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**BRAZIL'S HUMANITARIAN FOOD COOPERATION
(2003-2016):**

FROM INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE TO THE POLITICS OF
TRADITIONAL AID

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Brazil's Humanitarian Food Cooperation (2003-2016): from innovative experience to the politics of traditional aid

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Abstract

Brazil donated food abroad on previous occasions, but an institutionalized humanitarian food aid policy was something innovative in its History. The magnitude was also noteworthy, as the country became one of the six largest donors to the World Food Program (WFP). At first, the Executive's proposal was to connect the produce of Brazilian small family farming to an international humanitarian policy. However, the Executive didn't manage to get the necessary legal framework for that plan from the National Congress. Instead, the Legislative passed a law that, in practice, privileged the donation of food produced by large agribusiness farms. The agreement between the two branches allowed Brazil to become one of the main world donors of food for a few years, accomplishing some objectives of the Workers' Party governments, but resulted in a public policy very different from the original intent. Based on interviews and document analyzes, the research concluded that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office called CGFome had the power to initiate the agenda, but it didn't have enough political strength to move its preferred policy through Congress. However, when economic incentives changed, the Ruralistas (the legislative caucus of the large-scale agribusiness) entered the agenda and moved it forward very quickly, making it possible for Brazil to become one of the biggest donors in the world. The case showed the domestic political limitations of what could have been an international cooperation different from that of the traditional donors, which used to source their international food aid in the surplus stocks, something profoundly criticized by most of food aid specialists.

Keywords

keywords; Food Aid; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Humanitarian Cooperation; Ruralists Caucus; Zero Hunger

Acronyms

CAISAN	Inter-Ministerial Chamber for Food and Nutrition Security / Câmara Interministerial de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional, in Portuguese
CGFome	General Coordination for Actions to Fight Hunger, Coordenação-Geral de Cooperação Humanitária e de Combate à Fome, in Portuguese
CONAB	National Supply Company / Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento, in Portuguese
CONSEA	National Council for Food Security and Nutrition / Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional, in Portuguese
MDA	Agrarian Development Ministry / Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário, in Portuguese
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MST	Landless Workers Movement / Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, in Portuguese
PT	Workers' Party / Partido dos Trabalhadores, in Portuguese
WFP	World Food Program
ZHP	Zero Hunger Program

I. Introduction¹

Brazil was considered one of the emerging donors of international cooperation at the beginning of the 21st century, and one of the most important providers of food aid (Leite et al, 2014). During the governments of Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), both from the Workers' Party (PT, in Portuguese), the goal was to place the country as a leader of the fight against hunger. In fact, Brazil became a main voice in the field under the emblem of the Zero Hunger Program, and a relevant supplier of technical and humanitarian South-South and triangular cooperation. This article focuses on humanitarian food cooperation (2003-2016). Brazil donated food abroad on previous occasions, but an institutionalized humanitarian food aid policy was something innovative in its History. The magnitude was also noteworthy, as the country became one of the six largest donors to the World Food Program (WFP), although for a few years.

The research addressed two main goals: i) to understand why Brazil played that specific role in humanitarian affairs; and ii) to understand why it did it in a controversial way. If there were many ways to gain international protagonism in food security issues, why did those PT governments choose to donate parts of the state's food stocks if pundits consider that type of aid – called 'tied food aid' – has more cons than pros?

The research was designed on the basic grounds of foreign policy analysis (Hudson, 2007; Smith, Hadfield e Dunne, 2008). Domestic actors' interests, ideas, and interactions were examined as independent variables that, mediated by political institutions and processes (intervening variables), shape foreign policies (dependent variables). Empirical evidence and information about those variables were collected from primary sources such as official documents, reports, and correspondence, legislation, and bills, parliamentary debates, semi-structured interviews with bureaucratic officials and food donations databases. Secondary information was gathered from media sources. Literature review was used mainly for context and for drawing the general directions of the Brazilian foreign policy. Although there are many studies on Brazil's cooperation, no paper examining the policy-making of the international food aid was found in academic journals.

The research found out that, at first, the Executive proposal was to connect the produce of Brazilian small family farming to an international humanitarian policy. The plan was to foster food and nutrition security at home by supporting family farmer's income through government purchases destined to alleviate hunger abroad. However, the Executive didn't manage to get the necessary legal framework for that plan from the National Congress. Instead, the Legislative passed a law that, in practice, privileged the donation of the food produced by large agribusiness farms. The agreement between the two branches allowed Brazil to become one of the main donors of food, accomplishing some objectives of the PT's governments but resulted in a public policy very different from the original intent and short lived.

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The paper is thus organized: section 1 brings the policy to be explained. Section 2 presents Brazil's concept of humanitarian food cooperation and identify the main actors, interests, and ideas underlying it. Section 3 describes three different phases of policy-making during the 2003-2016 period. Section 4 analyzes interests, ideas and institutions in the process. Some final remarks presented in the end.

2 – Some numbers of the Brazilian humanitarian food aid

It is very difficult to systematically analyze data of the Brazilian humanitarian cooperation, as there is no unified database (Tambourgi, 2012). The reports of the governmental bodies aren't released regularly and the methodologies may be different. This section's objective is only to point out the change in the type of foods donated over the period based on the data available. This change is the result of the failure of the intended innovative policy and the prevalence of traditional politics and forms of tied food aid.

The Brazilian model of humanitarian food aid was largely based on the donation of national public stocks². It was a form of tied food aid originally imagined to match the food security programs directed at small family farmers at home, with humanitarian needs abroad. However, for reasons discussed in the following sections, the bulk of the donations ended up coming from large scale agribusiness' farms.

The National Supply Company's (Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento – CONAB, in Portuguese) stocks were the main source of the Brazilian food aid. A residual part came from the Ministries of Health, of Social Development, and Agrarian Reform (Fernandes, 2013). The foods donated until 2010 were mainly composed of grains and of diversified commercial and industrialized foods that were already in the public stocks for national emergencies (CONAB, 2010)³. Note that until 2010, rice and beans were not in the list and corn *in natura* was a small part of the donations. From 2011 on, the data of the governmental organ responsible for international food aid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), shows that beans, corn and rice became the only foods donated (IPEA, 20XX). That is when Brazil became a top 5 donor.

