Congress for the state of São Paulo since 2015. He was chairman of the Foreign Relations and National

6 On the extreme or radical right, especially in the U.S. and Europe, see Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge [UK]/Medford, MA [USA]: Polity Press, 2019).

7 Jair Bolsonaro, tweet of 2 October 2018, <https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1047073236591235074> (accessed 12 April 2022).

8 Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo's inaugural speech on 2 January 2019, <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/discursos-artigos-e-entrevistas/ministro-das-relacoes-exteriores/discursos-mre/discurso-do-ministro-ernesto-araujo-durante-cerimonia-de-posse-no-ministerio-das-relacoes-exteriores-brasilia-2-de-janeiro-de-2019> (accessed 12 April 2022).

9 See the letter of resignation by Ernesto Araújo, tweet of 30 March 2021, <https://twitter.com/ernestofaraujo/status/1376682355994279939?s=20> (accessed 12 April 2022).

10 Interview with Filipe Martins, *Os Pingos nos Is*, Panflix, Youtube-Video, 28 January 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugbnnyqFC9M> (accessed 12 April 2022).

11 Filipe G. Martins is accused of using the hand sign of White Supremacy, the racist belief in the superiority of white people and their right to rule over other "races". Martins is being investigated by the Senate Legislative Police in this matter. See Youtube-Video "Senado vai investigar gesto de assessor da Presidência da República feito em sessão de debates" [The Senate will investigate the gesture made by the adviser to the presidency of the Republic during the hearing], *TV Senado*, 25 March 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=k03af6kSe9M (accessed 31 March 2021).

Defense Committee in the Chamber of Deputies¹² during the first two years of his father's presidency and (still) accompanies him on almost all his trips abroad. President Bolsonaro advocated in 2019 for his son Eduardo to become ambassador to Washington, but ultimately lacked the necessary votes from the Senate. De facto, he is considered a "chanceler paralelo", secondary or even the actual foreign minister. In February 2019, Steve Bannon, former White House chief strategist, appointed Eduardo Bolsonaro as The Movement's representative in Brazil for Latin America.¹³ In addition, like former Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo, Filipe Martins, and Ricardo Salles, Eduardo Bolsonaro is an active participant and speaker at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), an annual event organized by the American Conservative Union Foundation (ACUF). This was held for the first time in Brazil, in São Paulo, in October 2019. It was repeated in the capital Brasília in September 2021.¹⁴

Unlike those aforementioned, Olavo de Carvalho (1947–2022) held neither an office nor a mandate. Until his death, however, he was a key figure who ideologically connected all other actors of the religious and radical right. Even though Carvalho resided in Richmond, Virginia during the last years of his life, he exerted great influence on the Brazilian New Right. Carvalho disseminated his far-right, anti-communist, and nationalist views in books, on his website, on a YouTube channel, and through educational seminars.

The ideological wing, to which the foreign policy team belongs, as well as the technocratic and military wings, have an informal profile, which becomes more visible when tensions arise between them. It follows on from this dynamic in the ranks of the government that the chances of one wing pushing through a certain political decision are more likely the less it

opposes the views and concerns of the other wings. Other than external constraints, it is usually the interests and actions of the technocratic and military wings that delimit the intentions of the foreign policy team.

Ideational foundations of the foreign policy team

Conservative political romanticism, cultural pessimism and right-wing populism are among the ideational foundations on which the discourse and substantive priorities of the foreign policy team are based. They form convergent, mutually reinforcing constructions of reality. These three currents of thought come to bear in a particularly explicit and elaborate way on Ernesto Araújo's written and oral statements. His sophisticated positioning and argumentation are considered representative of the body of thought of the New Right in Brazil.

Three currents of thought

Characteristic of the conservative strand of political romanticism¹⁵ are the glorification of a bygone era, nationalism and the cult of heroes. Society is seen as an organic community, often by analogy with the human body. In this context, history gains human attributes. So it possesses a personality, a soul, a spirit. All these concepts lead to striving for a homogeneous national identity and the preservation of its individuality, as against diversity, pluralism and syncretism. Preservation and self-defence are the most important motivations for action. Furthermore, instead of secular reason, mysticism and religion play a central role, as do feelings, intuition and the will, which is one reason for rejecting the Enlightenment.¹⁶

¹² He was succeeded at the head of the committee by the deputy for Minas Gerais, Aécio Neves of the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira, PSDB).

¹³ The Movement is an association of ultra-conservatives who support populist nationalism and decry globalism. "Steve Bannon Welcomes Eduardo Bolsonaro as Head of The Movement in South America", *Cision PR Newswire*, 2 February 2019, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/steve-bannon-welcomes-eduardo-bolsonaro-as-head-of-the-movement-in-south-america-300788579.html> (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁴ CPAC Brasil 2021, <https://www.cpacbr.com.br/palestrantes.html> (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁵ Ernesto Araújo, "Trump e o Ocidente" [Trump and the West], *Cadernos de Política Exterior* 3, no. 6 (2017): 323–57. Araújo expresses his admiration for the Romantic movement in many passages of his text (for example, *ibid.*, 341). He also classifies Trump's foreign policy, which he holds in high esteem, as Romantic (*ibid.*, 352). All quotations from Araújo's texts in this study were translated by the author from Portuguese into English. This is also true for translations from Spanish into English.

¹⁶ On the historiographical discussion of Political Romanticism and its conservative current and revolutionary potential see Klaus Ries, "Zum (Un-)Verhältnis zwischen Romantik und Revolution" [On the (dis)relationship between romanti-

For its part, cultural pessimism is directed against the present — initially against modernity, today against postmodernity and the globalized world. Political liberalism and the effects of secularization are critically evaluated. Cultural pessimism warns “against the loss of faith, unity and cultural values” and cultivates a “heroic vitalism”.¹⁷ From the cultural pessimist perspective, scenarios of decline and decay are diagnosed or predicted. In contrast, an imaginary future is envisioned as the recreation of an idealized past.

Populism, understood as a political style, is based on a pattern of interpretation, discourse and relations whose constituting moment is the morally charged friend-foe dichotomy. The idealized and homogeneous “people” are positioned against a certain sector of society, such as the “establishment”, the “political class” or the “oligarchy”. The populist leader sees himself as from the people and therefore as their genuine representative. The main components of a right-wing populist orientation are order and security as well as conformity to norms and the preservation of tradition. In line with this, populism — in its right-wing conservative variant and foreign policy manifestation — operates with an essentialist, idealized and nativist understanding of “nation” as a natural order, the embodiment of a homogeneous idiosyncrasy and the condensation of traditional values and customs that are threatened by a “liberal-cosmopolitan international elite” and foreign immigration. Populist leaders then present themselves as genuine representatives and guardians of the nation. In this context, the absolutized principle of state sovereignty is the most important means of protecting the nation from external influences and attempts at control, for example by supranational bodies, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations or international regimes. Together with globalization, these exogenous institutions would limit the scope of

action of states and thus prevent nations from developing in the sense of their own identity and from pursuing their own interests.

This worldview gained momentum in Brazil starting in the 2010s in the wake of a right-wing conservative reaction to the “progressive shock”¹⁸ during the presidency of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016). Right-wing populist critics saw a series of decisions and measures taken under her government as the socio-political concretization of a “communist dictatorship dominated by homosexuals” and a hegemony of cultural Marxism, whose claim to world domination is reflected in globalism.

The West and Brazil

The influence of political romanticism of a conservative orientation, cultural pessimism, and right-wing populism is particularly evident in the discourse of Ernesto Araújo. Since 2018, he has run the blog “Metapolítica 17. Contra o Globalismo”,¹⁹ which offers insight into these ideational components. Particularly fruitful for this analysis is the contribution “Trump and the West”,²⁰ which Araújo published in 2017. Two speeches by Donald Trump²¹ form the

cism and revolution], in *Romantik und Revolution. Zum politischen Reformpotential einer unpolitischen Bewegung* [Romanticism and Revolution. On the political reform potential of an apolitical movement], ed. Klaus Ries (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), 9–26.

¹⁷ Fritz Stern argued that cultural pessimism as a *völkisch* ideology in Germany led to the nihilism of National Socialism. Fritz Stern, *Kulturpessimismus als politische Gefahr. Eine Analyse nationaler Ideologie in Deutschland* [Cultural pessimism as a political danger. An Analysis of National Ideology in Germany] (Bern and Stuttgart: Alfred Scherz Verlag, 1963), 2 (first published in English in 1961 under the title *The Politics of Cultural Despair*).

¹⁸ Camila Rocha, *The New Brazilian Right and the Public Sphere* (São Paulo: Mecila, 2021), (Working Paper no. 32/2021), 18, https://mecila.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WP_32_Camila_Rocha.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁹ *Metapolítica 17. Contra o Globalismo* [Metapolitics 17. Against Globalism], <https://www.metapoliticabrasil.com/> (accessed 12 April 2021).

²⁰ Araújo, “Trump e o Ocidente” (see note 15). This publication is considered Araújo’s springboard to the top of the Itamaraty. Consuelo Dieguez, “O chanceler do regresso. Os planos de Ernesto Araújo para salvar o Brasil e o Ocidente” [The Chancellor’s Return. Ernesto Araújo’s Plans to Save Brazil and the West], *Piauí, Folha de São Paulo*, no. 151, April 2019, <https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/materia/o-chanceler-do-regresso/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

²¹ One speech was delivered by Trump during his state visit to Warsaw on 6 July 2017, the other before the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 19 September of the same year. “Donald Trump’s Speech in Poland”, *NBC News*, 6 July 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/here-s-full-text-donald-trump-s-speech-poland-n780046> (accessed 12 April 2022); “President Donald Trump’s Statement to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 19, 2017, as Prepared for Delivery”, *Politico*, 19 September 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/19/trump-un-speech-2017-full-text-transcript-242879> (accessed 12 April 2022).

starting point and common thread of the 34-page text. In Araújo's eyes, Trump, then still U.S. president, is the only "Western statesman" who recognizes the most urgent current challenge facing the West and wants to save it.

Araújo's interpretation of global reality is based on three premises. First, he normatively exalts the Christian West, which has a special place in the history of civilizations. Second, he diagnoses a "disease" of the West, its weakened condition, its "dementia" due to "spiritual and psychological problems" that allegedly threaten its existence. Third, he states the urgent need for a rescue of the West, its moral restoration and renewed self-assertion.

