

Introduction

EQUIVOCAL ENGAGEMENT: KISSINGER, SILVEIRA, AND THE POLITICS OF U.S.-BRAZIL RELATIONS (1969-1983)

'Brazil is the key to the future', confided Richard Nixon. It was the winter of 1971, and the president was briefing the British prime minister on the prospects for the cold war in Latin America. Nixon's assertion was an honest revelation of his hopes, but it concealed an important piece of information; for as he spoke, a team at the White House was grappling with the full implications of the 'key' analogy, and a major Brazil-policy review was under way.

This thesis provides an in-depth study of U.S.-Brazil engagement as it emerged, evolved, and collapsed over fifteen years that roughly coincide with superpower *détente* and the peak of Brazilian international activism (1969-1983). Resorting to multi-archival sources, the analysis offers a treatment of the range of international, domestic, and foreign policy factors, both in the United States and in Brazil, that contributed to their attempt to engage and to their equivocal achievement. The hope is that this story might shed light on the conceptual and historical dimensions of other engagement contexts between a major power and an activist peripheral state.

Here 'engagement' means a conscious choice to elevate a bilateral relationship to higher levels of governmental interaction. It is characterised by sustained consultation, some degree of policy coordination, mutual commitment to overcoming areas of disagreement, and the introduction of a new normative lexicon to embed the relationship in a sense of purpose.¹ In our case, however, the experiment cannot be seen as an American attempt to turn Brazil into a typical client state nor does it reflect a Brazilian hope to pursue a policy of alliance with the United States.

In this sense the expression 'alignment' does not capture the character or the range of motivations underpinning the relationship under study here. Whenever 'alignment' had occurred in the past, American motives had involved either the expectation that Brazil help on specific managerial tasks or that a sympathetic ruling regime remain in power. For the Brazilians, 'alignment' traditionally had served to

¹ On the difficulties of conceptualising 'engagement' see Evan Resnick, 'Defining Engagement', *Journal of International Affairs*, 54/2 (2001): 551-567. For a recent definition and application different from the one used here, see Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Domestic Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 36.

obtain side payments (such as material assistance and trade concessions), support when the balance of influence in South America was detrimental to Brazil, and greater security against perceived domestic threats.

By contrast, engagement as it occurred during *détente* entailed a different set of motivations. The stronger side willingly accommodated the demands of the weaker even if her retribution was vague, future-oriented, and essentially intangible. The weaker side had an eye on concessions, but it also tried to constrain the power of the stronger, while also leveraging American influence in the global system for its own purposes (some of which involved direct negotiations with Washington but others of which attended wider concerns about enhancing Brazilian prestige abroad and being accorded higher status in international society).

To be sure, there were initial hopes in Washington that Brazil might make the difficult business of sustaining regional hegemony easier. But after it was clear that Brasília was unwilling and unable to coordinate policies for managing regional order, the White House nonetheless pushed for approximation. Also, the Brazilians began by conceiving proximity as a source of concessions and support for the ruling regime. But soon they realised that they could exploit the American overture to enhance their own prestige internationally, to bind the U.S. to new procedures, and to blunt its power on a range of specific negotiations. Following distinct and largely disconnected rationales, the two countries coalesced around the principle that their relationship needed serious revamping, and that the context of *détente* warranted the endeavour.

Two individuals fathered and guided the initiative. Henry A. Kissinger, the American national security advisor and secretary of state who first proposed it, and Antônio F.A. da Silveira, the Brazilian foreign minister who made it operational. That they were the leaders in charge mattered for several reasons. Their personal vision and judgement made an unlikely project viable. Their personal rapport shaped its aspirations, and their bureaucratic skills helped set the boundaries for what engagement could accomplish in practice. Together, they set out to overcome the veto of domestic actors and rally support for the project. In the end, their voluntarism and personal identification with the policy programme irrevocably sealed its fate, for the moment they left office the initiative disappeared from the bilateral menu.

This is not to say that personal rapport caused engagement or that it was a necessary condition for it to occur. Rather, the point developed in this thesis is that the Kissinger-Silveira association made a questionable proposition more likely to find its

way into actual policy; and that, when crises struck, it facilitated solutions that emphasised more rather than less engagement. As we will see, the room for manoeuvre that these two figures enjoyed was distinctly narrow, both domestically and internationally. Key factors in the rise and fall of American-Brazilian engagement resulted from forces at the level of the international system, domestic and bureaucratic politics, bilateral interaction and feedback. But these dynamics were filtered by leaders' perceptions and shaped by their political and bureaucratic skills.

That is why the analysis presented here addresses the story of Brazilian-American ties in this historical period from the standpoint of a personal relationship. Departing from diplomatic history, though, the research approach is analytically-oriented international history. It seeks to blend storytelling with a conscious attempt to consider the various conceptual implications that follow from the narrative.

This introductory chapter begins by identifying the puzzle that animates the dissertation. It then condenses the story of U.S.-Brazil engagement from boom to bust to give the reader an overview of the whole narrative. Subsequently, an appraisal of existing literatures situates the thesis in the context of previous works by historians and political scientists. The next section then details the research approach and the primary sources that make up the study, followed by important caveats that specify what the work shall not attempt to achieve. The chapter finally closes with a plan of the thesis.

The Puzzle

U.S.-Brazil engagement as it occurred in the 1970s involved a conscious attempt on both sides to elevate the status and broaden the remit of the relationship. Each side had its own rationale and set of interests for acting in such way, but their motives, different as they were, coalesced around the principle that it was in their mutual advantage to do certain things together in the field of diplomacy (from consultation to modest policy-coordination); that their recurrent friction over concrete interest such as trade, nuclear power and law of the sea ought to be transcended in the name of broader long-term interests; that the range of topics for discussion should encompass more than purely bilateral affairs; and that the protocol, language, and indeed the institutions binding the two should reflect Brazil's activism in the world. As highlighted above, convergence in no way precluded conflict and negotiation.

Engagement was and remains a deviation from the historical pattern of Brazilian-American relations. Although there had been instances of close cooperation

before, and even occasions when leaders on both sides saw each other as key regional allies, neither the notion nor the practice of engagement is to be found anywhere else in their past or in subsequent years. Whenever proximity had occurred in the past – as in the early 1900s or in the aftermath of the 1964 Brazilian military coup – it was characterised by alignment. As flagged out before, however, alignment and engagement is not one and the same thing. In this sense, the events surrounding the Kissinger and Silveira tenures need to be seen as an historical aberration. Let us situate them in their historical context.

