

Understanding Brazil's new drive for Africa

Lyal White*

Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Following a period of some distancing through the 1980s and 1990s, Brazil has made a concerted effort to engage with Africa. Today, under the leadership of President Lula, Africa is clearly a priority, especially as Brazil emerges as a global economic power and leader of the developing South. Yet, relatively little is written of Brazil's engagement with Africa and the rationale behind the political and economic drive toward the continent. What is clear is that Brazil's engagement with Africa, viewed in the historical context, maintains its underlying foreign policy principles of economic development on the one hand and the preservation of autonomy in an asymmetric world on the other. Brazil's engagement with Africa has taken on a three-pronged approach of political diplomacy, commercial engagement and development co-operation. This is indicative of a new era of Brazilian foreign policy and Brazil's process of internationalisation in general. This is a complex and inter-related process that Brazil seems to have managed well through a high degree of diplomatic sophistication and open cooperation between the political, commercial and various development entities. Africa displays one of the best contextual examples of Brazil's delicate balancing act between commercial and strategic interests and external development assistance. The way Brazil manages this and builds on its positive image in Africa is indicative of its role and approach as a new and emerging power on the international stage.

Keywords: Brazil; Brazilian foreign policy; Africa; Brazilian investment; development cooperation; IBSA; South Africa

Introduction

Brazil has prioritised Africa in its global political and economic outlook. After decades of emotive gestures and historical linkages, which lacked clear political and economic commitment from both sides of the Atlantic, Brazil–Africa relations have finally reached a new juncture.

Officials have moved beyond the rhetoric that characterised relations for so long by pursuing a more active foreign policy filled with substantive agreements, while commercial entities from Brazil are actively seeking new opportunities across the African continent. This will deliver tangible outcomes that will benefit both Brazil and Africa in the long run.

This article gives a detailed overview of Brazil's relations with Africa, first historically and then in the context of its rise as an emerging global power. While Brazil has maintained a pro-Africa position for many decades, it is clear that behind this recent emergence and under the leadership of President Luis Inacio 'Lula' da

*Email: lyal.white@gmail.com

Silva, engagement with Africa has stepped up in substance and intensity. Historical linkages were important in establishing a cultural and diplomatic foundation, but tangible economic and development exchanges have been largely absent until now. Brazil's Africa agenda under President Lula represents a combination of the ideological and strategic changes within the country, with a particular emphasis on development imperatives and a changing global political economy under increased forces of globalisation. Africa is seen by some in foreign policy decision making circles in Brasilia as a viable alternative in the South to traditional reliance on powers from the North, such as the United States.¹

Often described as a country of continental proportions, with a highly diversified economy that is backed up by enormous resource potential in agriculture, metals, minerals and now oil, but still suffering alarming levels of poverty, inequality and crime, Brazil's greatest challenge clearly lies in balancing its growing list of international activities with the developmental needs of its people back home. Some believe that Brazil's ambitious international agenda is simply untenable since it does not have the resources and capacity to sustain it — in spite of the economic boom and progress that has captivated the country.

Given these circumstances and as Brazil grapples with a range of domestic and foreign policy challenges while it emerges as a leading power of the South, this article explores three inter-related areas of Brazil's engagement with Africa: political diplomacy, African neo-mercantilism and development co-operation. These three areas help illustrate the range of activities in which Brazil is involved across the African continent. But, more significantly, these three areas of engagement with African countries mark a new era of foreign policy coherence between the various external actors in Brazil — be they commercial players like Vale, Odebrecht or Petrobras, or development partners like EMBRAPA and BNDES — and extends the notion of 'autonomy through diversification' through more concrete engagement and co-operation with African countries.²

Brazil's approach to Africa, which exudes an increasing sense of responsibility along with a strategic impetus, appears to be an ideal pilot test for the country's broader foreign policy as an emerging power. At the same time, as demonstrated in this article, Africa forms a crucial part of Brazil's foreign agenda and is key to its global political and economic aspirations.

A brief history of Brazil–Africa relations

Brazil's relations with Africa date back centuries. As a result of the history linking Brazil and Africa through the slave trade in the 17th century, Brazil's black population is the largest in the world outside of Africa, and is second only to Nigeria. In fact, more than half the Brazilian population of 190 million claim direct African ancestry. But despite boasting one of the largest African diasporas, historically Brazil has had limited interaction with Africa, tending to focus almost exclusively on lusophone Africa. One expert insists that Brazil has never had a clear, homogenous policy toward Africa, but has instead pursued a more focused bilateral agenda with selected countries based on cultural affiliation and strategic interests.³ It was not until 1983 that a Brazilian president visited the Africa continent, when Joao Baptista de Oliveira Figueredo made a state visit to five African countries.⁴

Before this, Brazil maintained an 'arms length' exchange with Africa through indirect anti-colonial gestures in favour of Africa around the period of independence

and through voting at the United Nations (UN). Brazil's foreign minister in 1972, Mario Gibson Barboza, visited nine African countries on the Atlantic coast, which served to illustrate Brazil's developmentalist approach to foreign engagement and also to promote self-determination in Africa.⁵ Such pro-African international diplomacy earned it support across the continent and paved the way for ongoing healthy relations and strategic Brazilian investments in resource extraction in later years. This was so despite what many believe to be a lack of explicit commitment between Brazil and Africa.

Two strands

But what some see as a lack of substance in Brazil–Africa relations in the 1960s through to the 1980s was merely an extension of the broader principal of political autonomy from global powers that had come to define Brazilian foreign policy since independence, and was articulated more clearly after the Second World War, during which two broad strands of thought around Brazilian foreign policy emerged. These strands of thought still inform contemporary foreign policy in Brazil and its subsequent relations with Africa today.

Maria Regina Soares de Lima (2008) describes the first strand as championing relations with established partners in the developed world, like the United States, with the aim of achieving international recognition. The second line of thinking emphasises Brazil's identity as a developing country, where it pursues closer ties with other like-minded developing countries of the South. Each one of these strands of thought assumed varying degrees of dominance throughout recent Brazilian history as they were adopted by one government to the next.⁶

During the military dictatorship in Brazil (1967–1985), and particularly the 1970s, Brazilian foreign policy adopted the second strand of thought, which was more specifically articulated under President Ernesto Geisel as 'Responsible Pragmatism'. This approach affirmed the principle of autonomy from centres of power (notably the United States) by engaging (somewhat superficially) with countries of the South. The rationale was to diversify Brazil's interests from countries of the North in an effort to unlock the country's dependency on the likes of the United States. It also promoted a strong developmental sentiment in this approach, which is precisely where Africa fitted in. However, Brazil's true commitment to this line of foreign policy thinking was questioned not only as a result of the lack of tangible engagements with Africa, but also by the fact that it was never a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Brazil's economic rhetoric also often contradicted that of the concerns of the developing South.

