

ARTICLE

Environmental Foreign Policy on Stage: Between Discourse and Reality in Lula's Third Term

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President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's aim to turn Brazil into a global environmental leader has faced three different challenges: conceptual, economic, and political-institutional tensions. In this article, we discuss and analyze how the concept of climate justice, the old tension between development and environmental protection, and the relationship with the Congress and social movements have been reconfigured in Lula's third term in office. We discuss these tensions in light of Brazil's environmental history and of the perception of important actors in the socio-environmental arena. Lastly, we address ways to overcome these three tensions by further empowering democratic institutions and practices.

Keywords: Environment; foreign policy; climate justice; extractivism; Brazilian Congress.

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The environment and, in particular, the protection of the Amazon are the main focus of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's discourse regarding his administration's current foreign policy. This became clear at COP 27 when he stated: "There is no climate security for the world without a protected Amazon" (REUTERS, 2022).

As Marina Silva, who has played a key role, in historic reductions in deforestation rates in the Amazon, in previous administrations of the Workers' Party (PT), was once again appointed to head the Ministry of the Environment, the idea that Brazil would become an environmental leader have initially gained traction¹. So far, however, this has not been the case. This article looks into the obstacles facing Lula's environmental foreign policy. To this end, exploratory interviews were conducted in Brasília, the headquarters of the three branches of Brazil's federal government to understand how government representatives, NGOs, and social movements see the strengths and weaknesses of Brazil's environmental public policies, who the important actors are, how climate justice is defined, and what needs to be done to produce more effective results.

While all interviewees unanimously agreed that there has been a positive change in the Executive branch's position after the election of Lula in 2022 when compared to Jair Bolsonaro's dangerous stance on the environment and Indigenous rights (RACHED et al., 2022; RACHED and VITALE, 2023), they also mentioned major problems preventing the implementation of Lula's plans for the environment. The first issue refers to pre-existing tensions between environmental protection and economic growth, as they argued that the government has to overcome its developmental mindset, based on the exploitation of natural resources and the implementation of infrastructure projects. The second problem, points to Congress, as the most divisive actor in environmental matters due to its increasingly conservative makeup of big landowners and agribusiness representatives. Finally, the third point refers to the presence of social movements as governmental actors, which leads to tensions between autonomy and co-optation.

¹During Lula's first two terms in office (2003-10), the Brazilian government strengthened the country's environmental protection system. NEPSTAD et al. (2014) discuss this endeavour success.

From a theoretical and methodological point of view, we draw from certain underlying tenets about foreign policy. The main premise is that no single actor alone can dictate the contents of a foreign policy. Between foreign policy formulation and implementation, several actors must interact to produce the final result. Therefore, in examining Lula's current environmental foreign policy, we do not treat foreign policy as solely the domain of the President or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, despite them being historically and constitutionally mandated to do so², but as the composite of different national and international actors' behaviors.

An intelligible foreign policy analysis requires asking 'who' the traditional foreign policy makers are as well as who the actors capable of interfering in decision-making processes are. It is also necessary to examine the 'characteristics' of the object of the foreign policy pursued. In our case, the object involves the environment, which has a national and transnational component. In addition, it is an area highly permeable to civil society demands due to the collective value attached to the environment³.

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the Brazilian government's current environmental foreign policy. It identifies and analyzes the main tensions that were (re)configured in the Lula administration based on his socio-environmental foreign policy and the perception of important actors in the area. The paper is structured in three parts. Section 01 addresses the environmental situation in the current administration according to a brief historical context. Section 02 critically discusses different socio-environmental tensions based on internal and external conflicts with the government. In section 03, these tensions are analyzed in light of central actors' views on the socio-environmental agenda. Through semi-structured interviews, we sought to identify how the discourse on the centrality of an environmental policy, its conflicts, battles, and challenges have been perceived. Finally, we address ways to overcome these social-environmental tensions.

²The Executive branch is the major actor responsible for foreign policy making (articles 21 and 84 of the 1988 Constitution of Brazil).

³On foreign policy as public policy, see MILANI and PINHEIRO, 2017 and SANCHEZ et. al, 2006. On foreign policy as a complex interaction between domestic and international politics, see ROSENAU, 1968.

Brazilian environmental foreign policy: the future trapped in the past?

One of the myths about the formation of Brazil is that Brazil was 'the country of the future', a giant that would one day wake up to play a leading role that this future would hold. Whether in history or the arts, politics, or culture, there are several inferences about this unfulfilled capacity. From the verses of the national anthem ('a giant by nature, your future mirrors this greatness') to the book by Stefan Zweig (*Brazil, Land of the Future*, 1941). From the construction of Brasilia to the Tropicalia movement. From the nationalist propaganda of the military government to the country's democratic transition, the feeling of latency of Brazilian potential has always permeated the national imagination.

Brazil holds a very unique position in the Latin American context: it is the only Portuguese-speaking country and the largest country on the continent and, in the verses by Chico Buarque, it "will eventually fulfil its ideal and become an immense Portugal"⁴ (1973). Regarding its environmental foreign policy, its history includes hosting the 1992 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, a landmark in environmental policy making and the birthplace of the three conventions that still coordinate global environmental governance today.

In 1992, the country's political situation was almost the opposite of the current one: after the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, the most participatory and progressive constitution in the country's history, an extreme-right president was elected, defeating Lula in his first presidential bid. But social movements and organized civil society, as well as left-wing, center-left, and even center parties were strong enough to successfully impeach and remove President Fernando Collor de Melo from office in the following year. It was a context where a democratic center in Congress and society pointed to a certain consensus in tune with international principles of socio-environmental governance, expressed in the then recently created conventions and Agenda 21.

The fight for a democratic transition, the return to a multiparty system, the 1987-88 constituent process, the first direct presidential election in 1989, the Rio de Janeiro Conference, and Collor's ousting repositioned Brazil in the global scenario. Not surprisingly, the first Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1995-98) was

⁴Music Fado Tropical, by Chico Buarque and Ruy Guerra.

marked by efforts to ‘renew the country’s credentials’ at the international level regarding socio-environmental and human rights matters. The country signed and ratified treaties and protocols that were pending ratification since the times of the previous dictatorial regime. In a new post-socialist and ‘globalized’ order, Brazilian delegations at environmental conferences started to include different civil society representatives, from NGOs to social movements, Indigenous peoples, and the academic sector, as the country started to present itself to the world in a more participatory and plural way. In the 1990s, the decade of UN Conferences, Brazil actually became a social and cultural power as it eventually occupied and expressed itself at local, national, and international contexts.