On the American side of the equation, the traditional perception of Brazil had been one of benign indifference. For all of Brazil's material attributes and relative weight in South America, a status quo and inward-looking country sitting in a non-core area of the world could hardly command much attention. As a result, general protestations of friendship had traditionally coexisted with low levels of commitment. This said, there had been short-lived but significant historical moments when Brazil seemed to matter. These exceptional occurrences reflected American considerations of the regional balance of power (e.g. the view that Brazil could help curb the intermittent shoots of Argentine anti-Americanism), geo-strategic calculations (during the Second World War), and power-ideological concerns (as when the Kennedy White House feared a Brazilian nationalist, left-ward turn). But the perception never developed in Washington on a sustained basis that Brazil could actively help in promoting the U.S.-led global order. It is no wonder, then, that when Henry Kissinger ordered a major policy review for Brazil as he entered office in 1969, officials at the State Department should have raised their eyebrows with scepticism and even incredulity.

Turning to the Brazilian side, traditional policy to the U.S. had rested upon a narrow policy menu: this was a contentious domestic debate over whether to align with Washington (called indigenously *automatic alignment*) or pursue a policy of distancing (variously called *neutralism* and *independence*). The former retained the upper hand for the first half of the twentieth century (although it reappeared various times into the 1960s), and held that bandwaggoning with the hegemon was the most effective strategy to secure Brazilian modernisation, development, and political power and prestige internationally.² Its straightforward contention was that benefits would follow from

² For its various historical instances, Bradford Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio Branco and Brazilian-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Clodoaldo Bueno, *Política externa da primeira república, 1902-1918* (São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 2003); Eugênio V. Garcia, *Entre América e*

adhering, promoting, and facilitating American designs, not from resisting them. In opposition stood those who, since the 1940s, had argued that the costs of alignment far exceeded the benefits accruing from it.³ Washington, it was claimed, lacked the interest in recognising and committing to Brazilian aspirations in ways that would sustain a beneficial relationship. The recommendation followed that it was in Brazilian interest to avoid too close an involvement with the Americans. And as the 1950s came to a close, the notion grew inside Brazil that hegemonic power was in and of itself *one* (if not *the* major) obstacle on the way of internal modernisation and external projection. It was this view that eventually prevailed. As a result, the search for greater ‘independence’ was largely defined in terms of detachment from the United States. In the range of policy options, proximity of any kind with the hegemon progressively disappeared as a legitimate choice; instead, the dominant orientation became resisting new commitments and avoiding entanglements. Unsurprisingly then, when Kissinger first gestured his engagement proposals to the Brazilians, their response was evasive.

The basic puzzle that follows is why and how, in such context, U.S.-Brazil engagement ever became a feasible proposition; and what range of conditions shaped its trajectory over time. The problem can be usefully decomposed into smaller parts:

Questions about origin. Why did Washington try to engage a far weaker polity, and why do so in 1969? What did rapprochement involve and what was its conceptual base? Who were the major forces opposing engagement on each side, and how did leaders overcome them? How did American-Brazilian relations at the moment of engagement compare to U.S. ties with other ‘key’ countries across the developing world and in Latin America? Why was Brazil non-responsive at first but only a few years later it sought to revive the proposal?

Europa: a política externa brasileira na década de 1920 (Brasília: UnB, 2006); Joseph Smith, *Unequal Giants: Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Brazil, 1889-1930* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991); Gerson Moura, *Autonomia na dependência: a política externa brasileira de 1935 a 1942* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1980); Gerson Moura, *Sucessos e ilusões: relações internacionais do Brasil durante e após a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1991); Ricardo Seitenfus, *O Brasil vai à guerra: o processo do envolvimento brasileiro na Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Barueri: Editora Manole, 2003).

³ For historical instances, Stanley Hilton, *O Brasil e a crise internacional (1930-1945)* (Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo, 1987); Frank MacCann, *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937-1945* (1977); Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, eds., *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944-48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Mônica Hirst, *O pragmatismo impossível: a política externa do segundo governo Vargas (1951-1954)* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 1990); Paulo F. Vizentini, *Relações internacionais e desenvolvimento: o nacionalismo e a Política Externa Independente, 1951-1964* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1995); Alexandra de Mello e Silva, *A política externa de JK: a Operação Pan-Americana* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 1992) and Antônio J. Barbosa, ‘O Parlamento e a Política Externa Brasileira (1961-1967)’, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Brasília, 2000.

Questions about process and implementation. What domestic and international factors and hurdles fostered or inhibited engagement? How did engagement fit within the broader picture of Western hemisphere politics and the global cold war? What areas of policy did the new approach seek to tackle and which ones did it avoid? And what were its methods of delivery?

Questions about impact and outcomes. What was the record of engagement, and what value did it add to the partners, if any? Did it have any unexpected effects, and did it create any practical and conceptual problems that did not exist before? How did it cope with changes in great-power politics, events in the Western hemisphere, and the transformations occurring inside Brazil and the United States? And why did it begin to falter so soon after inception?

The Narrative in a Nutshell

The narrative presented in the following chapters plays out from inception to end in a relatively well-defined, short stretch of time. The story begins with the appointment of Kissinger as national security advisor to the Nixon administration in 1969 and ends with the closure of Silveira's tenure not as Foreign Minister (1979), but as Brazilian ambassador to Washington (1983). Within this we can usefully distinguish three core periods: engagement's embryonic *set up* (1969-74); the interval when it gained full force and it displayed all its inherent tensions, requiring a great deal of *management* (1974-77); and the eventual deranging that led to mutual *estrangement* (1977-83). There are of course limits to such periodisations, not the least because relevant characteristics of each category often reappear under a paler guise in the other two. But the division is useful because it captures a complex storyline in a compact chain of events.

Setting up Rapprochement (1969-1974). Very early on, the Nixon administration launched a major policy review for Brazil. The choice reflected a concern with the perceived decline of U.S. influence in Latin America, and with the detrimental impact that losing regional control may have upon the global balance of power. According to American assessments, regional decline followed from the global strategic rivalry with the Soviet Union only in part; crucial in the equation were social, economic, and diplomatic changes in the hemisphere itself, with the rise of economic nationalism, indigenous forms of foreign-policy activism, and a growing role in Latin America for booming Europe and Japan. Within this, engaging Brazil – then seen as a rising but largely benign centre of regional power – was thought to help reverse that trend. The

new orientation also had to do with novel ideas circulating in the White House about the need to devolve power and responsibility to a group of regional influential states that, roughly at the same time, was thought to include Iran in the Middle East and later on Indonesia, Zaire, South Africa, and possibly Turkey.

But the White House's Brazil approach was riddled with problems. These were partly conceptual: What ultimate objective should guide policy, what tools would it take to achieve it, and at what cost? Since there had been no dedicated policy for Brazil for generations (although Brazilian alignment between 1964 and 1967 had helped Washington focus its attention on that country), and no one outside President Nixon's entourage seemed to think that one was particularly needed, answering these questions proved to be both contentious and time-consuming. With the State Department in opposition, whatever movement towards a fully-fledged policy there was at this stage came after much debate and some arm-twisting in the bureaucracy.