Despite this, the second strand of thought around Brazilian foreign policy and particularly President Geisel's idea of responsible pragmatism, all of which seeks greater autonomy from traditional powers through diversification or increased participation in the multilateral arena — together with a strong developmental imperative, has remained the guiding principal for the Lula government. This follows a period in the late 1980s and 1990s when Brazil adopted the first strand of foreign policy thinking that prioritised relations with the United States and other developed countries in line with its process of democratisation and liberal economic reform.⁷

Looking beyond political diplomacy to commercial policy, tangible links between Brazil and Africa were first made by South African investors in the Brazilian mining sector which began in earnest in the early 1970s. Brazil, at the time, was regarded by

many as the emerging market giant of the future — but not without its own set of political problems. South African mining giant Anglo American took the opportunity to invest in the enormous Brazilian gold deposit potential. Anglo American was well placed for such an endeavour since the geological environment in Brazil was very similar to the South African Witwatersrand, an area where the company had developed unique expertise in deep-level mining. Its operating experience under politically constraining circumstances in apartheid South Africa and other parts of Africa prepared it well for the Brazilian environment, which was equally opaque from an investment point of view at the time.⁸

Brazil quickly became one of Anglo American's most lucrative international investment destinations. In turn, Anglo American was instrumental in modernising the Brazilian mining sector and, by the mid-1990s, was one of the largest investors in Brazil and arguably the largest investor in the mining sector. Anglo American's success drew other South African investors from a diversity of sectors to Brazil in the years that followed. It also pioneered the way for deeper political and cultural relations between South Africa and Brazil post-1994, since the commercial incentive already appeared to be in place (not to mention the familiarity that had been built between the Brazilian and South African business community).

But reciprocal investments from Brazil to Africa (and particularly South Africa) have been slow and less pronounced. Brazilian companies — with the exception of one or two traditional players in Angola — only started looking to Africa as an investment destination at the turn of the millennium and once President Lula had laid the political ground work.

This reflects the traditional rationale of engagement for Brazil in Africa, which in recent history — as alluded to above — was based on strategic alliances and selective political diplomacy and engagement with lusophone Africa. As African countries gained their independence one after another, Brazil replaced (and even undermined) its Portuguese colonial master by pursuing closer ties with the five Portuguese colonies in Africa. Brazil recognised the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in July 1974 — before it was conceded by Portugal — and in November 1975 Brazil established relations with Mozambique and became the first 'Western' government to recognise the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA) government in Angola. This was a bold move on the part of Brazil as it not only challenged Portugal in its former colonial backyard, but also undermined the US position in the Cold War battle against communism, since the MPLA was staunchly supported by communist powers.⁹

Years later Brazil's recognition of independent lusophone states in Africa has proven to be an astute strategic manoeuvre. Angolans constantly refer to the fact that Brazil was the first country to recognise their independent MPLA government and to offer them support through a range of investments and construction projects. Brazilians are welcomed to Angola with open arms, and the cultural and social affinity between Brazil and Angola eclipses the frayed link they have with Portugal. This has contributed enormously to Brazil's 'soft power' in Angola and the region. By now, Angola is Brazil's third or fourth most important trade partner in Africa and an all-important export market for Brazilian manufactured products and services. It has over 100 Brazilian firms operating there, which is by far the largest number of all African countries, and Brazilian brands are prevalent across Angolan society. Brazilian TV channels, and especially soap operas, are by far the most

popular TV shows in Angola, and Angolans frequently travel to Brazil, to which many Angolans claim a closer cultural affinity than with Portugal.

With hindsight, it is apparent that Brazil's recognition of independent Africa was less an act of political altruism than one of strategic interest. During the oil crisis in the early 1970s, Brazil negotiated a reciprocal agreement of oil for Brazilian manufactured exports with African partner countries through the state controlled petroleum company, Petrobras. In 1979 Petrobras also made its first investment in Angola.¹⁰ This is an example of what Vigevani and Cepaluni describe as autonomy through distance and diversification.¹¹

This marked the start of Brazil's strategic interests in Africa, which are explicitly linked to energy and which are clearly evident today not only in terms of trade with Algeria and Nigeria — two of Brazil's largest trade partners in Africa — but also in the fact that coal is still one of the primary imported commodities from South Africa.¹² Meanwhile countries like Nigeria and Morocco purchase sugar from Brazil, which could have an inferred linkage with Brazil's new energy aspirations around biofuels and the bioethanol industry in particular.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Brazil–Africa relations declined off an already relatively low base, with sporadic state visits from Brazil to lusophone Africa in the late 1980s and a string of visits from African partners to Brasilia during that period.¹³ A notable exception to this trend was in the inception of Odebrecht, the Brazilian construction company, which first invested in Angola in 1982. On the back of large-scale construction and civil engineering projects Odebrecht's interests have grown and diversified dramatically since then, beyond Angola and construction into various sectors across Africa.

But it was not until democratic transition in South Africa that relations stepped up in significance and intensity. Regular state visits between the two countries began in 1996, and both Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were invited to the Mercosur (Mercado Comun del Sur) summit in 1996 and 1998 respectively. This period also marked a turning point in Brazilian foreign policy, when, under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil began re-engaging with countries in the South and establishing alliances with like-minded partners or emerging powers in an effort to counter asymmetries of power in its external relations.¹⁴ Bilateral trade flows between South Africa and Brazil also began to pick up during this time as both countries awarded reciprocal strategic partner status to each other.

Brazil–South Africa relations were crystallised in 2003 through the launch of the India–Brazil–South Africa (IBSA) forum, which essentially grouped the two country's (and India's) global political and developmental aspirations together under a more collective arrangement. Brazil and South Africa actively led multilateral dialogue and coalitions that championed the agenda of the developing South (and Africa in particular) in various global dialogues and forums. IBSA also undertook a range of development projects across the African continent and, in more recent years, has facilitated trilateral development co-operation with South Africa in Africa. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this article.

It is clear that Brazil has enjoyed a long, healthy relationship with Africa. But it is only under more recent developments — Brazil's rise as an emerging power, its growth in wealth and international commercial interest and under the leadership of President Lula — that this relationship has taken on a more structured form with explicit strategic interests. These interests in Africa will need to be defined more

Table 1. Comparative figures 2008

	Brazil	South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
Population (million)	192	48.7	818
Surface area (km ² , thousands)	8 514	1 219	24 242
GDP (current US\$, billions)	1 613	277	987
GDP (% growth)	5.1	3.1	5
Inflation	5.9	10.8	10.8
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	14	36	37
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)	14	40	40
Foreign direct investment (US\$, millions, 2007)	34 585	5 746	28 734
Official development assistance and aid (US\$, millions, 2007)	297	794	35 362
Life expectancy at birth	73	50	52
Prevalence of HIV (2007)	0.6	18.1	5.0
CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita, 2005)	1.7	8.7	0.9
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	78	92	32
Internet users (per 100 people)	35.5 (2007)	8.6	4.5

Source: The World Bank Data Profile, <www.worldbank.org>.

clearly in the context of Brazil's evolving foreign policy as they certainly are an important part of Brazil's aspirations as an emerging power.¹⁵

The rise of Brazil as an emerging power

Long described as 'the country of the future — and always will be',¹⁶ Brazil's astonishing ascent in the last decade has silenced its critics who doubted it would ever realise its true potential. Such potential, based on the country's vast territory, population and economic size and dominance in South America and its array of natural resources, has eluded Brazil since the country was first vaunted as an emerging power in the 1950s. Instead, the promise of a prosperous future was replaced by political instability and successive economic failures that culminated in a myriad of social problems that made Brazil one of the most violent and unequal countries in the world throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Economic stagnation in the 1980s — known as the 'lost decade' — and lack-lustre performance in the 1990s further deepened inequality and poverty levels. In the early 1990s inflation stood at approximately 70% per month, which marked the peak of a 40 year period where inflation outpaced annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth.¹⁷

In recent years the story of Brazil has changed. Since 2000 sustained economic growth and falling social inequality has — for the first time in decades — followed Brazilian political stability, which was entrenched in the mid-1990s by former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Between 2003 and 2008 Brazil enjoyed its best economic performance in more than 25 years, with economic growth averaging 5% per annum. Foreign investment reached record levels of \$45 billion in 2008 and a favourable trade balance, with exports exceeding \$700 billion, is driving Brazil's export-led growth.¹⁸ All this has translated into greater global influence, projecting the Brazilian voice beyond Latin America and the traditional developing South into

a new league of leading global powers alongside China, India and the United States. After years of underperformance and dashed expectations, Brazil, it seems, has finally arrived.