Brazil also practiced untied food aid, that is, it bought food overseas for humanitarian purposes (MRE, s/d). However, the MFA's budget was too limited to make that a standard practice. Besides, the primary goal was to link small family farmers to international populations, and that should be done through the donation of food from national stocks. However, the Brazilian legislation and a short budget for humanitarian actions made it extremely difficult for the MFA to pay for food the international transportation of the food aid. Those limitations, as we'll see later, were fundamental for the partnerships between Brazil, the WFP and foreign governments.

²This brings the debate about the pros and cons of tied versus untied food aid, but unfortunately there is no space in this article to address it properly. See Barrett, 1998; Clay e Stokke, 2000; Clay e Riley, 2005; Clapp, 2012.

³ Entrevista com CONAB 1 e CONAB 2.

The amount spent by Brazil and its partners (private partners not included) with freight in 2011-2013 for the transportation of foods and medicines totaled R\$ 319.1 million, of which R\$ 3 million was paid by the MFA and R\$ 97 thousand by the Ministry of Health, both to the Brazilian Air Force. In comparison, the monetary value of the food donated totaled R\$ 280.6 million and all Brazilian financial contributions to humanitarian agencies and operations summed R\$ 77.3 million (IPEA, 2016).

Critics of tied food aid usually argue that too much money is spent on freight. If the foods were procured in markets closer to the targeted populations, the money saved on transportation could be converted into more food (See Clay e Riley, 2005; Clapp, 2012). However, while developing donor countries may have budget limitations for freight, they may have lots of foods available for donation. Specialists, like Ziegler (2013), argue that leaving those foods out of the humanitarian circuit would be inhumane⁴.

The fact is that in 2012, Brazil became one of the top five donors of food, along with the U.S, Canada, Japan and China, accounting for 70 percent of WFP's food aid deliveries (WFP, 2012 Food aid Flows). The U.S. is by far the undisputed contributor since WWII. Japan is the second largest donor. Brazil discretely appears in the top five in 2009 and 2010, and then it rises in 2011, and reaches a peak in 2012. Those were tied food contributions to international aid, in usually in triangular cooperation with the WFP and developed countries.

3 - The Zero Hunger Program: the two-track strategy and the need for international action

The Brazilian food aid policy cannot be understood outside the scope of the Zero Hunger Program (ZHP). The ZHP's principles brought a discourse that made it possible to legitimate an international humanitarian policy, both because of its internal coherence and because it was the main flagship of Lula's election and mandate⁵ (Aranha, 2010; Brasil, 2013).

The roots of the ZHP were deeply related to social movements, academic researchers and the agenda of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Albuquerque, 2013; Takagi, 2006). Even though the ZHP was a proposal for a national policy, its principles were considered of universal interest, as a human right. However, to defend that human right, the governments should have the appropriate tools and policy-space to intervene in the market, thus challenging the dominant neoliberal international context (Graziano da Silva, 2009). In this sense, international cooperation (including the humanitarian) was seen – not exclusively – as a strategy to gather foreign support for interventionist state policies. The support of foreign governments,

⁴ Why did foreign partners paid the freight?. Some interviewees for this research suggested that visibility was a strong reason, especially at times when Brazil's diplomatic power was high. Research about the decisions to cooperate with Brazil would be welcome.

⁵The ZHP is referred here as a broad multidimensional strategy containing many more specific projects. Changes in the project didn't change the strategy overall. In the first Rousseff's government (2011-2014), a new strategy was announced – 'Brazil Without Misery' Plan – but it didn't change the ZHP general framework. Some literature, however, argues that the ZHP was abandoned or significantly altered. See, for example, Tomazini, Carla Guerra, & Leite, Cristiane Kerches da Silva. (2016). Programa Fome Zero e o paradigma da segurança alimentar: ascensão e queda de uma coalizão?. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 24(58), 13-30.

NGOs, IOs and other civil societies would strengthen Brazil's soft power to call a new vision to fight hunger globally. The election and re-election of Brazilians José Graziano da Silva for FAO's Director-General (2012-2015/2016-2019) and Roberto Azevêdo to Director-General of the WTO (2013-2017/2018-2021) are evidences of the soft power Brazil accumulated in the agro-food domain. Graziano's case is of utmost importance as he was one of the main minds behind the ZHP before PT achieving the Presidency in 2002 and, once Lula entered in office, Graziano was the minister in charge of putting the ZHP in motion (January 2003 to January 2004).

The ZHP had a two-track strategy (Albuquerque, 2013; Brasil, 2013). One was fostering structural policies such as the Food Acquisition Program (PAA, in Portuguese), through which the government purchases small family farmers' produce to, for example, serve meals in local public schools (Grisa et. al, 2010). Structural programs would be necessary for poor people to have more resilience and social development opportunities that could raise income and diversify local food supplies. The other track was the emergency actions to solve food insecurity immediately, because people cannot wait for a structure to be created or the economy to grow to eat properly. Programs like *Bolsa Família* and *Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar* are examples that combine both (Takagi, 2010). They offer immediate ways to access food by providing cash and school meals respectively, while fostering basic education. The former demands mothers to keep children at school in order to receive the grant, and the later serve meals at school.

In conceptual terms, the government redirected the State to perform a "logistical" function after years of neoliberalism, when the role of the State was retrenched (Cervo, 2003). Under the paradigm of the "logistical State", the government must use the State's tools such as its purchasing power, its capillarity and its coordinating power to incentivize the market and the society in search for solutions to the problems, but also to build capabilities that would make the nation less vulnerable and more autonomous in international relations. So, internationalizing policies like those of the ZHP was part of the strategy to legitimize globally the necessary *policy space* to manage the State in a logistical way.

