The Vote of Brazil in the United Nations Security Council (1946–2011) and the Role of Elected Members in the Decision-Making Process

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Conventional wisdom on the UN Security Council has it that the five permanent members decide and elected members abide by their decisions. This article argues that elected members follow their own policies in the council and work to influence decisions, even when these efforts contradict preferences of the permanent members. The voting pattern of Brazil, with its ten terms in the council, and some specific cases are considered to probe the behavior of an elected member. Brazil, as an elected member, has marked its disagreements with decisions, knowing the symbolic importance of its support. The article concludes that an elected member, such as Brazil, not only can contribute actively for council decisions, but also can modify the preferences of the P5, in certain occasions.

In his discussion on the relationship between permanent and elected members of the Security Council (UNSC), former Singapore Permanent Representative Kishore Mahbubani (2004: 258–59) stated that the body's elected members are perceived as tourists, the last in an unspoken pecking order. Similarly, in his history of the UNSC, David Bosco (2009: 103) referred to it as the "great-power citadel." Both statements—the first grudgingly, the second, matter-of-factly—reflect a widespread and deep-rooted understanding that elected members of the council hold their seats for two-year terms in order to rubber-stamp decisions taken by the five permanent members (P5)—after some de rigueur kicking and screaming.

The result of this assumption, held by many scholars and diplomats, is a persistent lack of interest in a systematic study of the behavior of the council's elected members, coupled with some difficulty in explaining why they insist in presenting themselves for the post, regardless of the well-known setbacks it may bring.[2] Even a seasoned practitioner and scholar like Malone (2000: 5–7) experiences some uneasiness in explaining why countries insist on submitting their candidacies. After dismissing the likelihood of a meaningful engagement with the P5, he attributes it to a search for prestige, vested interests, or the promotion of specific concepts.

A growing body of literature (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2010; Vreeland & Dreher, 2014) highlights the interest of the P5 in cajoling elected members to vote alongside their proposals. Although most authors admit that UNSC membership "offers nations an opportunity to shape international security policy" (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2010: 672), they tend to emphasize the symbolic and informative role of elected members' votes, in order to explain the efforts exerted by the P5 to gain their support (Vreeland and Dreher, 2014: 8–10). Recent research goes a step further and posits that elected members succeed in introducing their preferences into UNSC decisions apparently changing those of the P5 (Mikulaschek, 2014).

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1. The opinions of the author are solely his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of External Relations.

2. In a recent article, Bosco (2014) researches the usefulness of the UNSC for the P5 to concert their efforts. Although its conclusion reinforces the interest in studying the five permanent, it does not invalidate the interest in the elected members.

Breaking with the conventional wisdom on the Security Council and building upon these new paths, the present article is based on the premise that elected members can contribute to the decisions of the council, and they do so according to their own priorities, not necessarily following the lead of the P5. This assertion does not imply that elected members' inputs are always significant or that most of these states, most of the time, elect to disagree with the P5, but over time it is possible to discern behaviors that indicate decision-making autonomy in face of the P5 and dissatisfaction regarding UNSC decisions. The text is divided in four sections: a discussion on the various forms of voting and their uses; why choose Brazil as a specimen of elected member[3]; the presentation of data on Brazilian voting since 1946 to argue that voting choices of elected members indicate strategies in the council; and an analysis of four cases that might be useful to understand Brazilian strategies and perspectives.

Voting and the Uses of the Vote in the Security Council

Opting to gain knowledge of the behavior of a UNSC member by analyzing its voting record is an attempt to benefit from advantages listed by James Todd (1969: 62): a) the vote makes explicit the attitude of a state towards a given subject debated by the council; b) voting takes place on a wide range of issues, allowing to map a country's position across the agenda; c) the analysis of votes make it possible to identify alignments and trends in a country's politics in the UNSC. The vote is a public statement of a country regarding a decision and the policies connected to it. As explained by Gelson Fonseca (2008: 53–4), voting in multilateral fora disciplines the differences amongst members, and dissolves national wills into a collective decision.

Recognizing the shortcomings of the vote as a yardstick is essential, and Todd (1969: 62) highlighted the inability to assess the intensity of a state's attitude, the ambiguity of abstentions, and the uneven distribution of votes across the agenda. Robert Keohane (1967: 221–22) also criticized the studies on voting for not producing any information on the underlying political processes that resulted in a text submitted to a roll-call vote—compared the method to examining a turtle shell without being able to verify if the turtle actually exists. In the post–Cold War era, Keohane's concerns are still justified, given "the statistics . . . cover only one formal layer of council activity, not the informal layers nor the vast underworld of its subsidiary bodies" (Security Council Report 2012). In particular, aggregated voting data, *per se*, confronts the analyst with the misleading impression that states take atomized decisions in yea-nay votes without having bargained the terms of a draft resolution in order to coalesce a myriad policy options into specific language. Here lies the difficulty in perceiving most of the potential influence of elected members: First, because the underlying bargains are often ignored altogether, and second, because it is unlikely there will be enough evidence on the negotiating success of each country for each agenda item.

Regardless of its limitations, the vote is still useful as a research instrument. In the absence of a thorough study of every single decision—unrealistic in the face of the secrecy of procedures and the enormity of the task—the positive features of vote-based analyses can be brought out and their shortcomings mitigated by drawing on statements of the voter to the UNSC and from the appropriate literature on the country's positions in order to help place exemplary cases within a broader context.

