

Brazilian Global South Diplomacy and Great Power Identity Formation in Geopolitical Conflict

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Abstract: The importance of the global South continues to gain prominence in a changing geopolitical landscape. As an important member of the Global South, Brazil's diplomatic strategy and great power identity shaping have become the focus of research. The purpose of this paper is to explore Brazil's global South foreign policy strategy and great power identity shaping in the midst of geopolitical challenges. Brazil's post-Cold War foreign policy in the Global South has gone through five phases. Given its deep knowledge of the international power structure and precise positioning of its own interests and economic and geopolitical considerations, Brazil has shaped its great power identity through active participation in regional integration, multilateral diplomacy, and positive neutrality strategies, which have manifested its influence in the Global South and not only strengthened its economic ties with the countries of the South, but also advanced the global South agenda. However, while advancing cooperation in the global South, Brazil has faced internal and external challenges, including internal economic volatility, political polarization, and the pressures of external great power competition. The article focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of Brazil's global South diplomacy, particularly its role as the G20 Presidency in 2024, and explores its opportunities and challenges in global South cooperation. Through Brazil's strategic choices and great power identity shaping in global South diplomacy, it explores its strategy, the reasons behind it, how effective it has been, and how it can deepen its great power identity by strengthening its multidisciplinary cooperation with the global South, laying the groundwork for realizing the dream of being a great power in a globally responsible and multi polar world.

1. Introduction

On September 24, 2024, as the 79th United Nations General Assembly convened, Secretary-General António Guterres issued a stark warning: "Our world is caught in a whirlwind. We stand at the threshold of an epic era of transformation, confronting unprecedented challenges... We are steadily moving toward unimaginable extremes – a powder keg that could ignite and engulf the entire planet." ^[1]

The concept of the Global South has evolved from a geographical designation to a political-economic identity following the Cold War's conclusion and the emergence of multipolarity, representing developing nations' pursuit of greater equality in discourse and participation rights within global governance to achieve modernization. "The Global South concept carries distinct

historical and contemporary significance." Historically, it represents an extension and development of the Third World, yet differs from the Third World by emphasizing international solidarity and cooperation, focusing on addressing common development challenges through multilateral mechanisms and South-South collaboration ^[2]. In the contemporary context, the rise of Global South nations reflects significant shifts in the international power structure. With the rapid development of emerging economies, these countries have increasingly demonstrated influence in economic scale, population size, and resource endowment, emerging as a force to be reckoned with in global political and economic dynamics.

The economic potential of "Global South" countries has provided a vital impetus for sustainable global development. In recent years, their growth rates have consistently outpaced those of developed economies, making them a key engine for worldwide economic expansion. Xu Xiujun noted that since 2000, emerging markets and developing economies have maintained a dual-growth pattern with advanced economies ^[3], indicating a sustained shift in the global economic balance toward favoring the Global South. According to IMF data from October 2024, emerging markets and developing economies recorded an average annual growth rate of 5.6% between 2000-2015, 4.1 percentage points higher than developed economies. From 2016-2023, this growth rate rose to 4.7%, 2 percentage points above the average. The IMF projects that developed economies will remain stable at 1.7%-1.8% until 2029. Over the next two years, emerging markets and developing economies are expected to maintain steady growth around 4.2%, stabilizing at 3.9% by 2029 – 2.1-2.5 percentage points above the developed economies' average. Economically, measured by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) exchange rates, emerging markets and developing economies surpassed developed economies in GDP by 2007. Emerging and developing economies have demonstrated stronger PPP GDP growth compared to developed economies. The share of developed economies in global GDP has decreased from 40.9% under the previous PPP framework to 40.2% in 2024 under the new PPP methodology, marking a 0.7 percentage point decline. Meanwhile, emerging markets and developing economies increased their share from 59.1% to 59.8%. Concurrently, economic cooperation among "Global South" nations has deepened, with trade and investment volumes expanding steadily, injecting fresh momentum into global economic recovery and stability ^[4].