In the 2000s, during the first two Lula administrations (2003-2007 and 2007-2011), such a trend grew stronger, as Lula, by continuing Cardoso’s foreign policy, intensified Brazil’s international insertion through diversification (VIGEVANI and CEPALUNI, 2007). Aiming for a ‘proud and active’ foreign policy, this occurred both through participation in existing international organizations and in new and diverse multilateral spaces, such as IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa Forum), G20, and BRICS (a group of major emerging economies). In different spaces, especially on agendas with significant expertise from civil society, such as the environment, the presence of civil society was striking, plural, and welcomed by the Brazilian delegation.

This inclusion, however, did not mean there were no conflicts or tensions — diverse and contradictory views on the meaning and scope of ‘sustainable development’ were a major matter of contention. Conflicts over projects such as the ‘Proálcool’ Program, dedicated to foster the Brazilian ethanol fuel industry, or the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam project were present at international stages, exposing different views within the government, and between the government and civil society, Indigenous peoples, and traditional peoples. At the height of tensions between developmentalism and sustainability, the Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva, left the government and the Workers’ Party in 2008. Reconciliation between Silva and the PT would only happen in 2022, as a broad coalition was formed that year to defeat the far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro in the presidential election.

From 2010 onwards, after the election of Dilma Rousseff, developmental views gained strength in the government and socio-environmental tensions soared in the

country. Agribusiness expanded its political clout as more of its representatives got elected to the Brazilian Congress, flexing their political muscle by advocating for looser gun control in the name of rural security. Conservative religious sectors have also gained ground, pushing an agenda of setbacks in alignment with the so-called 'BBB' caucus (Bullet, Beef, and Bible, a reference to three powerful conservative groups in the Brazilian Congress, including law and order hardliners, agribusiness representatives, and religious leaders, mainly from Evangelical Christian sectors). The 2014 political crisis, the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, the Michel Temer administration (2016-2019), and the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 have established a climate of political polarization in the country, marked by the rise and consolidation of the extreme right, aligned with the global situation led by Trumpism since 2016. Amid this new situation, the defense of socio-environmental rights and the fight against the climate crisis and the defense of the multilateral system and the post-war international world order have lost ground, effectively becoming the biggest enemies of radical far-right actors. Marked by a strong reactionary spirit, the forces of this new right are nationalists and climate deniers, rejecting the importance of global governance, science, and a grammar of human and environmental rights. Nothing has exposed this polarization as much as the COVID-19 pandemic — in fact, Brazil's environmental policy during the pandemic and under the Bolsonaro administration has dramatically deteriorated. Sad milestones achieved by this administration included an unprecedented increase in the number of wildfires in different regions and biomes across the country; huge budget slashes that severely impacted environmental agencies; an international halt to donations to the Amazon Fund; and reduced ambitions for the Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement. Meanwhile, Ricardo Salles, Bolsonaro's Minister of the Environment, was infamously caught on camera during a cabinet meeting conspiring to weaken environmental protections while the public was busy worrying about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump's defeat in 2020, followed by Bolsonaro's in 2022, opened an opportunity to reclaim democracy, weaken polarization, find a path toward climate justice, and advance a rights implementation agenda. At the same time, global environmental and climate conditions are now much more challenging than they were in the early 2000s, when Lula was serving his first and second term in office. 2023 was

the warmest year on record, and the recent tragic Rio Grande do Sul floods prove that extreme weather events are the new normal. Unlike the situation at the beginning of the century, finding the way to ‘sustainable development’, whether it be through increased sustainability or development, is no longer feasible; rather, we must confront climate change as an emergency that calls for swift, coordinated state action. . The crisis has reached an unprecedented new level and this is where it is necessary to understand the dynamics of a socio-environmental foreign policy and the meaning and scope of climate justice in Brazil.

The socio-environmental agenda is back on the table as a clear backdrop to where we are going or should be going. During his 2022 presidential campaign, Lula highlighted that the environment and the climate were central issues for his government. He formalized this pledge at COP 27 in Egypt and offered to host COP 30 in Belém, Pará, a city in the Brazilian Amazon. He appointed Marina Silva, the undisputed leader of the environmental movement in Brazil, once again as his Minister of the Environment, and started to promote bioeconomy as a driver of the country’s reindustrialization. He created the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples to elevate Indigenous issues to the first level of government attention and appointed the first Indigenous woman to head the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI). Two years into his administration, however, tensions and conflicts over the real urgency and centrality of this discourse have re-emerged.

Lula’s current environmental foreign policy

At COP 27, Lula exposed the features of his foreign policy, which should be “based on dialogue and multilateralism” (G1, 2022). Differently from Bolsonaro, who rejected the global liberal order and ultimately became a pariah, Lula is hailed for his charisma and political acumen abroad. In his first year in office, he enchanted the international community by declaring “Brazil is back” (THE GUARDIAN, 2022). In practical terms, Lula has implemented his vision of dialogue and multilateralism by demanding global governance reforms and engaging with international ‘outcasts’, such as Cuba and Venezuela.

More often than not, however, he has attracted criticism. He has enraged many when he defended Maduro and said that accusations that Venezuela is a dictatorship

are part of a “narrative” (G1, 2023). He has caused a storm after comparing Israel’s war in Gaza to the Holocaust (GREGORY, 2024).

Lula’s environmental foreign policy does not follow the same pattern as other areas. As we will demonstrate, the weaknesses of Lula’s environmental/climate foreign policy are not the result of thoughtless statements or skewed alliances, but the product of a conservative Congress and the Workers’ Party’s developmental mindset (RACHED and VITALE, 2023).

In 2023, the government revamped the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm), which now aims at achieving zero deforestation by 2030. Created in 2004, the PPCDAm is lauded for promoting an unprecedented reduction in deforestation rates in the Amazon. Its ingenuity lies in understanding the drivers of deforestation in the region and its flexibility to adapt to new challenges over time. It was designed in successive steps, which have embraced actions such as creating new protected areas (Indigenous territories and conservation units) and strengthening illegal deforestation monitoring (JACKSON, 2015). Despite the new challenges the Amazon Region faces, deforestation alerts have dropped compared to 2022 (INPE, 2024).