In his game-theoretic discussion on how outside options help superpowers achieve favorable results in the UNSC, Erik Voeten (2001: 845–51) asserts that the U.S. establishes the Pareto frontier for council policies but cannot impose an outcome for the concrete negotiations, having to argue and compromise on the actions to be taken. Voeten formulates a series of models where any other member of the council positions itself in a one-dimensional con-

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3. The article does not attempt to demonstrate that Brazilian behavior is similar to that of other elected members, since that would require extensive empirical research on several other countries. The underlying assumption, however, is that there is some measure of similarity, even if elected members comprise a wide range of countries.

tinuum between the ideal points of the U.S. and a hypothetic veto-holding challenger. He contemplates the possibility of the veto-holding challenger expressing discontent without preventing the adoption of the decision (by abstaining).

In another discussion on the Security Council, the author (Voeten 2005: 542–44) argues that limiting U.S. power demands a complex coordination exercised by other countries, which can take place with the UNSC as a focal point. The body is understood as an elite pact that tries to neutralize threats to stability. Council decisions not only send signals to other countries, but also simplify to the U.S. internal public the meaning of foreign actions and foreshadow the degree of cooperation expected from the rest of the international community. Voeten briefly remarks that some high-profile, nonpermanent members are particularly insistent on UNSC authorization, in spite of their discomfort with current council structure.

Drawing on Voeten's ideas is extremely helpful to gain understanding on why Brazil votes as it does—without formalizing a mathematical model. Extrapolating Voeten's continuum, it is argued that UNSC decisions should be understood as a complex set of policies, pertaining to the preferences of the member states along several axes that could measure implications of the adoption of a decision, such as financial cost, contribution with troops, degree of involvement of UN entities in implementation, etc. Instead of a one-dimensional continuum, the positioning occurs inside a space defined by frontiers superimposed by the five permanent members, not just the United States. Any decision that stands a chance of adoption, being a complex policy, is a solid in this space not a point on a continuum. Likewise, one that fails to be adopted was outside the frontiers of one or more of the P5, at least partially. A few caveats are important at this juncture: (a) the frontiers are not always apparent to other members and sometimes not even to their formulators, which means that countries map them by trial and error, (b) the permanent members tend to have global commitments, which is not true for most elected ones, but it may happen that they are relatively indifferent to a specific conflict or policy, and (c) over the Cold War, as noted by Fancis Delon (1993: 53–64), there was no "P5" group, and the disputes amongst the permanent members were seen as an opportunity for the elected members to build bridges and advance their agendas—a phenomenon still conceivable today.

The elected members have their own preferences, but, being unable to veto, cannot define the space, only negotiate within it and position themselves, by means of their voting choices, in relation to the decision. For an elected member like Brazil, navigating Security Council politics means inserting as many features as possible in the decision, struggling to limit the aspects inserted by the P5 but seen as inconvenient and, in voting, signaling to other countries and to its own public if it is close to or far from the negotiated decision. It is essential to discuss the possible meanings of each voting option.

When taken by a permanent member, the negative vote is the most maligned path in UNSC voting. Once hailed as a mainstay of the UN architecture, the veto soon became a propaganda weapon in the Cold War, wielded against the Soviets, accused of blocking the council—an accusation proven to be false in the 1960s by Stoessinger (1966: 5–16) but still etched in most minds. A veto not only signals the language voted upon was outside a given P5 negotiation frontier, but it also embodies the frontier in effectively blocking council action. As for elected members, the function of a nay vote is less concrete. Except for the mythical *sixth veto* (an elusive collusion of seven or more elected members to block a decision), the negative vote of an elected member indicates a strong dissatisfaction, normally reserved for issues of extreme relevance to its foreign policy—unless the nay vote is cast alongside a similar manifestation by several members, knowingly dooming the draft to non-adoption for lack of a necessary majority (Bailey 1969: 26–63; Bailey and Daws 1998: 227–49; Todd 1969: 75–6; Wilcox 1945: 946–52).[4]

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4. Turkey (2009–10) exemplified a rare case of systematic nay voting by an elected member in all resolutions on Cyprus.

The positive vote might seem the clearest of paths, but it often conceals the disagreements in the political negotiations. Unlike the Cold War period, when drafts were often voted paragraph by paragraph to highlight opposing views, since the 1980s, the council has combined the consensus with informal consultations, i. e., members negotiate behind closed doors until an acceptable text is achieved. This procedure makes public meetings generally uninformative as compromises were already bargained (Bailey 1969: 10–1; Bailey and Daws 1998: 222–23; Smith 2006: 218; Teixeira 2003: 21–2; Voeten 2005: 547). An affirmative vote should be understood as signaling satisfaction. Yet, by its nature, the positive vote leaves unanswered the highly relevant question of how the decision became satisfactory: because some aspects were seen as indifferent, the country was pressured into accepting the language, or it was satisfied after including its preferred options.

Not enshrined in the charter, abstentions were conjured out of thin air by the Soviets in 1946 to signal a relevant level of dissatisfaction by a permanent member, without the need to veto a decision. They were, from inception, a function of expediency—to avoid causing unnecessary attrition—and a display of good sportsmanship—alleged proof that one wants the council to function. Their legality was never seriously questioned outside academic circles, and they were soon incorporated into council practice. During the early Cold War, the West began to get used to killing Soviet proposals softly with its abstentions. Elected members emulated their permanent counterparts in abstaining more often than voting negatively—although mathematically both choices have the same weight—to disagree without being seen as a naysayer (Bailey and Daws 1998: 250–57; Gross 1951; McDougal and Gardner 1951; Winter 1996). Brazil, since the early 1990s, follows the practice of abstaining instead of voting nay unless the issue at stake is of utmost importance to its foreign policy. In doing so, it signals a low level of dissatisfaction, with the language put to vote being considered mostly acceptable (Neves 2008: 101; Amorim 2015: 88–91).