Araújo sees the Occident, or Western civilization, to which Brazil belongs without qualification, as a "community of nations" that contrasts with an "amalgam without borders" and a mere contractual, purely legal union of states.²² In this community, according to Araújo, the different nations form "unique essences" that maintain their historical and cultural identity.²³ He conceives of nations as "spaces for the preservation of their own identity". His essentialist, reifying, static, and conservative view applies to both national and gender identity. Araújo explicitly treats these two identities side by side and places them in a close context.²⁴ In his view, particularisms are not accidental, but rather specific ways of being that together build an organic whole. Therefore, "the abolition of borders, the supra-national principle as well as the [international] convergence of values" are diametrically opposed to his concept of the West.²⁵ On the contrary, "the nation becomes the embodiment of the power of the Western spirit".²⁶

Araújo rejects cosmopolitanism and professes pan-nationalism, in which the sovereignty of nations is respected and protected. In accordance with this, he believes that one cannot be a citizen of the world, but only a member of a national community.²⁷ A "community of nations" could consist of a particular civilization based on a shared history, feelings, and beliefs,²⁸ but not of the entire world. Consequently, there can be no "international community" and

therefore no global governance, in the framework of which, for example, the United Nations (UN) plays a steering role.

In Araújo's view, the West is not based on abstract values, not on tolerance or democracy, "but on battles and wounds, passions and wars, the cross and the sword". Western ideals and values are "not to be found in the pamphlets of the European Commission or in the decisions of any human rights court, but in the scars of the past, its heroes and martyrs".²⁹ The origin of Western civilization is warlike and is marked by the naval battle of Salamis in the Mediterranean, fought by Greeks and Persians in 480 BC.³⁰ Therefore, he claims, the "West was not born in dialogue or tolerance" but in defense of its own identity, its own gods, its own culture and history.³¹ Since 1945, however, the West has been in decline, because since then, under the dominance of liberalism, any kind of Western Nationalism has been falsely associated with Nazism, and the postmodern culture that dominates today ignores God.

Thus, Araújo takes a pessimistic view of the present of the Occident. In this context, he explicitly defends³² Oswald Spengler's work *The Decline of the Occident*.³³ Araújo laments the de-westernization of the West in the sense of the loss of its specific character. Postmodernism, globalism and (cultural) Marxism are ideologies that endanger the West. The Enlightenment is also a threat, because the representatives of its liberal and revolutionary manifestations rebel against the past and thus also against heroes, religion and the family.³⁴ The main enemy of the West is the West itself.³⁵

In Araújo's view, the "fight against Islam"³⁶ is part of the "defensive struggle for the preservation of the

22 Araújo, "Trump e o Ocidente" (see note 15), 326.

23 Ibid., 334.

24 Ibid., 339.

25 Ibid., 328.

26 Ibid., 340.

27 Ibid., 334.

28 Ibid., 334.

29 Ibid., 348.

30 Some historians consider the Battle of Salamis as a decisive event in Western history. The battle contributed to Europe's independent development and its assertion against the East.

31 Araújo, "Trump e o Ocidente" (see note 15), 336.

32 Ibid., 344.

33 Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* [The Decline of the Occident. Outlines of a Morphology of World History], vol. 1: *Gestalt und Wirklichkeit* [Shape and Reality] (Vienna: Braumüller, 1918); vol. 2: *Welthistorische Perspektiven* [World Historical Perspectives] (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922).

34 Ibid., 329.

35 Ibid., 332.

36 Ibid., 352.

intellectual space of the West”, which is vital for survival. Trump has taken it up and thus rightly brought foreign policy to the level of a cultural and civilizational struggle for the self-assertion of the West, for the “recovery of itself.”³⁷ In this, Araújo asserts, Europe and especially the European Union bear the greatest responsibility for Western decadence.³⁸

What is Brazil’s role in the culture war? Araújo considers the people of Brazil as “genuinely and profoundly nationalistic” and the “essence of their nationality” as Western.³⁹ Therefore, Brazil’s participation in a project in which the West seeks to recover its soul by activating the national sentiment is consistent with its own nature. Brazil needs not only a new foreign policy, but also a “foreign metapolicy”. Such a “metapolicy” in Araújo’s sense would operate both on the level of reason and on that of emotion and would work less on the diplomatic, economic or military field, but rather on the cultural-spiritual field.

Araújo’s blog posts also clearly reveal the populist element of his foreign policy views. After his resignation, for example, he characterized President Bolsonaro’s plan as a “liberating and patriotic project, or a project of transformation and national redemption, supported by the people and directed against an old system of concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a political elite acting against the people”.⁴⁰ This includes a “foreign policy establishment without soul and without heart.”⁴¹ Even though Araújo has no longer been in charge of foreign affairs since the end of March 2021 and his successor is closer to the mainstream tradition of the Foreign Ministry, his worldview is representative of the social, domestic and foreign policy ideas of the New Right.⁴²

Reforms in the foreign policy area

The Itamaraty has historically had a reputation, both regionally and internationally, for being an exceptionally professional department. This includes the narrative that the foreign ministry has enjoyed great autonomy in the face of unsteady politics, which has allowed it to ensure a foreign policy characterized by continuity via cultivating certain principles. Therefore, breaks in Brazil’s foreign policy are explained by the marginalization of the Itamaraty in this policy area.⁴³

The supremacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came under particular pressure during the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003 – 2011), especially due to the presidentialization of foreign policy and the pluralization of the institutions and bodies involved.⁴⁴ Once President Rousseff was removed from office in 2016, her successor and former Vice President Michel Temer (2016 – 2018) announced that he wanted to “de-ideologize” Brazilian foreign policy and put Itamaraty back at the center of policymaking. The far-reaching *Lava Jato* corruption case,⁴⁵ which involved major Brazilian companies with business abroad in addition to political parties, had also led to some “clearing” of the field for Itamaraty. However, notable successes in terms of upgrading the foreign ministry failed to materialize. Indeed, Temer appointed José Serra (2016 – 2017) and Aloysio Nunes (2017 – 2019) as foreign ministers, so that for the first time in 15 years politicians headed the department instead of diplomats.

Bolsonaro maintained the narrative that a “de-ideologization of foreign policy” was necessary, by which he usually meant a reorientation. With the backing of

37 Ibid., 352.

38 Ibid., 346.

39 Ibid., 354.

40 Ernesto Araújo, “Um Itamaraty pela liberdade e grandeza do Brasil balanço de gestão” [An Itamaraty for the freedom and greatness of Brazil: management balance sheet], *Metapolítica* 17. *Contra o Globalismo*, 10 April 2021, <https://www.metapolitica.com/post/um-itamaraty-pela-liberdade-e-grandeza-do-brasil-balan%C3%A7o-de-gest%C3%A3o> (accessed 12 April 2021).

41 Ibid.

42 Rocha, *The New Brazilian Right* (see note 18).

43 Alejandro Frenkel and Diego Azzi, “Jair Bolsonaro y la desintegración de América del Sur: ¿un paréntesis?” [Jair Bolsonaro and the disintegration of South America: a parenthesis?], *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 291 (2021): 169 – 81 (177).

44 Claudia Zilla, *Brazil’s Foreign Policy under Lula*, SWP Research Paper 2/2017 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, March 2017), https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2011_S29_zll_ks.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

45 Philipp Wesche and Claudia Zilla, *Korruption in Brasilien – ein Fass ohne Boden. Der Lava-Jato-Fall, seine Aufklärung und die regionalen Implikationen* [Corruption in Brazil – a barrel without bottom. The Lava-Jato-Case, its investigation and regional implications], SWP-Aktuell 39/2017 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, June 2017), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/korruption-in-brasilien> (accessed 12 April 2022).

the ideological wing, particularly his first foreign minister Araújo, the president endeavored to break up the departmental structures and thus create a counterweight to the existing mainstream in Itamaraty. Since Araújo's worldview and political convictions put him in the minority in the foreign policy milieu, he was dependent on recruiting like-minded people for key foreign policy positions. Thus, on his very first day on the job at the ministry, he promised to "make the staffing process in Itamaraty more flexible at certain levels of the hierarchy for career civil servants, precisely to refresh the flow of careers and also to encourage our colleagues to fill these positions."⁴⁶ A January 2019⁴⁷ presidential decree allowed for organizational reforms and more flexible personnel policies within the foreign office. At the same time, several officials, some of them high-ranking, who could influence the formulation of foreign policy were demoted and assigned to less responsible tasks.

In addition, Brazil's own region was downgraded organizationally in line with changing foreign policy priorities. The Undersecretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and thus the intermediate organizational level for the subcontinent, was abolished. In his "fight against ideological environmental activism," Araújo consistently devalued environmental issues in Itamaraty by downgrading them institutionally and by reducing staff.

Furthermore, the curriculum of the Rio Branco Institute (Instituto Rio Branco, IRB), the training school for the diplomatic corps in Brazil, was modified. For example, the subject "History of Latin America" was eliminated, and chairs were created for the study of classical works. Within the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, FUNAG), which is subordinate to Itamaraty, Araújo also facilitated new, mainly conservative, schools of thought.⁴⁸ The diplomat Paulo Roberto de Almeida, a critic of Olavo de Carvalho, was dismissed from the board of the Research Institute of International Relations (Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacio-

nais, IPRI).⁴⁹ The newly founded Instituto Guimarães Rosa aims to enhance foreign cultural policy.

Cabinet reshuffles

As expected, these institutional changes and the new foreign policy focus drew harsh criticism from the ranks of diplomats. In a high-profile article in the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*⁵⁰ in May 2020, a group of diplomats strongly condemned the Bolsonaro government's foreign policy. In it, they accused the government of systematically violating Article 4 of the 1988 Constitution, which enshrines the principles of Brazilian foreign policy.⁵¹

This foreign policy diagnosis was compounded by criticism of the government's handling of the Corona crisis. The population's assessment of the government's management of the pandemic was decidedly negative, and the government's approval ratings dropped rapidly. At the same time, the government's dependence on the so-called *Centrão*, in Congress to push through legislation grew rapidly. The "Centrão," a group of extremely pragmatic conservative parties fixated on offices and positions, demanded personnel changes from Bolsonaro in exchange for parliamentary support.⁵² All these factors led to a major cabinet reshuffle at the end of March 2021, with Foreign

49 Almeida then critically addressed recent developments in Itamaraty in several books.

50 Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, Celso Amorim, Celso Lafer, Francisco Rezek, José Serra, Rubens Ricupero and Hussein Kalout, "A reconstrução da política externa brasileira" [The reconstruction of Brazilian foreign policy], *Folha de São Paulo*, 8 May 2020, www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2020/05/a-reconstrucao-da-politica-externa-brasileira.shtml (accessed 12 April 2022).

51 "Article 4. Principles of Foreign Policy. The Federative Republic of Brazil shall be guided in its international relations by the following principles: I. national independence; II. primacy of human rights; III. self-determination of peoples; IV. Non-interference; V. Equality among States; VI. Defense of peace; VII. Peaceful resolution of conflicts; VIII. Combating terrorism and racism; IX. Cooperation among peoples for the progress of mankind; X. Granting political asylum." *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988* [Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil of 1988], http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm (accessed 12 April 2022).

52 The "Centrão" includes, among others, those parties that provide the presidents of both chambers of the National Congress.