In the realm of international governance, the significance of "Global South" nations has become increasingly prominent. With the decentralization of global power, these countries have gradually enhanced their influence in multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a representative of Global South nations, Brazil's active participation and constructive contributions in multilateral bodies have not only boosted the collective influence of developing countries but also provided crucial impetus for reforming the international governance system. During Lula's first term in office, Brazil adopted an active foreign policy emphasizing multilateralism and South-South cooperation. However, under Bolsonaro's administration, the country shifted toward anti-globalization stances, leading to isolation in international affairs. After Lula's re-election, Brazil renewed its focus on regional integration and multilateral diplomacy. This shift offers valuable insights into how Global South nations shape their identities amidst geopolitical conflicts and provides important guidance for these countries to play a more significant role in global affairs.

2. The evolution of southern Brazil's diplomatic development and the pursuit of a great power identity

Brazil's unique geopolitical, economic strength and social influence are the basic conditions for its participation in the Global South. Through its leadership position in the South American region,

Brazil seeks to "implement an' active and confident' international strategy" ^[5]. Its global South diplomacy has gone through five different stages.

2.1 Brazil from the Perspective of the Global South

As a representative of the Global South, Brazil's unique geopolitical position, economic strength, and social influence make it an ideal case study for examining diplomatic strategies and the shaping of major power identities in this region. As South America's largest country, Brazil possesses abundant natural resources and strategic depth. Not only is it a key economy in Latin America, but also stands out as one of the most representative developing powers among Global South nations. Its distinctive geopolitical status lies in its dual role: being both a regional power and an active participant in global affairs.

Brazil's leadership in South America has further solidified its position in global geopolitics. Former Foreign Minister Amonin once stated that Brazil's true identity lies in being a South American nation, where regional integration aligns with Brazil's national interests. Achieving peace and development in South America constitutes a crucial aspect of Brazil fulfilling its international role. By advancing South American integration, Brazil seeks to establish a more autonomous and independent regional cooperation mechanism ^[5]. "At the initiative of Brazil in 2000, the first South American Summit was convened, proposing plans for regional infrastructure integration (IIRSA) and establishing a Community of South American Nations." In May 2008, the Summit of South American Nations was held in Brasília ^[6], where the Charter of the Union of South American Nations was signed, marking the establishment of the organization. This "regional dimension" strategic choice serves both as a key pathway for Brazil to achieve its status as a major power and as a manifestation of its pursuit of autonomy in a multipolar world. The Union of South American Nations embodies Brazil's strategic vision of "integrating South America into a pole within the global multipolar order" ^[5]. Through strengthening economic, political, and security cooperation with neighboring South American countries, Brazil not only consolidates its dominance in regional affairs but also lays the groundwork for greater influence in global governance.

In the context of a multipolar world, Brazil's international strategic choices carry particular significance. Zhou Zhiwei noted that "Brazil considers maintaining' active neutrality 'in Sino-American competition to best align with its geopolitical and economic interests." ^[7] This strategy not only serves its geopolitical interests but also helps avoid direct involvement in external conflicts. Brazil believes that preserving strategic autonomy is crucial for maintaining its international standing in the comprehensive competition among major powers like China and the United States. This "active neutrality" stance partially reflects Brazil's unique role in the global geopolitical landscape. Achieving this position is no easy task—it requires not only Brazil's diplomatic capabilities but also a clear and widely agreed strategic framework. "For a long time, the ultimate goal of Brazil's international strategy has been to bridge the gap between its self-perception and international perceptions." ^[8] Brazil's strategic choices not only reflect its assessment of the global power structure but also demonstrate its efforts to promote common development among "Global South" nations while safeguarding its own interests.

2.2 The evolution of Brazil's Global South foreign policy

Brazil has long maintained close ties with the countries of the South. The development and evolution of Brazil's South-South diplomacy reflects its strategic positioning as a rising power in the global South, which has undergone multi-stage changes from the embryonic concept to institutionalized cooperation.

2.2.1 Historical foundation and early exploration (from the mid-20th century to 1989)

From alliance to abandonment. In 1952, the Vargas government "adopted a diplomatic policy of aligning with the United States" ^[9]. During World War II, Brazil became the only Latin American country to deploy troops in Europe by providing the Natal military base and sending 20,000 soldiers to combat in Europe. Under the Quadros and Goulart administrations, Brazil began seeking a "third way" between the opposing blocs of the US and USSR, supporting self-determination in colonies.^[10] The Geisel government abandoned its automatic alliance with the US in 1977 due to escalating tensions over nuclear development, human rights issues, and trade conflicts. In May 1969, the Medici government participated in the Special Coordination Committee meeting of Latin America held in Bigna del Mar, Chile—the Chilean Special Meeting of the Organization of American States (excluding the US)—and signed the landmark Bigna del Mar Declaration. This document established guiding principles for Latin American joint actions against US hegemony, marking the beginning of coordinated resistance against American dominance.