In 2024, the government also updated and increased the ambition of its nationally determined contribution (NDC) before the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The new document has updated emission reduction goals from 59% to 67% by 2035, compared to 2005 levels (BRAZIL, 2024).

Despite these concrete gains in the environmental arena, there is some hesitation when investigating three different tensions. The first tension is ‘conceptual’: what is the government’s current discourse on climate justice and what should this discourse be like to tackle the reality of the climate emergency? The second tension is ‘economic’. How to promote the country’s growth without resorting to aggressive extractivism? The third tension is ‘political-institutional’ and involves the Executive branch’s relationship with the National Congress and with social movements. We will unpack these three tensions below.

The conceptual tension: climate justice x common but differentiated responsibilities

The climate justice discourse is omnipresent in contemporary law and politics. Representatives of states, social movements, and political theorists have been invoking the term to explain how the climate emergency lens has changed the demands made in the name of justice. On different occasions, the essence of the concept might differ.

The contrast between different actors' speeches illuminates such heterogeneous use of the concept. When Sonia Guajajara, Brazil's first-ever minister for Indigenous peoples, states that it is "time to indigenize politics and reforest minds" (GUAJAJARA, 2022). When the American academic Eric Posner (2013) suspects that "you can have climate justice or a climate treaty, not both" (POSNER, 2013); or when the Peregum Black Reference Institute advocates that "there is no climate justice without racial justice" (PEREGUM, 2023) they give a small sample of this diversity and its convergences. Knowing who used the term and where it was used (international, regional, or local arenas) impacts the content and scope of the concept.

The methodological impossibility of a single approach to understanding the term would require us to trace a genealogy of the concept in three dimensions: the international, the sociological, and the normative⁵. In this article, however, we focus only on the international dimension as we are discussing foreign policy, but we are well aware of the importance of the other two dimensions. The sociological dimension encompasses demands presented by groups disproportionately impacted by climate change. The normative dimension can inform how social movements convey their demands for justice and how this dimension is itself affected by the realities of social demands⁶.

In the international dimension, since 1992, the 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR), a foundational principle of the climate change regime that was formalized in the UNFCCC, have fulfilled the role of assigning responsibilities for

⁵This methodological premise is widely used by Skinner: "When we trace the genealogy of a concept, we uncover the different ways in which it may have been used in earlier times. We thereby equip ourselves with a means of reflecting critically on how it is currently understood" (SKINNER, 2010, p. 26).

⁶Schlosberg (2007) explained the circularity and mutual dependency between the sociological and theoretical dimensions.

carbon dioxide emissions. Such a principle requires developed countries to lead the response to the climate problem due to their historical responsibility and is considered a 'proxy' for climate justice in the international arena.

Lula maintains that this principle remains valid in a world in which inequalities between states and within states are visible and have become more pronounced. During the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, he said:

It is very hard to combat climate change while so many developing countries are still dealing with hunger, poverty, and other forms of violence. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is still relevant.

Those largely responsible for the carbon emissions that have caused the climate crisis were those who carried out the Industrial Revolution and fed a predatory colonial extractivism.

They owe a historic debt to planet Earth and humanity (PLANALTO, 2023b).

At the UN General Assembly, Lula employed the same rhetoric:

Rich countries grew based on a model that led to high rates of climate-damaging emissions. The climate emergency makes it urgent to correct the course and implement what has already been agreed upon. It is for no other reason that we speak of common, but differentiated, responsibilities. It is vulnerable populations in the Global South who are most affected by the losses and damages caused by climate change. The richest 10% of the world's population are responsible for almost half of all carbon released into the atmosphere. We, the developing countries, do not want to repeat this model (PLANALTO, 2023a).

Lula's decision to avoid outsourcing responsibility to the Global South seems justified at first glance, albeit somewhat outdated. The CBDR principle has generated resentment between developed and developing countries. The United States did not sign the Kyoto Protocol, the first agreement drafted to control greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, because China, as a developing country, would not have to make any commitment⁷. This principle has also failed to prevent the increase in global

⁷Echoing the US Senate's previous rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, President George W. Bush then said: "I oppose the Kyoto Protocol because it exempts 80 percent of the world, including major population centers such as China and India, from compliance, and would cause serious harm to the US economy. The Senate's vote, 95-0, shows that there is a clear consensus that the Kyoto Protocol is an unfair and ineffective means of addressing global climate change concerns" (WHITE HOUSE, 2001).

temperature by 1.4°C so far and does not differentiate between countries within the developing group.

The most important thing for our discussion is that prioritizing only a North-South cost distribution no longer seems sustainable. Brazil is the seventh largest GHG emitter⁸ and the world is on the verge of meeting its most ambitious climate target — a global temperature increase of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the limit above which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expects more catastrophic events to occur.

Such withdrawal from the more ‘controversial’ expression, i.e., climate justice, reinforces the perception that the concept only thrives at the social movement level, which we were able to verify in our interviews (Section 03). However, formulating a more democratic foreign policy that is better suited to the current climate crisis requires claiming the historical responsibility of the North in addition to the responsibility of the ruling classes in Brazil.

The economic tension: after Belo Monte, oil exploration in the Amazon

The government has demonstrated a lack of consistency in resolving the binary mentality of the past, which leans towards the incompatibility between economic growth and sustainable development. The previous left-wing administrations in Brazil (Lula, 2003-2011, and Rousseff, 2011-2016) relied on ‘extractivism’ as the main form of economic growth. Eduardo Gudynas (2012) coined the expression ‘neoextractivism’ to explain how progressive governments in Latin America have championed the fight against poverty but, in a somewhat contradictory way, have intensified the model of economic development based on the exploitation and export of natural resources (GUDYNAS, 2012, 2009).

Such contradiction is the essence of the concept of ‘neoextractivism’, according to Gudynas (2012, 2009). On the one hand, leftist governments extract natural resources to finance social programs and to obtain legitimacy; on the other, these practices worsen social-environmental problems and perpetuate the subordination of South American countries as mere suppliers of commodities for the global economy

⁸According to a WRI interactive chart that shows the world’s top 10 emitters. Available at <<https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters>>. Accessed on 16 July, 2024.