The absence from a vote—except in very rare instances—is understood as an attempt to delegitimize the council as a whole, one or more items of its agenda, or the decision being voted. In a few cases, it may also result from extreme opposite pressure on an elected member. Overall, absences are rare and, in the mathematics of council voting, have the passive value of an abstention. Their sense of deviation from the expected conduct of a constructive member of the UNSC made them anathema to Brazil, which has never used this artifice (Bailey and Daws 1998: 257–59; Uziel 2012: 139–40; Vreeland and Dreher 2014: 9–10).

The meaning of each type of vote should not obscure their ambiguity. Arend Lijphart (1963: 910–17), dealing with the General Assembly, underlined that even two negative votes may result from diametrically opposed reasons. In order to optimize the benefits of studying voting records and to clarify the ambiguities as much as possible, it will be necessary to assess Brazil's decisions in relation to the result of the vote, to the vote of other members, as well as the convergence with certain other members. For this last aspect, Lijphart's proposal to employ the Beyle-Rice approach to the General Assembly will be taken into account, using the weighted mean formula. Although originally meant to identify blocks and measure their cohesiveness, in this text it will be used in a more limited manner in order to highlight the general tendency, or lack thereof, to converge with positions of the U.S., the USSR/Russia, or the majority of council members. The formula to find the Index of Agreement (IA) is $IA = (f + 1/2g)/t \times 100\%$, where t is the total number of votes, f is the number of votes, A and B were in full agreement, and g is the number of votes where they agreed only in part. Countries are in full agreement if they voted the same way, in full disagreement if they voted in opposite ways, and in partial agreement if one of them abstained.[5]

5. Although published over fifty years ago, Lijphart's article has the advantage of taking into account that abstentions signify a degree of disagreement. There is a clear arbitrariness in assigning the 50 percent weight, but some arbitrariness is inescapable. For the purpose of this article, the assumption is that the voting distance between a council member that votes yea or nay and another member that abstains is half as large as the voting distance between two states that vote yea and nay, respectively. The author wishes to thank Ch. Mikulaschek for this observation.

Inside and around the frontiers established by the preferences of the P5 is where the political process takes place. In Voeten's (2005: 551) words, "Although the role of the UNSC in this conception depends entirely on the configuration of state interests, this does not make the institution epiphenomenal. There are many potential equilibria . . . and convergence on a particular (semi-cooperative) equilibrium has important implications." Brazilian votes will be used as an instrument to highlight possible behaviors and strategies of elected members, based on the idea that the country, in deciding how to vote, not necessarily follows the preferences of the P5 but rather expresses its own positions regarding the language put to the council's consideration.

Brazil as an Elected Member of the Security Council

Brazil is in a privileged, though not unique, position to serve as a seminal example. Briefly contemplated as a possible sixth permanent member and since the 1990s an active candidate to permanent membership, the country has served ten terms on the council (1946–47, 1951–52, 1954–55, 1963–64, 1967–68, 1988–89, 1993–94, 1998–99, 2004–05, and 2010–11), a number equaled only by Japan. With twenty years of participation, Brazilian votes have produced enough evidence to allow for comparisons over time and subject. Additionally, Brazil has predicated a significant part of its foreign policy regarding peace and security on participating in and strengthening multilateral fora (the nineteen years of absence from 1969 to 1987 being an exception related mainly to domestic factors beyond the scope of this article). This enduring preference and the literature strongly suggest that every decision to vote in the council is thoroughly assessed as an integral part of its international relations, a supposition corroborated by statements of high-level officials (Amorim 2007: 9–13; Bueno 1994: 59–144; Fonseca 2011: 375–79; Garcia 2011: 159–77; Sardenberg 1995; Sardenberg 2013: 85–97; Souza 2009: 99–104). This process, according to a senior Brazilian diplomat, comprises the consideration of each draft against the scenarios in the UNSC, in the UN in general, and globally (Sardenberg 2014).

In spite of Brazil's belief in its own commitment to the UNSC and multilateralism, Stewart Patrick (2010) argues that there are strong misgivings in Washington about how much Brasília is willing to work within the current international order or to shoulder responsibilities beyond those bringing immediate benefits. In the same vein, after recognizing the relevance of multilateral institutions to Brazil, Jean Daudelin and Sean Burges (2011: 37–8 and 47–50) argue that Brazilian diplomacy is "hedging its bets . . . by playing a weak institutionalist game." Regarding the UNSC, they clarify that the country advocates strict limits to international interference in domestic affairs—although with some flexibility of late—while participating actively in the council deliberations, recommitting frequently to the UN principles, and criticizing the council's structure. The whole Brazilian policy is dubbed rebellious multilateralism. Although meant to enjoin Brazil to comply with Western tenets, these observations serve to confirm that Brazil does not act in the UNSC on its own terms (no actor does) but certainly strives to preserve a modicum of autonomy to make decisions and, in making them, first takes into consideration its own foreign policy goals rather than the preferences of the P5, contrary to the common opinion that elected members just comply with them.

In his recent work, Amorim Neto (2011: 171–73), after an in-depth review of the literature, emphasizes how Brazil's search for autonomy in its foreign policy is mirrored by an increase in the divergence with U.S. policies, which he assesses by comparing voting data in the UN General Assembly. With extensive use of aggregated data, he concludes that from 1946 to 2008 there was a long-term distancing between Brazil and the U.S., leading to a universalization of Brazilian international relations, without sudden fractures with Washington. His emphasis on structural and bureaucratic factors suggests that a similar pattern of autonomization should be found in Brazil's votes in the UNSC.