In this sense, both Lula's and Dilma's governments strived to write that imperative into laws and regulations. Under Lula, Law 11,346 of September 15 of 2006 created the National System of Food and Nutrition Security. Its article 6 established that "the Brazilian State must engage in promoting technical cooperation with foreign countries, thus contributing to the realization of the human right to adequate food at the international level". The decree 7,272 of August 25 of 2010, which regulates the law 11,346, states in article 4, item IV, that the National Food Security Policy has as one of its "specific objectives (...) - [to] incorporate into State policy the respect for food sovereignty and to guarantee the human right to adequate food, including access to water, and to promote them in the ambit of international negotiations and cooperation". Article 22 of the same decree, item XIII, provides that the Inter-Ministerial Chamber for Food and Nutrition Security (CAISAN, in Portuguese), together with the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSEA, in Portuguese), shall include in the first National Plan for Food and Nutrition Security the guidelines for "international humanitarian assistance and South-South cooperation in food and nutritional security".

The National Plan was first published in 2011 by the Rousseff's government (CAISAN, 2011: 106) and lists among its priority goals: i) to elaborate a legal framework regarding the provision of international humanitarian cooperation by Brazil; ii) expand actions that protect, promote and provide the Human Right to Adequate Food in international humanitarian operations through emergency actions, complemented by initiatives aimed at contributing to food autonomy and sovereignty of foreign countries; iii) to promote international humanitarian assistance, through donation of food from national public stocks located in the International Humanitarian Warehouse, to countries victimized by adverse social-environmental events.

In 2011, humanitarian food aid was already under way at historical levels, but its institutionalization into policy was a slow work in progress. In fact, the Plan reflected the experience until that point and highlighted the crucial need for an adequate legal framework. The empirical evidence of the next section points that the lack of that legal framework was critical for the policy's design along the years.

It is interesting to highlight the concept of Humanitarian Cooperation. According to Milton Rondó Filho⁶, the diplomat that headed the MFA's General Coordination for Actions to Fight Hunger' (CGFome, in Portuguese), the concept was an alternative to terms like international aid or humanitarian assistance. Inspired on Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, humanitarian actions should also be treated as cooperation because while providing help, the provider would also benefit by gaining at least knowledge throughout the experience. That experience, for instance, could improve the provider's own humanitarian capabilities. In this sense, both sides would be in a two-way relation instead of the traditional perspective in which one gives and the other takes, one is active and the other passive.

The humanitarian cooperation concept was integrated in what could be called – not without criticism – 'Solidarity Diplomacy' (de Faria and Paradis, 2013; Cesarino, 2015). Celso Amorim was Lula's Minister of Foreign Affairs (2003-2011) and Rousseff's Minister of Defense (2011-2014). In a personal reflection published after he left the government, he defended that solidarity was a principle that both governments were trying to foster both domestically and internationally, as part of the plan to become a system-affecting state. In this sense, the humanitarian cooperation, along with South-South cooperation for development, "Were part of the same awareness that Brazil had 'to get out of the shell', so to speak, and assume its responsibilities internationally. Or, in a positive sense, punch according with its weight" (Amorim, 2016, p. 106). In other words, the governments believed that there was a price to pay if they wanted to play a bigger role in shaping the principles and norms of the international society. Table 5 demonstrates federal spending with international cooperation from 2005 to 2013. Note the rising trend for humanitarian cooperation. The peak in 2010 is mainly due to the earthquake in Haiti that year. The high levels in 2011 and 2012 are related with Law 12,429, explained in the next section.

⁶ Interview to the author in December, 2016

Another concept adopted under CGFome's lead was that of "structuring humanitarian cooperation". Fundamentally, it meant that food donation should be part of some kind of structuring program whenever possible. For example, Brazil would donate vegetable seeds in some cases, so people could start to grow part of their own food, even in refugee camps⁷.

In the context of the Structuring Humanitarian Cooperation, the partnership relation would allow and legitimate structuring actions that would also take place not near the most damaged population. Thus, local purchases of food for humanitarian ends should be incentivized. In this sense, both MFA's Rondó⁸ and CONAB's Dalla Costa⁹ affirmed that the original intention for the humanitarian food policy was to donate food acquired from Brazilian small family farmers and agrarian reform's settlers whenever possible. The idea was that CONAB should procure food through the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), or use the PAA's stocks. The PAA supports small family farmers through government purchases of their produce at prices usually above the market (Grisa et al 2010; Peraci, Bittencourt, 2010). By doing this, Rondó and Dalla Costa said, a foreign population would receive relief while supporting small farmers in Brazil. That would be South-South cooperation providing benefits for both sides. As a developing country, it would be legitimate to work on its own poverty and food problems while contributing with foreign partners (Milani, 2012). Besides, the ZHP would be fully contemplated: the two-track strategy plus the international cooperation.

Yet, the reality turned out to be very different. From the original intent (independent variable) to the general policy outcome (dependent variable), the lack of an adequate legal framework (intervening variable) pulled policy in the direction of the traditional food aid operations, that is, donation of commodities acquired from the surpluses of large-scale farmers (Friedmann, 1982). It is important to say that not all food aid was from big agribusiness. However, the bulk of it, which was rice and a big amount of corn, were from those sources. Donations of beans and other foods probably came from small farmers and cooperatives. Powdered milk was from cooperatives farmers¹⁰.

To conclude this section, it is important stress that the research didn't find an original interest in the Executive or the Congress to support large-scale farmers' exports, neither an interest of large producers to get rid of surpluses through food aid. In the Brazilian case, the origin was rooted on ideas regarding small family farming. The Executive and the social forces around the family farming issue were the main sources, and the MFA's CGFome was surely the main actor driving it.

However, the next section will demonstrate that it was only with the support of the large-scale agribusiness through the legislative bloc called *bancada ruralista*, that Brazil was able to become a major international player in humanitarian affairs. The original plan to support family farming was sacrificed in the process, and the food aid became a way for large agribusiness to deal with surpluses.

⁷ Interview with Dalla Costa, from CONAB, and diplomat Mari-Carmen Gerpe, who served at CGFome.