(GUDYNAS, 2009). The consequences are dire for these extractive enclaves: a cycle of denial of territorial rights for Indigenous and Amazon peoples, violence, and expansion of infrastructure projects to connect the extracted commodities to global markets. Once again, Gudynas, in 2009, predicted the wounds that would be corroding Brazil today.

Extractive enclaves generate tensions and contradictions. In some cases, governments assign exploration and exploitation areas that ignore pre-existing territories recognized by Indigenous peoples or peasant communities. In other cases, these enclaves mean the opening of remote areas or the advancement of the agricultural frontier, and along with it, the entry of poachers, illegal logging of the forest, drug trafficking, or smuggling, for which security conditions deteriorate and violence increases. At the same time, extractive enclaves require connectivity networks that allow the entry of inputs and equipment, and the exit of exportable products, which in turn triggers other impacts (GUDYNAS, 2009, p. 221).

In 2023, Brazil's contradictions became apparent as IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) received criticism after rejecting a request filed by Petrobras (the state-owned oil and gas company) to implement oil operations in an ecologically sensitive area near the mouth of the Amazon River. IBAMA is a federal agency linked to the Ministry of the Environment and is responsible for carrying out actions relating to environmental licensing, the use of natural resources, and environmental monitoring and control⁹. It is the technical arm of the Ministry of the Environment.

IBAMA denied Petrobras' application to receive an oil drilling license in what would mean expanding areas of operations in the Amazon arguing that it could be seen as a "free pass for the uncertain" (IBAMA, 2023, p. 20). The emergency plan Petrobras provided for the event of an oil spill incident, the environmental agency argued, was full of "logistical challenges" (IBAMA, 2023, p. 15) and did not include appropriate measures to allow communication with Indigenous communities and their representative entities. Finally, IBAMA ensured that its technical mission prevented any form of economic consideration in its report:

⁹Law Nº 7,735 from February 1989.

While certain social groups may consider, even with legitimate arguments, that the possible economic benefits of the enterprise could justify loosening guidelines to respond to the deficiencies of the project, it is not up to IBAMA to prioritize this bias in its analysis, as this would contradict the mission and values of the agency¹⁰ (IBAMA, 2023, p. 19).

Following IBAMA's denial, Marina Silva was summoned to speak before the House of Representatives. Where she explained that the Ministry of Environment would not make a political intervention in IBAMA: "I will repeat over and over again: IBAMA neither facilitates nor hinders anything, and the Ministry of the Environment respects, from a technical point of view, duly instructed procedures based on good public management" (SILVA, 2023).

To further demonstrate the contradictions found within the Lula administration, the Minister of Mines and Energy, Alexandre Silveira, recently expressed his eagerness to explore oil "until Brazil achieves the same level of Human Development Index as industrialized countries" (SILVEIRA, 2024). At COP 28, Silveira also announced that Brazil plans to become more closely aligned with OPEC, the world's biggest oil cartel.

As the first part of this article summarized, the three decades that followed the democratic transition to the so-called New Republic in Brazil were marked by profound contradictions in Brazilian society. The 1988 Brazilian Constitution advanced fundamental rights, social policies, and active citizenship, but the material conditions provided by the economic model have limited the implementation of these achievements. The adoption of neoliberalism by center-left forces (originally social democrats) and the later adoption of developmentalism by the left itself has seemed to have led the country into a backward movement in terms of productive and social diversity.

In the Brazilian case, the choice for neoliberalism was associated with a shift back toward the primary sector of the economy, based on a strong commitment to agribusiness and the extractive industry. The country's remaining industries progressively lost the relevance they had between the 1930s and 1980s, which led to a significant concentration and emergence of several oligopolistic markets, from

¹⁰For an excellent detailed account of IBAMA's report, see Diogo Ives et al. (2024). A transição energética em disputa no Estado brasileiro: coalizões político-burocráticas e a exploração de petróleo na Foz do Amazonas.

agribusiness to the banking sector, with the country losing much of its industrial, economic, and social diversity. During the first and second Lula administrations and the Dilma Rousseff administration, the country maintained its focus on the primary sector of the economy, although through a different framework, much more driven and expanded by the state and public enterprises. In both cases, either, under a more private or a more public umbrella, the economic paradigm was concentrated in the primary sector, with agribusiness and exportation at the center. These historical choices have consequences to this day. In socio-environmental terms, the most relevant result is the association of development with agribusiness and extractive industries, with few contributions in terms of technology and innovation.

Indeed, this neoextractivist vision was further promoted after Lula's first election. Internal disputes were solved when Marina Silva, representing a socio-environmental sector that was more aligned with current needs and, therefore, was more ambitious and not committed to short-term political and economic gains, left the government and the Workers' Party in 2008. After that, major and highly controversial megaprojects gained strength by ignoring principles dear to environmental action, such as the principles of precaution and prevention. These projects included the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam, the transfer of the São Francisco River, deepwater oil projects off the south and southeast coast of Brazil drilling more than 7,000 meters below sea level (Pre-Salt layer), the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America), and PAC (Growth Acceleration Program).

All of these projects were implemented based on the assumption that they were necessary for the country's strategic development, despite their inherent environmental risks. Particularly in the Amazon, the IIRSA project, initially devised in 1998, was resumed and intensified under Lula and Rousseff. While this was publicly justified as a means to foster South American integration, it was mainly intended to build infrastructure for commodity exportation to Asia. The building of hydroelectric facilities (Santo Antonio, Jirau, and Belo Monte) and large roads, as well as mining operations, oil and gas projects, have had huge impacts on Indigenous peoples and their lands.

These were, the negative consequences of policymaking without social participation, a narrow style of policymaking that misrepresents issues and weakens

public debate. It also goes against the tradition of the Workers' Party, which achieved great local gains by constructing a participatory system during the 1990s. ILO Convention 169 was disregarded when it came to approving dam megaprojects in the Amazon — while some public hearings were held, other decisions were made behind closed doors. This tightening of policies on social and environmental issues and the growing gap between the Executive branch and NGOs with long-standing work in socio-environmental advocacy were not, however, new trends and could already be observed in 2012, during Rio+20.