Brazil's emergence and recent economic success can be attributed to a fortuitous combination of factors and events. These include political leadership and appropriate succession; the sequencing of tough reforms dating back to the early 1990s; well formulated and executed social policies; the commodity boom; and a favourable international environment. On top of this, new oil deposits were discovered off the coast of Rio de Janeiro which, once exploited, will convert Brazil from a net importer to a net exporter of oil. Brazil is scheduled also to host the world's two largest sporting events, the International Football Federation (Fifa) World Cup football finals in 2014, and the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

All this has injected a wave of optimism and enthusiasm in Brazil, which has instilled a new sense of confidence and global leadership in the country. Brazil finally seems to be embracing its role as a global player that extends well beyond Latin America and conventional multilateral actions, engaging directly on a political, commercial and developmental level in regions across the globe.¹⁹

Brazil's global emergence has been characterised by not only a rise in inward investment flows, but also an increase in outward investment (predominantly in the developing world) and with that a provider of development assistance. In 2006 outward bound foreign direct investment (FDI) flows for the first time matched inbound FDI. In that year inbound FDI stock reached in excess of \$328.5 billion, while outbound FDI stock totalled \$129.8 billion, which is exceptionally high considering Brazilian investors are still relatively new players in foreign markets. It is also indicative of Brazil's coming of age.²⁰

It is this new found outward orientation of the Brazilian economy that distinguishes Brazil's rise, as well as the excitement around its economic potential, from past 'miracle periods'. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, for instance, Brazil enjoyed a 10% annual economic growth for seven consecutive years. This figure constituted one of the world's highest growth rates of that time. It is true that agricultural exports boomed during this period, but a lack of product and market diversity made it extremely vulnerable to both internal and external shocks, and Brazil soon fell victim to economic crises in the early 1980s.

Today Brazil is no longer simply exporting commodities. True, Brazil's commodity mix — from soy beans, beef and orange juice to iron ore — has been a fundamental contributor to its recent wealth accumulation, as booming markets from the United States to China demand food and raw materials. But it is more the choice of policies and the sequencing of long term structural reforms (which have finally settled after a long period of adjustment) that have enabled Brazil to capitalise on the commodity boom, while other countries — like South Africa — have not.²¹ This is what distinguishes Brazil from other commodity exporters.

The Brookings Institute, in a recent publication, describes Brazil as 'reaping the benefits of its legacy of policies'.²² Ironically, it has been those very same protectionist policies from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s that were designed to make Brazil self-sufficient and to empower the state through a large and controlling public sector that have created internationally competitive and technologically superior Brazilian multinational corporations (MNCs) and development agencies today. In the 1990s, before Brazil's privatisation drive, 38 of Brazil's 100 largest firms were still

government owned. Government-controlled Petrobras is still widely regarded as the largest company headquartered in the southern hemisphere.²³

While a large body of literature²⁴ describes the state-led development policies adopted by Brazil decades ago as ‘costly and counterproductive’, the legacy of these policies is paradoxically, it seems, the foundation for Brazil’s outward-looking business and political leaders. These policies helped develop a competitive advantage in sectors like agribusiness, biofuels (bioethanol in particular) and resource extraction, the underlying services and expertise for development of which are now being exported around the world.

Such prolonged autonomy from international markets in Brazil also helped develop skilled technocrats, bureaucrats and systems geared toward innovative social programmes and broad-based development. Lessons in social development (especially in areas such as HIV/AIDS awareness) have long been instructive for African countries. But certain programmes around conditional cash transfers, incentive-based education, commercial farming and renewable energy (to name a few) are now actively being exported to African countries in what Brazilians call a transfer of ‘social technology’.²⁵ This is a dimension of Brazilian internationalisation that transcends various sectors relevant to both social and commercial development, and which has become an important component of Brazilian foreign policy in both Latin America and Africa. This dimension receives further attention below.

Ultimately, Brazil’s protectionist policies from the 1960s to 1980s have unintentionally given it a competitive advantage in a range of commercial and social sectors particularly relevant in the developing world. This has not only helped position it more steadfastly as an emerging power, but has provided tangible areas of foreign engagement beyond traditional trade and political relations, revealing new drivers of Brazilian foreign policy in the form of investment, development co-operation, technology transfer, energy and agriculture — all of which are interconnected and relevant to Africa.

Brazil’s new Africa strategy: political diplomacy, neo-mercantilism and development cooperation

Brazil’s contemporary relations with Africa may at first appear to be a complex — even poorly defined — mix of political alliances (old and new) and commercial interests, underpinned by foreign policy priorities that have varied from administration to administration in Brazil. On closer inspection, however, Brazil’s relations with Africa can be neatly divided into three broad categories. While these may be inter-related, they certainly do offer a useful strategic map of Brazil’s engagement with Africa which correlates strongly with Brazil’s broader foreign policy goals as an emerging global power.

The first category is political diplomacy and Brazil’s multilateral engagement with Africa. This has been a primary feature of Brazilian foreign policy under President Lula, who single-handedly changed the face of Brazilian international engagement and multilateral activism during his two terms in office. Under Lula, Brazil’s multipolar approach reprioritised the developing South through various multilateral forums and placed special attention on Africa through unprecedented direct attention and visits, advancing the historical Brazilian notion of responsible pragmatism with universal democratic principles, and development through increased globalisation.

The second category is trade and investment, wherein certain Brazilian companies have maintained a long standing interest (especially in lusophone Africa). However, the recent surge of interest shown by emerging Brazilian MNCs in resource extraction, construction and agriculture beyond the former Portuguese colonies to other parts of Africa represent a new era of commercial exchanges between Africa and Brazil, which certainly appears to be a strong driver of Brazilian foreign policy on the continent.

Finally, development and development co-operation have become an important component of Brazilian foreign policy, and is sure to be a principal driver of foreign policy in Africa. Brazil's relative success in social development programmes in its own country has made it a primary exporter of 'social technology' to other developing countries. This has become an important tool in its foreign policy in the developing world.

Africa is clearly an important arena for the exercise of Brazil's new foreign policy approaches. Its engagement in Africa is generally well-received. Brazil seems to have opted for a middle-ground approach between the Chinese-style of engagement — which is highly political and supported by the weight of the state-run machinery behind investments and development initiatives — and the Indian approach — which is characterised more by private sector investments and entrepreneurial activities across the continent.

This is a continent in need of political support and better representation through functional coalitions at multilateral forums. Africa also needs investment in resource extraction, in construction and civil engineering (all areas of commercial focus for Brazilian companies), and development co-operation, as well as increased technology and knowledge transfers. Africa is an ideal location for rolling out Brazilian-styled social programmes and to put in practise nuanced approaches to enterprise and technology-led development, which will test the real world application of Brazil's instructive lessons for developing countries.