2.2.2 Democratization and Institutionalization of Diplomacy in the South (1985-2002)

From the late 1980s to the early 21st century, Brazil's foreign policy gradually shifted from traditional regionalism to more proactive multilateralism. During this period, through participation in South-South cooperation and multilateral mechanisms, Brazil progressively established its significant position in a multipolar world. The 1991 signing of the Asuncion Treaty with Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay to promote a customs union became Latin America's most important regional economic organization. Brazil actively promoted the establishment of Mercosur and, through collaboration with neighboring countries like Argentina, laid the foundation for regional integration in South America. As noted by Brazilian diplomatic theorist José Lacerres, who served as Deputy Foreign Minister during the Lula administration: "A multipolar world is an ongoing reality that offers a more favorable political landscape for Brazil, Argentina, Mercosur, and even South America compared to a unipolar system." ^[8]

2.2.3 The Southern diplomatic summit in the Lula era (2003-2010)

Since the dawn of the 21st century, Brazil's foreign policy under the Lula administration has reached new heights. Recognizing the benefits of a more balanced and diversified international power structure, the Lula government forged strategic South-South cooperation partnerships at both regional and global levels. Lula integrated his "New Southern Paradigm" into Brazil's diplomatic initiatives and discourse, criticizing how the globalization of capitalist systems—characterized by liberal democracy and market economies in Northern countries—had exacerbated global imbalances. Regionally, the South American Community of Nations (SADC) was established in December 2004, later renamed the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) on April 16, 2007. Globally, the first BRICS Summit took place in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in June 2009, formally launching the multilateral cooperation mechanism. Regarding climate change, He Luyang noted: "Brazil transitioned from a participant to a driving force in UN climate negotiations, continuously innovating its policies and achieving emission reductions that have garnered widespread international acclaim." ^[11] Lula's foreign policy, rooted in defending the multipolar world order and safeguarding Brazil's political autonomy in shaping its development trajectory, has significantly enhanced the nation's global influence.

2.2.4 Adjustment and fluctuation period (2011-2022)

Lula's successor Dilma Rousseff "essentially continued Lula's foreign policy direction." ^[8]

During the Bolsonaro administration, Brazil's foreign policy underwent a significant shift. The government zealously aligned with U.S. interests, using ideological boundaries to shape Latin American affairs. Within just nine days of taking office, Bolsonaro's administration withdrew from the UN Global Compact on Secure, Orderly and Regular Migration and threatened to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. By adopting an anti-globalist, pro-American diplomatic approach, the government partially damaged Brazil's national image and international credibility, leading to diminished strategic autonomy and isolation in global relations. Foreign Minister Ayrault completely rejected the administration's foreign policy, labeling it a "human-hating totalitarian project," while vehemently opposing "globalism" as a process driven by "cultural Marxism." He also dismissed climate change as a "communist conspiracy."^[12] Bolsonaro's foreign policy choices weakened Brazil's relations with developing countries, significantly impacting its participation in regional integration and South-South cooperation initiatives.

2.2.5 Revival and Innovation (Since 2023)

Since the Lula administration regained power, Brazil's foreign policy has undergone significant realignment, reaffirming its commitment to multilateralism and South-South cooperation. Centered on a "proactive and confident" approach, the current foreign policy demonstrates clear objectives and continuity. While maintaining Brazil's historical strengths in Global South diplomacy, it has developed new practical strategies in response to escalating geopolitical tensions. Through these efforts, Brazil is steadily regaining its pivotal role in a multipolar world order.