46 Inaugural speech of Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo on 2 January 2019 (see note 8).

47 Decree no. 9.683, as of 9 January 2019, in *Diário Oficial da União* [Law Gazette of the Union], 10 January 2022, Issue 7, Section 1, 1–11, http://www.in.gov.br/materia/-/asset_publisher/Kujrw0TZC2Mb/content/id/58549274/do1-2019-01-10-decreto-n-9-683-de-9-de-janeiro-de-2019-58549021 (accessed 12 April 2022).

48 Araújo, "Um Itamaraty pela liberdade" (see note 40).

Minister Araújo leaving the government. His anti-communism, anti-China stance, and aversion to multilateralism – especially, like Trump, to the World Health Organization (WHO) – and to “covidism” were considered crucial in Brazil’s late receipt of drugs, medical devices, and vaccines from abroad compared to other countries in the region, and its long refusal to embrace the Covax initiative.

Among the six portfolio changes in March 2021 was the ousting of Defense Minister Fernando Azevedo e Silva, a reserve general. With a coordinated joint resignation, the commanders of the three branches of the armed forces wanted to express their displeasure at the president’s removal of Azevedo e Silva from office. But the president pre-emptively dismissed all three. Bolsonaro’s government is thus characterized not only by tensions between the various wings of government, but also between the president on the one hand and the technocratic and military wings on the other.

At the head of the Itamaraty, Bolsonaro placed diplomat Carlos França. The new foreign minister, who like his predecessor had not attained ambassadorial status before his appointment, is considered a moderate. Aécio Neves, a member of the PSDB, also replaced Eduardo Bolsonaro as chairman of the Foreign Relations and National Defense Committee in the Chamber of Deputies by rotation in March 2021. Thus, the ideological wing lost two key positions and with them influence on foreign policy.

President Bolsonaro and members of the ideological wing also came under pressure when, in April 2021, a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito, CPI) was created in the Senate to investigate over six months the alleged failures of the federal and state governments to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. On 26 October 2021, after several hours of debate, the investigative committee adopted the final report authored by Senator Renan Calheiros by a vote of seven to four. One of the key points of the 1,299-page document recommends that President Bolsonaro and 77 others, including his three sons, be indicted for various crimes (including crimes against humanity).⁵³ As a political body, a

Parliamentary Investigative Committee can propose an indictment but cannot conduct a criminal trial, much less pass a verdict.

Since there will be presidential and congressional elections in October 2022, in which Bolsonaro intends to run again, he dismissed seven ministers and two female ministers in March of the same year on the basis of electoral regulations so that they could devote themselves to the election campaign for mandates and offices. These include Women’s Affairs Minister Damara Alves from the ideological wing and Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina from the technocratic wing.⁵⁴ Also in March 2022, Bolsonaro signed a decree⁵⁵ implementing the restructuring of Itamaraty requested by the new Foreign Minister França and reversing some organizational reforms of França’s predecessor Araújo. For example, the fight against the pandemic was institutionalized through the General Coordination of Health Diplomacy and the planned accession to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) through the corresponding unit. A new unit was created for cyber defense and security. Areas dealing with environmental issues, such as the Sustainable Development Unit, were upgraded.

53 Karine Melo and Heloisa Cristaldo, “Aprobado informe de la Comisión de la Pandemia: piden 80 imputaciones” [Pandemic committee report approved: 80 charges requested], *Agência Brasil*, 27 October 2021, [https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/es/politica/noticia/2021-](https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/es/politica/noticia/2021-10/aprobado-informe-de-la-comision-de-la-pandemia-piden-80-imputaciones)

10/aprobado-informe-de-la-comision-de-la-pandemia-piden-80-imputaciones (accessed 12 April 2022).

54 “Bolsonaro lista 9 ministros que vão disputar eleições; confira quais” [Bolsonaro lists nine ministers who will participate in the elections, he confirms which ones], *Exame*, 11 March 2022, <https://exame.com/brasil/bolsonaro-lista-9-ministros-que-vaao-disputar-eleicoes-confira-quais/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

55 This decree came into force on 20 April 2022. See Decree no. 1,1024 of 31 March 2022, *Diário Oficial da União* [Law Gazette of the Union], 1 April 2022, Issue 63, Section 1, 16, <https://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/decreto-n-11.024-de-31-de-marco-de-2022-390295737> (accessed 12 April 2022).

Foreign Policy Fields

Personal, ideational and institutional factors shaped a foreign policy whose main characteristics can be described as follows against the background of the predecessor governments under the PT: First, Brazil abandoned its claim to leadership in the region, showed itself skeptical of cooperative and coordinative formats in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and distanced itself from Argentina. Second, Brazil engaged in “automatic alignment” with the United States under President Trump, while confronting China. Third, tensions grew with the EU and Germany on global governance issues, especially environmental issues. Fourth, a certain de-secularization of foreign policy could be observed, while at the same time Brasília moved closer to right-wing conservative governments that (want to) give religion a significant role in politics.

Latin America and the Caribbean

When Bolsonaro came to power, the process of regional disintegration was already underway. Prior to that, there had been an extremely dynamic phase of post-liberal regionalism starting at the turn of the millennium in the wake of the “pink wave” of (center)left governments. It is true that the share of intraregional trade (in terms of value) in the total trade of the LAC states had never exceeded the 20 per cent mark, and it had also not been possible to create a supra-national body analogous to the EU Commission. At that time, however, ideological convergence between the heads of state in particular facilitated cooperation. The high world market prices for raw materials in the years 2003 to 2013, the main export of South American countries, had expanded their (foreign policy) room for maneuver. Countries in the region not only sought to diversify their extraregional partner structures beyond the dominance of the U.S. and EU, but also to upgrade and expand regional

initiatives.⁵⁶ Some of these developments stemmed from the initiative of Brazil⁵⁷ and Venezuela⁵⁸, which increasingly engaged in the neighborhood, claimed a role as regional powers, and even displayed global ambitions. Taken together, these trends led to an expansion of South-South cooperation.

Regional disengagement

However, signs of “regionalism under stress”⁵⁹ have already been visible since the early 2010s: The regional market lost muscle for trade and investment from the LAC states, the degree of coordination and consensus-building among their governments declined, and regional governmental organizations experienced a loss of political significance, a weakening of their structures or were dissolved. Already under the Rous-

56 The Common Market of the South (Mercosur) added political and social components to its trade agenda. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de nuestra América, ALBA) was founded in 2004, and the Union of South American Nations (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas, UNASUR) in 2008.

57 Claudia Zilla, “Brasilien: Eine Regionalmacht mit globalen Ansprüchen” [Brazil: a regional power with global ambitions], in *Neue Führungsmächte: Partner deutscher Außenpolitik?* [New Leading Powers: Partners in German Foreign Policy?], ed. Jörg Husar, Günther Maihold and Stefan Mair, *Internationale Politik und Sicherheit*, vol. 62, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2008), 49–67.

58 Claudia Zilla and Luise Pfütze, *Venezuela nach den Parlamentswahlen. Zwischen interner politischer Polarisierung und regionalem Führungsanspruch* [Venezuela after the Parliamentary Elections. Between Domestic Political Polarization and Regional Leadership Ambitions], SWP-Aktuell 61/2005 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, December 2005), https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/aktuell/aktuell2005_61_pfuetze_zll_ks.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

59 Detlef Nolte and Brigitte Weiffen, *Regionalism under Stress. Europe and Latin America in Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021); Detlef Nolte and Brigitte Weiffen, “How Regional Organizations Cope with Recurrent Stress: The Case of South America”, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 64, no. 21 (2021).

seff administration, the foreign policy activism that had characterized the Lula presidency noticeably declined. During President Temer's term, Brazil's foreign policy retreat became even more evident. The South American giant has not been replaced by another state with the capacity and will to take on leadership roles in the region. Domestic factors such as erosion of democracy, political polarization and socioeconomically motivated protest encouraged a neglect of foreign policy not merely by the Brazilian government.⁶⁰

In the wake of many changes of government in South America, in April 2018 five of the twelve states of the Union of South American Nations (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas, UNASUR) – including Brazil under Temer – suspended “indefinitely” their participation in this security bloc, which last held a summit in 2014. After Brazil had already declined to participate in the activities of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños, CELAC) in 2019, the Bolsonaro administration said in January 2020 that it would suspend participation in this single forum, which includes all 33 states of the subcontinent. An official statement stated that the government “does not consider that the conditions exist for CELAC to act (appropriately) in the current context of the regional crisis.”⁶¹ The main points of contention concern the participation of some countries with whose governments Brasília saw or sees itself in ideological confrontation: the Bolivian government of Evo Morales (until 2019) and the Venezuelan government of Nicolás Maduro.

Brazil advocates making Mercosur more flexible.

Furthermore, in the Cono Sur, the southern part of South America, there has been an increasingly strong

call for greater flexibility in the Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur, Mercosur)⁶² and its convergence⁶³ with the Pacific Alliance.⁶⁴ This would amount to a harmonization of integration mechanisms in the region. This position is also accompanied by criticism that Mercosur has become too political, too protectionist and “too heavy” in institutional terms. There were calls for a return to the predominantly trade agenda and narrow governmental structure of the early years at the expense of social and political issues and institutions that were created later. For example, in 2019, the bloc's presidents decided to abolish the direct election of deputies to the Mercosur Parliament (Parlasur) by citizens and return to the method of sending delegates from the respective national parliaments. Overall, however, these efforts at adjustment failed to curb the centrifugal dynamics, and disinterest in the regional market continued to grow.

The Bolsonaro government's fundamental skepticism toward the Mercosur materialized as early as January 2019 in the decision to remove the inscription “Mercosul”, which the passports of the four member states bear, from the Brazilian passport and replace it with the Republic's emblem. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the measure was aimed at “strengthening national identity and love for the homeland.”⁶⁵ This attitude repeatedly culminated in the threat of withdrawal, which, however, has not been carried out to date. Even before the victory of Peronism in Argentina in the presidential elections in

⁶² Active members of Mercosur are currently Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

⁶³ Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), *La convergencia entre la Alianza del Pacífico y el Mercosur. Enfrentando juntos un escenario mundial desafiante* [Convergence between the Pacific Alliance and Mercosur. Facing a Challenging World Scenario Together], LC/PUB.2018/10 (Santiago de Chile, 2018), https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/43614/S1800528_es.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁶⁴ The Pacific Alliance includes Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

⁶⁵ Guilherme Mazui, “Governo anuncia que passaporte excluirá inscrição ‘Mercosul’ e adotará brasão da República” [The government announces that in the passport the inscription ‘Mercosur’ will be deleted and the emblem of the Republic will be inserted], *G1*, 23 January 2019, <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2019/01/23/governo-diz-que-brasil-deixara-de-adotar-passaporte-com-simbolo-do-mercossul.ghtml> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁶⁰ Federico Merke, Oliver Stuenkel and Andreas E. Feldmann, *Reimagining Regional Governance in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 24 June 2021), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/06/24/reimagining-regional-governance-in-latin-america-pub-84813> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁶¹ “Brasil formaliza la decisión de suspender su participación en la Celac” [Brazil formalizes decision to suspend its participation in CELAC], *Agencia EFE*, 16 January 2020, <https://www.efe.com/efe/america/politica/brasil-formaliza-la-decision-de-suspender-su-participacion-en-celac/20000035-4151200> (accessed 12 April 2022).