Brazil's Voting Record in the Security Council and its Meanings

From January 1946 to December 2011, Brazil participated in 2,194 UNSC meetings, in which 1,114 votes were taken, 956 on substantive matters, and 158 on procedural ones. After the end of the Cold War, the number of substantive votes reached previously unthinkable heights—from the lowest point of six votes in 1954 to twenty-five in 1989, and the upper limit of ninety-five votes in 1993—with a corresponding drop in votes on procedure—practically zero after 1989.[6]

A perfunctory look at Brazil's decisions (Table 1) indicates a majority of affirmative substantive votes in any year, with abstentions and negative ones amounting to 101 out of 956. An overwhelming majority (73 percent) of the non-affirmative votes are concentrated in the 1946–55 period, a particularly contentious moment in the council, when Brazil was closely associated with the Western group (Bosco 2009: 39–79).

Table 1. Brazilian Votes Disaggregated by Affirmative, Negative, and Abstention

Year	Unanimous votes	Non-unanimous votes			
		Brazil affirmative	Brazil negative	Brazil abstention	Total
2011	63	3		2	5
2010	53	5	1		6
2005	68	1		2	3
2004	55	6		1	7
1999	58	8	1		9
1998	68	5			5
1994	75	11		5	16
1993	85	9		1	10
1989	18	6		1	7
1988	17	9			9
1968	14	5		2	7
1967	12			2	2
1964	10	9		6	15
1963	5	6		3	9
1955	3	25	1		26
1954	2	3		1	4
1952	1	9	3	2	14
1951	2	7			7
1947	16	63	16	37	116
1946	15	25	9	5	39
TOTAL	640	215	31	70	316

Instead of indicating that the low level of abstentions and negative votes mean a mechanistic compliance with decisions previously taken by the P5, Brazil's profile and the literature on its experience in the UNSC suggest that the country tries to contribute to decisions and

6. For the period between 1946 and 1993, data were collected by reviewing the verbatim record of each individual meeting; from 1994 on, the data compiled by the Secretariat, with mild adjustments, were used (http://www.un.org/en/sc/meetings/). The data comprise all substantive votes taken during meetings (even if the required majority was not achieved or the issue vetoed) and all procedural votes in which there was a "show of hands" (what excludes the mostly automatic and consensual decisions to adjourn). For the substantive votes, in cases where the decision was taken "without a vote," all votes were considered as affirmative; in case of absences, they were counted as abstentions. Votes on paragraphs or sentences were considered different votes, which resulted in very few amendments to the count of the secretariat. The tables with compiled data can be made available upon contact with the author.

votes in favor when reasonably satisfied. The overall picture is a mostly satisfied voter, especially in the five mandates since the 1980s, when only around 2.2% of the total votes were negative or abstentions. Taking out non-unanimous votes Brazil abstained or voted negatively in 32% of the time: 36% in those from 1946 to 1955, 40% in those from 1963 to 1968, and 18% of those in the five terms since 1988. Whereas, in the terms until 1955, Brazil's votes were mostly associated with those of the United States. In the 1960s and in the post–Cold War period, abstentions and negative votes were limited in number, focused on those cases when the country held doubts on the limits of legitimate council action or on the effectiveness of measures taken. Abstentions were preferred over negative votes precisely to avoid being seen as a nay-sayer. As contended above, voting in the affirmative, however, may mask varying degrees of lesser dissatisfaction with the text before the council, but a finer assessment would depend on further research about critical explanations of vote or conspicuous refusal to co-sponsor a draft. The literature registers that Brazil seems to vote yea only when participating in the negotiations, normally by offering concrete language (Fonseca 2011: 392; Patriota 1998: 191–92; Sardenberg 1995: 124–25; Sardenberg 2014).

Two possible explanations for the instances where Brazil chose not to vote affirmatively since the 1980s must be briefly considered—geographic concentration and concerns over alluding to Chapter VII—and discarded. Brazilian abstentions and negative votes are not clustered around any geographic item of the UNSC agenda, straddling themes as different as Libya, Iran, peacebuilding, Sudan, Haiti, Lebanon, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The only clear sequence of abstentions is about Haiti, in 1994, meant to be a display of coherence. Since Brazil abstained on resolution 940 (1994) authorizing a U.S.-led multinational force, a need was felt to persevere in distancing oneself from the use of force in the Americas. Some have mistakenly argued that Brazilian non-affirmative votes are connected to a heightened adherence to sovereignty and to an alleged rejection of references to Chapter VII in decisions. This reasoning is deprived of any empirical basis, as Brazil has time and again voted in favor of resolutions making use of Chapter VII (Kenkel 2013: 347; Diniz 2006; Uziel 2014: 72–3).

Further insight can be gained by disaggregating the cases where Brazil decided to abstain or vote negatively and comparing to how other members voted in those instances (Table 2). Until the end of its third term, in 1955, most Brazilian non-affirmative votes joined the U.S. and the Western bloc to reject a Soviet-sponsored proposal. During the 1963–64, 19–1968, and 1988–89 mandates, there are more significant instances where Brazil's vote diverges from the U.S. pattern, but Brazil always accompanies one or more permanent members in their vote. Not until 1994 will Brazil abstain without the company of any of the P5 (or any other member for that matter).

It was in 1968 that Brazil first abstained in a most significant manner, in resolution 255 (1968) on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Drawing on the ideas of Permanent Representative (and former minister of external relations) João Augusto de Araujo Castro, Brazilian diplomacy began to decry what was seen as a freezing of world power, with the U.S. and the USSR deciding on the relevant issues behind closed doors and expecting other countries to acquiesce. In Castro's view, the NPT and its consideration in the council were clear expressions of this freezing and Brazil had to clearly distance itself from the text agreed to by the great powers in order to preserve the usefulness of the UN to middle and small powers. The abstention (alongside Algeria, France, India, and Pakistan) was a first instance of Brazilian linking its diverging choice of vote in the UNSC to one of its major principles in international affairs. The whole doctrine of freezing, however, had the unintended consequence of compounding the criticism to Brazilian membership in the council and helped keep the country out of the body until 1988 (Vargas 2013: 167–203; United Nations 1968: 3).