While Conference organizers created an institutional mechanism for dialogue with civil society, most social actors did not recognize it as a proper channel to express their demands and chose to take part exclusively in the People's Summit. Ironically, two years later, the government issued a decree strengthening the country's national participatory democracy system¹¹. Although it was an important step toward strengthening participatory institutions, the actual social-environmental policies adopted afterwards (and the megaprojects carried out later, such as hosting the World Cup and the Olympic Games) took the exact opposite route. In a nutshell, contradictions and hesitations could be seen in different areas within the Workers' Party, not just regarding social-environmental policies, but also social participation procedures.

A lot had to happen — the rise of the far right, the crisis within the Workers' Party after Dilma Rousseff was ousted, and the imprisonment of Lula himself — before social-environmental issues gained relevance again under Lula and for Marina Silva to once again take on a prominent role in the government, in his third term. However, to what extent? And until when? In 2024, Lula's ambiguous and contradictory recent speeches on environmental issues — the pinnacle of which was perhaps appointing Magda Chambriard as CEO of Petrobras, a woman who was advocating for oil operations in the Amazon precisely during Rio Grande do Sul worst environmental crisis — risk leading the country to tensions similar to what happened in 2008. On the one hand, some ministries are pushing forward sustainable projects, recognizing and making commitments to overcome the climate emergency (Environment/Economy). On the other hand, other ministries are

¹¹Decree N° 8,243/2014, which was very detailed, was completely revoked in 2019 by Bolsonaro. In 31 January 2023, the government under Lula's third term issued another decree, N° 11,407, restoring calls for a social participatory system.

working for short-term results, being almost 'denialists' regarding environmental and climate issues (Energy/ Agriculture)¹².

The political-institutional tension: the Executive Branch x the National Congress

Lula's narrow presidential victory in 2022 (he won by a 1.8-percentage margin) and, at the same time, the increasing presence of right-wing parties at the National Congress meant that Lula has had to negotiate deals with the same politicians once aligned with Bolsonaro. The strength the National Congress built up during the Bolsonaro administration became apparent in a speech by the Speaker of the House of Representatives: "The government needs to adapt to the new relationship between the branches [of government]" (FEITOZA, 2023). Amid a context in which Lula has been struggling to muster congressional support, environmental legislation is considered "collateral damage" (LOCKWOOD, 2018, p. 714), of the dividing lines of the ideological debate, which means that Congress only considers cross-partisan economic and tax issues¹³.

'Observatório do Clima', a civil-society coalition of organizations focused on climate change policy, denounces that there are currently 28 bills, dubbed the 'Destruction Package', being drafted at the Brazilian Congress, which harm environmental protection or put Indigenous rights at risk. These bills include authorizing mining operations in conservation units (5,822/19), regularizing the illegal occupation of public lands (510/21 and 2,633/20), and loosening or completely eliminating licensing processes currently required for several polluting activities (2,159/21) (OBSERVATÓRIO DO CLIMA, 2024).

A better illustration of how difficult the conversation between the Executive branch and the Congress can get in socio-environmental matters relates to the implementation of Indigenous rights, particularly the 1988 constitutional right of

¹²Our argument does not aim to deny the right to development (see the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development), recognized by international law, but to highlight the need to update this right in the face of the current climate crisis.

¹³Jaques Wagner's post on X, formerly Twitter, "The Tax Reform is a non-partisan initiative, it is not coming from the right or left, it is not from the government or the opposition, but an objective that we have pursued for more than 40 years. All tax models and systems in Brazil so far were previously developed under authoritarian regimes, without the participation of the Congress". Available at <<https://twitter.com/jaqueswagner/status/1725505378023100516> >

Indigenous peoples to the land they have ‘traditionally occupied’¹⁴. Since the introduction of such a right, there have been multiple attempts to reduce its scope. One of the most dangerous efforts in this sense is known as the ‘time marker’ theory (‘marco temporal’ in Portuguese). This theory, created by the Supreme Court¹⁵, conditions the demarcation of Indigenous lands to the physical presence of Indigenous communities in their territories at the time of the promulgation of the Brazilian Constitution — October 5th, 1988. This unduly restricts the extent of the protection given by the 1988 Constitution to Indigenous peoples and ignores the fact that many of them have been forced to abandon their territories because of loggers and miners (RACHED and VITALE, 2023b).

In September 2023, Brazil’s Supreme Court rejected the ‘time marker’ theory, ruling that it is unconstitutional, and recognized the rights of Indigenous peoples as provided for by the lawmakers who drafted the Constitution¹⁶. In the same week, however, as a response to the Supreme Court’s decision, the Senate approved a bill validating the ‘time marker’ theory. Finally, in October 2023, Lula vetoed several parts of the bill, but the Congress revoked his veto in December 2023.

Law N^o 14.701/23 now establishes October 5th, 1988 as a threshold date for the demarcation of Indigenous lands and establishes that Indigenous communities do not need to be consulted in advance in cases of ‘strategic interventions’ on their lands, which includes the installation of military facilities and the exploration of energy alternatives and other natural resources¹⁷.

How can we reconcile this specific legislation with 82% of the Brazilian population supporting the demarcation of Indigenous lands?¹⁸ Or with the fact that Congress recently celebrated records of public approval rating at a mere 22%, its highest approval rate recorded since 2003, compared to 23% of respondents who disapprove it and 53% who rate its work as average? (GIELLOW, 2024). What would be

¹⁴Art. 231 of the 1988 Federal Constitution.

¹⁵See the 2009 ruling by Brazil’s Supreme Court on the demarcation of the Indigenous land ‘Raposa Serra do Sol’.

¹⁶See the ruling in Portuguese: available at <<https://portal.stf.jus.br/processos/detalhe.asp?incidente=5109720>>.

¹⁷Available at https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/lei/L14701.htm.

¹⁸Violência e democracia: Panorama Brasileiro Pré-Eleições 2022. Available at <https://concertacaoamazonia.com.br/estudos/violencia-e-democracia-panorama-brasileiro-pre-eleicoes-2022/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCOjw1q00BhDwARIsANfknv9dogKjC5kUZGLa1H1rm4Ou9Cwy36Caw1ydP31zKaIqIqk8WV6ftqoaAIQpEALw_wcB>.

the reaction of young people between the ages of 16 and 25, in 10 different countries, including Brazil, who claim they suffer from climate anxiety and feel betrayed by government responses to climate change? (HICKMAN et. al, 2021).