October 2019, President Bolsonaro and his Finance Minister, Paulo Guedes, had announced that Brazil would leave Mercosur if there was a shift to the left in the neighboring country. They doubted that Alberto Fernández and Cristina Kirchner, as president and vice president of Argentina, would “want to stay on the path of democracy and freedom.”⁶⁶ Bolsonaro and Guedes expected a protectionist economic policy from the Casa Rosada in Buenos Aires. Here, two lines of conflict converge and intensify: One concerns Mercosur, the other Brazilian-Argentine cooperation.

Distancing from Argentina

Since the beginning of his presidency, Bolsonaro has maintained a distanced relationship with Argentina, even during the conservative government of Mauricio Macri (2015–2019). This is to be seen in the context of a turning away from the region and the aspiration to win the U.S. as the strategic partner country – a role that was intended for Argentina since redemocratization. But the neighboring country also represents much of what Bolsonaro publicly criticizes from a social and economic policy perspective. Contrary to bilateral tradition, Bolsonaro’s first foreign trip did not take him to Argentina. After attending the World Economic Forum in Davos in the first month of his presidency, he visited President Donald Trump in the United States in March 2019. That same month, Bolsonaro met with other South American heads of state in Santiago de Chile and paid a state visit to Israel a little later. He did not set foot on Argentine soil until June 2019, after a second trip to the U.S. Bolsonaro made his second and to date last trip to Argentina a month later, when he attended the Mercosur summit. The change of government in Buenos Aires that year widened the rift between the neighboring countries’ governments. The Brazilian president refused to congratulate Fernández on his election victory and stayed away from his inauguration in December 2020. Bolsonaro had publicly supported the re-election of his opponent Macri, calling Kirchner and Fernández “leftist bandits.” Fernández, in turn, had spoken critically of Bolsonaro and with great sympathy for Lula during the election cam-

paign. The first (and so far, last) bilateral meeting between the two presidents, together with Foreign Ministers Ernesto Araújo and Felipe Solá, took place at the end of November 2020 – virtually.

USA, China and the Big Clubs

As regards the great power rivalry between the U.S. and China, Bolsonaro already made the stance of his future government clear during his election campaign: He promised to break with “ideological alignments” (*alinhamentos ideológicos*) and instead to intensify those bilateral relations from which Brazil could profit more. In doing so, he announced a move away from China and toward the U.S. In February 2018, Bolsonaro visited Taiwan, which is considered a breakaway province by the People’s Republic of China. Thus, the presidential candidate took an unequivocal stand against Beijing’s One China policy, which was critically received there. To be sure, his preferences and discourse on this issue, which are publicly shared and promoted by the ideological wing, remained unchanged after he took office. However, numerous factors hindered the intended distancing from China as well as the “automatic alignment with Trump’s U.S.,” as his approach is critically referred to in Brazilian politics and academia. Despite the general shift away from a foreign policy that prioritizes the Global South toward one that focusses on the U.S., BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) retained their institutional roots as interregional mechanisms within Itamaraty.⁶⁷ Brazil under Bolsonaro continues to pursue its interest in belonging to the Big Clubs.

“Automatic alignment” with the U.S.

Bolsonaro and members of the ideological wing look up to the North American superpower and see in it the model of freedom, market economy and religiosity that must be emulated. They see themselves as members of Donald Trump’s ideological family and are committed to the same political struggle. In the spirit of America First, Bolsonaro had campaigned

⁶⁶ “Bolsonaro endossa fala de Guedes sobre saída do Mercosul” [Bolsonaro endorses Guedes’ speech on leaving Mercosur], *Veja*, 16 August 2019, <https://veja.abril.com.br/economia/bolsonaro-endossa-fala-de-guedes-sobre-saida-do-mercossul/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁶⁷ On the tension between a pro-U.S. stance and a South-South orientation in the foreign policy of LAC states see Merke et al., “Foreign Policy Change in Latin America” (see note 60).

with the slogan “Brazil above everything.” Thus, the Brazilian government had high hopes of Trump’s U.S.

Bolsonaro’s first state visit was to the U.S. in March 2019, where his foreign minister Araújo had already been in February in search of political support and investment. Two more meetings with Trump in the U.S. followed, as well as an important visit, including Cabinet members and son Eduardo, to Trump’s private Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach in March 2020.⁶⁸ President Trump, however, did not set foot on Brazilian soil once during his entire term in office.⁶⁹

In a departure from the Brazilian tradition of non-interference, peaceful conflict resolution and avoidance of unilateral action, the Bolsonaro government explicitly supports U.S. international counterterrorism goals and means. For example, in an official statement, Foreign Minister Araújo welcomed the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in Iraq in January 2020 by U.S. forces. In September 2020, Brazil joined other LAC countries in supporting not Argentina’s candidate but Trump’s later successful candidate, Mauricio Claver-Carone, in the race for the presidency of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Western Hemisphere’s main multilateral development finance institution.⁷⁰

Brazil wants to join the OECD and is seeking U.S. support to do so.

Several agreements emerged from the March 2019 meeting between Trump and Bolsonaro in Washington. In addition, the Trump administration promised Bolsonaro, first, to support Brazil’s accession as a full

member of the OECD.⁷¹ The OECD kicked off formal discussions on Brazil’s and another five countries’ accession in January 2022.⁷² Second, President Trump held out the prospect of upgrading Brazil to major non-NATO ally, which should facilitate new opportunities for cooperation on defense issues. This indeed happened in June 2019, making Brazil the second Latin American country after Argentina to enjoy this privileged status.⁷³ Nevertheless, in December 2019, the U.S. government threatened to terminate the agreements on technological cooperation and use of the Alcântara Space Center in northern Brazil if the South American country did not exclude Chinese telecom equipment supplier Huawei from the tender to build a fast 5G mobile network.⁷⁴

While the ideological wing celebrated the “automatic alignment” with Trump’s U.S., some of Brazil’s concessions to the great power of the North went too far for the military and technocratic wings of the government: For example, high-ranking Brazilian military officials expressed considerable concerns about the announcement by President Bolsonaro and Foreign Minister Araújo at the beginning of 2019 that the construction of a U.S. military base on Brazilian territory was being evaluated. Regarding the Venezuela conflict, when Bolsonaro conceded the possibility of supporting the U.S. in the event of a military intervention in the neighboring country, Vice President General Mourão made it unequivocally clear that Brazil would not allow the U.S. to militarily attack Venezuela from Brazilian territory under any circumstances.

From the Brazilian perspective, trade relations with the U.S. lack reciprocity. Bolsonaro complied with

⁶⁸ Claudia Zilla, “Die Beziehungen zu Brasilien im süd-amerikanischen Kontext” [Relations with Brazil in the South American context], in *Länderbericht USA* [Country Report U.S.], ed. Andrew Denison, Georg Schild and Miriam Shabafrouz (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2021), 486–94.

⁶⁹ Given that Trump did not visit a single country in LAC – not even Mexico – during his four-year presidency, aside from his participation in the G20 summit in Argentina, Brazil is not a special case in this context. In August 2019, U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross visited Brazil after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo attended President Bolsonaro’s inauguration in Brasília in January 2019.

⁷⁰ Richard E. Feinberg, “Latin America Yields to Trump’s Pick to Head Regional Bank”, *Order from Chaos* (Brookings), 14 September 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/09/14/latin-america-yields-to-trumps-pick-to-head-regional-bank/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁷¹ However, Washington did not explicitly and unequivocally speak out in favor of Brazil until January 2020.

⁷² The further five countries are Argentina and Peru as well as Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania. “OECD Takes First Step in Accession Discussions with Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru and Romania” (Paris: OECD, 25 January 2022), <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-takes-first-step-in-accession-discussions-with-argentina-brazil-bulgaria-croatia-peru-and-romania.htm> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁷³ The move followed Brazilian Defense Minister Fernando Azevedo e Silva’s visit to Washington in March and the third meeting of the bilateral defense industry dialogue initiated in 2016.

⁷⁴ Huawei was blacklisted from U.S. exports in 2019, and the group was denied access to critical U.S.-manufactured technology. This affects the company’s ability to develop its own chips and source components from third-party suppliers.

Washington's demand that Brazil not be treated as a developing country in future World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. However, on trade issues, Brazil received no special treatment from the Trump administration. On the contrary, Brazil was the target of protectionist defensive reactions from time to time. From Brazil's point of view, relations with the U.S. under Trump were "excellent" but not very productive, and after the change of government in the White House they even lost their friendly component. In addition to Bolsonaro, there was an uneasy start with the new U.S. administration by some members of the ideological wing, who in public statements, especially on social media, doubted Biden's election victory and therefore showed great understanding for the U.S. Capitol attack. Bolsonaro explained that he saw this as a foreshadowing scenario for Brazil in 2022, should anyone want to prevent his reelection.

Against this backdrop, expectations are now being directed at Brasília from the north, not only regarding the great power rivalry between the U.S. and China,⁷⁵ but also for the protection of democracy and the environment.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the South American country is not excluded from major U.S. initiatives. The Brazilian president was among 40 heads of state Biden invited to the virtual Climate Summit in April 2021. Brazil also participated with more than 100 other countries in the Summit for Democracy hosted by the U.S. government in Washington in December 2021.

The economic maelstrom of China

Together with Bolsonaro, the ideological wing cultivates an aggressive rhetoric toward China that is based, among other things, on its anti-communism and aversion to the non-Western world. Its members and the president accuse the Asian superpower of buying Brazil, of pushing it into economic depen-

dence.⁷⁷ Beijing and the Chinese Embassy in Brasília repeatedly respond to these accusations with clarifications and warnings. However, the discursive tensions have not been an obstacle to reciprocal state visits in 2019: Bolsonaro traveled to China for the first and thus far last time in October, where he met with Premier Li Keqiang and President Xi Jinping. The latter, in turn, attended the BRICS meeting in Brazil a month later.

China is now Brazil's most important trading partner. It passed Argentina and the U.S. in 2009 and overtook the EU in 2013.⁷⁸ By value,⁷⁹ about 32 per cent of Brazil's exports went to China in 2020, but only about 10 per cent to the U.S. and about 4 per cent to Argentina. Unlike the U.S., to which Brazil runs a trade deficit, China accounted for about 67 per cent of Brazil's total trade surplus between January and August 2021.⁸⁰ However, most of Brazil's exports to China are raw material shipments.

China's importance to Brazil is also growing in the investment and financial sectors.

Although still behind the EU and the U.S., China has now also become a significant investor in Brazil. In terms of the origin of investment flows to Brazil (inflow), the U.S. and China alternated in first place several times between 2010 and 2017. China's foreign direct investment in Brazil flows mainly to the power sector (48 per cent). China Three Gorges Corporation is the second largest power generation company with

⁷⁵ Bolsonaro had been against Huawei during Trump's time in office, although Brazilian telecommunications companies had already built networks consisting largely of Chinese components. Bolsonaro abandoned that position after Biden took office. However, Brazil had never made an official commitment to the U.S. on this issue.