In turn, beside reliable access to strategic resources like oil, Brazil also seeks political support from African countries in various global forums, especially in its pursuit of permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and, more generally, their recognition of Brazil as a leading global power.

Political diplomacy, geopolitics and multilateral engagement

Brazil's prioritising of Africa in the current period can be attributed largely to President Lula.²⁶ Since taking office in 2003, Lula has visited no less than 19 African countries in eight trips. During this time Brazil has doubled the number of its embassies in Africa to 30,²⁷ and Lula was invited as a special guest to the African Union summit in Sirte, Libya, in 2009. Brazil has hosted a number of large second track initiatives with African academics and policy thinkers and was behind the creation of the South America–Africa summit.²⁸ In 2007 Lula stated that, 'South America is a priority in Brazilian external policy. Our region is our home. . . We also feel ourselves connected to Africa through cultural and historical threads. Having the second largest black population in the world, we are committed to share the destiny and challenges of the region.'²⁹ With these words Lula set a political precedence for his administration and those that follow. On a personal note, Lula has also pledged his commitment to alleviating poverty in Africa when he leaves office at the end of 2010.³⁰

All these efforts have helped build Brazilian ‘soft power’ in Africa, and particularly in countries like Angola where the Lula administration has advanced existing cultural and historical linkages through diplomatic exchanges and a range of agreements. Brazil’s political advances have also brought targeted funding, credit lines and technical assistance to Africa. The Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) have rolled out a number of development initiatives across the continent, the fact of which has gone a long way in developing Brazil’s strategic interests and promoting the country in the eyes of Africans. The role of BNDES and EMBRAPA, which have become an important part of Brazil’s commercial expansion and drive for development co-operation in Africa, will be described in more detail in the two sections that follow.

From a geopolitical or multilateral perspective, these ‘on-the ground’ efforts — which go beyond high profile but largely vacuous political visits — have not gone unnoticed among African leaders. In turn, Brazil, like any emerging power in Africa, seeks privileged status for its contractors and development plans. Beyond this, African support for Brazil’s grand plans of global governance reform is important. This is especially the case in the UN where each nation has a vote and Brazil is vying for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Commercial drivers and Brazilian MNCs

Trade has grown rapidly between Brazil and Africa in recent years. African exports to Brazil have risen from \$3 billion in 2000 to \$18.5 billion in 2008, while imports from Brazil have increased from \$1 billion in 2000 to \$8 billion in 2008. Imports from Africa now represent roughly 9.5% of total world imports for Brazil while exports to Africa represent about 5.5% of Brazil’s total exports (see Figure 1). It should be noted in this context, however, that Brazil’s total trade with Africa, currently \$26.5 billion, is minor when compared with total China–Africa trade at \$107 billion.³¹

Brazil’s trade with Africa is still dominated by oil. Nigeria is Brazil’s largest trade partner in Africa, with oil exports from that country totalling \$6.3 billion (or one third of total Brazilian imports from Africa). Angola and Algeria, both large oil producers, follow closely behind Nigeria. Meanwhile, trade with South Africa is relatively lower than that with the oil producers, and the balance is deeply in favour of Brazil.³²

While other emerging powers like China and India seem to have more substantial commercial ties with Africa, Brazilian interests are growing and diversifying at a rapid pace. In their traditional sectors and locations, such as resource extraction,

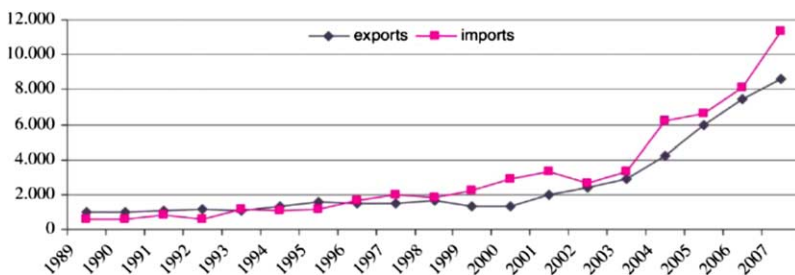


Figure 1. Brazilian trade with Africa, 1989–2007 (\$ millions).

engineering and construction in Angola and Mozambique, Brazilian companies are well established and exude a positive image. Odebrecht, the mega-construction and engineering company, is the largest private sector employer in Angola, for instance, active in diverse sectors from construction and supermarkets to food and ethanol production.³³

Investment and the activities of the emerging Brazilian MNCs tell a slightly different story to that of simply trade. While Brazilian investments in Africa total a little more than a modest \$12 billion, these players are clearly in it for the long haul. Odebrecht has been in Angola for close on 30 years, arriving shortly after Brazil became the first Western government to recognise the MPLA in 1975. Petrobras, the Brazilian state-owned oil company, has been in Angola for equally as long and has more recently continued the tradition by deploying its expertise to deep water oil deposits off the coast of Luanda. It plans to invest \$3 billion in oil-rich Angola and Nigeria before 2013. Brazil's Vale, the second largest mining company in the world — and Odebrecht's largest private client — meanwhile has interests scattered across Africa. Its most significant project (in operation), which is also one of the continent's largest mining developments, is the Moatzie coal plant in Mozambique in which Vale has already invested about \$1.3 billion. In addition to this Vale has just committed to buying an iron ore mine in Guinea for \$2.5 billion. Both Vale and Odebrecht have existing operations in Liberia, through which the iron ore from Guinea will be exported (see Table 2).

Africa is clearly seen as the new frontier of resource extraction, construction and infrastructure development, all areas of speciality for Brazilian MNCs. This was confirmed by Roger Agnelli, the president of Vale, who recently declared Africa as 'the next horizon in the industry of natural resources in the world' and 'the future of Vale'.³⁴

But President Lula recently criticised Brazilian companies for their slow and timid participation in Africa when compared to their Chinese counterparts.³⁵ Brazilian investments in Africa lag far behind those of China. But Brazil is still a relatively new player in the investment game and lacks the monolithic state infrastructure and support that China provides its firms in Africa. Modest support (when compared to China) from Brazilian state agencies for investment in Africa is starting to trickle in, however. Most of this is linked to Brazil's development or donor agenda, as will be demonstrated below. But funding from the likes of BNDES and EMBRAPA does provide credit to Brazilian firms eager to start new projects or to expand existing ones, especially in the areas of construction, agriculture and biofuels.