2.3 Brazil's Global South Foreign Policy Considerations and Challenges

Brazil's Global South foreign policy is rooted in its profound understanding of the international power structure and precise positioning of its own interests. The country maintains that multipolarity represents the predominant trend in the evolution of the post-Cold War international system, with collective actions by "Global South" nations serving as a crucial force for transforming the international order. He Luyang noted: "With the return of the Lula administration, reviving the tradition of South-South cooperation and increasing strategic investments in the Global South have become one of Brazil's top priorities in developing its foreign relations."^[8]

2.3.1 Brazil's Global South foreign policy considerations

From an economic perspective, Brazil's Global South foreign policy has clear economic objectives and strategic considerations. By positioning "Global South" countries as key partners in its international economic cooperation, Brazil seeks to enhance its status in the global economic landscape through deepening economic ties with these nations. Zhou Zhiwei pointed out that "one of the interests pursued by Brazil's international strategy is to secure a favorable international environment for its socio-economic development."^[8] Through Global South diplomacy, Brazil aims to create a favorable external environment, secure more external resources, reduce economic dependence on foreign sources, and safeguard its autonomous development rights. According to data from Trading Economics website, Brazil's major export partners in 2024 include China (27% total exports), the United States (11%), Argentina (5%), the Netherlands (4%), Chile, and Spain (each 3%). Major import partners consist of China (22%), the United States (19%), Argentina, and Germany (each 5%). The largest trading partners are China (27% of total exports and 22% of total imports), the United States (11% of exports and 19% of imports), and Argentina (5% of both). In terms of proportion, Southern countries serve as primary sources and destinations for Brazil's import-export trade. It is evident that the economic growth of Southern countries plays a significantly stronger role in driving Brazil's trade than that of Northern countries. These nations

will assume increasingly vital roles in Brazil's future development and remain natural partners for achieving its economic goals. Notably, among Brazil's major trading partners in Latin America, only Argentina, Mexico, and Chile account for a relatively small share. Brazil maintains an export-oriented economy, relying on manufacturing exports (54% of total exports), mining (23%), and agricultural product transportation (22%). The country's primary exports include soybeans and related products (17% of total exports), crude oil and asphalt ore (13%), and iron ore (9%). As a major agricultural powerhouse, Brazil's market competitiveness in this sector positions it as a crucial partner for global South countries in ensuring food security. Through production capacity cooperation, Brazil and Southern countries can enhance complementary industrial chain integration to collectively "expand the economic pie."

From a geopolitical perspective, Brazil's Global South foreign policy demonstrates distinct priorities of pursuing independence and expanding diplomatic frontiers. The Latin American region, being geographically close to the United States, has long been perceived as America's backyard. To safeguard its interests, the U.S. has consistently prevented external powers from interfering in Latin American affairs. As previously noted, Brazil's exports are predominantly bulk commodities and raw materials. "The external vulnerability and dependency on foreign resources in Brazil's national development have made the exploration and pursuit of national autonomy a longstanding focus in Brazilian diplomatic and strategic studies."^[8] Yaguaribe proposed that "from both domestic feasibility and international compatibility perspectives, Latin American countries including Brazil should promote their survival capabilities and autonomous development through regional integration."^[13] With the rapid economic growth and heightened self-awareness of the Global South, "Southern nations as emerging forces are increasingly shaping the traditional North-dominated international order, injecting new momentum into building a more just, inclusive, and equitable global framework."^[14] Therefore, strengthening Global South cooperation can serve as a crucial support for Brazil to enhance its resilience against external risks and achieve autonomous development capabilities. Through diversified collaboration, Brazil can also expand alternative diplomatic options focusing on trade, security, development, and climate issues.

2.3.2 Challenges to Brazil's efforts to advance cooperation in the Global South

In advancing the Global South, Brazil faces multiple internal and external challenges that not only affect its leadership in the Global South agenda, but also pose important constraints on its identity as a major power.

On the economic front, Brazil's sluggish growth and structural transformation challenges in recent years have constrained its resource allocation for Global South cooperation. As Zhou Zhiwei's research indicates, "The slowdown of economic globalization and Brazil's significant deindustrialization 'have placed the economy in a downward trajectory, exposing it to risks of global economic marginalization'"^[7]. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s October 2024 report, Brazil's real GDP per capita averaged 1.97 from 2016 to 2023, while emerging market and developing economies maintained an average of 3.39. The report further predicts Brazil's 2025 GDP growth at 2.2%, lagging behind the IMF's forecast of 2.5% for Latin America and the Caribbean region.^[4] These economic challenges not only weaken Brazil's capacity to fund South-South cooperation but also diminish its negotiating leverage in multilateral frameworks. Compounding these issues, Brazil's worsening debt crisis and fiscal deficits have further constrained its resource allocation and operational capacity within Global South initiatives.