The preference for joining one or more permanent members in abstaining is not unexpected and derives from the very disparity of status in the council. Elected members tend to

Table 2. Brazilian Abstentions and Negative Votes in Relation to Other Members

Year	Negative alone	Abstention alone	Negative + P5*	Abstention + P5	Negative + elected	Abstention + elected
2011				2		
2010					1	
2005				1		1
2004				1		
1999			1			
1998						
1994		1		4		
1993				1		
1989				1		
1988						
1968				2		
1967				2		
1964				6		
1963				3		
1955			1			
1954				1		
1952			3	2		
1951						
1947			16	37		
1946			9	5		
TOTAL		1	30	68	1	1

*In this column and in the following, it does not matter if the other member voted the same as Brazil, only that it did not vote affirmatively.

seek cooperation with permanent ones, in order to mitigate the pressure from proponents of the resolution (Mahbubani 2004: 263; Teixeira 2003: 13–5). A brief analysis of the period from 1994 to 2013 shows that, in a total of 121 non-unanimous votes, elected members voted in company of one or more P5 in forty cases (33%), of another elected member six times (5%), and by themselves in nineteen instances (15%)—whereas the permanent members were themselves the dissenters on fifty-six (47%) occasions. The percentages are fitting to the political dynamics of the council, where the P5 do not shy away from disagreeing, while most elected members will prefer to disagree in the company of a permanent peer, and some countries will vote alone either because they are too close to the subject or adopting a maverick attitude. The coordination of elected members is more unusual, given the difficulties to conciliate purposes, but also because it is actively opposed as a sign of collusion against the frontiers established by the P5.

These data reinforce the proposition that the P5 define the limits of council negotiation, but the very existence of instances where Brazil and others abstain or vote negatively regardless of the P5 belies the perception that the text agreed upon by the permanent members will be automatically accepted. It further suggests that elected members, such as Brazil, may try to maneuver in the council to expand the frontiers established by the P5. A case in point is the negative vote on Iran in what became resolution 1929 (2010), mentioned below.

Equally important to understand, Brazil's role as a council member is to assess how it expects its own vote to be a part of the result. In deciding how to vote, a country calculates

how others will vote and if the preferred option has a chance to be reached (the implication being that some might prefer to be simply on the winning side in the absence of concrete interests). Most Brazilian affirmative votes contributed to the adoption of a resolution, even discounted the unanimous decisions. In a significant number of cases, Brazil's yea vote did not result in the adoption of a resolution, mostly because one or more permanent members vetoed it. In such cases, a believable reading would be that Brazil took part in a concerted effort to exert pressure on those dissenters—and the year 1947 strongly suggests that toward the USSR.

In its first four terms, all Brazilian abstentions and nay votes served to defeat the drafts. In the Cold War context, this meant Brazil was part and parcel of the hidden veto mechanism, which allowed the Western bloc to prevent the adoption of Soviet proposals. Only after 1963 does Brazil start to abstain more often to signify disagreement with the majority of council members, hence, finding itself in the defeated group in face of an adopted resolution (Bailey and Daws 1998: 249–50; Stoessinger 1966: 13–5). In the post–Cold War period, Brazilian abstentions are knowingly cast without hope of defeating the draft in order to express dissatisfaction.[7] It is possible to suppose that the preference for abstention would have prevailed in other cases, but the country decided to vote affirmatively not to be singled out as the only objector (Sardenberg 2014). The exceptions are: the 1993 abstention on Bosnia-Herzegovina (on 6/29/1993), and the 1999 negative vote with the intention to prevent the adoption of a draft on Kosovo (on 3/26/1999).

In December 2005, for instance, after a torturous negotiation, the Peacebuilding Commission was created by unanimous resolution 1645 (2005). The P5 then put to vote a draft that

Table 3. Brazilian Vote and Result of the Vote

Year	Affirmative adopted	Affirmative defeated	Abstention adopted	Abstention defeated	Negative adopted	Negative defeated
2011	2	1	1	1		
2010	5				1	
2005	1		2			
2004	3	3	1			
1999	7	1				1
1998	5					
1994	10	1	5			
1993	8	1		1		
1989	2	4		1		
1988	3	6				
1968	4	1	1	1		
1967				2		
1964	6	3	2	4		
1963	4	2	1	2		
1955	7	18				1
1954		3		1		
1952	1	8		2		3
1951	7					
1947	38	25		37		16
1946	8	17		5		9
TOTAL	121	94	13	57	1	30

7. During the Cold War, there were instances of Brazil abstaining when the U.S. voted yea, but they were very few.

ensured a permanent place for themselves in the PBC, which became resolution 1646 (2005). Brazil abstained and recruited Argentina to do the same, on the grounds that the draft departed from previous agreements and reinforced imbalances amidst UN organs (Neves 2008: 106; Sardenberg 2014; United Nations 2005: 11; Uziel 2012). The Brazilian-Argentinian vote was not meant to frustrate the adoption of the text but to signal their preference as partially outside the frontiers set by the P5.

The relation between Brazilian votes and the adoption or rejection of drafts corroborates the point made by Fonseca (2011: 378–88) that in its first terms in the UNSC, Brazil mostly followed U.S. policies but started to drift away in the 1960s, opposing what it perceived as a freezing of global power. Upon its return to the body in 1988, Brazilian strategies adapted to the new age but acted purposefully to maintain a level of decision-making autonomy and shape actively the institutional framework of the council, curtailing as much as possible what was seen as excessive P5 hegemony.