Part of the problem hindering the emergence of a new policy, however, lay in Brazil itself. The Brazilian reception of U.S. overtures reflected an internal split: whereas President (General) Garrastazu Medici was keen to contribute to the 'new arrangement' (provided it fitted his perception of what it should achieve), his leading foreign ministry officials opposed it from the start. These key advisors feared that closer ties would lead only to friction with the United States; keeping hegemonic power at arms-length was safer. Furthermore, if American priorities for rapprochement focused on containing Communism and the nationalist Left in South America, Brazilian diplomats aimed at obtaining economic and diplomatic concessions from a powerful partner, not at becoming entangled in regional politics. In the end, Brazil's behaviour reflected the divide between the president and the bureaucracy, and rather than flatly rejecting Washington's proposal, Brasília simply slowed it down, picking selectively from the basket of incentives on offer and generally muddling through. The Brazilian president shared information with Washington about a range of covert activities in South America, while diplomats generally pressed for handouts and resisted American pressure on specifics. The Americans, in turn, contributed with staunch rhetorical support for Medici, resuming aid flows suspended by the Johnson administration, recognising Brazil's rising status, and stepping up weapon sales. Overall, rapprochement remained vague and informal, managed through backchannels, and with Nixon and Medici very much at the helm.

Managing Engagement (1974-1977). A change of government in Brasília in 1974 created the domestic conditions for a re-launch of the initiative, this time under a new guise. Incoming Foreign Minister Silveira convinced newly-inaugurated President (General) Ernesto Geisel that they should see American overtures for engagement as a window of opportunity for Brazilian power, prestige, and status in international society. When Silveira offered Kissinger a counter-proposal to widen and institutionalise engagement, the now appointed U.S. Secretary of State was eager to explore the idea further.

For three consecutive years the two embarked upon an ambitious programme of engagement. Encompassing new protocols and agreements, numerous cables, extensive travel, and often uneasy negotiations, the U.S.-Brazil relationship underwent serious remodelling. The bilateral agenda expanded beyond its traditional confines, now including revolutionary Cuba and independent Angola, revolutionary Portugal, nuclear proliferation, emerging norms protecting human rights, and the situation in the Middle East. Following foreign-ministry preferences, Brazil now resisted any discussion of South American affairs, avoided any commitments to help fight Communism, while emphasising instead its quest for economic modernisation and prestige and status in international relations. To a large extent, Kissinger acquiesced with this reorientation, showing that the policy did not follow directly from an American design, but from interactions where the preferences (and indeed pressures) of the weaker side to a relevant degree shaped the choices of the stronger.

But the convergence was undoubtedly uneasy. Silveira studied and revised his moves with obsession, measuring each gesture and word for adequacy and precision, while having always to obtain Geisel's approval and sort out the various obstacles he faced at home. In turn, Kissinger showed a disposition to hear and accommodate, but only moved decisively when crises struck. In this sense, the recurrence of mini-crises was crucial for the evolution of American-Brazilian engagement. They pointed clearly to the limits to what the policy could achieve, prompting Kissinger and Silveira to devise formalised arrangements to sustain cooperation beyond their tenures. This is an example of how close interaction between two states can in itself sometimes change the environment within which these two states relate. It is therefore no wonder that on both sides the notion became firmly rooted that continuing clashes of interests, values, and vision were there to stay, be it due to mutual distrust, massive asymmetry of power, fluctuating U.S. commitment and arrogance, or Brazilian hard-nosed nationalism.

Estrangement (1977-1983). As American public opinion and Congress grew increasingly hostile to alliances with dictatorial regimes, the hopes began to dissipate that a U.S.-Brazil partnership might someday endure. Jimmy Carter had spoken against engagement with Brazil since the presidential campaign; now in office, his foreign policy team reinterpreted the ‘key country’ orientation as a tool to affect changes in the foreign policy and domestic composition of the target-states. Carter singled out Brazil to test some of his ideas about non-proliferation and human-rights promotion: in Washington engagement now meant something quite different than what Kissinger had had in mind only a few years before. That Brazilian leaders saw this reorientation as a threat is best reflected in the decision to turn the institutions of engagement into a shield against American pressure, and in 1979 to appoint of Silveira as ambassador to Washington. The remit of the relationship with Brazil narrowed down dramatically due to bilateral friction but also as a result of the progressive deepening of the cold war at the expense of *détente*. As President Reagan took over with his programme of reasserting containment, the relationship became all the more deranged. And whatever room there had been for a policy of devolution, it came to a close, sealing the experiment’s end. With its demise, old patterns resurfaced once more: low-level friction, American indifference, Brazilian suspicion, and a gap that kept apart for a generation the two largest countries in the Western hemisphere.

Related Literatures

To date there are no systematic accounts of U.S.-Brazil engagement as it happened in the 1970s. There are, however, important historical literatures that bear upon the interpretation advanced here. The chapters that follow build on and seek to further expand knowledge in three specific areas: devolution and the global cold war, Brazil’s foreign-policy strategies since the mid-1960s, and the paucity of Brazilian-American engagement in the long term.

Devolution and the Global Cold War

Recent times have seen a significant reassessment of the international history of the cold war.⁴ The revival results partly from the opening of new archives around the world,

⁴ John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition:*

allowing scholars to tell more balanced stories from a global perspective. But to some degree the revisionist drive may be attributed to our reassessment of past events under the light of current affairs: If the cold war produced a legitimate setting for global great-power interventions, and to this day these remain an integral part of world politics, how much of a turning point really were the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union? Was the cold war primarily about the competing ideologies of two superpowers or was it largely about the clash of a much wider set of ideas and visions of world order? It is within this set of concerns that returning to the days of Henry Kissinger can be a profitable experience.