⁷⁶ This was the nature of the claims made by the National Security Council's senior director for the Western Hemisphere, Juan González, and the Biden administration's security adviser, Jake Sullivan, who visited Brazil in August 2021.

⁷⁷ Even Finance Minister Guedes, who belongs to the technocratic wing, has sometimes used this rhetoric style.

⁷⁸ Unless otherwise stated, data on trade with and investment from China are from Tulio Cariello, *Investimentos Chineses no Brasil. Histórico, Tendências e Desafios Globais (2007–2020)* [Chinese investments in Brazil. History, trends and global challenges (2007–2020)] (Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Empresarial Brasil-China, 2021), <https://www.cebc.org.br/2021/08/05/investimentos-chineses-no-brasil-historico-tendencias-e-desafios-globais-2007-2020/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁷⁹ Unless otherwise stated, all shares, comparisons and rankings refer to the value (and not the volume) of trade exchange.

⁸⁰ Daniela Amorim, "Comércio com China responde por 67% do superávit brasileiro em 2021, diz FGV" [Trade with China accounts for 67% of Brazilian surplus in 2021, FGV says], *CNN Brasil*, 16 September 2021, www.cnnbrasil.com.br/business/comercio-com-china-responde-por-67-do-superavit-brasileiro-em-2021-diz-fgv (accessed 12 April 2022).

private capital in Brazil. Chinese investment is also strong in the oil and gas and mining sectors. The intensification of economic relations between the two countries attracted Chinese activity in Brazil's infrastructure and financial sectors.

In the pandemic year 2020, anti-China discourse intensified in parts of the Brazilian government: The Asian country was accused of having invented the coronavirus and of developing vaccines against Covid-19 that did not work. As a result, Bolsonaro initially opposed the purchase of Chinese vaccines, which began circulating relatively quickly in neighboring countries. Only when access to alternative vaccines proved difficult did he relent. At that point, however, an agreement between the government of the state of São Paulo and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac had been in force for several months. It provides that the latter's vaccine, CoronaVac, will also be produced by the Brazilian biomedical research center Instituto Butantan. This vaccine, whether imported or produced in Brazil, ended up being the first to be administered in Brazil, starting in January 2021. So far, it has also been the most widely used.

On the other hand, the technocratic and military wings are trying to maintain good relations with China: Driven by agribusiness export interests, Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina, for example, repeatedly tried to soften the confrontation with China and never tired of emphasizing good cooperation. In June 2019, she publicly supported on behalf of Brazil the (eventually successful) candidacy of China's Qu Dongyu as director general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Similarly, Vice President Mourão, who has always advocated a "pragmatic and flexible" foreign (trade) policy, received representatives of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce the day after his inauguration. Five months later, he attended a meeting of the High-Level Sino-Brazilian Commission for Consultation and Cooperation (Comissão Sino-Brasileira de Alto Nível de Concertação e Cooperação, COSBAN) in Beijing.⁸¹ And in November 2020, less than a month after Bolsonaro's media-grabbing rejection of China's Covid-19 vaccine, Brazil joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Brazil remains aloof from China's New Silk Road initiative, which now includes 20 LAC countries, among them Argentina.

⁸¹ This is the main dialogue mechanism, which provides for meetings every two years, but has been dormant since 2015. Cariello, *Investimentos Chineses no Brasil* (see note 78), 38.

IBSA in the shadow of BRICS

Under Bolsonaro's presidency, Brazil's participation in the IBSA and BRICS dialog forums has not been called into question. High-level meetings, but above all working meetings in various policy areas, continue to take place at regular intervals. However, the political weight of BRICS members China and Russia makes this group more important to Brasília than IBSA, especially since the democratic regime quality of IBSA member states seems to matter only at the rhetorical level for the Brazilian government. IBSA retains a special status as a platform when it comes to advocating reform of the UN system, especially the UN Security Council. This is always a concern of India, Brazil, and South Africa, which are not permanent members.⁸²

Brazil held the rotating BRICS presidency in 2019 and therefore hosted the XI Summit in Brasília in November, which was themed "Economic Growth for an Innovative Future." In addition, the Brazilian presidency organized more than 100 meetings during the year, including 16 at the ministerial level. But Bolsonaro canceled the BRICS Outreach, a parallel summit in which heads of state from the host country's region — in this case, LAC — are invited to meet with BRICS presidents. Irreconcilable differences over a specific personnel issue were the reason for the cancellation: Bolsonaro, who is the only one in the group to recognize Juan Guaidó as the legitimate president of Venezuela, had insisted on inviting him, despite the objections of the other member states.

Even if tensions between participating countries burden the group, it can nevertheless contribute to the stabilization of bilateral relations.⁸³ President Bolsonaro sees BRICS as a coordination forum that can, among other things, act as a motor for modernizing the WTO and reforming the UN.⁸⁴ Institutionally,

⁸² "IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on Reform of the UN Security Council", 16 September 2020, and "IBSA Joint Statement on the Reform of the Multilateral System", 27 September 2019, www.ibsa-trilateral.org/Foreign%20Ministers.html (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁸³ Oliver Stuenkel, "Why the BRICS Grouping Is Here to Stay", *The Diplomat*, 20 November 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/why-the-brics-grouping-is-here-to-stay/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁸⁴ Andreia Verdêlio, "Brics: Bolsonaro Argues for Modernization of WTO and Subsidy Rules", *Agência Brasil*, 9 September 2021, <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/internacional/noticia/2021-09/brics-bolsonaro-argues-modernization-wto-and-subsidy-rules> (accessed 29 November 2021).

BRICS continues to evolve: the New Development Bank (NDB), established in 2014, announced in September 2021 that it would admit Bangladesh, Uruguay, and the United Arab Emirates as new members. In April 2022, Finance Minister Guedes endorsed Argentina's accession to the NDB, but not to BRICS.⁸⁵

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is straining relations within the BRICS group.

Since 24 February 2022, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has driven a wedge between members of the forum. Bolsonaro visited President Vladimir Putin a few days earlier, despite warnings from Washington and critical voices within the Brazilian executive branch. Bolsonaro sees a kindred spirit in the Russian president ("a conservative like us"). But not everyone in the Brazilian cabinet harbors the same sympathy for the man at the head of the Kremlin. When Vice President Mourão strongly criticized the Russian attack, Bolsonaro put him in his place by saying that he was not responsible for foreign policy issues. In this context, the president recalled how dependent Brazil is on Russian fertilizer. Of Brazil's total imports of this product, 25 per cent come from Russia.

Brazil belongs to that group of countries that opts for a certain neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian issue. However, in doing so, the South American country runs into ambivalences and contradictions, especially between the president's statements and the positions taken by Itamaraty in international forums. Brazil was one of the countries that, in the special session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), did not support the declaration on "The Crisis in Ukraine"⁸⁶ that was later adopted, condemning the Russian invasion. Otávio Brandelli, Brazilian ambassador to the OAS, said that Russia's concerns should be taken into account,

⁸⁵ Richard Mann, "Brazil to Help Argentina Join BRICS Development Bank", *The Rio Times*, 11 April 2022, <https://www.riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/brazil/brazil-to-help-argentina-join-brics-development-bank/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁸⁶ Organización de los Estados Americanos (OAS), Consejo Permanente, *La Crisis en Ucrania* [The Crisis in Ukraine], CP/RES. 1192 (2371/22), 25 March 2022, https://scm.oas.org/doc_public/spanish/hist_22/cp45739s03.docx (accessed 12 April 2022).

"especially with regard to the balance of forces and strategic weapons in the European context," even though this "does not give the Russian Federation the right to use force and threaten the territorial integrity and sovereignty of another state."⁸⁷ But Brazil voted on 25 February to condemn the Russian invasion at the UN Security Council, of which it is a non-permanent member in 2022 – 23, while India, China and South Africa abstained. However, because Russia vetoed the resolution, it failed. Brazil also supported the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) under the slogan "United for Peace".⁸⁸ Ultimately, however, it abstained from voting on Russia's suspension from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Itamaraty justified⁸⁹ this by saying that Russia's exclusion would contribute to the polarization and politicization of the discussions by this body and make it more difficult to find peace. Instead, it is important to keep an open space for dialogue.

EU and Germany

The Brazilian shift away from a South-South orientation by no means meant a turn toward Europe. Several positions taken by Bolsonaro and the ideological wing have strained relations with the EU and

⁸⁷ "Argentina y Brasil no apoyan en la OEA la condena a la invasión rusa de Ucrania" [Argentina and Brazil do not support in the OAS the condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine], *France24*, 26 February 2022,

<https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20220226-argentina-y-brasil-no-apoyan-en-la-oea-la-condena-a-la-invasi%C3%B3n-rusa-de-ucrania> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁸⁸ The President of Argentina was also in Moscow for a state visit shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On the positioning of Latin American states on this issue see José Antonio Sanahuja, Pablo Stefanoni and Francisco J. Verdes-Montenegro, *América Latina frente al 24-F ucraniano: entre la tradición diplomática y las tensiones políticas* [Latin America vis-à-vis Ukraine's February 24: between diplomatic tradition and political tensions], Documento de Trabajo 62/2022 (Madrid: Fundación Carolina, March 2022), https://www.fundacioncarolina.es/dt_fc_62/ (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁸⁹ 93 states voted in favor of the suspension, 24 states voted against, and 58 states abstained. "Rusia, suspendida del Consejo de Derechos Humanos" [Russia, suspended from the Human Rights Council], *Noticias ONU*, 7 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/es/story/2022/04/1506852> (accessed 12 April 2022).

Germany. These are a fixation on the U.S. during Trump's presidency, the cultivation of illiberal values, the pronounced nationalism, the strong interest in exploiting nature at the expense of the environment and indigenous rights, and the criticism of global governance. Trade relations experienced less change. Brazil remains the EU's main trading partner in LAC by value (its eleventh largest in the world in 2021),⁹⁰ as well as with Germany. However, not least due to political tensions, the conclusion of an association agreement between Mercosur and the EU appears to be a distant prospect. At the center of the disputes is the Brazilian government's environmental governance, which also complicates the conditions for German-Brazilian cooperation.

Broad-based relationships with decreasing momentum

The decline of Brazilian-European relations did not start under Bolsonaro's presidency. This development should also be seen in the context of stagnating bi-regional relations. Between 1999 and 2015, summits⁹¹ between LAC or CELAC and the EU had been held every two years within the framework of the Biregional Strategic Partnership. Only after a six-year interruption could they be resumed in December 2021 in the form of an EU-LAC video summit.⁹² Cooperation between the EU and Mercosur, in which Brazil accounts for around 80 per cent of the population and gross domestic product, was institutionalized as early as 1995 by an interregional framework agreement. Its main objective was to conclude an association agree-

ment between the EU and Mercosur. However, the framework agreement did not enter into force until July 1999. Since then, the association agreement has been under negotiation — not without interruptions of several years. Brazil and the EU have been linked by a strategic partnership since 2007, which provides for dialogue and cooperation on various fields such as human rights and environmental protection, as well as summit meetings. However, the last one took place in 2014 under the presidency of Rousseff.⁹³

Brazil is a strategic partner of the EU and Germany.