An important feature of Brazilian votes is what can be deemed an aversion to the veto. Over its twenty years in the council, Brazil witnesses eighty-one decisions being blocked by the veto. In only three of those cases did Brazil allow itself to assume a position closer to the vetoing power, by abstaining: in 1954, on a vote on Israel-Syria (United Nations 1954), in 1989, on a vote on Libya (United Nations 1989), and in 2011, on another vote on Syria (United Nations 2011). This preference for dissociating from vetoes may be attributed to two factors: 1. The veto is seen as a traumatic moment, the failure of negotiations, and potential instigator of friction among great powers, hence an impairment to the work of the council (Fonseca 2008: 56); 2) For a country regularly elected to the UNSC and coveting a permanent seat on it, it is essential to convey the idea of an autonomous decision-maker, which could be put into question by association with vetoes, an attitude seen as typical of satellite-states.

Brazilian concerns on converging with vetoes were somehow justified in 2011, in the vote of a draft on Syria, vetoed by Russia and China, with Brazilian, Indian, South African, and Lebanese abstentions. U.S. Ambassador Rice, in a media stakeout after the meeting, dramatically scolded those not favoring the resolution for having "slapped in the face" the people of Syria and for blocking the work of the council. While reserving some respect for Russia's "sovereign choices," she dismissed offhand Brazilian-Indian-South African concerns for a repetition in Syria of the mistakes of Libya as an excuse, an "effort to maintain solidarity in a certain group" (presumably BRICS) and, in the U.S. explanation of vote, dubbed those preoccupations a "cheap ruse" (Rice 2011; United Nations 2011: 8). Dissenters were seen as blockers of the council's work and as proxies of a group that included two permanent members with alleged vested interests in Syria.

A final field to explore through the aggregate analysis of Brazilian votes is its relative distance from other members of the UNSC, Lijphart's Index of Agreement (IA). The chosen reference points were the U.S.—a key country since 1945—and the USSR/Russia—until 1991 for its role as superpower, since then for its often adversarial relationship with Western tenets; the Brazilian tendency to vote alongside the arithmetic majority of the council was also assessed as a third reference point.

Regarding the IA with the U.S., the results are as expected and coincide *grosso modo* with the conclusions of Amorim Neto (particularly if one takes into account that the UNGA provides more complete and accurate data). A significant convergence in the first twenty years, never falling below 80 percent before 1968, is followed by a steep decrease in the late 1980s, a recovery in the 1990s, culminating with a rapprochement in 1998–99, falling again in the 2004–05, and 2010–11 terms (Amorim Neto 2011: 66–74). It is noteworthy that the lowest levels in the 1988–89 term are due to a passive disagreement, where a satisfied Brazil mostly votes yea, a strategy which diverged from a series of vetoes by disgruntled United States. In the 1993–94, 2004–05, and 2010–11 mandates, the fall in IA is due mostly to the Brazilian decision to abstain or vote nay when the U.S. voted affirmatively.

Table 4. Index of Agreement between Brazil, U.S., USSR/Russia, and Majority of the UNSC on Non-Unanimous Votes (%):

Year	Brazil X U.S.	Brazil X USSR/Russia	Brazil X Majority
2011	60	80	80
2010	83	75	83
2005	83	50	66
2004	57	75	92
1999	100	61	100
1998	100	80	100
1994	69	80	87
1993	94	77	100
1989	21	92	92
1988	16	100	100
1968	78	64	92
1967	100	50	100
1964	93	53	86
1963	88	66	94
1955	82	30	100
1954	87	12	87
1952	100	10	100
1951	100	50	100
1947	92	48	97
1946	93	25	100

As for the USSR/Russia, the first years are as predictably marked by a low level of agreement, which improves significantly in the 1960s without ever reaching 70 percent. In the 1980s, it will reach its highest point, acquiring an irregular character after that but remaining above 75 percent, except for two years. The review of the voting disagreements shows the Brazilian preference not to converge with vetoes as well as substantive divergences, such as on the 1999 Russian draft on Kosovo, or the 2010 P5 and the Germany resolution on Iran. It is early to say if the advent of BRICS was responsible for the level of agreement during the 2010–11 term (Lijphart 1963: 912–13; Uziel 2012: 146–47).

The highest IAs for Brazil appear when its votes are compared with how the majority of the members of the council voted. In nine out of twenty, there is a 100 percent agreement, and the IA only once falls below 70 percent. Only twice, in 1964 and 2005, the IA of Brazil and the U.S. is higher than the IA of Brazil and the majority, which never occurs with the USSR/Russia. These data strengthen the idea that an elected member aiming for autonomy in its decision-making may seek to reinforce its position by voting closer to the majority of its peers even when it means disagreeing from the superpowers—a proposition that cannot be proved here but is worth mentioning.

Four Cases of Brazilian Vote

The four cases below were chosen because they encompass the whole range of possible voting positions by Brazil: affirmative, negative, and abstentions. The analysis focused on how Brazil identified the main concerned parties, the most contentious issues, and how it shaped its strategies to insert its preferences. The goal of the section is to briefly highlight some of the

main aspects of the political negotiations behind the votes and how an elected member may act to promote its own positions.

Resolution 1284 (1999) on Iraq

After the Desert Fox Operation in December 1998 when Americans and British bombed Iraq without express UNSC authorization, any consensus on the issue in the council seemed undone for good, and the fabric of dialogue in the organ was threatened. In January 1999, while chairing the organ, Brazil, alongside Canada, advanced new ideas on how to rebuild a negotiating process within the UNSC and avoid new unilateral actions. The three panels on Iraq, later known as the "Amorim Panels," were established by exploiting the minimum overlapping in the P5 positions. Their final reports were far from pleasing all the main powers but opened the opportunity to negotiate a new inspections regime for Iraq and to restitute the council to the forefront in that context. From the beginning, Brazil had limited specific concerns but emphasized a broader aim to maintain the functionality of the council, building on a minimum of trust amongst its members (Fonseca 2011: 392; Padovan 2010).