⁸ Entrevista ao autor.

⁹ Entrevista ao autor

¹⁰ Interviews with CONAB'S Nilton Lelio AND Dalla Costa, and MFA's Rondó.

This finding is important because one of the first hypotheses for this study was that Brazil's original plan was to emulate the experience of traditional developed donors (Clapp, 2012). In the U.S. case, the political economy of grain surpluses created political groups interested in dumping surpluses through food aid since the end of II World War (Portillo, 1987; Clapp, 2012). Presidents Bush Jr. and Obama tried to reform the system to 'untie' the aid from national production, like the E.U. did recently, but 'iron triangles' in Congress blocked them (Diven, 2006; Lima e Dias, 2016). In Brazil's case, the first policy's input wasn't from the agribusiness or the *ruralistas* legislators, but their active support eventually proved to be essential, thus approximating Brazil's food aid to the practices of the U.S. during the period when Brazilian food aid reached its peak.

4 – The struggle for institutionalization and the politics of the possible

The 2003-2016 period is divided in three different phases where the CGFome struggled for an adequate legal framework to its preferred policy. The analysis evidences that the policy was an 'adjust while doing' process, instead of a rigorously planned policy put to work with the appropriate financial and institutional resources. To use a Brazilian old saying – it was 'fixing the car's tyre while driving it'. This section will also show the centrality of the MFA's CGFome in the process, and especially the individual role of its coordinator, Milton Rondó (2004-2016).

4.1 – 2003-2006

Two dynamics at different levels of analysis are fundamental. The first and more general one was the opening of the policy making process at federal level to social forces related to small family farming during Lula's mandate. Lula's comprehensive social agenda had important supporters and constituencies in agrarian reform and in small family farming movements, like the Landless Workers Movement (MST, in Portuguese). President Lula granted top institutional access to those groups through relevant channels (Albuquerque, 2013, Brasil, 2013). The most important was the Agrarian Development Ministry (MDA, in Portuguese), created in 1999, and powered up after 2003. Under Lula, the MDA became part of the foreign trade policy making process, with the mission of defending the interests of small family farmers and rural populations in international negotiations. The almighty Ministry of Agriculture – which represents large-scale agribusiness – would have an agrarian rival in the federal government for the first time (Fernandes, 2010). The CONSEA was also brought inside the federal government's structure as an advisory committee to the President regarding the Human Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition. It monitors international negotiations and issue position papers on them.

Retrospectively, however, although Lula and Dilma did provided relevant incentives for small family farming, it is clear that both Presidents didn't advance the agenda of agrarian reform. They were deeply aligned with the interests of large scale agribusiness, *ruralistas* politicians and *latifundiários* (Sauer, Meszáros, 2017). The G-20 breakdown at the WTO's 2008

Conference demonstrated that the president chose the preferences of the Ministry of Agriculture instead of the MDA's (Ramanzini Jr e Lima, 2011).

Nevertheless, the small family farming social forces had institutional access to the policy-making table. This same movement occurred in the MFA. Created in 2004, the MFA's CGFome was responsible for advocating and promoting abroad policies inspired in the ZHP. This was an institutional innovation, as the MFA's tradition and *sprit de corp* are more associated with wealthier urban classes than with the rural poor¹¹. This takes us to the second dynamic mentioned earlier: the role of CGfome's chief, Milton Rondó.

The following history was reconstituted after interviews with officials from CGFome, CONAB and the WFP. They highlighted the importance of individuals' personalities and networks in foreign policy-making (Hermann, Preston, 2011; Hudson, 2007). Milton Rondó's individual role was of unique importance for the whole trajectory of the CGFome and, therefore, for the Brazilian humanitarian food policy in the period covered by this research.

Milton Rondó Filho is a career diplomat with personal interest in agrarian reform and the catholic political group called Pastoral Land Comission (Rondó Filho, 2009). He is also a sympathizer of PT. Before CGFome's inauguration, Rondó worked in the first CONSEA in 1994. Later, he worked as an international adviser at the Department of Agriculture of the Olívio Dutra's government (PT, 1999-2003) in the Rio Grande do Sul state. While working at Dutra's government, Rondó got closer to Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães because of their common critical opinions about the Free Trade Area of Americas then under negotiation. Guimarães was a top senior career diplomat and a theorist of Brazilian foreign policy. He was ousted of central positions in Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government (1995-2002) because of his ideas. Similarly, Rondó's disagreements with Cardoso's agenda motivated him to work at the Rio Grande do Sul state, hence outside federal diplomacy¹².

After Lula entered the Presidency, Rondó was invited by Guimarães to integrate the high ranks of the MFA. Guimarães had become the Secretary-General of the MFA, which is a position below only to the Chancellor. Once invited, it was Rondó's proposal to install a General Coordination for Actions to Fight Hunger (CGFome), an office that would be the international arm of the Zero Hunger Program at the MFA.

The CGFome was formally created in January 1st, 2004. It is very important to highlight that it was located at the top of the MFA's organogram. That unusual position gave CGFome direct access to MFA's Secretary-General Guimarães and to Chancellor Amorim. Rondó himself would even have some direct access to Presidents Lula and, to a lesser extent Rousseff. As a sign of prestige, the office was placed inside the Itamaraty's main building.

Some critical events contributed heavily to shape CGfome's role in humanitarian food cooperation: the 2004 coup d'état in Haiti and the Lebanon War in 2006. The MFA realized that Brazil had no adequate structure to deal with those scales of

¹¹Interviews with CGFome's diplomats Mari-Carmen Gerpe and Milton Rondó; and with CGFome's employees Bianca Fadel and Lorena Braz.

¹² Interview to the author.

humanitarian operations (Amorim, 2016). In 2004 Brazil was already coordinating the MINUSTAH, which naturally imposed obligations regarding humanitarian aid towards the Haitian people. However, the humanitarian work – not only with food – of the CGFome really started with the floods in Ecuador, Bolivia and Suriname in the first half of 2006 (Fernandes, 2013). Those experiences were very much new to the diplomats managing it. They didn't have previous training or expertise in large-scale humanitarian operations and protocols were not available.