Brazil is the only LAC country with which Germany has maintained a strategic partnership since 2008. This covers a wide range of bilateral and global areas of cooperation. In 2015, the first German-Brazilian government consultations took place in Brasília, attended by President Rousseff and German Chancellor Angela Merkel — and they were also the last to date at the highest level. Brazil is one of eight countries worldwide (out of three in LAC) that the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) classifies as Global Partners.⁹⁴ The focus of the development cooperation is on forest and biodiversity conservation, renewable energies and energy efficiency, and sustainable urban development. Cooperation projects also exist between other German federal ministries⁹⁵ and state institutions in Brazil at national, regional and local level, as well as with business and civil society. These are not only old projects that are still ongoing, but also some that

⁹⁰ See European Commission, Directorate General for Trade, "Client and Supplier Countries of the EU27 in Merchandise Trade (Value %) (2021, Excluding Intra-EU Trade)", https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122530.pdf (accessed 23 May 2022).

⁹¹ On the dates of the EU summit meetings in general see *Meeting calendar* of the European Council, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/calendar/> (accessed 1 June 2022). For the summits with LAC see Delegations European Parliament, *CELAC Summits and Earlier EU-LAC Summits*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/celac-summits-and-earlier-eu-lac-summits/product-details/20170715DPU10565> (accessed 1 June 2022).

⁹² European Council/Council of the European Union, "EU-Latin America and Caribbean Leaders' Meeting via Video Conference, 2 December 2021", <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2021/12/02/> (accessed 1 June 2022).

⁹³ André Luiz Reis da Silva and Vitória Volpato, *The Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership: Advances, Convergences, and Challenges*, Working Paper (Leuven: Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, October 2019), <https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/research/eucross/eucross-wp-andre-reis-and-vitoria.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁹⁴ BMZ, *Zukunft gemeinsam gestalten – strategische Zusammenarbeit mit Globalen Partnern* [Shaping the future together – strategic cooperation with global partners], BMZ-Papier 3/2021 (Berlin: BMZ, 2021), <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/86794/21419db54e37cbf4c8a54c842c306bc1/bmz-positions-papier-globale-partner-data.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁹⁵ Federal Foreign Office, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection.

started under Bolsonaro's presidency, such as the German-Brazilian Agricultural Policy Dialogue (APD, since 2020).⁹⁶ In addition, there are continuing measures with and in Brazil as part of the German Foreign Office's Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, which was launched in 2019.⁹⁷

Rainforest disagreements

It is above all questions related to Brazilian environmental governance — and primarily the protection of the Amazon rainforest — that are at the center of the debates between Brazil and the EU and Germany.⁹⁸

In the meantime, an agreement has been reached between the EU and Mercosur, so that the envisaged association agreement exists as a two-part draft: The first, trade policy part⁹⁹ was agreed in June 2019 between the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade and the Mercosur states. The market-friendly convergence of the governments under Presidents Macri in Argentina and Bolsonaro in Brazil contributed to this achievement. The second, still unpublished, policy section on dialogue and cooperation was agreed in June 2020 between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Mercosur countries.¹⁰⁰ On the Mercosur side, treaties with individual

states or blocs of states must always be ratified bilaterally by the national parliaments of the member countries. Since this association agreement is a so-called mixed agreement, it is also necessary for all 27 EU states to ratify it. This high institutional threshold has meanwhile become associated with even higher political hurdles.

A few days after the agreement on the trade component had been reached, voices were raised on the European side questioning it: Governments or parliaments in France, Austria, Denmark and Germany, for instance, stated that the association agreement posed a threat to the Brazilian Amazon. The confrontation between Bolsonaro and European leaders intensified in August 2019 in the wake of massive forest fires in Brazil. France's President Macron wrote in a tweet, "Our house is on fire. Literally." and illustrated it with an old forest fire photo. He also suggested putting the issue on the agenda of the G7 summit in Biarritz.¹⁰¹ Bolsonaro judged Macron's intentions to be colonialist and accused NGOs of committing environmental crimes in the Amazon. He also accused European governments of being driven by greed for natural resources and of launching a disinformation campaign against the Brazilian government. Bolsonaro not only uses such discourse in domestic politics, but sometimes also effectively carries it internationally, such as at the UN Biodiversity Summit in New York in September 2020.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Agricultural Policy Dialogue (APD) between Germany and Brazil, <https://apdbrasil.de/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁹⁷ Federal Foreign Office, "Latin America and the Caribbean come to Berlin — together for International Cooperation and Women's Rights" (Berlin, 28 May 2019), <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/regionaleschwerpunkte/lateinamerika/latin-america-caribbean-conference-berlin-/2220382> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁹⁸ Miriam Gomes Saraiva, "What Next for Brazil-EU Relations?" *LSE Blog*, 4 September 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2019/09/04/what-next-for-brazil-eu-relations/> (accessed 12 April 2022).

⁹⁹ European Commission, *New EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement. The Agreement in Principle* (Brussels, 1 July 2019), https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2019/june/tradoc_157964.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022); Jan Hagemeyer, Andreas Maurer, Bettina Rudloff, Peter-Tobias Stoll, Stephen Woolcock, Andréia Costa Vieira, Kristina Mensah and Katarzyna Sidlo, *Trade Aspects of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement* (Brussels: European Parliament, November 2021), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653650/EXPO_STU\(2021\)653650_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653650/EXPO_STU(2021)653650_EN.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁰⁰ For an analysis of the unpublished political part of the association agreement see Andrés Malamud, *Assessing the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Pillar of the EU-Mercosur Associa-*

tion Agreement: Towards a Bi-regional Strategic Partnership?, In-Depth Analysis Requested by the AFET Committee, European Parliament (Brussels, January 2022), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/653652/EXPO_IDA\(2022\)653652_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/653652/EXPO_IDA(2022)653652_EN.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁰¹ Emmanuel Macron, tweet of 22 August 2019, <https://twitter.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/1164617008962527232?s=20&t=k1sqn4emxBqscDmCcU4NA> (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹⁰² "Bolsonaro culpa a las ONG por crímenes ambientales en Brasil y acusa a la comunidad internacional de 'avaricia'" [Bolsonaro blames NGOs for environmental crimes in Brazil and accuses international community of "greed"], *Europa Press*, 1 October 2020, www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-bolsonaro-culpa-ong-crimenes-ambientales-brasil-acusa-comunidad-internacional-avaricia-20201001015119.html (accessed 23 April 2022).

Civil society is also voicing criticism of the association agreement between the EU and Mercosur.

As well as deficits regarding the enforcement of labor rights, it is the Bolsonaro government's environmental policies that are fueling the European Parliament's (EP) concerns about an association agreement with Mercosur. In an October 2020 decision, the EP opposed its ratification in its current, trade-related form.¹⁰³ This criticism was echoed by non-governmental organizations such as Greenpeace¹⁰⁴ and AllRise,¹⁰⁵ with their voices sounding much louder on the European side than on the South American side. In the meantime, discussions have begun – especially in Europe – about the conditions under which ratification of the biregional association agreement would be possible. Among the options being discussed are a treaty adjustment such as the addition of an interpretative declaration or of a separate protocol, or indeed a complete renegotiation.

Tensions between Brazil and Germany also revolve around the rainforest issue. In 2019, Germany stopped payments to the Amazon Fund for Forest and Climate Protection.¹⁰⁶ Soon after, major donor Norway¹⁰⁷ fol-

lowed suit. This climate finance initiative, launched by Brazil in 2008, provides for measures to prevent, control and combat deforestation and promote conservation and sustainable land use in the Brazilian Amazon. Since 2019, however, there have been no further new project commitments from Germany because the fund's governance structure has been undermined.¹⁰⁸ According to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), deforestation declined significantly from 2004, but has been rising again since 2012. While the deforestation rate had already risen significantly in 2019 and 2020, it increased by another 22 per cent in 2021.¹⁰⁹

Dismantling environmental governance

Already under President Temer, the Brazilian government had begun to make environmental regulation more flexible. The Bolsonaro government advanced this even further.¹¹⁰ In line with the ideological wing, and especially with Ricardo Salles, Minister of the Environment until June 2021, Bolsonaro maintains an ambivalent discourse pattern in the area of environmental and climate protection. On the one hand, he agitates domestically, sometimes beyond national borders, in a right-wing populist style against Brazilian and international environmental governance. On the other hand, at international forums –

103 European Parliament, *European Parliament Resolution of 7 October 2020 on the Implementation of the Common Commercial Policy – Annual Report 2018, 2019/2197(INI)*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0252_EN.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

104 Rhea Tamara Hoffmann and Markus Krajewski, *Legal Opinion and Proposals Regarding a Possible Improvement or Renegotiation of the Draft EU-Mercosur Association Agreement* (Aachen, Hamburg and Brussels: MISEREOR, Greenpeace and CIDSE, May 2021), www.cidse.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Legal-Opinion-EU-Mercosur_EN_final.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

105 “ONG denuncia a Jair Bolsonaro ante la CPI por deforestación de la Amazonía” [NGO files case against Jair Bolsonaro at ICC for deforestation in Amazon region], *Deutsche Welle*, 12 October 2021, <https://www.dw.com/es/ong-denuncia-a-jair-bolsonaro-ante-la-cpi-por-deforestaci%C3%B3n-de-la-amazon%C3%ADa/a-59477365> (accessed 12 April 2022).

106 Minister Svenja Schulze, tweet of 23 August 2019, https://twitter.com/SvenjaSchulze68/status/1164917950450753539?s=20&t=ra6YXi9fJK_aMVEWFm1LHg (accessed 12 April 2022). Jens Thureau, “Streit um Amazonas-Fördergeld aus Deutschland” [Dispute on Amazon aid money from Germany], *Deutsche Welle*, 2 October 2019, www.dw.com/de/streit-um-amazonas-f%C3%B6rdergeld-aus-deutschland/a-50679615 (accessed 29 November 2021).

107 “Norwegen setzt Zahlungen zum Regenwaldschutz aus” [Norway suspends payments for rainforest protection], *Zeit online*, 16 August 2019, www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-08/amazonas-fonds-norwegen-zahlungen-regenwald-abholzung-brasilien (accessed 12 April 2022).

108 GIZ, *Kooperationsprojekt mit dem Amazonienfonds für Wald- und Klimaschutz* [Cooperation project with the Amazon Fund for forest and climate protection], (Rio de Janeiro, August 2021), https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/Amazonienfonds_BMZ_PN_15.2132.7-001.00_DE.pdf (accessed 12 April 2022).