The disconnect between citizens and their representatives is referred to as a crisis of representation. If left unchecked, it will be fertile ground for triggering a greater decline of democracy and the rollback of hard-won rights. It is a vicious cycle that would take us further from the path to a possible solution to the climate crisis.

Protagonism of Indigenous peoples in government positions

A novelty of Lula's third term was the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, led by an Indigenous woman, Sonia Guajajara. The appointment of Joenia Wapichana, another prominent Indigenous leader, to head FUNAI was also a milestone. With both innovations, Lula brought Indigenous leaders into top government positions, a type of partnership with social movements, particularly the Indigenous movement. As the Workers' Party was founded, among others, by members of social movements at the end of the military dictatorship, it was expected in some way that grassroots forces actively participate in the government and organize efforts to coordinate and operate public policies. While this happened with other social movements during Lula's first and second terms, this is the first time Indigenous people are included in this arena.

The Indigenous movement has gained strength in recent decades in Brazil. Domestic and international factors contributed to this (MACHADO et al., 2023; VITALE and NAGAMINE, 2022). As environmental and climate crises have become deeper, so has Indigenous resistance. Indigenous peoples are the guardians of the forests and their survival depends on the protection of forests. At the same time, Indigenous women play a significant role as they are those most affected by climate emergencies and the bearers of their ancestral culture. In the past two decades, with the growth of extractive industries associated with neoliberal policies, it is possible to assert that the Indigenous women's movement has gained momentum both resisting autocratic measures and advocating for environmental and climate justice in the international activist field, making it one of the most developed social movement in the country.

The Brazilian Indigenous movement's history has been marked by strategic approaches including engagement with institutions and promotion of broader spaces for political participation. Internationally, by organizing and mobilizing at major environmental conventions, building caucuses and alliances and fighting for recognition as a special constituency, Indigenous peoples have managed to create a Permanent Forum at the UN (2002) and witnessed the creation of a Declaration on their rights, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). As political actors, the movement is guided by a pragmatic sense. In Lula's third term, this strategy has led them to have a position within the government. Being part of the government is a clear step forward for Indigenous mobilization, but, at the same time, it is a risky activity, as co-optation can weaken the movement's growing resistance.

The interviews: most important findings

This section explores how social and political actors perceive the points of tensions identified in the previous section to build a more complete and complex picture of the Brazilian environmental foreign policy, whether reinforcing, rejecting, or pondering on the description and analysis made so far. The interviews were carried out in Brasilia in October 2023. Prominent actors were selected for their roles and history within the socio-environmental agenda. In total, nine actors from the government, international organizations, social movements, and NGOs were interviewed through semi-structured questions. Because what matters for the argument of this paper methodologically is from 'where' each actor speaks — that is, which sector she/he represents —, all names were anonymized.

The conceptual tension: climate justice x common but differentiated responsibilities

The interviews revealed that government representatives avoid using the expression 'climate justice', preferring the traditional 'common but differentiated responsibilities' principle¹⁹. As discussed above, this principle has guided the relationship between developed and developing countries since its

¹⁹For an overview of the history and a critical account of such principle, see Simon Caney (2005).

inception at the UNFCCC, in 1992, and leans towards assigning extra responsibilities to developed countries due to their historical contributions to climate change.

A special advisor to President Lula and top climate change expert explains why such a principle has a stronger call for Lula. According to this interviewee, Brazil still needs leeway to develop economically and the principle allows Brazil to combine sustainability and development.

The vision that the president adopts on climate issues is not a purely decarbonization vision. Because this is the pressure we suffer. [Developed countries] want Brazil to decarbonize. They don't want to talk about Sustainable Development Goals. They want us to do climate mitigation. And, in the president's view, decarbonization is necessary and possible, as long as it generates jobs, income, and well-being for the population.

It is a different footprint — it is not just a mitigation footprint, it is a footprint that requires adaptation. When we talk about climate, we talk about climate and development. [This is why] we defend the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Because firstly it is a question of justice between countries — the countries that have historically contributed the most are the countries that have to pay the most for mitigation (...) (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023a).

Our interviews have shown how social movements are more comfortable with the term climate justice. For an expert with a traditional Brazilian nongovernmental organization focused on Indigenous rights, it is only natural for the government to use less controversial concepts. The expert says: “Because government bodies know that there is a clear limit, that the possibilities are limited. Either they state that justice is being done or they recognize that there is inequality. Both things are difficult” (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023b).

According to this interviewee, the concept of climate justice addresses what is most important: that there are vulnerable groups who suffer the most from the effects of the climate emergency, and that the concept is more acceptable to different audiences than similar expressions, such as oppression or environmental racism:

I see the concept of climate justice as an adequate concept so that we can get into what matters, which is discussing who suffers most and how to deal with those who are most vulnerable. It is a concept that fits into everyone's debate because there are people who, if you treat it from the perspective of environmental racism or in other ways (... including)

oppression or exploitation, they might turn their backs on you (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023b).

An expert with the UN Women Brazil, an international organization, goes further and pinpoints that the origin of the term is directly influenced by social movements: “The concept of climate justice comes from social movements. It arises from social movements’ demands” (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023c). It is only after this moment, the interviewee explains, that local demands may connect to the international agenda:

We have tried to look at local demands, to understand, for example, the Indigenous territorial management policy — PNGATI20 —, how this has to do with Indigenous peoples, and how it has to do with an important role played by Indigenous women in their territories.

So this is very local and materializes in a very localized way, with the need to work in each [Indigenous] community. (...) These things stay on the radar; that will lead to policies at the micro level and then it connects with an international agenda of other groups that are working on territorial issues and the environment (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023c).

The economic tension: after Belo Monte, oil operations in the Amazon

This nongovernmental expert mentioned the tension between economic development and sustainable development within the Workers’ Party. The interviewee anticipated that the only way out of this puzzle is through social mobilization and social control to continue to pressure the government.