On one hand, the Brazilian officials and the CGFome did an important humanitarian job by improvisation. On the other, improvising is hardly ever the best way to provide humanitarian assistance. As part of the lessons learned regarding the lack of intra-government of coordination, the CGFome managed to create an Interministerial Task Force for International Humanitarian Assistance (Grupo de Trabalho Interministerial para Assistência Humanitária Internacional (GTI-AHI, in Portuguese) through Presidential Decree of June 21 of 2006.

As the bureaucratic structure and procedures advanced in this period, it became clear that the government needed an appropriate legal framework for international humanitarian cooperation. Actually, there was no legislation about it and that was a major setback for any attempt to respond rapidly to emergencies. Brazilian Constitution forbids donating any public asset unless explicitly allowed by law or "Provisional Measure". Both must pass through Congress, but the latter is considered "very urgent" under the legislative process and receives priority in Congress, while the former has no deadline at all. In that sense, the MFA, lead by CGFome, made two important movements. First, it convinced President Lula to present bill 737 to Congress in 2007. Second, for the first time in History, the MFA received a budgetary line for humanitarian actions. The budget allowed CGFome to be part of many humanitarian operations abroad and was the biggest line in the MFA's schedule.

4.2 – 2007-2010

The bill 737 was about making the Executive Branch's actions more agile and adequate to emergency actions. Article 1 would give the Executive the "permission to use or donate movable property, including food from the Federal Government's public stock, as well as those that make up the assets of the organs or entities of the federal public administration [...], as well as the donation of financial resources". In other words, the ambitious bill intended to unbind the government from editing a Provisional Measure or submitting a bill to Congress whenever it was to donate public goods for international humanitarian purposes. Amorim's concern can be exemplified by the case of Provisional Measure (MP, in Portuguese) 444 of 2008, which made available up to 45,000 tons of benefited rice, 2,000 tons of powdered milk; 500 kilos of vegetable seeds to Cuba, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica, in response to the climatic disasters of that year.

Published on October 29, 2008, MP444 was converted into the bill 11,881, and finally instituted as a law in December 23 of 2008. If the MP was not converted into law, its effects would cease after 60 days of its publication, which meant that the government would be prevented from sending more humanitarian aid, unless another MP or law was approved by Congress.

The lapse of time is an obstacle to plan appropriate assistance to populations affected by sudden natural disasters. In Haiti, for example, hurricane Hanna left 500 people dead and 250,000 in need of humanitarian assistance in early September 2008¹³, but the Brazilian aid was available in December.

It is important to note that art. 1, paragraph 3, of law 11,881 mandated CONAB to promote the transportation of the foods to the final destinations using its own resources or in partnerships. The Executive tried to get federal funding for transportation in bill 737, but it failed. In the future, Congress would explicitly prohibit the Federal Government to pay for international transportation of food aid. That was a major setback for the CGFome's plans, because it cut much of its autonomy in implementing the policy.

While law 11,881 was case-specific, bill 737¹⁴ was a general framework. Introduced in April 2007, the bill slowly passed through four different Legislative Commissions¹⁵ and in April 2010 it was approved at the Committee on Constitution, Justice and Citizenship of the Chamber of Deputies. One of the dissenting votes came from the opposition Deputy Maia Filho (DEM/PI), which highlighted unconstitutionality, because in the case that aid constitutes an agreement, such an agreement should pass through Congress. He also argued against the exclusion of the necessity of specific laws to donate public assets. The opposition also considered that the bill would be an inappropriate 'blank check' to the Executive and that it could actually disguise aid to governments like Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia (Câmara Notícias, 2010). On May 6, 2010, Deputy Efraim Filho filed an appeal supported by at least 51 deputies demanding the bill to be examined by the plenary of the Chamber before going to Senate. Since then, the bill 737 has been paralyzed. According to Leite et al (2014):

“Opposition did not centre on the donation of food itself, but on: (1) it being an instrument to affirm the international image of President Lula and his alignment with countries whose governments were found not to be respecting domestic human rights; (2) it being an instrument to promote compensatory programmes abroad, to the detriment of other policies targeting sustainable social inclusion (such as health and education); (3) it being decided by the Executive; (4) the possibility of directing seized merchandise at home to humanitarian assistance; and (5) the quantity and kind of grains that would be destined for other countries, having in mind their impacts on national prices (Leite et al, 2014: 57).”

¹³Death toll in flooded Haitian town soars. Reuters. September 5, 2008. Available in <https://goo.gl/EVX8zm>. Access in June 16, 2017.

¹⁴ The whole process and documents available are from CÂMARA DOS DEPUTADOS. “PL 737/2007 Histórico de Pareceres, Substitutivos e Votos”, available at <https://goo.gl/N5GUj5>. Access in June 25, 2017.

¹⁵ It is important to highlight the negative vote from Deputy Fernando Coruja (PSC/SC) in November 2008, arguing, among other things, that rice public stocks were “extremely low if compared with CONAB’s rice public stocks historical series from 1987 to 2008” and that high prices would hit consumers (Coruja, 2008). Section 3.3 will show a contrasting situation – low price of rice, large public stocks, and an expected big harvest – that would bring legislators from the bancada ruralista to approve the donation of public stocks for humanitarian purposes in 2011.

Three contextual factors must be noted. First, Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales used to make national headlines because of their socialist/bolivarian worldviews. Plus, President's Lula diplomacy with South American neighbors angered the opposition, as in 2006 nationalization of gas in Bolivia that expropriated Petrobras properties; the 2009 negotiation to elevate the fares payed to Paraguay for Itaipu's energy; and the strengthening of the Bolivarian Alliance of Americas lead by Venezuela. Second, the price of rice was high and stocks were low. Although there isn't evidence enough to say that this factor had been a necessary condition for the bill's fate in this process, the reversion of signals in 2011 makes it a relevant intervening variable in the future. Third, a critical organizational change occurred in the MFA. Guimarães left his post in October 2009, being replaced by career diplomat Antonio Patriota. Rondó and Patriota didn't have the same kind of close relationship. This resulted in some loss of influence of the CGFome in the MFA and in inter-ministerial relations. Nonetheless, CGFome still had Amorim's ears, but that would change in 2011, when Patriota became the chancellor¹⁶.