109 GIZ, *Amazonienfonds für Wald- und Klimaschutz* [Amazon Fund for forest and climate protection] (Rio de Janeiro, February 2022), <https://www.giz.de/de/weltweit/12550.html> (accessed 12 April 2022).

110 In May 2019, seven former environment ministers from five previous governments led by different parties responded to this with a high-profile and critical article. Bruno Ribeiro, “Ex-ministros do Meio Ambiente se unem contra ações do governo Bolsonaro” [Former environment ministers join forces against Bolsonaro government measures], *Estadão*, 8 May 2019, <https://atarde.uol.com.br/brasil/noticias/2057841-exministros-do-meio-ambiente-se-unem-contra-aco-es-do-governo-bolsonaro> (accessed 12 April 2022).

for example, at the Leaders Summit on Climate initiated by U.S. President Biden or at the COP26 in Glasgow 2021 — empirical data, political plans and technical programs are presented by officials, suggesting that the Bolsonaro government has taken up the cause of saving nature.

However, there is no evidence of this kind of environmental commitment — on the contrary: At the international level, Brazil is retreating. It is true that the country has not withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, as Bolsonaro had announced during his election campaign. Nevertheless, as a president who was not yet in office but had already been elected, he played a decisive role in the Temer government's decision to withdraw its candidacy for hosting the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in 2019.¹¹¹ At the national level, environmental monitoring bodies were severely weakened when the government shifted competencies, cut funding, replaced personnel, and limited civil society participation.

The military wing of the government views the Amazon rainforest from a security perspective.

Numerous specialists in environmental protection agencies have been replaced by members of the armed forces. While the military wing often plays a moderating role over the ideological wing in other policy areas, it tends to bring in an additional nationalist-security perspective here. The Amazon has always been one of the regions that receives the most attention in the conflict scenarios of the Brazilian armed forces. Parts of the economy, on the other hand, above all export-oriented agro-business companies, publicly complain that the government's rainforest policy is damaging to business.¹¹²

¹¹¹ The cancellation of this international event, which would have taken place during the new presidency, was justified with reference to budgetary constraints. "Brasilien zieht Kandidatur für Klimakonferenz zurück" [Brazil withdraws candidacy for climate conference], *Zeit online*, 29 November 2018, <https://www.zeit.de/wissen/umwelt/2018-11/cop-25-klimakonferenz-brasilien-rueckzug-gastgeber-kandidatur> (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹¹² "Grandes empresas do agronegócio assinam manifesto de combate ao desmatamento na Amazônia" [Major agribusiness companies sign manifesto to fight Amazon deforestation], *Globo Rural*, 12 July 2020 <https://g1.globo.com/economia/agronegocios/globo-rural/noticia/2020/07/12/grandes-empresas-do-agronegocio->

Religion in foreign policy

According to his motto "Brazil above everything; God above everybody," Bolsonaro promised in his campaign for the presidency to give God and the (Christian) religion more space in politics, because — in his view — the state might be secular, but Brazil and the Brazilians are deeply Christian. With this justification, he attempted to do justice not only to a supposed Brazilian majority, but also to a weighty sector of his electorate, especially the evangelicals. Bolsonaro owes his election victory largely to them. The evangelicals have experienced a visible symbolic and institutional revaluation under his presidency. They continue to be the population group that rates the performance of Bolsonaro's government best by far.

The references to God and religious arguments in the Bolsonaro government's discourse serve not only as a political instrument, but also as a confession, because they are an expression of the beliefs of many members of the government, above all the ideological wing. Within this wing, Christian and political conservatism converge into a religious right. It shaped foreign policy, especially under Araújo, who saw like-minded people in the governments of some states, such as Poland and Hungary. In this context, three developments can be observed: the intensification of bilateral relations with Israel, a change in policy towards Africa, and Brazil's modified positions in international forums on gender issues and the situation of worldwide Christian communities.¹¹³

Friendship with Israel

In contrast to previous PT governments, which maintained a more pro-Palestinian stance in their foreign policy aimed at the global South, Bolsonaro considers Israel to be an ally of Brazil. The political dialogue between the two governments was particularly close

assinam-manifesto-de-combate-ao-desmatamento-na-amazonia.ghml (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹¹³ Some of the arguments made in this chapter have already been published in Claudia Zilla, *Evangelicals and Politics in Brazil. The Relevance of Religious Change in Latin America*, SWP Research Paper 1/2020 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, January 2020), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/evangelicals-and-politics-in-brazil> (accessed 1 June 2022), and in Claudia Zilla, "Foreign Policy Change and the Salience of Religion in Brazil", in *Rethinking the Religious Factor in Foreign Policy*, ed. Maria Toropova (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2022), 181 — 201.

under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was in office until June 2021. During the election campaign, Bolsonaro had already declared that he wanted to move the Brazilian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, following the example of the U.S. In doing so, he sought not only to pay tribute to the political right and advance a desired rapprochement with the U.S., but also to do justice to the importance of the Holy Land for Christianity and especially the evangelical denominations. But the embassy relocation project had to be downgraded: Some members of the technocratic wing feared that exports of halal meat to Arab countries would suffer as a result. In December 2019, only a Brazilian trade office was opened in Jerusalem, which was presented as the first step toward the complete relocation of the diplomatic mission.

In terms of Brazil-Israel relations, Filipe Martins, Bolsonaro's foreign policy adviser in the presidential office and a member of the ideological wing, stated, "[T]hrough its friendship with Israel, Brazil will continue to contribute to efforts to protect the Holy Sepulcher and other Christian holy sites in Jerusalem."¹¹⁴ Speaking at the August 2019 "March for Jesus", a mass evangelical event at which Israeli flags were waved, Bolsonaro praised Judaism as the origin of Christianity and said Israel was a model he wanted Brazil to emulate. At the end of March 2019, Bolsonaro paid a state visit to Israel shortly before the parliamentary elections there. Together with the Israeli head of government, he visited the Wailing Wall in East Jerusalem. According to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, this was a first for a sitting head of state.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ María Belén López Conte, *La influencia de los grupos de apoyo de Bolsonaro en la política exterior brasileña: un análisis a través de Twitter* [The influence of groups supporting Bolsonaro on Brazilian foreign policy: an analysis based on Twitter] (Buenos Aires: Universidad de San Andrés, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, Tesis de Licenciatura en Relaciones Internacionales, January 2021), 27, <https://repositorio.udea.edu.ar/jspui/bitstream/10908/18135/1/%5BP%5D%5BW%5D%20T.L.%20ReL.%20L%C3%B3pez%20Conte%2C%20Mar%C3%ADa%20Bel%C3%A9n.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2022).

¹¹⁵ The good personal relationship between Netanyahu and Bolsonaro encompasses their children. On the one hand, a 2018 photo circulated on Twitter showing one of Bolsonaro's sons wearing a Mossad T-shirt, and another wearing a T-shirt with the words "Israel Defense Forces". On the other, Netanyahu's son Jair proclaims great sympathy for the Bolso-

Since the beginning of Bolsonaro's presidency, and in contrast to PT policy, Brazil has stood up for Israel at the UN. In March 2019, for example, Brazil voted against a UNHRC resolution condemning Israel's apparent premeditated use of unlawful lethal and other excessive force against civilian protesters in Gaza and demanding that perpetrators in the enclave be brought to justice. In June 2020, Brazil rejected another UNHRC resolution demanding accountability for serious violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territories, which ultimately won majority approval.

Cleared terrain in Africa

Although Brazilian Africa policy has lost momentum, members of Congress belonging to the multi-party Evangelical Parliamentary Front (Frente Parlamentar Evangélica, FPE) and large evangelical churches are pursuing strategies for foreign policy in this continent. Moreover, the evangelicals have become a driving force in Brazil's Africa policy, replacing Brazilian corporations in the role. The latter had greatly expanded their activities internationally under the PT presidency, but then retreated to national business as a result of their involvement in the major *Lava Jato* corruption case. Africa is now considered the region with the greatest expansion of Christianity in the world; various Brazilian missionary organizations are active there. At the same time, it is an area where evangelical interests do not clash with the foreign policy agenda of other groups such as the technocratic and military wings.

At the beginning of the legislative period in early 2019, evangelical members of the national parliament chaired seven of the eight parliamentary friendship groups between Brazil and African states. When Foreign Minister Araújo traveled to five African countries in December 2019, he was accompanied by three congressmen, two of them pastors and members of the FPE, who participated in religious activities in Africa. Among them was Congressman Márcio Marinho, the main interlocutor of the Brazilian Congress with the community of Portuguese-speaking countries and bishop of the evangelical Universal

naros' political project: in his podcast debut of "The Yair Netanyahu Show", he interviewed Eduardo Bolsonaro, the son of the Brazilian President, in November 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_yliPLv-fs (accessed 12 April 2022).

Church of the Kingdom of God (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, IURD). In this church he is responsible for African affairs. In addition to Africa policies, Bolsonaro's first foreign minister maintained close ties with the FPE: Araújo already received a group of deputies in Itamaraty in June 2019 for a "Foreign Policy Dialogue with Evangelical Parliamentarians" and participated in the FPE's National Conference in December 2019.

Value-related positions

The influence of religion and a socially conservative agenda on foreign policy is also evident in Brazil's positions in international organizations. The country is thus distancing itself from the liberal-progressive stance of previous governments, but also from a long-standing Brazilian tradition. This is in line with the policies of Brazil's Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, which was headed by evangelical pastor Damares Alves until March 2022. She is a prominent opponent of the legalization of abortion and of secular and gender pluralistic sex education in schools. Alves had already announced in 2019 that she wanted to restore conservative Christian values that had been severely neglected under the "dictatorship of a leftist minority in the media, universities and non-governmental organizations."¹¹⁶

This approach is reflected, for example, in Brazil's objection to the use of the term gender in documents and resolutions of international organizations, which was introduced by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. At the UNHRC, Brazil voted against the inclusion of the terms "sexual and reproductive rights" and "sex education" in its resolutions.¹¹⁷ At a UN conference in March 2019, the Bolsonaro government opposed any mention of universal access to reproductive and sexual health services in the document. The reason

given was that such statements could lead to the "promotion of abortion."¹¹⁸

In November 2019, Brazil, represented by the Secretary for National Sovereignty and Citizenship Affairs of the Itamaraty, Fabio Mendes Marzano, participated in a conference in Budapest against the global persecution of Christians. The conference was opened by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In line with the government's new foreign policy priorities, Marzano engaged in international action against the persecution of Christians during his speech in Budapest, declaring that religion was now a determining factor in the policy formulation process and that the defense of Christian minorities in the world was among Brazil's essential national interests. Since he was a confidant of then-Foreign Minister Araújo, Marzano was forced to resign his post as secretary after Araújo resigned at the end of March 2021. Due to opposition by the Senate, Marzano could not take up the new post foreseen for him as Brazil's permanent representative to the UN office in Geneva. To circumvent the Congress, Marzano eventually became Consul General in Paris, a position that does not require parliamentary approval.¹¹⁹

116 Tobias Käufer, "Jair Bolsonaros Chefideologin ist die umstrittenste Politikerin Brasiliens" [Jair Bolsonaro's chief ideologue is Brazil's most controversial politician], *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 August 2019, <https://www.fr.de/politik/jair-bolsonaro-chefideologin-praesidenten-frauenministerin-12923162.html> (accessed 23 August 2019).