Politically, Brazil's domestic political instability and lack of policy continuity pose challenges to advancing Global South cooperation. The country's political landscape has shown marked fragmentation and volatility in recent years, with foreign policies and strategic choices often diverging significantly between administrations. This policy discontinuity has hindered Brazil's

effective implementation of long-term objectives within the Global South agenda. During the Bolsonaro administration, there was a passive stance toward South-South cooperation and regional integration. Although the Lula administration emphasized the importance of Global South cooperation after resuming power, restoring and strengthening Brazil's leadership in South-South collaboration remains a critical challenge to address in the short term.

At the societal level, Brazil's intensifying social conflicts and expanding inequality have become major obstacles to advancing Global South cooperation. The country's wealth gap, uneven distribution of educational resources, tax collection challenges, and public security issues not only undermine domestic stability but also diminish its international influence and reputation. Furthermore, the lack of public support for Global South cooperation in Brazil has resulted in its initiatives failing to gain broad social backing or genuine public endorsement within the Global South agenda.

Beyond internal challenges, Brazil faces external geopolitical pressures and competition from major powers in Global South cooperation. The intensification of international geopolitical conflicts and deepening power rivalries require Brazil to balance self-interest with maintaining relations with major powers when advancing its agenda within the Global South. This "asymmetric equilibrium" strategy demands greater diplomatic acumen and strategic capability from Brazil to protect its interests while promoting the Global South agenda amid global geopolitical tensions. Regional security issues and external interference pose additional obstacles. In South America, "Brazil's leadership in regional governance is frequently challenged by neighboring countries like Argentina and Venezuela." ^[15] These internal contradictions and competition create multiple difficulties for Brazil in advancing South American integration, which also constrains its leadership role in Global South cooperation.

3. Brazil's global South strategies and means under geopolitical conflict

3.1 Shaping regional leadership roles and promoting integration

Brazil's role within Latin American regional organizations reflects its leadership as a major regional power and strategic positioning. He Luyang noted that "one of Brazil's fundamental goals in global governance is to consolidate its dominance in the South American region." ^[11] In April 2023, Brazilian President Lula signed a declaration announcing Brazil's re-entry into the Union of South American Nations (hereinafter referred to as UNASUR). Earlier, in January 2023, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry announced through diplomatic channels that Brazil would "fully and immediately" rejoin this crucial regional mechanism.

As a founding member of the Union of South American Nations (UNAS), Brazil has consistently championed the organization's institutional development. The 2023 UNAS Summit opened in Brazil, where President Lula urged: "We have no time to waste; South America must once again embrace unity." As a major South American nation, Brazil not only played a pivotal role in establishing UNAS but also serves as a crucial leader. Through initiatives like the Inter-American Infrastructure Integration Initiative (IIRSA), Brazil has actively promoted cooperation in infrastructure development, energy collaboration, and regional security. These efforts enhance intra-regional trade and mobility via cross-border infrastructure projects, accelerating economic integration across the continent. This cooperative model not only solidifies Brazil's leadership in South America but also lays the groundwork for greater influence in global affairs.

3.2 Conducting Multilateral Diplomacy and Strengthening Cooperation with Southern Countries

As a key representative of the Global South, Brazil's tradition of multilateral diplomacy has provided a solid foundation for strengthening cooperation with developing countries in South-South relations. By actively participating in international organizations and multilateral mechanisms, Brazil not only reinforces its leadership role among developing nations but also leverages these platforms to advance the Global South agenda. Its multilateral diplomatic strategies demonstrate respect for international rules and steadfast support for a multipolar world order, while simultaneously offering crucial pathways for Brazil to establish itself as a major power amidst global geopolitical conflicts.