One last thing should be noted for this period: President Lula didn't put his weight in the battle for bill 787. Why? Was it a sign of the low relevance that the Executive attributed to the policy? Or, was the bill a product of CGFome's activism, not fully backed by the Executive's core? Those are questions this research couldn't advance.

4.3 – 2011-2016

Until 2009 most of the Brazilian food donations were bilateral and authorized through MPs. After that, working with the WFP became the regular practice. Many factors contributed to this. One was the legal restriction to pay for international transportation. Another was the convenience of using WFP's specialized logistics and skills, which contrasted with the Brazilian lack of expertise¹⁷. A third factor was the interest of the WFP itself in bringing Brazil into its hall of regular major contributors¹⁸ (Fernandes, 2013; Santana e Lima, 2018).

Three of the CGFome's employees commented that if the government had the capacity to pay for international transportation, Brazil would not attach its humanitarian cooperation with WFP too much. The WFP's standards sometimes restricted the CGFome's preferences in terms of public diplomacy and domestic policy. For example, WFP's requirements in terms of packing made food aid from family farmers virtually unviable, and the publicity protocols would curtail some actions aimed to capitalizing the Brazilian role in the humanitarian area. Plus, the prices charged by the WFP were higher than the commercial ones. Anyway, the fact is that the partnership with the WFP was crucial for Brazilian humanitarian food aid. Under the WFP's "twinning" mechanism, a foreign country could pay the freight of a developing country's donation, making it a triangular cooperation (Canuto, 2013).

¹⁶ Interview with diplomats and CGFome's employees.

¹⁷ Interview with CGFome's employees.

¹⁸ Interview with WFP's Daniel Balaban e Mauricio

With the transportation issue addressed, let's turn now to the sequence of Laws that made Brazilian humanitarian food cooperation possible.

In the very end of his second term, President Lula published the MP 519 of December 30, 2010. The position paper accompanying the document, elaborated in July 2010, asked for 300,000 tons of corn, 100,000 of rice and of beans, 10,000 tons of powdered milk and 1 ton of vegetables seeds. The MP 519 was converted into bill 12,429 in the first semester of Rousseff's mandate, and approved in June that year¹⁹. Note that the speed of this approval process contrasted with the induced coma of the bill 737. Why? This time the CGFome had the active support of the opposition because of the interests of large-scale agribusiness farmers.

For starters, bill 12,429 was analyzed by a joint commission of the Chamber of Deputies in May 2011, having the *ruralista* Deputy Luis Carlos Heinze²⁰ (PP/RS) as the reviewer. Surprisingly for a Brazilian conservative, his report was against three amendments that sought to prioritize national territory's assistance. Heinze approved the budgetary and financial structure of the proposal, but he amended the quantities of foods demanded by the CGFome. His justification is of utmost importance:

"Finally, as the present Provisional Measure nº 519 was edited back in 2010, a period where very low prices for rice was not observed in the market, causing income loss to farmers, and the high prices of corn, which significantly impacts the production of hogs and poultry, I believe to be adequate, timely and necessary to adjust the quantities to be donated of those products. That is, to reduce corn from 300 to 100 thousand tons, and to elevate rice from 100 to 500 thousand tons".

Heinze also stressed that "the sack of rice is valued at R\$ 18.00 while the minimum price is R\$ 25.80 and its cost is R\$ 29.90". As a huge harvest was expected to the next year, the situation would be even worse. Thus, he argued, "it is only natural to match the donation of public stocks to other countries with strategies of price support for agricultural products in the home market". Heinze's arguments demonstrate some of the perils of tying food aid to national market's prices and harvests, as that kind of volatility curtail long-term international humanitarian planning (Clapp, 2012).

Other legislators presented three amendments. i) The original bill didn't have an expiry date. Deputy Miro Teixeira (PDT-RJ) asked for a 12 months cap, which was immediately accepted by Heinze. Heinze and Teixeira agreed that as the harvest would be only in February 2012, the 12 months deadline would fit nice. ii) Teixeira also demanded an amendment – then accepted by Heinze – to secure that the international aid would not compromise eventual assistance in the national territory (previously considered "unnecessary" by Heinze). Then, iii) what should be very polemic turned out to be smooth:

¹⁹ Documents available for this legislative process in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate can be found respectively in: CÂMARA DOS DEPUTADOS. "Histórico de Pareceres, Substitutivos e Votos - MPV 519/2010", in <https://goo.gl/C1B4VP>. Access June 26, 2017. SENADO FEDERAL. "MEDIDA PROVISÓRIA nº 519, de 2010", in: <https://goo.gl/qD3gAs>. Access in June 6, 2017.

²⁰ Heinze is known for his far-right positions. He was elected the racist of the year 2014 by the NGO *Survival*. Available at <https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10076>. Access in 18/11/2017.

Deputy Vicente Candido (PT/SP) asked for the inclusion of Cuba in the explicit list of receivers, and Heinze accepted it without debate. The bill was approved by the Chamber of Deputies in May 26.

The bill 12,429 was sent to a Senate Commission and Senator Ana Amelia (PP/RS) was the reviewer. Her report in favor of Heinze's was issued on May 31²¹. (PARECER ANA AMÉLIA <https://goo.gl/NpSjVH>). The Senate approved her report and the bill became Law 12,429 in June 20, 2011 – about one year after bill 737 was put in coma. There wasn't roll call vote. It shouldn't go without notice that providing humanitarian assistance to socialist/bolivarian countries was something fiercely fought against in the 737 bill, but the 2011 law provided explicit authorization for Cuba, Bolivia and North Korea.