117 Aline Beatriz Coutinho and Kristina Hinz, "Back to the Past: Brazil's Backlash of Reproductive Justice in Its Domestic and Foreign Policy", *Disrupted*, no. 4 (2020): 12–17, <https://bit.ly/3vdg47a> (accessed 12 April 2022).

118 Caio Quero, "Para 'evitar promoção do aborto', Brasil critica menção à saúde reprodutiva da mulher em documento da ONU" [To 'avoid promoting abortion', Brazil criticises mention of women's reproductive health in UN document], *BBC News Brasil*, 26 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-47675399> (accessed 12 April 2022).

119 Eliane Oliveira, "Ex-secretário de Ernesto Araújo no Itamaraty será cônsul-geral em Paris" [Former Secretary of Ernesto Araújo becomes Consul General in Paris], *O Globo*, 9 June 2021, <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/ex-secretario-de-ernesto-araujo-no-itamaraty-sera-consul-geral-em-paris-25053044> (accessed 12 April 2022); Sara Resende and Gustavo Garcia, "Senado rejeita nome do diplomata Fabio Marzano para delegação em Genebra" [Senate rejects the nomination of diplomat Fabio Marzano for the delegation in Geneva], *G1*, 16 December 2020, <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/12/16/senado-rejeita-nome-do-diplomata-fabio-marzano-para-delegacao-em-genebra.ghtml> (accessed 12 April 2022).

Conclusion and Outlook

According to the findings of foreign policy research on presidential governments in Latin America, a change in the ideology and political preferences of the head of state is the main explanatory factor for a change in foreign policy.¹²⁰ This is also true of Brazil under Bolsonaro. However, Bolsonaro was only able to partially implement the break with previous governments in foreign policy that he had promised in his election campaign. Certainly, at the level of discourse there is a clear rejection of the foreign policy of PT presidencies, and at times even of the country's foreign policy tradition. Simultaneously, however, there are several factors that limit the translation of this change in discourse into concrete policy and thus relativize its characterization as a "rupture."

Some aspects of foreign policy under Bolsonaro can be assessed as an exacerbation of trends that had already begun before he took office. In this regard, the presidencies of Rousseff (2011–2016) and Temer (2016–2018) can be seen as a kind of "two-stage transition." These include, first, the noticeable reduction in Brazilian foreign policy activism under the last PT government, and then second the shift to the right that Temer's assumption of the presidency represented as a result of Rousseff's impeachment.

The Bolsonaro government's foreign policy is not a unified policy, but the result of conflicting ideas and interests within the cabinet, the tension between desire and reality, and the executive branch's growing dependence on legislative support. The driving force of foreign policy change, both in discourse and in political action, is the ideological wing of the government. This wing is strongly motivated by ethics, and its ideological foundations can be found in conservative political romanticism, cultural pessimism and right-wing populism. A clear political intention to de-secularize and a belief in the superiority of the West are characteristic of the ideological wing. Its members belong to the (religious) New Right. Since the ideological wing succeeded in taking key foreign policy

positions in the presidency, the Cabinet and Congress, it greatly influenced foreign policy until mid-2021. This influence is particularly curbed when the military and technocratic wings see their interests affected by the rhetoric and actions of the ideological wing.

The ideological wing tried to impose its preferences in the formulation of foreign policy through personnel and institutional reforms. Significant contextual factors can facilitate or counteract the plans of the ideological wing. For example, Brazil's disengagement from Latin America is furthered by disintegration, political fragmentation and ideological polarization in the region. "Automatic alignment" with the U.S. under Trump's presidency, on the other hand, did not come to bear as Brasília desired and has become obsolete following the change of government in Washington. And although the rhetoric toward China ranges from dissociation to hostility, the importance of the Asian country is growing inexorably in ever more areas of the Brazilian economy.

Since Bolsonaro has become more dependent on the support of Congress and particularly on the parties of the Centrão, the influence of the ideological wing on foreign policy has reduced, in part due to forced resignations. The Covid-19 pandemic, which exposed the negative consequences of the ideological wing's positions like a burning glass, also contributed to this. At the same time, international relations under Corona conditions had the effect of increasing China's importance. In a situation in which material demands are becoming more explosive, the "culture war" is losing its power.

If Lula becomes Brazil's president again in 2023, as Brazilian polls suggest, he will not be able to simply continue his "old foreign policy". Brazil, the region and the world have changed significantly over the past decade. Greater Brazilian foreign policy engagement will be selective due to scarcer resources, increased challenges and changing partner constellations. At the same time, there is no indication that Lula has new foreign policy concepts or innovative initiatives in the pipeline. After the devastating socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 crisis, growth

¹²⁰ Merke et al., "Foreign Policy Change in Latin America" (see note 60).

and development will be the top priority of the incoming Brazilian president — in tension with other policy goals.

After Lula's election victory, members of the ideological wing would presumably no longer have a place in the government. But the influence of the Evangelicals will not disappear because of their electoral weight and parliamentary representation. Lula is already seeking their support in the election campaign. Although the military has played a moderating role in many foreign policy issues in Bolsonaro's government, it remains to be seen to what extent they will withdraw from the civilian structures of the state if Bolsonaro is voted out of office.

As far as environmental governance is concerned, many divergences between Brazil and the EU or Germany are intensifying. On the European side, the protection of the rainforest often serves as a pretext for agricultural protectionisms in the home market. This is the more counterproductive because parts of agribusiness in Brazil are raising their critical voice against the government's Amazon policy. After all, they have a great interest in the country's positive international image so that their export products are bought abroad. These sectors should be seen less as "agrarian competitors" than as "agrarian allies" on the path towards an association agreement between Mercosur and the EU.

Governance proposals that challenge Brazilian sovereignty over the Amazon primarily arouse nationalist and anti-globalist sentiments among the ideological wing, security concerns among the military wing, and anti-imperialist reflexes from Lula and parts of the political left. The legitimacy of European advances pales against the backdrop of some policies of the EU and Germany, such as their refusal to treat Covid-19 vaccines as a global public good.¹²¹ Internationalization pressures, whether from above or without, do not help nature or indigenous peoples. While it seems logical to stop funding those initiatives and projects that no longer serve their original purpose, it is also advisable to continue supporting

federal institutions, technical bodies and civil society organizations. These can perform on-site monitoring, control and advocacy functions to protect the climate, the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples.

There is little point in rhetorically reiterating the "strategic partnerships" that exist between supposedly natural allies but are based on dwindling or only verbally invoked commonalities.¹²² Instead, realistic cooperation would be appropriate. First, this does not mean underestimating Brazil's global nor its regional importance, but rather not overestimating the positive and negative effects of an association agreement between Mercosur and the EU. It would not be advisable to reduce the manifold — also transnational — relations to this one instrument, which was partly negotiated in confidence, partly kept secret and therefore cannot be supported socially.¹²³ Secondly, it would also be realistic to address the existing structural asymmetries and political differences in an appropriate framework, so that different positions do not merely become visible in the event of divergent voting behavior. Third, even if coherence is considered an imperative of effective foreign policy and summit diplomacy a sign of successful cooperation, sectoral fragmentation and lowering the level of engagement (from the political to the technical or from the national to the regional and local) could be a viable way of continuing broad-based cooperation with Brazil. This is true at least for as long as important parts of Brazil's government are convinced that non-governmental organizations and international organizations and regimes are dominated by "cultural Marxism" or "globalism."

121 Denis M. Tull and Claudia Zilla, "Putting Words into Action: Foreign Policy towards Africa and Latin America", in *German Foreign Policy in Transition. Volatile Conditions, New Momentum*, ed. Günther Maihold, Stefan Mair, Melanie Müller, Judith Vorrath and Christian Wagner, SWP Research Paper 10/2021 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, December 2021), 49–52, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/research_papers/2021RP10_German-ForeignPolicy.pdf (accessed 1 June 2022).

122 Claudia Zilla, "From Bad Times to Great Opportunities, a Usual Hope", *EU-LAC* (Blog), 3 May 2022, <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/bad-times-great-opportunities-usual-hope> (accessed 23 May 2022).

123 Malamud, *Assessing the Political Dialogue* (see note 100), 23.

Abbreviations

ACUF	American Conservative Union Foundation	ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
AD	Assembleias de Deus Assemblies of God	IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	INMET	Instituto Nacional de Meteorologia National Meteorology Institute
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de nuestra América Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America	INPE	Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais National Institute for Space Research
ANA	Agência Nacional de Águas e Saneamento Básico National Water and Sanitation Agency	IPRI	Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais Institute for International Relations Research
Anatel	Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações National Telecommunications Agency	IRB	Instituto Rio Branco Rio Branco Institute
AP	Associated Press	IURD	Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus Universal Church of the Kingdom of God
APD	Agricultural Policy Dialogue	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
BNDES	Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Brazilian Development Bank	LSE	The London School of Economics and Political Science
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa	MA	Massachusetts
CELAC	Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños Community of Latin American and Caribbean States	Mercosur	Mercado Común del Sur Southern Common Market
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CNAL	Conselho Nacional da Amazônia Legal National Council for Legal Amazonia	NDB	New Development Bank (BRICS)
CONAMA	Conselho Nacional do Meio Ambiente National Environmental Council	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
COSBAN	Comissão Sino-Brasileira de Alto Nível de Concertação e Cooperação Sino-Brazilian High Level Commission for Consultation and Cooperation	OAS	Organization of American States
CPAC	Conservative Political Action Conference	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CPI	Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry	Parlasur	Parlamento del Mercosur Mercosur's Parliament
DEM	Democratas Democrats (political Party)	PL	Partido Liberal Liberal Party
EEAS	European External Action Service	Prosur	Foro para el Progreso e Integración de America del Sur South American Forum for Progress and Integration
EP	European Parliament	PSC	Partido Social Cristão Social Christian Party
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	PSD	Partido Social Democrático Social Democratic Party
FPE	Frente Parlamentar Evangélica Evangelical Parliamentary Front	PSDB	Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy
FUNAG	Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation	PSL	Partido Social Liberal Social Liberal Party
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit German Agency for International Cooperation	PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores Workers' Party
IBAMA	Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources	SMCF	Secretaria de Mudanças do Clima e Florestas Secretariat for Climate Change and Forests
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa	STF	Supremo Tribunal Federal Federal Supreme Court
ICMBio	Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation	UK	United Kingdom
		UN	United Nations
		UNASUR	Unión de Naciones Suramericanas Union of South American Nations
		UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
		UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
		WHO	World Health Organization
		WTO	World Trade Organization