Lula’s party has a group that is more development-driven and opposed to Marina Silva herself, both due to the environmental issue and the fact that she left the Workers’ Party. These are sectors of the Workers’ Party that are there, at the top, in leadership roles. So now, Lula’s public commitments are going to start taking their toll and it is inevitable, you know? The biggest symbol of this was when he arrived in Belen for the Amazon Summit and a journalist asked him about oil exploration in the mouth of the Amazon River. He said, ‘I didn’t come here to talk about that.’ I laughed and thought, what is he thinking? That he rules the agenda? Then the president of Colombia said, “No, we’re going to talk about that,” and put him in a tight spot, actually creating a diplomatic impasse. So what I see now is that this is going to be a very heavy internal dispute within the government (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023d).

²⁰Decree N^o 7,747/2012 establishes the National Policy for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Lands — PNGATI.

The political-institutional tension: The Executive Branch x the National Congress

Representatives of social movements have addressed the need to support the new Lula administration from a healthy, critical distance. An interviewee from a climate NGO network illustrates this point:

What is this fine line between supporting and collaborating with a government that we believe in, that we have endorsed in the elections, and that we are in tune with, and when should we start to criticize it?

The atmosphere is collaborative. It is about collaboration, because we continue to have a very conservative Congress and Senate, and we know that there are parts of this government, especially those run by women — I'm talking about ministers like Marina Silva —, that can't go wrong. We cannot afford to make mistakes (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023b).

Social movements understand the dangers and struggles that the Executive branch faces today with the current Congress, which has one of the most conservative compositions in its history. As discussed previously, Congress's anti-environmental and anti-Indigenous rights bills challenge the Executive branch's capacity to implement Lula's initial pledges to protect the Amazon and its Indigenous peoples. The environmental NGO interviewee worries that, because Lula does not have enough support in the Legislative branch, environmental and Indigenous matters are the first ones to be compromised. "We are seeing, for example, that the entire socio-environmental agenda is being addressed in the negotiations to build government alliances in a wrong way. Indigenous and environmental issues were the first to be dismissed (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023a).

From the government representatives' perspective, however, the implementation of the climate agenda requires a close conversation with the National Congress and its agribusiness caucus. The special advisor to the government that we interviewed highlighted the importance of keeping open discussion channels and eventually bringing the agribusiness sector closer to the government's side of the argument:

How do you work with Congress when there are so many resistant actors? The idea [is to] draw attention to the opportunities. So, for example, agribusiness, right? Agriculture is currently the main driver of economic growth in Brazil. You have to work with agribusiness so that sectors that are more resistant

within that group realize that more productive agriculture doesn't necessarily mean deforestation.

[The agribusiness sector won't talk about climate change], but, if you sit down with them and say, 'how was the harvest this year?' 'Oh, there was a drought? And how is the drought affecting you?' And then you use that to lead the conversation, you can use that to talk about climate change, because it is a concrete thing, it is something that is affecting the harvest.

Anyway, I think there is a cross-sectoral process of convincing. It is not just the government. But it is a challenge. We have to look for the actors and we have to sit down with them, we have to talk to them. The president always says, you have to talk not with who you agree with, but with who you disagree with the most. He always quotes Nelson Mandela and he reminds us of his own experience as a union negotiator. He says this in interviews, "You have to sit down and talk to anyone you disagree with (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023b).

Protagonism of Indigenous peoples in government positions: what are the dangers for the social movement?

The most promising findings from the interviews was to understand the complexities involved in the transition of key figures from the Indigenous social movement into Lula's government. In January 2023, Sonia Guajajara was sworn in as Brazil's first-ever minister for Indigenous peoples, and Joenia Wapichana was the first woman president of FUNAI, the official Indigenous agency of the Brazilian state.

According to the environmental NGO expert, the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples was not fully thought through. The interviewee says:

So I think [Lula] has a lot of goodwill, but [the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples] is still symbolic. It was not a demand from Indigenous people — it was Lula who came up with it. In my opinion, it was a petty response to the demands that were being placed on him, because he announced that he would create the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples at the time when [Sonia Guajajara] was giving a speech and he says, "I'm going to create a ministry for you." For me, it is the worst answer... I'm going to give you a small room, but I'm not going to make space for you everywhere. It was not a demand from Indigenous people. Now, Indigenous people are also very diplomatic and are very good at politics. They won't say no (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023b).

A member of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples has a different take on the importance of having his or her own ministry:

This is one of the differences — you are there, at the highest level of the Brazilian public administration, and you can deal directly with people who make political decisions, so our role here is to strengthen FUNAI. We are here

working, especially and dedicatedly with FUNAI, which continues to be the Indigenous agency and enforcer of the Indigenous policy. The ministry plays a role in overseeing FUNAI at the cabinet level and planning and developing public policies for Indigenous peoples, but the execution [of these policies] is the responsibility of FUNAI (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023e).

Regarding the challenge that the social movement faces to maintain the original agenda of Indigenous peoples while in government, our interviewee at the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples reveals the intricacies of this new position:

So, I usually say that I'm very used to being on the other side of the counter, taking a more activist position, as part of the Indigenous movement, always pursuing, demanding (...) through Indigenous advocacy, social mobilization, with women, the 'headdress caucus,'²¹ all these actions.

Now [inside the government], we have to do it, whether here in the Executive branch or the Legislative branch, with the 'headdress caucus.' Of course, each one, within their competencies, within the instruments that you have available. So we have strongly felt — not only here, but concerning a good part of our Indigenous public servants — the need for us to turn this key, you know? Now we are the ones who have to do it, we are the ones who have to implement the measures, and we are the ones who have to look for solutions. It's not just observing and reporting, but dealing with the state machinery, within the administrative bureaucracies to carry out that concrete action.

So, here at the Ministry, we have to welcome everyone. And the incredible thing is, (...) the first visits we received here at the ministry were from people with more conservative agendas. (...)

[We have received] congressmen linked to agribusiness; lawyers linked to agribusiness and Indigenous leaders also linked to agriculture, you know? (...) Each one presented their demand and their agenda in a public, transparent way.

From [Indigenous] territories, the question they raise is, 'Why is the minister receiving so-and-so?' (...) Because now we are the government, and we have to welcome everyone and listen to everyone. So, perhaps this is also another difference that I have realized in these first months into government (ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW, 2023e).