The Law wasn't what the CGFome originally planned, however, that was the politics of the possible. As Rondó said, it was that or refraining to help thousands of desperate hungry people²². For CONSEA, which represents the small family farmer's social movements, the law was a welcome act of international solidarity and they were not concerned with large-scale farmers being privileged by the model²³.

Another issue that tilted CGFome's plans was related to technical procedures regarding the food aid preparation. Depending on the commodity, the WFP would only ship benefited foods, but the CONAB's stocks were composed of foods *in natura*. As Congress would not grant a budget to process the foods, the government's solution was to make a "simultaneous buy-sell operation" in the market, through which CONAB would exchange, for example, shelled rice for husked rice shelled already packed²⁴. The problem, according to CONAB's Dalla Costa, was that this process was a kind of public auction that small farmers hardly ever could win. Thus, this institutional mechanism also diverted the humanitarian policy outcome from its original intent.

Anyway, the CGFome finally had a legal framework to work with. Two points are noteworthy. First, art. 3 of Law 12,429 allowed to aid countries not nominated in the Law, provided that the demand of listed countries' had already been served, and the quotas were not exhausted. This clause contrasts with the opposition's preoccupation about using food aid to support socialist/Bolivarian countries during 2007-2010.

Second, art. 1 set out the authorization's validity for 12 months. Although not ideal, it was better than the case-specific authorizations that Provisional Measures granted. It got better in 2012, when art. 27 of Law 12,688 repealed any expiry

²¹ In 2015, Amelia's website reported she was working with Rondó, Heinze and rice farmers to reenact a Rio Grande do Sul fiscal waiver on the commercial operations related to the humanitarian partnership with the WFP. "The president of the Federation of Rice Farmers' Association of the Rio Grande do Sul (Fedearroz), Henrique Dornelles, and the director of the Riograndense Institute for Rice (IRGA), Tiago Barata, stressed that the measure is fundamental in this moment of low prices for rice and that the referred covenant [Law 12,429 of 2011] contributes to the reduction of the stocks of the product". SENADORA ANA AMÉLIA. "Ana Amélia pede ampliação de convênio que beneficia produtores de arroz do RS". July 3, 2015. Available at <https://goo.gl/zWbT2T>. Accessed on June 6, 2017

²²Entrevista ao autor.

²³Interview with CONSEA's representatives.

²⁴ A technical note regarding budget and finance overview dated of February 7 of 2011 stated that that procedure would incur in a hidden cost for the federal budget and that contradicted the principle of transparency, but it seemed to be ignored by the Congress.

date. It should be noted that the 2012 Law was a patchwork that dealt with diverse subjects such as energy businesses and incentives to higher education institutions. Fernandes (2013) reported that Rio Grande do Sul's Deputy Jerônimo Goergen (PP) was the amendment's mentor. According to the Deputy's website, his main motives were to affect rice prices and, more urgently, to empty the stocks and allow space for the new rice harvest (*apud* Fernandes, 2013).

With the coming exhaustion of the quotas authorized by Law 12,429, the continuity of the food aid took place through the palliative art. 25 of Law 13,001 of June, 2014²⁵. Although the law was about agrarian reform credit issues, Deputy Heinze (PP/RS) proposed an amendment to expand in 500,000 tons of rice the donations' threshold established in the 2011 law. In this case, there was a clear partnership between the CGFome and the Rio Grande do Sul Institute for Rice²⁶.

In sum, the legal framework obtained in this third phase, the partnership with the WFP, and the diplomatic ability of the CGFome, resulted in a policy that made headlines about Brazil's new profile as an emerging donor of humanitarian aid²⁷. Parallel to that, the CGFome's prestige inside the MFA was diminishing. Rondó had already lost Guimarães' institutional support in 2009 and then lost Amorim's in 2011 when he left the MFA. Chancellor Patriota (2011-2013) who wasn't close to Rondó, neither were the following ministers of the MFA. CGFome's employees reported that the loss of influence was expressed physically, as the office was moved out of the Itamaraty's main building to its annex building.

Some of the CGFome's employees also mentioned that the loss of prestige occurred because of Rondó's intensive combat against the national protest movements initiated in June of 2013 and that culminated in the parliamentary coup that replaced Dilma Rousseff for Vice-President Michel Temer in 2016. The MFA's traditional career diplomats didn't approve Rondó's attitude in that process, leaving him with few allies in the Ministry. As the impeachment process advanced, the then interim President Temer indicated José Serra as MFA's chancellor in May 2016. Serra, from PSDB, had lost two Presidential elections against PT in 2002 and 2009, for Lula and Rousseff respectively. Serra terminated the CGFome in September, 2016.

²⁵ CAISAN reported in 2014 that it was "at the final stage of elaboration of a regulatory framework for the provision of international food assistance to allow the continuation of the actions of the Brazilian Government in this field". It also informed that the framework should be submitted to the [President] by the end of 2013, for future presentation to the National Congress, and was prepared jointly by several Federal Government agencies, aiming, in particular, to create permanent mechanisms for emergency humanitarian response (CAISAN, 2014: 104)". This research didn't find this new framework.

²⁶ IRGA. "Presidente do Irga recebe ministro Milton Rondó". July 15, 2014. Available at <http://www.irga.rs.gov.br/conteudo/4784/presidente-do-irga-recebe-ministro-milton-rondo>. Access in 03/07/2017

²⁷ DEUSTCHE WELLER (2012). "Brasil eleva ajuda humanitária de olho em maior projeção internacional". Available in <http://www.dw.de/brasil-eleva-ajuda-humanit%C3%A1ria-de-olho-em-maior-proje%C3%A7%C3%A3o-internacional/a-16215433>. Accessed in June 22, 2017.