BNDES, which has been instrumental in facilitating Brazil's export drive and the subsequent internationalisation of Brazilian firms, has funded over 30 infrastructure and ethanol projects undertaken by Brazilian companies in Africa. Its most significant contribution to date has been a credit line to the Angolan government of \$1.75 billion, to be used in national priority projects — mostly infrastructure construction — using Brazilian contractors. While significant, this is again relatively small when compared to the \$4 billion (and increasing) credit line extended from China and its provinces to Angola. Angolan officials estimate that the country needs about \$20 billion for national reconstruction. Brazil, through private firms like Odebrecht and development agencies like BNDES, is clearly an important part of this reconstruction process.³⁶

This scenario in Angola is a perfect illustration of the blurred lines or perhaps the complementarity between Brazilian commercial and strategic interests in Africa and

Table 2. Brazilian firms in Africa: industry and country

Company	Industry	Country
Adeco Agropecuaria	Sugar and ethanol	Mozambique
Andrade Gutierrez	Construction	
Aquamec Equipamentos Ltda.	Water treatment	Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Mauritania and DRC
Camargo Correa	Construction	Angola
Vale	Mining and metals	Angola, Morocco, Guinea, Mozambique and South Africa
Marcopolo S.A.	Bus manufacturing	Angola, Guinea, Mozambique and South Africa
Medabil	Construction materials	Egypt and South Africa
Odebrecht	Diversity of industries, mostly construction	Brazil, Botswana, Djibouti, Guinea, Gabon, Liberia, Libya, Mozambique, DRC and South Africa
Petrobras S.A.	Oil and gas	Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania
Symnetics	Management consultancy	Angola
Volkswagen Caminhoes e Onibus	Bus manufacturing	South Africa
Weg S.A.	Electro mechanical	Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Source: De Freitas Barbosa A, T Narciso & M Biancalana, 'Brazil in Africa: Another emerging power in the continent?', *Politikon*, 36, 1, 2009.

the development assistance it offers the continent. While the link is often denied or ignored, it is unavoidable given the increasingly competitive nature of development in Africa and especially in countries like Angola, where a new commercial rivalry may be brewing between entities from Brazil and China and, to a lesser degree, South Africa and Russia.

Brazil as an emerging donor and development co-operation through IBSA, energy and agriculture

Brazil is increasingly seen not only as an emerging market and global power, but also as an emerging donor in the developing world. This is a title and position it takes very seriously, especially in Africa.

As a country with enormous socioeconomic challenges, but boasting impressive results in combating HIV/AIDS and, more recently, reducing poverty and inequality through innovative programmes, Brazil exudes a genuine solidarity in its assistance as an emerging provider.³⁷ Recipients in both Africa and Latin America interpret Brazil's development co-operation initiatives as having a social and political impetus rather than an economic motive.³⁸ While no apparent link exists between direct government aid efforts in Africa and growing investment interests, this is likely to

change as development co-operation advances further into areas of technology transfers, infrastructure development, energy and agriculture where the notion of enterprise-led development will prevail. This will be a natural progression to ensure development initiatives and co-operation grow and are sustainable, especially in areas such as biofuel production and agribusiness.

Africa has become a focus of Brazilian donor initiatives. The Brazilian government has allocated over \$11 million, or more than half of its donor budget, to technical co-operation programmes in Africa — a figure that is inflated substantially if all activities and finance from BNDES and EMBRAPA are included. Today there are over 125 programmes (of a total 318) across 22 African countries on the continent. These have grown tremendously under Lula and look to be on track to grow for years to come. The only visible constraint is capacity and the need to improve co-ordination among the various agencies active in Africa.³⁹

Brazil has various arms of foreign assistance and development co-operation that emanate from the government and which are active in Africa. The Brazilian Agency for Cooperation or *Agencia Brasileira de Cooperacao* (ABC), co-ordinated by the Ministry of External Relations, has a broad portfolio of commitments across the African continent and works directly with host governments in recipient countries. Their on-the-ground activities focus on trying to replicate the success Brazil has had in areas such as combating HIV/AIDS through the construction of anti-retroviral laboratories.

Meanwhile, the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), which is a joint effort by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Presidency in Brasilia, engages in applied poverty research and training. Their aim is to promote South–South co-operation and exchange, in an effort to address common social issues. In early 2009 the IPC launched the Africa–Brazil Cooperation Programme on Social Protection (ABCP), which helps facilitate knowledge transfer on various social policies and programmes like conditional cash transfers and health governance.

For 2009–10, the IPC is tasked with hosting the academic forum of the IBSA summit. The aim of this is to encourage more constructive dialogue between policy thinkers and academics from IBSA, including exchange of examples of best practice from their countries. The academic forum is designed to inform the leaders at the summit and encourage ongoing policy research and dialogue that will feed into the decision-making process in IBSA. From this it is clear that Brazil sees IBSA as another forum for development co-operation, which can compliment other development priorities and the foreign assistance component of its foreign policy.⁴⁰

The third and most significant arm of Brazil's development assistance is in agriculture through EMBRAPA. The highly respected EMBRAPA is widely credited for Brazil's agricultural boom, and is now deeply active in Africa. In fact, EMBRAPA is probably the best established of all Brazilian foreign assistance organisations in Africa and opened its African headquarters in Accra, Ghana, in April 2008 with a clear intention to expand existing operations.

Indicators demonstrate that Brazil has emerged as an agricultural superpower.⁴¹ Since the 1960s EMBRAPA has revolutionised Brazilian agriculture through applied research and technology development, which increased agricultural production, improved land and resource utility and ultimately ensured food and energy security through sugarcane ethanol production. Brazil is today a leading agriculture and

ethanol exporter, and agriculture is without a doubt the backbone of the Brazilian economy.⁴²

But Brazil's emergence as a biofuel superpower is even more astonishing. As the world's second largest producer and largest exporter of ethanol, Brazil has by far the largest fleet of bioethanol cars, with a concomitant infrastructure, in the world (see Table 3). Bioethanol already accounts for 40% of the country's energy demand, but only 1% of agricultural land is used for its production — a figure that trumps concerns around the increased vulnerability of food security as biofuel production gains traction in developing countries.⁴³

Following its enormous success in Brazil, EMBRAPA began its international expansion in 1998. Brazil, including EMBRAPA, identified the needs and potential of agricultural cooperation with Africa early and has already established technical agreements with more than 20 countries across the continent. Based on a strategy of 'providing free assistance to African governments looking to improve levels of farming and sophistication, as well as those interested in developing indigenous biofuel industries',⁴⁴ EMBRAPA offers a range of technical, consultative and training support that looks to place Africa on a similar agricultural trajectory to Brazil and in the process to forge close bilateral ties between Brazil and African countries.

While development co-operation in agriculture may have been initiated by President Lula's diplomatic advances and his government's African assistance agenda, there is far more to the policy than that. Agriculture in Africa ties in all facets of Brazil's global aspirations and foreign policy objectives. Food and energy security both feature as priorities on the multilateral agenda, which is the locus of Brazil's current activity in global decision making. Shifting global food and energy production to Africa and the developing South also fits with Brazil's broader strategy of leveraging South–South co-operation and market integration. Finally, the commercial incentive is undeniably compelling. Developing a competitive food and biofuel energy supply chain across the south Atlantic carries enormous commercial potential for Brazil and particularly those holders of Brazilian technology.⁴⁵

Table 3. Comparing biofuel industries in Brazil and the United States

	Brazil	United States	Units/comments
Feedstock	Sugar cane	Maize	Main cash crop for ethanol production
Total ethanol fuel production (2008)	6 472	9 000	Million US liquid gallons
Total arable land	355	270	Million hectares
Total area used for ethanol crop production	3.6 (1%)	10 (3.7%)	Million hectares (% of total arable land used)
Productivity per hectare	6 800–8 000	3 800–4 000	Litres of ethanol per hectare
Flexible fuel vehicle fleet	8.2 million	8 million	Automobiles and trucks
Ethanol fuelling stations in the country	35 017 (100%)	1 963 (1%)	As a percentage of total gas stations in the country
Ethanol's share in the gasoline market	50%	4%	As a percentage of total consumption on a volumetric basis

Source: Freemantle S & J Stevens, 'Brazil weds itself to Africa's latent agricultural potential', *Standard Bank, Economics: BRIC and Africa*, 1 February 2010; Sourced from the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA).