Brazil was active in the debates about what would become resolution 1284 (1999), with positions on sanctions, humanitarian affairs, and the new inspections' regime. Those efforts, seen dismissively as idiosyncratic and ancillary by some (Ross 2007: 165–86), were perceived by Brazil as part of the larger strategy to ensure the council would regain the helm on the subject on acceptable terms—alleviating the humanitarian situation without perpetuating the abnormal international status of Iraq. Brazil was part of a group of elected members consulted systematically by the P5 in order to support text negotiated elsewhere, since their endorsement was seen as essential to an acceptable decision (Fonseca 2015; Padovan 2010).

When the vote finally came, Brazil voted affirmatively but made an explanation of vote noting flaws both in the process of negotiations and in its final result. Brazil's ultimate purpose with the Amorim Panels and the ensuing negotiation had been to promote a "healing diplomacy" (United Nations, 1999: 12–3), i.e., assist the conduction of the process in a manner that would rebuild a positive dynamics, allowing for a repositioning of the P5's preference frontiers. In such context, the experience was a formative one, and the substantive contributions counted less than the resumption of negotiations (Fonseca 2015; Padovan 2010: 106–74).

Resolution 1542 (2004) on Haiti

In February 2004, the council authorized a multinational force to prevent further security deterioration in Haiti. Brazil, in its early months as elected member, supported the decision but was suspicious that the international presence would develop as the previous one. In 1993–94, in a moment of heightened U.S. assertiveness, Brazil made a point of ostensibly abstaining on resolution 940 (1994), seen as advocating a militarized and short-sighted international strategy for the Caribbean country (Gharekan 2006: 234–35). Ten years later, Brazilian diplomacy was afraid once more the UN would enter Haiti and deal with security without taking care of the underlying social and economic shortfalls of the country. In the early years of Lula da Silva's presidency, Brazil was willing to make itself indispensable in the negotiations in New York, making clear that a prolonged and proactive Latin-American engagement would depend on enticing Brazilian political support. Negotiations on what became resolution 1542 (2004) were conducted with U.S. and Brazil as protagonists.

Brazil's immediate interests were focused on restricting the rhetoric of use of force (that account for the circumscribed reference to Chapter VII only in operative paragraph 7) and inserting economic and social elements in the mandate (finally consubstantiated in weak references in operative paragraphs 13–15). The U.S., France, and, to a lesser extent, the other P5 were perceived as rejecting a long-term presence in the country and involvement with development issues. Brazil played two cards in this case: For the more indifferent P5, it made clear that losing face at this point would sour its presence in the UNSC for the remaining two years;

for the U.S., it evidenced that Brazilian troops would not be available unless the mandate of the mission was shaped to Brazil's satisfaction—knowing that the failure to establish a long-term mission in Haiti could mean a refugee crisis in Florida (Fontoura 2015).

The text unanimously adopted in April 2004 fell short of both countries' preferences, but they went along with it since both wanted a mission in Haiti. Brazil's strategy was to work for the expansion of the U.S.'s preference frontiers in specific aspects, given its leverage as a potential troop contributing country that could attract political support and troops from others in the region. In the longer run, it intended to reinforce those aspects in successive renewals of the mission's mandate (Fontoura 2015; Sardenberg 2014; Uziel 2015: 210–17).

Resolution 1593 (2005) on Sudan

In early 2005, there was near consensus in the UNSC about referring the case of Darfur to the consideration of the International Criminal Court, although members were divided into supporters of the court (Brazil, Argentina, Benin, Denmark, France, Greece, Romania, Tanzania, and United Kingdom), reluctant supporters of the referral but not of the ICC (U.S. and China), and those indifferent in varied degrees (Algeria, Japan, the Philippines, and Russia). A draft resolution on the subject, mainstreamed by France, was being negotiated, having as its main point of contention the possibility of exempting from ICC jurisdiction citizens of non-party countries in Sudan—prominently U.S. nationals. At the eleventh hour, the U.S. advanced alternative proposals that would further enfeeble the ICC's jurisdiction or ignore it altogether by establishing an ad hoc tribunal.

In the broader picture, since 2004 an informal coalition of ICC supporters in the council, comprising permanent and elected members, had been struggling to convey to Washington a clear message that the blanket exemption achieved previously in resolutions 1422 (2002) and 1487 (2003) was not to be given again and that, despite the U.S. campaign against ICC, there was strong support for it in the council (Fontoura 2015; Uziel 2012, 2014).

This context suggested to Brazil that U.S. insistence on including in the draft an exemption for citizens of states not members of the ICC from being tried by it for acts in Sudan (paragraph 6) was merely a ruse to resume the campaign against the court. Attempts to suppress the text were unsuccessful, as the language was seen as a lesser evil in view of other proposals, and the price to avoid a U.S. veto. As a testimony of the bluntness of vote and ambiguity of abstention, Brazil abstained on resolution 1593 (2005) but so did the U.S., China, and Algeria, for diametrically opposed reasons. Brazil wanted to express its strong discontent with paragraph 6 while supporting the referral and the rest of the resolution; the other three were not members of the ICC and meant to underline that fact. In order to ensure clarity, Brazil made an explanation of vote emphasizing how its preferences differed from those of the U.S. and how it was not willing to accommodate the permanent member's demands (Fontoura 2015; Romeiro 2015; Uziel 2012).

Resolution 1929 (2010) on Iran

In early 2010, Brazil started its tenth mandate in the UNSC and was engaged, alongside Turkey, another elected member, in negotiations with Iran to reach an initial deal on a nuclear fuel swap that could encourage the resumption of broader talks among Teheran, the P5, and Germany on the whole of the Iranian nuclear dossier. From the Brazilian perspective, a letter from President Obama to President Lula requesting support to deal with Iran was understood as a vote of confidence to seek such limited preliminary agreement. Although the P5 had indicated their intention to vote in the UNSC a new round of sanctions on Iran by then, on 17 May, President Lula, President Ahmadinejad, and Prime Minister Erdogan issued in Teheran a joint statement on nuclear fuel swap. Based on its 1999 experience with Iraq (described above), Brazil had an expectation that the deal would change the issue in the council and lead the P5 to renegotiate their positions (Amorim 2015; Fonseca 2015).