5 - Interests, ideas, institutions and the process

Two questions drove this research: why did Brazil engage in humanitarian food cooperation; and why most of Brazil's international food aid was tied. Opening the black box of foreign policy, the research identified the main actors behind the policy and analyzed their interests and ideas. It was found that the policy was coherently created under the Zero Hunger Program's two-track and international strategies. The policy's design was not conceived in advance, before PT had won the Presidency. Rather, the policy was a work in progress, motivated by concrete humanitarian demands, as well as domestic and international windows of opportunity: it was like 'changing the car's tyre while driving it'. The fundamental actor was the CGFome and, even more important, the individual role of its chief. His personal attachment to the theme and his good networks with MFA's Secretary-General Guimarães and Chancellor Amorim gave him the bureaucratic resources needed to get the policy started.

But why send abroad food from Brazil? Supporting small family farming by procuring food from them, while helping needed people abroad, would fit the Zero Hunger Strategy perfectly: it would strengthen a structural food security program at home while assisting hunger emergencies internationally. Although not recommended by pundits critical of tied aid, it would fit a two-way South-South cooperation, and that would propel Brazil's image as an important actor in world food issues, which was another part of the ZHP. Besides, the government didn't have enough budgetary resources to buy food for donation abroad in the scale envisaged for the policy. The solution was to donate what was available at the stocks of ministries and agencies, mainly in CONAB's stocks.

So, the independent variable was the active role of the CGFome in the context of the ZHP. Brazil's start was different from the experiences of the U.S., where the main variable explaining the beginning of food aid after WWII was the excess of domestic commodities that could not be absorbed by the regular markets (Portillo, 1987).

However, the idea of buying food from Brazilian family farmers didn't work as expected and most of the donations came from big farmers. Why? Here come the intervening variables: i) the absence of an adequate legal framework; ii) lack of enough political support in Congress; iii) WFP's technical standards that family farmers could not reach or outcompete large-scale farmers. As the policy was put in motion without an adequate legal framework, many of its objectives were defined without the means to achieve them. This also explains why CGFome didn't donate more food purchased in international markets: its budget was too limited for it. The quest for an appropriate Law from 2007 to 2010 didn't work because the government couldn't get enough political support in times where a) Lula's opposition was resistant to provide any support for foreign leftist governments; and b) national food stocks were low.

Factor b)'s importance only became clear in the process that lead to the approval of Law 12,429 of 2011. In that period, national stocks of rice were high, and prices were low. So, in 2007-2010, factor b) was like an ineffective intervening variable that was turned on in the 2011 process. In his PhD thesis, Fernandes (2013: 45) concluded that "the *ruralista's* congressional support in the first semester of 2011 was a contribution, though eventual, for the evolution of the humanitarian

cooperation” (Fernandes, 2013: 145). That contribution remained effective in the 2012 and 2014 laws. In 2015 the support of rice agribusiness was withdrawn as the market prices were high and stocks were low²⁸.

In this phase, the Brazilian experience partially matches that of the U.S in the beginning of the international food aid after WWII: the excess of grains plus low prices created a political-economic force of producers and legislators that fed a humanitarian policy or, as critics say, a dumping policy. Scales differ a lot between Brazil's and the US' operations. However, the setbacks in terms of humanitarian long-term planning are very similar.

Nowadays, Canada and the EU untied their food aid and the U.S. is under a domestic debate about untying it but, as Diven (2006) explained, the political-economy of iron triangles resists change. This question is not present in Brazil. This research didn't find any criticism about tied food aid in the legislative processes, and there was no sign of an iron triangle. What happened was an ephemeral coalition. Hypothetically, the coalition's status could change into a more stable one if Brazilian rice farmers became structurally overproductive as well as the national rice stocks became often too high.

After 2010, the coalition formed by the CGFome, the *ruralistas* legislators led by those from Rio Grande do Sul state, and the rice agribusiness, was strong enough to pass a major bill around a year later the defeat of the bill 737. It must be highlighted that the opposition's resistance against cooperating with socialist/Bolivarian regimes disappeared and that countries like Cuba, Bolivia and North Korea were nominally included in the 2011 law.

The WFP's technical procedures for preparing food aid intervened in the CGFome's original plan. The WFP's standards created a dynamic within CONAB that small family farmers usually couldn't meet. Big farmers, on the other hand, were more prepared to put together large amounts of rice or corn in the WFP's standardized sacks and to deliver them at the port. If family farmers could get more organized and prepared to address the WFP's standards, the policy would probably be more like the CGFome's original preference.

Finally, it is important to understand the role of individuals in public policy. Here, it was found that although Rondó's individual role was crucial for the magnitude that the humanitarian food cooperation achieved – including the thousands populations helped –, his personal attachment seemed to have impeded the creation of the impersonality that is expected for public policy. The CGFome lived – and maybe the policy lived – while he was the chief of it. Some CGFome's veterans feared that the expertise costly developed in the period could be lost after the office's dissolution, because despite the efforts to create protocols, many operational memories were too personal, and it wasn't clear if there would be a bureaucratic force willing to cultivate it inside the MFA

²⁸ Interview with Milton Rondó.

6 - Final Remarks

What about the future of this first Brazilian experience in the realm of humanitarian food aid? Conjuncture is too fluid for a solid prospective analysis. With that in mind, the deep economic crisis initiated in 2015 is a heavy setback for a foreign policy of that kind. Plus, the independent variable radically changed with the parliamentary coup of 2016. It remains to be seen if future governments will embrace an international humanitarian food policy as a principle.

From the experience analyzed, it may be expected that if national grains stocks grow and prices plummet, Brazil's food donations may be boosted. The question is whether Brasilia would find countries or international organizations willing to pay for the logistics. That should be even more difficult if the president's diplomatic power is low. Finally, the CGFome's former tasks are now responsibility of the MFA's Brazilian Cooperation Agency and time is still needed to evaluate how and if that Agency will incorporate the humanitarian food cooperation as a mission. The experience showed that having a committed bureaucratic force in the government may be very important to turn ideas into policies. Plus, having in mind the problems of tied aid, policy-makers and the public should evaluate if donating food from national stocks, whether from small-scale family farmers or from large-scale agribusiness - is a desirable way to establish a reliable and efficient international humanitarian food policy in the context of a true South-South Cooperation.

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