Diversifying agricultural and biofuel production beyond Brazil to Africa will ensure continued and reliable supply for increasing demands from the United States, Europe and Asia in the long run. Development co-operation in the realm of agriculture and biofuel energy today is essentially Brazil's investment in the establishment of a large-scale agribusiness and energy sector in Africa for the future. It is for this reason that agricultural development is the new frontier of engagement between Brazil and Africa.

Strategic partners: Brazil–South Africa relations

Brazil and South Africa describe each other as strategic partners across the south Atlantic.⁴⁶ As the largest economies in their respective regions and widely regarded as leading nations in Latin America and Africa, both with global aspirations, it is little surprise that Brazil and South Africa share a unique relationship vis-à-vis the world and now, increasingly, in Africa. But ironically the resulting dynamics — their intersecting orientation from sub-region to continent to the world, and their subsequent multi-pronged engagement on a regional, trilateral or multilateral level — may in fact undermine the true potential of constructive bilateral relations between Brazil and South Africa.

Brazil and South Africa share values and principals in international relations based on similar histories, culture and socioeconomic conditions and challenges at home. Both view the world through a multi-polar prism and have prioritised multilateralism in their engagement with the international community and their influence in global agenda setting. It is for this reason that Brazil and South Africa are two of the most active players from the developing South in multilateral forums. They are often partners on issues of global relevance and have jointly led important multilateral coalitions that act in the interest of developing countries in global agenda setting. This has been most obvious in the World Trade Organization (WTO) where, in the 2003 Cancun round of negotiations, Brazil and South Africa led the G20 coalition of developing countries that stalled talks and ultimately altered the WTO trade agenda in an effort to better accommodate the needs of developing nations.

It was also in 2003 that India, Brazil and South Africa came together to form IBSA, an alliance of like-minded democracies from the developing South with an ambitious agenda focused on global governance, market integration and inter-sectoral co-operation.⁴⁷ While IBSA was first vaunted as a heavy-weight coalition of the South capable of influencing the restructuring of global governance institutions (like the UN and the UNSC) and even leading the new global order, its agenda quickly shifted toward trilateral trade and co-operation. Celso Amorim, Brazil's Foreign Minister, defined IBSA — and its priorities — shortly after its creation as a forum for 'economic development and social equity'.⁴⁸ Today, under the leadership of Brazil, IBSA is becoming increasingly a forum for development co-operation and assistance among the three member countries and in their respective regions at large.

While South Africa and Brazil clearly have a heavily loaded agenda and engage constantly on the multilateral and trilateral level, their bilateral engagements are less frequent and palpable. This has raised some concerns in Brasilia, where some officials at Itamaraty (the Brazilian Foreign Ministry) even suggest South Africa has simply collapsed bilateral issues into the trilateral (IBSA) and multilateral agenda — at the expense of constructive bilateral dialogue and agreements. Presidents Mbeki

Table 4. Brazilian donor and development co-operation in Africa

Country	Organisation/s involved	Project description and financing
Across Africa	BNDES	BNDES is the principal funding agency for goods and services exports used in Brazilian infrastructure projects in Africa. By 2007 BNDES had approved 29 projects amounting to US\$742 million
Across Africa	EMBRAPA	At the start of 2010 EMBRAPA had 22 areas of cooperation that spanned training, technical assistance and consultancies across Africa
Angola	BNDES	Credit line of US\$1.75 billion mostly for infrastructure development using Brazilian companies
Mozambique	ABC, Brazilian Foreign Ministry/FIOCRUZ	US\$23 million for the construction of a plant to produce generic drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS
Ghana	BNDES	Funding for ethanol production to be exported to Sweden
Ghana	EMBRAPA	African headquarters opened in Accra in April 2008. Partnered with construction company Constran for ethanol production
South Africa	EMBRAPA	Negotiations toward greater technical and scientific cooperation
Mozambique	EMBRAPA	US\$4.6 million pilot project on soil conservation and recuperation
Angola	EMBRAPA/Odebrecht	Partnership on maize production for animal feed
Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Benin and Zimbabwe	BNDES	Discussions towards accessing Brazilian technology for ethanol production and export financing
Mozambique	APLA	November 2009 bilateral deal signed for a US\$6 billion investment in biofuel exploration
Sudan	Brazil (general)/Dedini	June 2009 first ethanol plant opened, equipped with Brazilian machinery. Plant designed and manufactured by Dedini
DRC	ABC, Brazilian Foreign Ministry	October 2007 two agreements signed to provide training, technology and financing for biofuel production from sugar cane and palm oil
Uganda	ABC/Universities	Agreement toward research and innovation collaborations to boost the development of biofuels in Uganda
Senegal	ABC, Brazilian Foreign Ministry/EMBRAPA	2006 agreement for biofuel production programme. Brazil will provide scientific and technical know-how. Led to a 2009 proposed US\$2 billion oil refinery and biofuel power plant

Table 4 (Continued)

Country	Organisation/s involved	Project description and financing
Angola	Odebrecht	2009 agreement for a US\$220 million project, Bioenergy Company of Angola (BIOCOM), for sugar cane and ethanol production in partnership with Angolan companies Sonangol and Damer, to be opened in 2010
Nigeria	Consortium of Brazilian companies and agencies	Consortium of Brazilian and Nigerian organisations will build a 'Biofuel Town'. 1000 people in 6 million m ² at a cost of US\$100 million Ethanol will be produced from sugar cane and biodiesel from palm oil and castor
Across Africa	Petrobras/Eni Spa (Italian)	2007 co-operation agreement toward developing Africa's biofuel potential

Sources: De Freitas Barbosa A, T Narciso & M Biancalana, 'Brazil in Africa: Another emerging power in the continent?', *Politicon*, 36, 1, 2009; Freemantle S & J Stevens, 'Brazil weds itself to Africa's latent agricultural potential', *Standard Bank, Economics: BRIC and Africa*, 1 February 2010; Sotero P, 'Brazil as an emerging donor: huge potential and growing pains'. *Development Outreach*, February 2009, <www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/articleid526.html>.

and Lula met no less than 17 times between 2003 and 2008, but never in a bilateral context.

A more cynical perspective from Brazil is that South Africa has lost its lustre.⁴⁹ The mood among officials in Brasilia toward South Africa appears to have changed. South Africa is seen, under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma, to be more inward looking and increasingly detached from the priorities of others (i.e. Brazil) both multilaterally and across the south Atlantic.⁵⁰ Other factors such as emerging commercial and political rivalries on the African continent, as well as relatively mediocre trade and investment flows between Brazil and South Africa, may provide insufficient impetus to persevere through this somewhat awkward period.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and Brazil, while it has increased dramatically over the past 15 years (and 130% since 2004), remains relatively low at \$2.52 billion in 2008 and severely skewed in Brazil's favour — despite a 48% increase in South African exports to Brazil in that year.⁵¹ Investment flows are also in Brazil's favour with an array of South African companies from mining, retail, financial services and media having invested in an estimated \$8 billion in Brazil over the past 40 years.⁵² Brazilian companies tend to invest in other African countries like Angola and Mozambique — not South Africa.

The increase in Brazilian political and economic interests in Africa raise a number of interesting opportunities and challenges for Brazil–South Africa relations. As mentioned above, in commercial terms, since Brazilian and South African companies share a similar set of expertise and tend to operate in similar sectors — mining, civil engineering and construction — there is certainly a rivalry emerging between these players on the African continent. On the other hand, as the investment environment in Africa grows increasingly competitive between external actors, there is also a real opportunity for collaborative partnerships between Brazilian and South African companies, which seem to have a similar operating style and culture with complimentary skills, and which may collectively compete more effectively against the new price setters from China, India and even the United States.