As far as Kissinger goes, possibly no other twentieth-century diplomat has received as much attention from academe, the press, human-rights activists, and biographers. Recent works on his stewardship of U.S. foreign policy remain focused primarily on policies towards the Soviet Union, China, Japan, Europe, and Vietnam, with the story yet needing to be written about his policies in the Middle East, South East Asia, and Latin America. In the case of the latter, the absence of general works on the Nixon/Ford administrations, with the notable exception of the fall of Chile's Salvador Allende in 1973, contrasts starkly with the wealth of materials on the Kennedy/Johnson, Carter and Reagan periods (more on the literature concerning Chile below). This is to say that the non-core regions of the world still need to be brought on board our studies of the 1970s.⁵

American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994); Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Odd Arne Westad, ed., *The Fall of Détente: Soviet-American Relations during the Carter Years* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997); Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Andrew Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973-1996* (Boston: MIT Press, 1999); Richard K. Herrman and Richard Ned Lebow, *End of the Cold War: Interpretation, Causation, and the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Nina Tannenwald and William C. Wohlforth, eds, Ideas and the End of the Cold War, special issue of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 7, n. 2 (Spring 2005). Also insightful is a comparison of the first and last editions of John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* [1st ed 1981] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵ For recent assessments of U.S.-Soviet Union relations under Kissinger see books in previous footnote and Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* [1st ed 1985] (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994). For a recent interpretation of the China policy, see Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961-1974: From 'Red Menace' to 'Tacit Ally'* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For Europe, Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). On Japan, Walter LeFaber, *The Clash: A History of US-Japan Relations* (New York: Norton, 1997). For a recent assessment of Kissinger's overall performance, see Jussi M. Hanhimaki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For an updated

An important but still largely unexplored aspect of Kissinger's tenure with regard to the periphery of the international system is the notion of devolution: the White House's attempt to decentralise power and influence to selected regional states. The targets – or 'key countries' as they were called – were Brazil in Latin America, Iran in the Middle East, and Indonesia in the Far East, with Zaire, South Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan enjoying intermittent access to the club. Although several works refer to U.S. relations with these countries, as of writing none have been published that tell a story focused around the notion of devolution and that sit on the back of detailed archival research. This relative silence surely stems from the fact that sensitive archives have been opened only recently or not at all. But it might also follow from the ambiguous and uncertain character of the devolutionary drive itself. As we will see, devolution as presented here was an attempt at revitalising important relationships based on a fluctuating set of topical, ambiguous, and relatively uncoordinated policy initiatives.

The picture that emerges of devolution in this work therefore differs slightly from that either explicated or hinted at in the existing literature. Consider for instance the statement that:

American post-Vietnam foreign policy was premised upon the belief that the establishment of a new relationship with the United States's Communist great-power rivals would create the favourable political atmosphere so as to facilitate the orderly devolution of American power to incipient regional powers. The resulting stability along the periphery would, in turn, feed back into the central balance and thereby sustain the momentum of *détente* through the preservation of mutual trust. In this way, each component...would serve as the instrumentality for the achievement of the other.⁶

Indeed, devolution clearly needs to be seen as an American attempt to turn large regional states into the guardians of order in their respective neighbourhoods through a

comment on the specialised literature, Jussi M. Hanhimaki, "'Dr. Kissinger' or 'Mr. Henry'? Kissingerology, Thirty Years and Counting," *Diplomatic History* 27 (5) (2003): 637-676. Kissinger's own accounts include Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979); Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982); Henry A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999); Henry A. Kissinger, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003); Henry A. Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003). The best biography remains Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: a Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

⁶ Robert Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 54.

local ‘policeman’ policy.⁷ As it was conceived in Washington in the early days of the Nixon administration, this was an attempt to solve some of the problems embedded in rolling out containment around the globe. In this sense, the devolutionary policies of the Nixon administration showed striking continuity with the Kennedy years: in both cases decision-makers cared about minor developments in the Third World, sought primacy and preponderance, and were bent on fighting the cold war globally. In the 1970s the American leadership did this in spite of the rhetoric of retrenchment typical of the Nixon administration and in spite of the sophistication of channels for great-power concert that were characteristic of *détente*. In so doing the administration in Washington sought to win the support of local elites in their target states, where the global cold war had been internalised to the point of shaping much of the domestic political scene along international ideological divides.

But as we look closely at devolution, it is unquestionable that the endeavour was less of a well thought-out component of the grand architecture of *détente* than a set of trial-and-error probes marked by doubts on the part of those pursuing it – an uncertain process in which nothing was preordained. It is no surprise that the detailed case-work presented in this thesis suggests strongly that our understanding of devolution will change significantly in the coming years as future studies weigh the American devolutionary policies to Iran, Indonesia, Brazil (and possibly Zaire, South Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan) in comparative perspective. The implications that follow from suspending the view that devolution was a neat policy to deal with seemingly similar states are important, for we can now make sense of the many contradictions and inconsistencies that are so clearly integral to this element of the American cold war menu.

In so doing we can situate devolution in the context of the strategic interactions between the United States and the various target-states, rather than focus exclusively on American policy. For instance, we will see that Washington could not roll out its policies as it had originally intended when it came to Brazil. For all the asymmetry of power between the two partners, the project could not be imposed, and it only took off when Brazilian officials found a suitable reason to do it and a language to legitimise it. The two sides held very different ideas and visions of what their engagement should entail. Where the United States ran devolution with one eye on curbing the South

⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War...*, in particular pp. 194-202, but also references throughout the text, in particular those with regard to Iran and South Africa.

American Left and the other on preserving American influence on the ground, Brazil conditioned its acceptance to economic, technological, political, and diplomatic concessions that made it move up an imaginary ladder of power, status and prestige. It also conditioned the project to American formal commitments that emphasised respect for what Brazilian diplomats called ‘autonomy’. If Brazil saw *détente* as an oligarchic arrangement that militated against its political and economic emancipation, then, to take off, engagement had to be adapted to accommodate Brazil’s dominant concern with upwards mobility and reassurances in the face of a far more powerful partner.

As we will see, for Brazil to jump on board the engagement programme, a perceptual change had to occur in Brasília that could make such unusual course both legitimate and desirable. Leaders there needed a concept that made engagement a valid pursuit. The emergence in the 1960s of a conception of world order that was much broader than that of the early cold war made such shift possible. The perceptual turn took the guise of metaphor: according to its proponents since the early 1960, the country was a natural diplomatic ‘bridge’ between the U.S.-led West and the wider Third World. The corollary was that in order to fulfil its role the industrialised West ought to give Brazil significant concessions.

The vision, frail and intermittent as it was within Brazil itself, played a crucial role in the life of Brazilian-American engagement. Engagement occurred when key figures in Washington found the ‘bridge’ metaphor useful in the face of growing disruption coming from the South. Kissinger, as we will see, gave out un-reciprocated concessions on the basis that the more power and prestige Brazil acquired, the more useful it could be to American designs in the wider world. It is the set of inconsistencies inherent to that view, and the way they played out in the second half of the 1970s, that helps account for engagement’s short life.

Brazil’s Strategy of Activism and Ascent

In the 1960s Brazil underwent an economic expansion of great proportions. In the two following decades GDP *per capita* trebled, the volume of foreign trade doubled, and the population grew from 70 to 110 million. For all the stark inequality that growth only exacerbated, this was the produce of a major attempt at state-led modernisation. The transition was remarkable, from agricultural economy to heavy industries, high-tech innovation, and massive public works. A commodity exporter only two decades before,

the country was now on the way to become one of the ten largest economies in the world. But what was the impact of greater wealth at home on Brazil's activities abroad?