Within the BRICS cooperation framework, Brazil has deepened collaboration with developing nations through strategic coordination with emerging powers. As one of the primary architects of BRICS, the government regards this mechanism as a core strategy to elevate Brazil's international standing and promote South-South cooperation. According to Sun Degang and Maria's research, "The BRICS expansion has formed a 'Greater BRICS' 'cooperation mechanism that connects' regional South 'countries across different regions, initially establishing an integrated' Global South 'cooperation framework'" ^[16], which helps developing countries play a greater role globally. Brazil has actively driven BRICS cooperation, promoting reforms in the international financial system and shaping global development agendas through collective actions with other member states. Brazil played a pivotal role in establishing the New Development Bank (NDB), which provides developing countries with new financing channels while reducing reliance on Western financial institutions. Through BRICS cooperation, Brazil has not only strengthened strategic coordination with developing nations but also advanced the Global South agenda via multilateral platforms. Brazil's role in multilateral diplomacy manifests both in active participation in multilateral mechanisms and steadfast support for international rules and multilateralism. Zhao Yixian noted, "During the 2008 financial crisis, Brazil pushed for IMF reforms within the G20, demonstrating its adeptness in leveraging international rules and platforms like the UN Security Council and WTO to enhance its global influence and promote its vision of global governance." ^[17]

In addressing climate change and environmental protection, Brazil has facilitated cooperation among "Global South" nations through South-South collaboration in climate response and sustainable development. As the world's largest rainforest nation, Brazil has actively participated in multilateral mechanisms like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), driving collective action for climate change among Global South countries. In November 2022, the environment ministers of Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo signed a joint declaration in Indonesia, officially launching the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The combined tropical rainforest areas within these three nations account for 52% of the global total. Reuters reported that Brazil partnered with two other major rainforest countries to pressure developed nations into providing adequate funding for rainforest conservation.^[18] During climate negotiations, Brazil emphasized the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," advocating that developed countries should offer technological and financial support for developing nations' climate initiatives. This stance not only highlights Brazil's representation in the Global South agenda but also strengthens its influence in international climate governance.

4. Effects and opportunities for Brazil to pursue a Global South diplomatic strategy

4.1 Brazil's efforts in global governance mechanisms--taking the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro as an example

As the rotating chair of the G20 in 2024, Brazil demonstrated its significant efforts and contributions to global governance mechanisms through the Rio de Janeiro Summit. The G20 summit, themed "Building a Just World and Sustainable Planet," will focus on issues such as "global inequality, combating hunger and poverty, sustainable development, and reforms in global governance,"^[19] which fully reflect two priorities proposed by the Lula administration: first, eradicating hunger and poverty—a fundamental challenge faced collectively by Global South nations; second, establishing a sustainable economy that protects the environment while ensuring living standards for local communities. During Brazil's G20 presidency, another key agenda item was advancing the democratization of global governance.^[20] Brazil's efforts at the summit not only embodied its identity as a representative of the Global South but also marked an important attempt to seek strategic balance within a multipolar world order.

During the summit, Brazil announced the official launch of the "Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty" mechanism and jointly initiated the "Open Science International Cooperation Initiative" with China, South Africa, and the African Union. During its nearly one-year tenure as rotating chair, Brazil focused on combating hunger, poverty, and inequality, sustainable development, and global governance reform, hosting over 100 formal meetings in nearly 15 cities nationwide, including more than 20 ministerial-level conferences. On one hand, Brazil exchanged experiences with other countries on social programs and public policies aimed at eliminating hunger and ensuring access to social assistance for populations most affected by food security issues. On the other hand, Brazil has continued to play a leading role in global environmental issues. This agenda-setting not only demonstrates Brazil's support for the common interests of "Global South" countries but also secures greater influence and bargaining power in international affairs.

In the field of climate change, Brazil has leveraged the summit platform to promote collective action by developing countries on climate issues. The summit declaration reaffirmed "our commitment to multilateralism and adherence to addressing climate change based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities." It emphasized "expanding climate financing and investments for developing nations" and called on developed countries to provide more financial and technological support^[21]. President Lula stated that effective accountability across nations and relevant sectors—such as participation from central banks and public development banks—is crucial to ensure equitable implementation of climate initiatives, a stance that highlights Brazil's representation in the Global South agenda. Through the summit platform, Brazil has also actively promoted international cooperation, driving the implementation of multiple climate response measures and offering new approaches and solutions for global climate governance.