Both Brazil and South Africa are emerging donors that have prioritised Africa in their foreign assistance. Development co-operation is a real avenue of opportunity for both countries in Africa. This is already evident through the IBSA development fund, which has completed successful projects in Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Burundi. If this development fund, which is relatively small at this stage with an annual contribution of just \$1 million per member, could align itself with other development initiatives launched by the myriad of Brazilian agencies or South African efforts, the overall impact and reach would be far greater. Joint development initiatives, whether these are technical services or infrastructure construction, could draw on existing credit lines from Brazilian entities like BNDES or South African equivalents like the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), thus teaming up Brazilian and South African expertise and finance on the African continent.

Trilateral development co-operation between Brazil, South Africa and another recipient country in Africa — perhaps drawing in India through IBSA — will go a long way in elevating Brazil–South Africa relations in the context of Africa and will add greater definition to help distinguish their bilateral relationship. It will also provide a real contribution to development in Africa from leaders of the South.⁵³

Conclusion

Brazil's international relations have changed dramatically in recent years. As an emerging power with new-found wealth and under the leadership of President Lula, Brazil has combined its activism in the multilateral arena with a greater emphasis on bilateral relations with developing countries from the South. This has ushered in a new era of foreign policy that goes beyond autonomy from the centres of global power and pragmatic engagement with alternatives to satisfy a nationalist-type ideology, based on new imperatives to reduce traditional economic and political power asymmetries.

Long a proponent of a multi-polar international order, Brazil seeks to shape a new trade geography that will place developing countries at the forefront of energy and food security, and resource management. Given its recent progress and global emergence, Brazil's role in this broad strategy seems predetermined. But Africa is bound to also play a pivotal role in this and in Brazil's global agenda.

As discussed throughout this article, Brazil's rise and its global recognition is nothing new. But what makes it different this time — beside the confluence of a number of positive local political economy variables — is the nature and style of foreign engagement. Brazil's new foreign policy is linking various agencies (like BNDES, EMBRAPA and the Brazilian Export Promotion Agency, APEX) with diplomatic agreements and business interests (like Petrobras, Vale, Camargo Correa and Odebrecht).⁵⁴ This is an important distinguishing feature of Brazilian foreign policy which is particularly evident in Africa.

Agriculture is the binding variable or component in Brazil's engagement with Africa. Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim speaks of an 'agricultural deficit' which aggravates the 'development deficit' which is a primary concern in developing countries across Africa and Latin America.⁵⁵ It is also an area where Brazil has achieved impressive results with its highly competitive agricultural and biofuel energy sectors, and on the multilateral level in WTO negotiations and coalitions. Brazil's

direct engagement with African governments and development co-operation in the realm of agriculture are part of this. Agricultural development is clearly a point of intersection that illustrates a refreshing coherence in Brazilian foreign policy, especially in Africa.

There have been some murmurs of criticism around the growing link between Brazil's active diplomatic agenda in Africa, development co-operation and its commercial interests. The reality today is that Africa has become the new investment playground with developmental requirements across the board. Investors or investor countries are inadvertently drawn into large-scale development projects through the diversity of long-term investments. This is simply the nature of African neo-mercantilism today, where the lines between investment, commerce, development and foreign assistance are increasingly blurred. The aid and development environment in Africa is becoming just as competitive as the investment environment. There is an undeniable economic incentive for investors to become involved in development assistance, which, in turn, often ensures initiatives are sustainable over the long term.

The aid and investment environment in Africa is also highly politicised. It is for this reason that Brazil appears to have opted for a middle ground between what has become known as the 'Chinese' approach, which engages directly with African governments in its investments and credit lines, and the 'Indian' approach, which has concentrated on private foreign investment and the exchange of services and skills. While Brazil is not yet at the level of either China or India, it offers a little of both worlds, and its cross-cutting interests — from multilateral politics to economics to development aid — are growing rapidly.

Brazil seems to have struck a delicate balance between neo-mercantile interests and its development agenda in Africa, without significant backlash — which cannot be said for other emerging powers, notably China. In fact Brazil is building its interests on this very foundation by increasing development aid and technical co-operation alongside an array of strategic investments — all the while improving its image in Africa.

This positive image or 'soft power' has become an important component of Brazil's Africa policy. Nowhere is this more evident than in Angola, where Brazil has nurtured a close bond with the MPLA government and society at large since the end of the 1970s.

Brazilian 'soft power' is stretching beyond Angola. Government departments and agencies from African countries (including South Africa) travel frequently to Brazil to gain instructive lessons from the Brazilian model of economic planning. While on the continent, as was illustrated by Lula's attendance at the African Union (AU) summit in 2009, Brazilian leaders are very popular and regularly invited guests.

This positive sentiment toward Brazil is likely to grow as cultural and language barriers are overcome through increased exchanges. Brazil's nuanced approach to Africa is different to the former colonial masters and new players like China. There is a greater sense of mutual partnership and reciprocity in the relationship, which is not always the case with other established and emerging powers in Africa. This could be a defining trait of Brazil as a global emerging power and active player on the African continent, which will earn it much-needed support from the developing South.

Note on contributor

Dr Lyal White is a Senior Lecturer at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria. He is also a Research Associate at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Notes

1. Vigevani T & G Cepaluni, 'Lula's foreign policy and the quest for autonomy through diversification', *Third World Quarterly*, 28, 7, 2007.
2. The term 'autonomy through diversification' was used first by Vigevani and Cepaluni to describe Brazil's foreign policy evolution as a regional power and an emerging international voice in a world that is asymmetrically divided. It is also used by Doelling in her description of Brazilian foreign policy and its engagement with Africa. The notion of 'autonomy through diversification' will be elaborated on in more detail and in the context of Brazil's engagement with Africa in a later section of this article. See Doelling R, 'Brazil's contemporary foreign policy towards Africa', *Journal of International Affairs*, 10, Spring 2008.
3. This was a comment made by Dr Gladys Lechini from the University of Rosario, Argentina at a workshop titled 'Brazilian Foreign Policy Toward the South: IBSA, Africa and Latin America'. This was hosted by CEBRI, in collaboration with SAIIA, on 28 August 2009.
4. Those five countries were Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tome e Principe, Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau.
5. De Freitas Barbosa A, T Narciso & M Biancalana, 'Brazil in Africa: Another emerging power in the continent?', *Politicon*, 36, 1, 2009, pp. 59–86.
6. Soares de Lima MR, 'Brazil rising', *Perspectives on a Multipolar World*, 2008, <<http://www.ip-global.org/archiv/volumes/2008/auumn2008/brazil-rising.html>> (accessed 12 May 2010). For a more detailed analysis of this perspective of Brazilian foreign policy and its evolution see Soares de Lima MR & M Hirst, 'Brazil as an intermediate and regional power: action, choice and responsibilities', *International Affairs*, 82, 1, 2006, pp. 21–40.
7. For a detailed analysis of Brazilian foreign policy in a historical context and particularly around the theme autonomy from the Cardoso administration to the Lula administration, see Vigevani T & Cepaluni G, 'Lula's foreign policy and the quest for autonomy through diversification', *Third World Quarterly*, 28, 7, 2007, pp. 1309–26. The article provides an insightful description of the various degrees and periods of perceived autonomy that underpinned Brazilian foreign policy from military dictatorship to democracy and ultimately to President Lula. This clearly informed Brazil's South–South strategy and its engagement with Africa.
8. White L, 'Assessing Investment Rationale: The Case of Anglo American Corporation in Latin America', PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town (unpublished), 2007.
9. US State Department Country Studies, <<http://countrystudies.us/brazil/111.thm>> 2 February 2010.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Gonclaves J, 'Brazil–Africa economic relations', in Motta Pinto Coelho P & JF Sombra Saraiva (eds), *Brazil–Africa Forum on Politics, Cooperation and Trade*. Brasilia: Instituto Brasileiro de Relacoes Internacionais, 2003.
13. This was the period of Brazilian foreign policy that Maria Regina Soares de Lima describes as 'cosmopolitanism' or a 'search for credibility', during which Brazil sought closer ties with the 'credible' democracies and advanced economies like the United States, while relations with its region and the developing world were secondary. According to the definitions provided by Vigevani and Cepaluni, this era of foreign policy would have been described best as autonomy through participation, which emphasises adherence to international regimes, especially more liberal ones, and overall acceptance in the international system.
14. For further discussion of this period, see Vigevani T & G Cepaluni, 2007, *op. cit.*