Yet, the day after the Teheran statement, the P5 circulated in the UNSC a draft resolution imposing new sanctions—indicating they would accept merely marginal contribution by the elected members to the text already agreed by them. Brazil saw the circulation as ignoring purposefully a serious diplomatic effort and decided to abstain from contributing to the negotiations. The U.S., in particular, and all permanent members were unwilling to explore the Brazilian-Turkish initiative by postponing sanctions (Amorim 2015; Moretti 2015).

Officially, the P5 argued that the statement was "too little, too late," but the Brazilian perception in the UNSC was that the P5 were clearly concerned with the possibility that two elected members could upset a deal struck by the permanent members. When the vote came on 9 June, Brazil and Turkey voted against it (with Lebanon abstaining), and resolution 1929 (2010) was adopted. After the personal commitment of President Lula, Brazil felt "indignation," which an abstention was not enough to express (Amorim 2015: 88–9). An attempt was made boldly to change the frontiers set by the P5, and they had to protect their privileges. Brazil, after clearly distancing itself from the resolution, made a point of internalizing its provisions swiftly in order to restate unequivocally that the authority of the council should be respected even when a member disagreed with the decision (Moretti 2015; Security Council Report 2010; United Nations 2010: 2–3).

Conclusion

There is admittedly limited understanding of the depths of council's work behind closed doors. This study neither formalized a model nor was intended to prove one using quantitative data but rather was aimed at using the example of Brazil's votes to explore new paths in studying the relevance of elected members in UNSC decision-making. The Brazilian case suggests putting aside the traditional perspective, which attributes complete decision-making power to one or the set of P5, but it cannot give a complete mapping of the role played by elected members.

As Brazil's relative position in the international system changed, so did its attitude in voting in the council. Amorim Neto's (2011; 171–73) research underscores a continuous search for autonomy toward a universalistic foreign policy, not only in the choice in disagreeing with the U.S. and other great powers but also in trying to contribute significantly to a growing array of issues. This tendency is also the result of a deeply ingrained commitment to multilateral politics, including in peace and security affairs (Fonseca 2011). In view of the data and examples cited, hardly could Brazilian choices in the council be attributable to systematically yielding to P5 whims. The point of reference of Brazilian decisions should be sought in its own foreign policy assessed against each concrete situation examined by the council.

In a large number of cases, Brazil maneuvers within the frontiers given by the P5 to find a semicooperative equilibrium that is closer to its own preferences. The case of resolution 1542 (2004) is evidence of how Brazil used a privileged position regarding the peacekeeping mission in Haiti to push the decision of the council towards its own preferences. Brazil's willingness to contribute substantively to resolutions comes hand-in-hand with being more outspoken about unsatisfactory negotiations. The case of resolution 1593 (2005) underlines how the failure to achieve an acceptable text results in a clear expression of dissatisfaction—suggesting, *a contrario sensu*, that most affirmative votes could be interpreted, at least hypothetically, as displaying satisfaction. The whole process of referring Sudan to the ICC unveils how elected members actively engage in negotiations and alliance formation in the UNSC. Resolutions 1284 (1999) and 1929 (2010) could be understood as opposing examples of results in the attempt of an elected member to change the frontiers set by the P5, exploring the disagreements of the great powers when possible. In 1999, the Amorim Panels allowed for a protracted but successful negotiation on Iraq, building some margin for negotiations where there was none. In 2010, the Teheran declaration did not produce the same results, given the unity already achieved and valued by the P5. Brazil's voting records and the examples studied suggest an evolution of its ability to preserve its autonomy, in part, as a result of its frequent

presence on the UNSC as an elected member and its ability to evolve within each mandate by learning from year to year (Voeten 2005: 551; Fonseca 2011: 389–90; Sardenberg 2014; Uziel 2012, 2014).[8]

Another feature of Brazil's role in the UNSC is a limited degree of rebelliousness in its multilateralism. This means the country is willing to explore some risky paths, but with a strong concern for not endangering the functioning of the council as a whole. Even when strongly dissatisfied, Brazil made a point of swiftly implementing decisions against what it voted, such as resolution 1929 (2010). In Brazil's calculations, having a UNSC whose decisions are heeded is preferable to asserting its own positions in each argument to the point of discrediting the organ.

In order to gain further understanding about the role of elected members, different paths could be explored, such as comparing the data on Brazilian votes with that available for other frequently elected members, such as Japan, Argentina, Colombia, Germany, or Pakistan. Additionally one could unearth new evidence of successful bargaining by elected members by conducting further in-depth interviews with diplomats involved in the negotiations. Better quantitative data can be sought on preferences and satisfaction based not only on voting but also on explanations of votes and co-sponsorship. Recent studies on the relevance of co-sponsorship to assess the role of coalitions in the UNSC certainly point in that direction (Monteleone 2014).

For the study of the UNSC, quantitative data on votes have limited meaning, but it does reveal something. The initial assumptions made on the relationship between permanent and elected members are essential to interpret the data. Both the quantitative patterns and the concrete examples given above suggest that the usual assumptions should not be seen as proved and that looking at the council's decision from the point of view of elected members highlight new and interesting paths worth investigating.

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8. For an early example of Brazilian meaningful contribution to negotiations, see British Ambassador Caradon words after adoption of resolution 242 (1967) on the council's record (United Nations, 1967).

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