Domestic growth led to increased activism in the world. By and large, successive administrations since the 1950s sought to enlarge the scope of Brazilian ambitions and interests outside its borders. Although the broadening fell short of expectations, it was highly significant for a state that had been traditionally insulated and inward-looking. Brazil's foreign affairs in the 1980's were immensely more complex and sophisticated than they had been twenty years earlier. Somewhat surprisingly, a peripheral country had moved up the ladder of international stratification without recourse to military build-ups, warfare, or demonstrations of force.

This thesis situates Brazil's relationship with the United States in the context of its pathway to international power, influence and prestige. The purpose is to describe and account for Brazil's strategies to cope with American hegemony at the time that Brazilian activism abroad reached a historical peak. In so doing it takes advantage of and further expands the growing literature on foreign policy at this time and, in particular, on the tenure in office of General Geisel and his Foreign Minister Silveira.⁸

Parting ways with standard accounts, the current thesis shows that, from Brasília's perspective, improving working relations with Washington (rather than hiding and trying to escape hegemonic pulls) was the key to its wider strategy of activism and ascent. The attempt in no ways resembled that of alignment. On the contrary, it was

⁸ The foreign policies of Geisel are perhaps the most studied of all the Brazilian military administrations. Gino Costa, *Brazil's Foreign Policy towards her Neighbours during the Geisel Years*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1986; Maria R. S. de Lima, *The Political Economy of Brazilian Foreign Policy: Nuclear Policy, Trade and Itaipu*, unpublished PhD thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1986; Andrew Hurrell, *The Quest for Autonomy: The Evolution of Brazil's Role in the International System, 1964-1985*, unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1986; Letícia Pinheiro, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making under the Geisel Government: the President, the Military and the Foreign Ministry*, unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1994; Shiguenoli Miyamoto, *Do discurso triunfalista ao pragmatismo ecumênico (geopolítica e política externa no Brasil pós-64)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1995; Luis F. Ligiero, *Políticas semelhantes em momentos diferentes: exame e comparação entre a política externa independente (1961-1964) e o pragmatismo responsável (1974-1979)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2000; L. F. Ferreira, *A política latino americana do Governo Geisel*, unpublished thesis, PUC-Rio de Janeiro, 1993; Míriam Saraiva, 'A opção européia e o projeto Brasil Potência Emergente', *Contexto Internacional*, 11/1-6 (1990); Antônio C. Lessa, *Brasil, EUA e Europa Ocidental no contexto do nacional desenvolvimentismo: estratégias de diversificação de parcerias, 1974-1979*, unpublished thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 1994; Gelson Fonseca, *A legitimidade e outras questões internacionais* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1998); Sérgio F. Danese, *Diplomacia presidencial* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1999); Maria Regina Soares de Lima & Gerson Moura, 'A trajetória do pragmatismo – uma análise da política externa brasileira', *Dados*, 25/3 (1982): 349-363; Antônio C. Lessa, 'A diplomacia universalista do Brasil: a construção do sistema contemporâneo de relações bilaterais', *Revista Brasileira de Política Interacional*, 41 (special number, 1998): 29-41; and Matias Spektor, 'Origens e direção do Pragmatismo Ecumênico e Responsável (1974-1979)', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 47/2 (2004): 191-222.

premised on Brazil's ability to *both* manipulate Washington to accrue a range of positional goods (including prestige, status, political influence, leverage, concessions and markets for its exports) *and* resist American pressures on a range of specific topics. This understanding of what purposes engagement should serve was typically represented by Foreign Minister Silveira. To him more than anyone else, the fact that Brazil had chosen not to move up the ladder of international stratification by the force of arms, meant that autonomy would be achieved only as far as third parties recognised Brazil's special status in the world. And none such recognition mattered as much as that coming from the most powerful state of all. Engaging the United States, in his eyes, was not a strategy to follow the hegemon; but one that created room for manoeuvre to *avoid* following the hegemon while obtaining material and symbolic goods in the process.

That in the end his ambitions were only partly fulfilled does not detract from the fact that he tried to reorient Brazil's sense of how best to deal with American hegemony. In this sense, studying this particular period can help us reassess the lively domestic debates behind Brazil's strategies for ascent that were as inconclusive back then as they are today.

The U.S.-Brazil Relationship: An emerging rivalry?

'Why have the two largest countries in the Western hemisphere failed to sustain high-level cooperation in the long run?' Scholars have yet to confront this question systematically, but whenever the problem is tackled directly the standard answer is the thesis of the 'emerging rivalry'.⁹ The argument is that as Brazil began to urbanise and industrialise, relations deteriorated. The evidence base for the proposition is that increasingly since the 1950s, clashing interests have recurred in fields as varied as mineral exports and the repatriation of U.S.-firm surpluses, economic policy and nationalism, nuclear proliferation, international trade norms, North-South debates,

⁹ Luiz A. Moniz Bandeira has presented this thesis in *A rivalidade emergente* (1973) and its extended revision, *Relações Brasil-EUA no contexto da globalização*, 2 vols, (São Paulo: Senac, 1999). He has revived the argument in *As relações perigosas: Brasil-Estados Unidos de Collor a Lula, 1990-2004* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2004). His vision has informed two important historical accounts: Amado L. Cervo and Clodoaldo Bueno, *História da política exterior do Brasil*, revised edition (Brasília: UnB, 2002); and Paulo F. Vizentini, *A política externa do regime militar brasileiro* (Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 1998). Important traces of this approach are implicit in Mônica Hirst, *The United States and Brazil: a Long Road of Unmet Expectations* (New York: Routledge, 2005), and Antônio C. Lessa, 'A vertente perturbadora da política externa durante o governo Geisel: um estudo das relações Brasil-EUA', *Revista de Informação Legislativa*, 35/137 (1998): 69-81.

external debt negotiations, trade protection, intellectual property and regional integration.

There is a strong and a weaker version of the ‘emerging rivalry’ thesis. According to the former, American policy-makers have seen Brazil as an economic challenger or potential challenger, and have tried to either prevent or mould its economic rise. The milder version has it that economic development in the periphery carries with it an array of problems that lead inexorably to growing friction between developing polities and the established industrialised powers. Up to a point, the argument is bound up with theories of dependency: the accent is on centre-periphery dynamics and the uncertainty that associated development in the periphery generates for the global economic system.¹⁰

To be sure, the ‘emerging rivalry’ thesis has not been the only account of the relationship.¹¹ But it has produced the only attempts to date to interpret it over a very long span of time. Its tenets have influenced the ideas and beliefs of Brazilian policy-makers, and reappear prominently in the syllabi of academic courses on Brazilian foreign policy. Given the record of external domination in Latin America, perhaps it is only natural that the ‘emerging rivalry’ should be embraced as a compelling paradigm.