15. While a deeper analysis of Brazilian foreign policy is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note some significant shifts in foreign policy thinking and decisions making that have certainly influenced Brazil's policy on Africa. Itamaraty, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, has long been the cerebral centre of Brazilian foreign policy, lost some of its autonomy under the Lula administration, which named Marco Aurelio Garcia, a Workers Party (PT) intellectual, as special advisor to the president on foreign affairs. This injected a new strain of ideology into foreign policy making and priorities, along with 'territorial' conflict around the policy making process. Some believe Itamaraty has also lost some of its power under the Lula administration, where the president and his advisor have taken such a keen interest (and central role) in formulating and implementing the country's foreign policy. Few would disagree that while the priority given to the developing South, and subsequently Africa, may have started with President Cardoso and the support of Itamaraty, President Lula has made this a priority while Marco Aurelio Garcia has plied the strategy with ideological credibility. Meanwhile, the role of Itamaraty and Minister Celso Amorim has been an important one of a more moderate voice in foreign policy circles, which promotes Brazil not only as a leading country of the South but also a bridge between the North and the South — thus still harnessing relations with traditional partners like the United States.
16. Brazilians had for a long time jokingly used this familiar locution to describe their country and its frustrating lack of progress.
17. *The Economist*, 'Getting it together at last: a special report on business and finance in Brazil', 14 November, 2009.
18. See Sidiropoulos E & E White, 'South Africa can learn from the success of good planning and leadership', *Mail & Guardian*, 21–27 August 2009.
19. Spektor M, 'Brazil as a Regional and Emerging Global Power', SAIIA Policy Brief 9, 2009.
20. Black A, 'Blood Brothers: The Emergence of Brazil and Africa', *ISIZA*, March 2010.
21. South Africa has not benefited from the commodities boom in that it has not achieved the levels of economic growth, investment and reductions in unemployment like those of Brazil and other commodity exporters.
22. Brainard L & L Martinez, 'Brazil as an Economic Superpower? Understanding Brazil's changing role in the global economy', The Brookings Institute, 2009.
23. *Ibid.* Thirteen of the 100 largest firms are still state-owned today, including Petrobras.
24. See in particular: Vargas Llosa A, *Liberty for Latin America: How to Undo Five Hundred Years of State Oppression*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
25. See Sotero P, 'Brazil as an emerging donor: huge potential and growing pains'. *Development Outreach*, February 2009, <www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/articleid526.html> .
26. This has been contested by some foreign policy experts who insist that Lula's Africa strategy is merely a part of Brazil's broader foreign policy development. But leadership and personality should not be understated in a relationship that does not have the history or tradition of automatic substance needed to drive relations of this nature.
27. *The Economist*, 'Lula and his squabbling friends', 12 August, 2009.
28. For example, Brazil hosted the Brazil–Africa Summit in 2003.
29. Lula Da Silva LI, 'Presidents Speech during the Opening of the LXI UN General Assembly in New York', 19 September 2006, *O G-20 e a OMC: Textos, Comunicados e Documentos*. Brasilia: FUNAG.
30. This was expressed by many officials in the Africa department at Itamaraty.
31. Lapper R, 'Brazil accelerates investment in Africa', *Financial Times*, 9 February 2010.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. This comment was relayed during an interview at Vale headquarters in Rio de Janeiro in July 2009.
35. *Ibid.*
36. This information and data is based on comments made at a SAIIA arranged conference in Lunada, Angola on 3 March 2010.
37. *Ibid.*

38. This can be inferred from statements and interviews conducted in South Africa, Angola and Zambia with some government officials and ordinary public who have expressed a more positive sentiment toward Brazilian activities in their countries.
39. *Ibid.*
40. The history of IBSA and its evolution toward a development forum is discussed in more detail in White L, 'IBSA Six Years On: Co-operation in a New World Order.' *Policy Briefing 8*, SAIIA, November 2009.
41. This term was used by Garaldo Barros in his chapter 'Brazil: The challenges in becoming an agricultural superpower', in Brainard L & L Martinez-Diaz (eds), *Brazil as an Economic Superpower? Understanding Brazil's Changing Role in the Global Economy*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2009.
42. In 2009 Brazil was the world's top exporter of sugar, beef, chicken, orange juice, green coffee, soya, meat and oil, and the fourth largest exporter of maize and pork. See Freemantle S & J Stevens, 'Brazil weds itself to Africa's latent agricultural potential', *Standard Bank, Economics: BRIC and Africa*, 1 February 2010.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. These are often referenced in meetings between the two countries. It is also stated on the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation website with reference to Brazil <www.dirco.gov.za> .
47. *Ibid.*
48. This description was made in a statement by Foreign Minister Amorim at an IBSA gathering in August 2005.
49. This was a comment made by a prominent Brazilian academic and observer of Brazil–South Africa relations during an interview in August 2009.
50. Brazilian officials also expressed some concern over the Zuma government's expressed enthusiasm toward partners like Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who regularly challenges Brazilian leadership in the region. There is a real concern in Brazil that South Africa fails to understand the complexities of regional politics in Latin America and that some of its actions may inadvertently undermine its relations with Brazil — its strategic partner in the region.
51. Nkosi B, 'South Africa, Brazil cement ties', *Mediaclubsouthafrica.com*, 13 October, 2009.
52. White L, 'Why do Investors Invest? The Rationale of South African Firms in Latin America', Brenthurst Discussion Paper 1, 2007.
53. There is a growing literature on South–South diplomacy and IBSA in particular. But this is yet to develop much of a consensus or true accuracy and academic rigor in terms of a broadly accepted paradigm. Some alternative views of IBSA are assessed in Alden, C & MA Vieira, 'The new diplomacy of the South: South Africa, Brazil, India and trilateralism', *Third World Quarterly*, 26, 7, 2005. Or Lechini G, 'Middle powers: IBSA and the new South–South cooperation', *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 40, 5, 2007, pp. 28–32.
54. Foreign policy is no longer an exclusive part of Itamaraty, the Brazilian foreign ministry.
55. Amorim, C (2007), 'Speech by the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference', 14 December 2005, *O G-20 e a OMC: Textos, Comunicados e Documentos*.