At this summit, Brazil emphasized the importance of "the Global South" in global governance cooperation. "UN reform is a core issue for Brazil to secure active engagement from the Global South"^[22]. The summit declaration stated: "We call for expanding the composition of the UN Security Council to enhance representation of underrepresented regions and groups such as Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean"^[21]. The current Brazilian government stresses a "representative orientation in reform" for Security Council changes, advocating that "new permanent or non-permanent members should not only include traditional military powers but also economic giants, agricultural leaders, and cultural powers." This emphasis on Brazil's multifaceted representation "shapes a diplomatic narrative that better aligns with national interests within the

global community, particularly the Global South" ^[23]. Notably, the G20 summit has been held annually in Southern countries for three consecutive years: Indonesia hosted the 17th Summit in 2022, India hosted the 18th Summit in 2023, and Brazil will host the 19th Summit in 2024. As emerging market economies and BRICS members with governance experience, these three nations can address previous G20 omissions regarding critical issues faced by Global South countries, such as hunger, poverty, and climate financing challenges.

"Reforming the global economic governance system remains Brazil's top priority in advancing South-South cooperation." Regarding global economic governance reform, "Since returning to power, Lula has repeatedly emphasized initiatives like 'de-dollarization, ' local currency settlements, ' common currencies, 'and' new payment systems. '"^[23] The summit declaration stated commitments to "implement the World Bank reform roadmap in international financial reforms" and "awaiting the World Bank's 2025 equity review. It called for enhancing developing countries 'representation and voice in multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions" ^[21]. Brazil has advocated restructuring the governance frameworks of multilateral institutions like the IMF and World Bank to better reflect developing nations' interests. By prioritizing global economic governance reform, Brazil actively engages in South-South cooperation, championing issues that align with the region's core concerns. This approach allows marginalized "Southern solutions" to gain broader resonance. ^[24] The summit declaration demonstrates Brazil's commitment, not only reflecting its steadfast support for global governance reform but also securing greater influence and decision-making power for South-South countries in economic governance.

4.2 Seizing opportunities for cooperation with countries of the Global South to achieve a healthy balance between the identity of a great power and global responsibilities

In Brazil's global strategic positioning, advancing reforms in the global governance system and enhancing the voice and influence of "Global South" nations—including itself—in international affairs constitute a key priority. The country has consistently pursued the goal of establishing itself as a major global power, viewing engagement in international affairs and regional hotspot issues, along with driving reforms in the global governance framework, as vital pathways to expand its global participation and advance major-country diplomacy. These opportunities not only provide Brazil with a significant avenue to boost its international clout but also create new development space for "Global South" nations to strengthen their representation within the global governance architecture.

First, the enhanced collective actions of emerging powers have created significant structural opportunities for Brazil's cooperation with "Global South" nations. As the BRICS cooperation mechanism deepens, strategic collaboration between Brazil and other emerging powers has grown increasingly close. He Shuangrong noted, "Brazil views its cooperation with BRICS countries as crucial for enhancing national image and international standing, seeing these nations as a calling card to demonstrate its global influence." ^[25] After Lula's government regained power, Brazil became more actively involved in BRICS mechanisms. Through coordinated actions in economic, technological, and global governance areas with other member states, Brazil not only solidified its leadership in South-South cooperation but also amplified the collective voice of Global South nations in international affairs.

Second, emerging cooperation mechanisms represented by the "BRICS+" model have provided Brazil with new platforms and pathways for collaboration with "Global South" nations. Through this model, Brazil can engage in broader cooperation with other developing countries, particularly on critical issues such as climate change, digital economy, and reform of global governance systems. In recent years, with the official accession of "Global South" countries including Saudi Arabia,

Egypt, UAE, Iran, and Ethiopia, the BRICS framework has expanded significantly. The organization initially consisted of four members during the 2009 BRICS leaders' first meeting, grew to five members with South Africa's 2010 accession, and is now set to become a ten-member entity by 2024. Currently, over 30 countries have expressed interest in joining. Brazil will assume the BRICS chairmanship in 2025. This cooperative model not only transcends the geographical constraints of traditional South-South cooperation but also provides crucial support for Brazil to secure more strategic opportunities in international affairs. The "Greater BRICS Cooperation" signifies the evolution of the Global South from a loosely-organized international force toward institutionalized coordination centered on the BRICS framework.^[26] As a key member of BRICS, Brazil has further strengthened its position in the Global South agenda through coordinated actions with other developing countries via the "BRICS+" model.