Cracks began to be felt in the sense of harmony among Indigenous social movements. Writer Daniel Munduruku recently criticized the way the government was handling the Yanomami crisis — a crisis in the Yanomami Indigenous Land that worsened during Bolsonaro's term in office, but which came to light in 2023, when

²¹In Portuguese, 'bancada do cocar', which means the political representation of Indigenous peoples in Congress.

national and international television showed footage of Yanomami children and adults with emaciated and sick bodies²².

Daniel Munduruku wrote on X, formerly Twitter: “The data on the health of the Yanomami leaves no doubt: creating a facade ministry just to defuse the crisis means replicating the old ‘bread and circuses’ politics. Lots of parties, lots of international travel, lots of speeches, lots of the same, and nothing of what is necessary. What a shame!”(MUNDURUKU, 2024).

Final remarks: overcoming tensions by enhancing democracy?

The previous sections sought to highlight three points of tension that challenge the implementation of Lula’s current foreign policy discourse (2023 ongoing). The three identified tensions (conceptual, economic, and political-institutional) are complementary and interdependent and are reflected both, in the observation and interpretation of official speeches and in the perception of different actors we interviewed.

In addition to these three points of tension, we may observe a fourth concern, which is mentioned in the interviews and official speeches, but has not received sufficient attention. It is the dimension of citizenship and participatory politics, which should, as provided for in the Brazilian Constitution, inform and guide public policies and the foreign policy itself. Brazil, however, faces an unequivocal democratic deficit, as citizen participation in political-institutional life is lacking and restricted to the vote, a scenario that heightens existing tensions and increases the political cost of the country’s contradictory and ambiguous socio-environmental foreign policy.

The official discourse is that there is an ongoing debate to improve democracy and participation, and some initiatives have been carried out to enable more participatory spaces. In August 2023, the Secretariat of the Presidential Administration held conversations with civil society over the weekend leading up to the Belem

²²In reality, a large part of the problem known as the Yanomami crisis is due to the inaction of the military, who have the necessary structure remove invaders from Indigenous lands. This hostile position is a remnant of the military regime (1964-1985), which promoted an idea of progress through the occupation of the Amazon and the integration of its Indigenous population.

Summit. However, many of the guidelines and deliberations discussed during that weekend were not incorporated into the final draft produced after these meetings. There have been other initiatives: Lula has proposed the creation of an Amazon Parliament to legitimate public policies for the region, by strengthening the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) because of its democratic implications (VITALE and RACHED, 2023). The government has even launched a platform to guarantee popular participation in the preparations for devising a Climate Plan.

These actions are in tune with the 'old' history of the Workers' Party and the strong commitment it had to participatory democracy during its first experiences running local administrations in the 1990s. The Participatory Budgeting experience implemented in more than a hundred Brazilian cities over the years — of which Porto Alegre is the best-known case study —, took the Workers' Party to a high position in democratic innovation, maintaining legitimacy and accountability together. Political science and sociology literature produced in the 1990s and the early 2000s, before the first Lula's term in office, paid enormous attention to participatory practices such as Participatory Budgeting, Management Councils on Social Policies, 'Ouvidorias', and so on. Although the Brazilian Constitution sets forth means of participatory democracy in the Legislative branch (plebiscites, referendums, and popular initiatives) it was at the Executive level that participatory mechanisms advanced, enhancing democracy in public policies. Brazil has even been known as a 'participatory laboratory' and these new practices have been exported to many cities abroad.

Many studies regarding this 'participatory lab' have associated these new practices with the Habermasian theoretical framework of public sphere, discussing to what extent participatory experiences have enhanced the public sphere and political processes, improving democracy through a strong deliberative process (AVRITZER, 2000; FEDOZZI, 2000; VITALE, 2006). In a complex and post-socialist context, the strengthening of a procedural democracy conceived in a linguistic paradigm was, for Habermas (2023), the exit of a neoliberal and anti-welfare new order. During Lula's first term, this live participatory culture was somehow maintained as he launched several thematic national conferences, replicating the UN model developed in the

1990s at the national level. However, the internal disputes and conflicts concerning deeper developmental models led to a political crisis, which can be illustrated by the departure of Marina Silva from the government. After 2008, especially during the terms of Dilma Rousseff, Michel Temer, and Jair Bolsonaro, the participatory spirit was abandoned.

The decline in public participation beyond the vote was accompanied by the decline of the traditional public sphere, where traditional media outlets consisting of newspapers, news television channels, and magazines began to lose ground with the boom of social media, where fake news often circulates. This new phenomenon led to a structural change in the public sphere, which became a mix of semi-private or semi-public spheres customized according to the interests, tastes, ideologies, and expectations of each specific public (HABERMAS, 2023). New media, controlled by algorithms and three or four large companies, paint a much more difficult scenario for strengthening democracy, as people live in parallel realities. There is no longer a common life based on shared facts, a common basis from which we could interpret, analyze, and change our opinions by listening to our fellow humans, and make decisions rationally, keeping the best argument in mind. In a world where everyone is both an editor and viewer, the space for criticism and reflection has almost disappeared.

Despite this new structural scenario and ideological differences, there is only one planet Earth and one common destiny for humanity. The socio-environmental issue and the significant increase in natural disasters caused by climate imbalance accentuate this common denominator. The way toward a solution continues to be through the capacity for organization, mobilization, and resistance of the social groups most affected by the resulting climate injustices, and through the capacity of states, especially large 'developing' players, to propose and negotiate innovative solutions. To this end, it is crucial to open the foreign policy to social resistance groups. The resumption of a National Foreign Policy Council (CONPEB), an idea debated in previous Workers' Party governments, could contribute to greater social participation in the Brazilian foreign policy. Providing more legitimacy and accountability to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at a time of multilateral projection at the presidential level of the

G20 and BRICS and as the country is preparing to host COP30 (SCHUTTE and RODRIGUES, 2024).

The institutionalization of a permanent body to listen to and consult with members of civil society, especially those most vulnerable to the climate issue, could be a relevant democratic counterpoint. Considering that more established sectors in larger groups in Congress, such as the BBB (Bullet, Beef, and Bible) caucus, and in consolidated state structures, such as the military, have constant access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the corridors and coffee meetings with of the three branches of Brazil's federal government. A diverse, plural, and participatory council could reconnect the Workers' Party with its history to strengthen democracy through institutional channels of social participation. Far from being the solution to the three tensions mentioned in this article, it would at least be the construction of a public space for awareness and debate from where another world is possible

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