Yet, as we look back, it is easy to become bewitched into believing that *all* forces led quite inevitably to mutual estrangement and low-level friction. We quickly overlook that powerful elements were pushing hard in the opposite direction. Indeed, we forget how powerful were those voices at the time who heralded major

¹⁰ For two hugely influential statements focusing on or inspired by Brazil, Fernando H. Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) and Peter B. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). For an attempt to link dependency theory to US-Latin America relations explicitly, Mark J. Gasiorowski, ‘Dependency and Clientelism in Latin America’, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, v. 28, n. 3 (Autumn, 1986): 47-65.

¹¹ A sample of alternative perspectives would include Gerald K. Haines, *The Americanization of Brazil: a Study of U.S. Cold War Diplomacy in the Third World, 1945-1954* (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Books, 1989); W. Michael Weis, *Cold Warriors and Coups d’Etat, Brazilian-American Relations, 1945-1964* (University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Elizabeth A. Cobbs, *The Rich Neighbor Policy: Rockefeller and Kaiser in Brazil* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992); Jan K. Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); Philippe Parker, *Brazil and the Quiet Intervention, 1964* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Lincoln Gordon, ‘US-Brazilian Reprise’, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, vol. 32, n.2 (Summer, 1990): 165-178; Lincoln Gordon, *Brazil’s Second Chance: En Route toward the First World* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001); Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1990); Tullo Vigevani, *O contencioso Brasil x Estados Unidos da informática (Uma análise sobre a formulação da política exterior)* (São Paulo: Alfa-Omega/Edusp, 1995); Mônica Hirst org, *Brasil-Estados Unidos na transição democrática* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1985); select essays in Paulo R. de Almeida and Rubens Barbosa, orgs., *Brazil and the United States in a changing world* (São Paulo: Saraiva, 2005); and Andrew Hurrell, ‘The United States and Brazil: Comparative Reflections’, in Hirst, *The United States and Brazil*, pp. 73-108.

improvements in the conduct of bilateral business; their message, never dominant but surely influential, is now belittled. A re-examination of the historical record might now give us a more sober appreciation of the choices that were made, and an indication of causes and consequences that stands to close inspection.

Without assessing the merits of the ‘emerging rivalry’ proposition, I switch the mode of enquiry from the structural geo-economic forces framing the Brazilian response to U.S. power onto a different level of analysis. It is the political tensions confronting decision-makers at both ends – rather than the systemic economic constraints within which Brazil lived – that take the centre stage. I ask how external and domestic processes shaped the intentions of key figures in the two countries and how the political struggle between them played out. The accent is on leaders’ motivations and understandings, and their ability to conduct foreign policy accordingly – important aspects shaping U.S.-Brazil relations that the existing literature tends to obfuscate.

Research Approach

This study is concerned with advancing an analytically-oriented account of engagement that stands on detailed historical work. In so doing it embraces the view that scholarship in world politics only gains from blending concepts and evidence with the explicit purpose of expanding the former and improving the latter.¹²

Because no single ‘off the shelf’ model exists to account for the particular class of events that American-Brazilian ties exemplify in this period, the approach here is not one of illustrating or testing general theoretical arguments. Rather, its emphasis is on historical, inductive work that leads to the development of contextualised concepts and arguments about ‘devolution’ (to characterise Kissinger’s willingness to build closer relations with weaker but key polities), ‘activism and ascent’ (to depict Brazilian power

¹² On the stimulating (and promising) revival of case-study research in international relations, Colin Elman and Miriam F. Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (Boston: MIT Press, 2001); Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, ‘From Old Thinking to New Thinking in Qualitative Research’, *International Security*, 26/4 (Spring, 2002): 93-111; and Andrew Bennett and Alexander George, *Case Studies and Theory Development* (Boston: MIT Press, 2005). Also, Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2004); and James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On the marriage between history and theory in cold-war studies, William C. Wohlforth, ‘A Certain idea of Science: How International Relations Theory Avoids Reviewing the Cold War’, in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 126-145.

strategies), and ‘engagement’ (to encapsulate the arrangement they eventually hammered out).

The underlying point is that the phenomena under study here are not unique, but commonly recur over time and across place, although with a great deal of variation. A cursory glance at the record of the past fifty years exposes several cases where similar dynamics were at play. Consider, for instance, recent developments in U.S. relations with countries as varied as Australia, Indonesia, India, and China. Likewise, if we go back in time, attempts at engagement can be found in Washington’s engagement with the Shah in Teheran, the leadership in Islamabad, or diplomats in Ottawa. In this sense, the dissertation seeks to craft a research approach that might be useful to think about other engagement contexts.

Thus, in order to understand the motivations behind American and Brazilian behaviour, I took seriously some of the propositions advanced by neoclassical realism¹³ and the relevant literature on middle powers.¹⁴ For hints on how to research partnerships among states, I plundered the wider body of policy evaluation.¹⁵ As problems arose of conceptual equivalency when handling the data, I found insight in existing works on concept development and techniques of periodisation typical of comparative-historical analysis.¹⁶

¹³ Gideon Rose, ‘Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy’, *World Politics*, 51/1 (1998): 144-172. To integrate external and domestic influences in the analysis of foreign policy, I benefited from Fareed Zakaria, ‘Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay’, *International Security*, 17/1 (Summer 1992): 117-198. For a discussion of positional goods, Randall L. Schweller, ‘Realism and the Present Great Power System: Growth and Positional Conflict over Scarce Resources’, in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Masanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 28-68. On the motivations behind rapid shifts in state behaviour, William C. Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State* [1589] (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956); Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (London: Penguin, 1979); Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Iver Neumann, *Regional Great Powers in International Politics* (London: St Martin’s Press, 1992); and Andrew Hurrell, ‘Some Reflections on the Role of Intermediate Powers in International Relations’, in *Paths to Power: Foreign Policy Strategies of Intermediate States*, Working Paper Series, Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, March 2000, 1-11.

¹⁵ In particular I benefited enormously from several conversations with Elliot Stern in the planning stages of this thesis, and from his ‘Evaluating Partnerships’, in Andrew Liebenthal, org., *Evaluation and Development: the Partnership Dimension* (London: Transaction, 2004), pp. 29-42.

¹⁶ David Collier and Robert Adcock, ‘Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2 (1999): 537-65; and David Collier and James Mahon, ‘Conceptual ‘Stretching’ Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis’, *American Political Science Review*, 87/4 (December 1993): 845-855; and Evan S. Lieberman, ‘Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 34/9 (November 2001): 1011-1035.