Third, the advancement of regional integration has created significant practical opportunities for Brazil's cooperation with "Global South" nations. At the South American Summit, participating countries signed the "Brasília Consensus," emphasizing the need to foster collective responses to global affairs and amplify South America's voice on the world stage. In 2025, the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held in Belém, located in the Amazon region. These regional integration efforts and focused attention on key issues not only provide Brazil with a crucial pathway to fulfill its status as a major power, but also establish new practical platforms for "Global South" nations to enhance their representation in global governance systems.

Fourth, the multilateral platforms in global governance mechanisms provide an important space for dialogue and action in cooperation between Brazil and "Global South" countries. Brazil's efforts in the G20 not only demonstrate its support for the common interests of "Global South" countries but also provide a significant driving force for promoting a more equitable and inclusive international order. He Qin pointed out that "China's three major global initiatives and the Belt and Road Initiative have effectively safeguarded the legitimate rights and interests of the 'Global South' and received positive responses from the region"^[27]. On November 20, 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Brazil. During the visit, both sides signed 38 cooperation documents, including a joint statement and 37 mutually signed agreements covering strategic alignment and multiple fields. On the evening of May 10, 2025, Brazilian President Lula arrived in Beijing with a large delegation for a five-day state visit to China. Under the witness of the two heads of state, 20 cooperation documents were signed and two joint statements were issued. Looking further ahead, Brazil is the first country to establish a strategic partnership with China and the first Latin American nation to build a comprehensive strategic partnership with China. As Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated, "The mutual engagement between China and Latin America will undoubtedly become a splendid chapter in the story of solidarity, self-reliance, and shared prosperity among the Global South." Through cooperation with China, Brazil can advance the realization of the Global South agenda and provide crucial support for enhancing the status of "Global South" countries within the global governance system.

5. Conclusions

This paper examines Brazil's Global South diplomacy and its shaping of a major power identity amidst ongoing geopolitical conflicts. Against the backdrop of escalating global geopolitical tensions, Brazil's diplomatic strategies and identity-building as a key member of the Global South have become focal points of research. The current complex geopolitical landscape features intensifying regional conflicts and strategic competition between major powers. Against this backdrop, Global South nations are gaining stronger influence and voice in international affairs. As

a prominent representative of the Global South, Brazil's foreign policy choices significantly impact the global geopolitical landscape.

Through active participation in regional integration and multilateral diplomacy, Brazil has not only strengthened economic ties with Southern countries but also advanced the Global South agenda. Guided by its profound understanding of the international power structure and precise positioning of its own interests, Brazil's Global South foreign policy aims to elevate its status in the global economic landscape and enhance its influence in international affairs through multilateralism and South-South cooperation.

However, Brazil faces multiple challenges in advancing Global South cooperation. Economically, the country's sluggish growth and structural transformation difficulties have constrained its resource allocation for such initiatives. Politically, domestic instability and policy discontinuity hinder the realization of long-term objectives within the Global South agenda. Socially, escalating social tensions and widening inequality have diminished Brazil's influence in international affairs. Furthermore, external geopolitical pressures and competition among major powers continue to impede Brazil's progress in Global South cooperation.

Brazil's global South strategies in the context of geopolitical conflicts encompass establishing regional leadership, advancing integration initiatives, pursuing multilateral diplomacy, strengthening cooperation with Southern countries, and maintaining a proactive neutral stance. These strategic approaches demonstrate Brazil's unique role in the global geopolitical landscape and its diplomatic acumen.

Brazil's assumption of the G20 presidency in 2024 demonstrates its commitment to advancing global governance. By championing critical issues including combating hunger, addressing climate change, and reforming international governance frameworks, Brazil has not only strengthened its global influence but also bolstered the representation of "Global South" nations within the world's governance systems. This year, Brazil's hosting of the BRICS Summit and UN Climate Change Conference will further enhance collaboration and shared development among developing countries and Global South nations.

Through active participation in regional integration and multilateral diplomacy, Brazil has not only elevated its standing in the global economic landscape but also made significant contributions to advancing a more equitable international order. However, the country still faces multiple challenges in promoting cooperation within the Global South, requiring a delicate balance between safeguarding its own interests and maintaining harmonious relations with major powers. Moving forward, Brazil must strengthen collaboration with other Southern countries, solidify its status as a responsible global power, and lay the groundwork for realizing its vision of becoming a leading nation in a multipolar world.

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