This work deploys some of the standard techniques for historical inference – ‘within case’ comparisons, cross-references, counterfactual thinking, and the assessment of alternative explanations. ‘Within case’ comparisons in this study involve the contrasting of the three consecutive periods specified above. These are before-after comparisons that seek to tease out some of the causal factors at play in the story. Thus, I analyse how successive policy makers interpreted the meaning of engagement, and contrast their distinctive political and bureaucratic skills and contexts with those of their predecessors and their successors. Where appropriate there are also cross-references to other dyads of great-power/middle-power, in particular with reference to U.S. relations with Iran at the same historical time. There is some contrasting with Mexico too, the one Latin American country that could have feasibly been the recipient of U.S. preferential attention instead of Brazil. Additionally, the study resorts to counterfactual thinking across chapters – ‘what alternative scenarios could have realistically developed?’¹⁷ Finally, whenever the account clashes with alternative explanations established in the literature, the difference is tackled explicitly.

This is therefore not an exhaustive account, but a partial one that seeks to spark off debate and open the door for further work. The thesis sits very much at the beginning, not the end of our appraisal of U.S.-Brazil relations in the 1970s.

Primary Sources

These are exciting times to study Brazilian-American relations in the 1970s. New materials have flooded specialised libraries in both countries, and on the two sides there have been heated legal battles over the handling and declassification of official documents pertaining to this historical period.¹⁸ In the United States, I researched the Nixon Presidential Materials Project at the National Archives in Washington DC, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor, and the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, all of which have moved relatively quickly in their declassification

¹⁷ Aaron Belkin and Philip Tetlock, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiment in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and Richard N. Lebow, ‘What’s so different about a counterfactual?’, *World Politics* 52 (July 2000): 550-585.

¹⁸ For the Brazilian side, ‘Brasil insiste em pacto com vizinhos para abrir arquivos’, *O Estado de São Paulo*, 12 February 2005. For the US side see Seymour Hersh, Nixon’s Last Coverup, *New Yorker*, 14 December 1992; Hack Hitt, Nixon’s Last Trump, *Harper’s*, August 1994; Stanley Kutler, Liberation of the Nixon Tapes, *Legal Times*, 6 May 1996; Letter to the editors, William Burr, ‘The Kissinger Papers’, *Foreign Affairs*, 46/9, 20 May 1999; Jeffrey Goldberg, ‘Sprucing Up Nixon’, *New Yorker*, 8 May 2006; ‘U.S. Reclassifies Many Documents in Secret’, *New York Times*, 21 February 2006; ‘CIA Withdraws 55,000 Pages from Open View’, *The Guardian*, 22 February 2006; Maarja Krusten, ‘Nara Reclassification Issues’, electronic message circulated via H-DIPLO, 4 May 2006.

process for material regarding Brazil. This said, there are important files which remain closed that may contain relevant information on both Brazil and the wider U.S. move towards devolution. I also made extensive use of the collection at the National Security Archives, which have been at the forefront of research on the Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy. *The Foreign Relations of the United States* series goes up to 1972 as of writing, with new volumes on the Nixon/Ford administrations planned for release soon (the exception is the material on Africa, with a dedicating volume going up to 1976). In addition I filed a dozen of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with the State Department and the CIA, only half of which were granted.

In 2003 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) released millions of pages of declassified documents for the period 1945-1981. Over one million pages are available for research in an electronic database accessible at the National Archives facility in College Park, Maryland, called CIA Records Search Tool (Crest), which I perused extensively for information pertaining to Brazil. More recently, the U.S. National Archives also opened the State Department's electronic databases for years 1973 and 1974, making hundreds of thousands of cables available online that do not necessarily figure in presidential libraries. Because this occurred as I was completing the draft of this dissertation (March 2006), I only researched the database with the purpose of finding evidence that warranted a significant re-writing of parts of the story, leaving aside many of the materials that would simply make the narrative more colourful; no groundbreaking additional materials were found.

In Brazil the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasília granted me access to its 'ostensive' and 'confidential' archival holdings (for years 1969-1977 only), but turned down my first application for clearance to consult 'secret' and 'ultra-secret' files and never replied to the second. For these I turned instead to the Azeredo da Silveira collection at *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* in Rio de Janeiro – a depository of his official and personal documents that is now entirely open for research. Since this archive only includes materials that reached Silveira's office, it captures the picture of events occurring at the top of the diplomatic hierarchy, with much of the nitty-gritty of daily diplomatic practice, as well as the debates that might have taken place at lower ranks, obscured. Also, because the decision has stalled within the Brazilian Executive branch over the wider declassification of materials on the last authoritarian period (1964-85), the evidentiary basis for the Brazilian side of the story is dominated by documents produced by Itamaraty. Future students of this period will surely profit greatly from

searching the holdings that exist but are still closed in the military ministries, possibly in the presidential palace, as well as the various personal collections of leading figures of that time.

Balancing out the bias that follows from the dominance of foreign ministry archives is a difficult operation. For instance, while press cuttings can be useful to illustrate specific episodes, because all major media companies were heavily censored until the late 1970s, they tell us less of the mood of Brazilian public opinion than of the requirements of the governing regime.¹⁹ Within this, I found it particularly useful to study a recent documentary-based history of the Geisel years that focuses largely on domestic politics but whose sources and interpretations have rather important consequences for our assessment of Brazilian foreign policy.²⁰

For all the problems of access, the quality of Brazilian materials on this period is outstanding. Not only did Silveira make copies for his personal files of thousands of sensitive documents, but differently from the standard American practice, the Brazilian documents have not been ‘redacted’; that is, documents remain untouched, with no excisions or blacking out of sensitive passages. In Brasília I also made extensive use of the newspaper collections at the Federal Senate, and counted on the good will and generosity of people who facilitated their own reminiscences and copies of old documents. Acknowledgments are duly indicated in footnotes across the text.²¹

It is worth noting that as the story that follows moves into the 1980s primary sources on both sides become scarcer and more uneven.

Biographies and memoirs relevant to this study are numerous but disappointing. Kissinger’s own massive volumes devote only a few pages to Brazil.²² To be sure this is partly because Brazil was tangential to the grand narrative of U.S. foreign relations in the 1970s; but it might also be an attempt to downplay certain events in Washington’s relations with Latin America that now strike many as contentious, if not immoral (some

¹⁹ On press censorship, Paolo Marconi, *A censura política na imprensa brasileira, 1968-1978* (São Paulo: Global, 1980).

²⁰ Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura envergonhada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002); *A ditadura escancarada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002); *A ditadura derrotada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003); *A ditadura encurralada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004).

²¹ Pio Penna Filho, ‘A pesquisa histórica nos arquivos do Itamaraty’, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 42/2 (1999): 117-144. A partial description of the Silveira collection that is now dated appears in Matias Spektor ‘A abertura do Acervo Azeredo da Silveira’, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 44/2 (2001): 193-197.

²² Kissinger, *White House Years*; *Years of Upheaval*; and *Years of Renewal*.

have said outright criminal).²³ Perhaps more striking still is the absence of substantial references to the United States in the memoirs of Brazilian policy-makers, with the exception of two long oral-history interviews granted by Azeredo da Silveira and his predecessor, Mario Gibson Barboza, to *Fundação Getúlio Vargas*.²⁴

Caveats

The current work deals with the regional picture of U.S.-Latin America relations as contextual background rather than as a crucial component of the story. Equally, Brazil's most important neighbour and at the time rival, Argentina, makes an appearance only when it affected U.S.-Brazil relations directly.

The thesis also departs from the tendency in the literature to assess hemispheric relations in this historical period through the prism of human-rights abuse and violation. During preparation for this work there were countless occasions when interlocutors assumed that a thesis on 'Henry Kissinger and Brazil' would break new ground on the human-rights score. This is understandable given the recent declassification of crucial materials, the publication of important books, and the occurrence of significant controversies.²⁵ Indeed, Kissinger's ability to travel to Brazil has been restricted in recent years due to ongoing investigations about *Operation Condor* – the network of South American security forces that tracked, tortured and killed opponents.²⁶ But since

²³ Such operation is common in the memoirs of statesmen generally, and it has been noticed before in Kissinger's own treatment of U.S. policies towards *apartheid* South Africa and Suharto's Indonesia, Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*.

²⁴ For example, Pio Corrêa, *O mundo em que vivi* (São Paulo: Expressão e Cultura, 1995); Mário Gibson Barboza, *Na diplomacia, o traço todo da vida* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1992); and Saraiva Guerreiro, *Lembranças de um empregado do Itamaraty* (São Paulo: Siciliano, 1992). For the interviews see Antônio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira, *Interview*, 1979/1980/1982, Rio de Janeiro, CPDOC/FGV, 2000. 22 tapes (20h 55'), hereafter *Silveira Interview*. According to its terms of concession the Gibson Barboza interview to CPDOC/FGV can be consulted on site, but its contents cannot be quoted.

²⁵ For the declassification of materials see the National Security Archive Web-site (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv>). For recent books, Ariel Armony, *Argentina, the United States, and the Anti-Communist Crusade in Central America, 1977-1984* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1997); John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (The New Press, 2003); Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet Files: a Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: The New York Press, 2004); Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Jonathan Haslam, *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende's Chile* (London: Verso, 2005). For the latest controversy as of writing, Kenneth Maxwell, 'The Case of the Missing Letter in *Foreign Affairs*: Kissinger, Pinochet and Operation Condor', working paper n. 04/05-3 (2004), David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.

²⁶ In February 2002 a ceremony to grant Kissinger the *Grã Ordem do Cruzeiro do Sul*, the highest national command, was cancelled because the hosting authorities could not guarantee the guest's immunity from judicial action. On 31 May 2001 a French judge summoned Kissinger to present himself to court to discuss Condor-related crimes, leading the former secretary to flee Paris the same day. In July 2001 the Chilean Supreme Court granted an investigating judge permission to question Kissinger, and a

the perspective here emphasises the power-political and diplomatic dynamics shaping American-Brazilian relations, the several passages that refer to human rights are contextualised and presented as part and parcel of the broader political story.²⁷

Plan of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 traces the origins of devolution and narrates the process that in 1969 induced Nixon and Kissinger to revitalise relations with ‘key countries’ across the periphery, including Brazil. The chapter also explains why Washington picked Brazil over Mexico. It also begins to tell the story of how the White House sought to set up a new policy in the face of opposition from the State Department.

Chapter 2 narrates the inception of rapprochement. We see the White House making an effort to entice the Brazilian leadership into closer proximity, as well as Brazil’s ambiguous response. The focus is on the scope of the new arrangement – the selection of representatives to carry it out, their ability to retain legitimacy at home, their techniques for developing some degree of mutual trust, and the early redrawing of administrative boundaries at the White House and in Itamaraty to cope with the new orientation.

Chapter 3 deals with the arrival of Silveira on the scene in 1974, situating him within the conceptual debates and practical struggles taking place inside Itamaraty at the time, and their connection to the wider picture of Brazilian politics under President Geisel. The chapter then studies the motivations that compelled Geisel and Silveira to offer Kissinger a counter-proposal for engagement, and their battles to overcome domestic opposition to the endeavour.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Kissinger-Silveira rapport as they met for the first time. The focus is on their willingness to expand the remit of the relationship, introduce new bureaucratic arrangements to link Itamaraty to the State Department, and develop mechanisms to facilitate consensus and prevent friction. At this juncture, crises begin to

month later an Argentine magistrate filed a derogatory letter with the U.S. State Department with the same purpose.

²⁷ See Chapter 2 in particular. Note that, for all the materials now coming out on Latin America’s state-led terrorism, human rights abuse, guerrilla war and covert action, we still miss research on Brazil. If anything, a striking feature of the recent literature on the subject is the paucity with which Brazil appears in a narrative that is dominated by the Chilean and Argentine security services, with Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia prominent, and Ecuador and Peru less so.

loom large in the horizon over Brazil's nuclear programme and its involvement in the independence of Angola.

Chapter 5 tells the story of the several crises affecting the relationship, and shows the progressive shift from engagement as a tool to fight the cold war towards engagement as an instrument to navigate North-South relations. It also shows how Kissinger and Silveira reacted to negative feedback, responding to these crises not with a retreat into more detached positions, but with greater institutionalisation.

Chapter 6 tells the story of the formalisation of engagement under a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by Kissinger and Silveira in February 1976. The focus is on the priorities and visions of each side, the benefits they reaped and the costs they paid, and the problems they faced to retain support for the Memorandum at home.

Chapter 7 deals with the unravelling of engagement from the inauguration of Jimmy Carter onwards. It shows the mutual attempt at rescuing the project, but one that sought two opposing goals. If Carter treated engagement as a tool to pressurise Brazil, Geisel conceived it as the instrument to resist those very same pressures. The chapter follows Silveira's appointment to the embassy in Washington, the beginnings of the Ronald Reagan administration, and the fate of Brazilian-American engagement in an increasingly unwelcoming environment. It closes with the ensuing end of the practice, rhetoric and spirit of bilateral engagement.

A brief conclusion summarises major findings and seeks interconnections with developments in U.S.-Brazil relations today.