

## CHAPTER ONE

# *Brazil, the Emerging Powers, and the Future of the International Order*

IT IS DIFFICULT IN 2016 to remember the optimism that Brazilians once shared about their country's climb up the ranks of international standings. Already the fifth largest country in terms of landmass and demography, it grew to become the seventh largest economy in the world, powered by a major increase in commodity exports. It won bids to host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics. It greatly increased its diplomatic representation, opening embassies across Africa and the Caribbean. It led peacekeeping operations in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a Brazilian rear admiral commanded UN naval forces off the coast of Lebanon. It aspired to find a peaceful solution to the international controversy generated by Iran's nuclear program. It hosted and led major conferences such as Rio+20 on the global environment in 2012 and NETmundial on global Internet governance in 2014. Together with its partners in the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Brazil launched proposals for new multilateral institutions—BRICS New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (paralleling the role of the International Monetary Fund [IMF])—designed to give a greater voice to the Global South. In 2009, the newsmagazine *The Economist* celebrated Brazil's rise with a controversial cover that depicted the famous statue of Christ Redeemer rising like a rocket from its perch on Corcovado Mountain high above Rio de

Janeiro's bay.<sup>1</sup> For a few years, it seemed that Brazil would finally fulfill its long-held aspirations to become a major power.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, in 2015 the news from Brazil was mainly dominated by economic turmoil and the possibility of a presidential impeachment. Impeachment proceedings against Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff, began in December 2015, just one year after she had been reelected. A major scandal at the national oil company Petrobras landed major politicians and top executives in jail, paralyzing an industry that constituted almost 10 percent of the economy. A prolonged economic recession, a significant fiscal deficit, and rising inflation eventually produced a downgrade of its international credit to junk bond status. In the World Economic Forum's 2015 Global Competitiveness report, Brazil slipped eighteen places to seventy-fifth (out of 140).<sup>3</sup> And it increasingly found itself left out of the major international debates of the day, such as those concerning Russia's annexation of Crimea or the civil war in Syria. In light of such severe domestic setbacks, its recent international aspirations seemed to rapidly recede into historical memory.

Yet even in the midst of Brazil's troubles, Brazil is still a power with the aspiration to become globally influential. And it is a power that other major powers recognize as potentially important and a possible key to solving major crises in global governance. In June 2015 U.S. president Barack Obama made these points forcefully at a joint press conference with Brazilian president Rousseff, stating that the United States regards Brazil as a global power, rather than a regional power as a Brazilian reporter had suggested.<sup>4</sup> Although this statement may have been a diplomatic way to score points with a visiting foreign leader, it also reflects the hopes of the United States for Brazil to play a constructive role in global governance.

Brazil's efforts to emerge as a global power are particularly important now that international politics are in flux. The unipolar moment that followed the end of the Cold War seems to be slipping away in the face of the Chinese economic and military surge of the past decade and Russia's desire to contest U.S. leadership along its periphery. In this context, some developing nations such as Brazil and India have increased their military, economic, and political capacities to the point that they appear to be on the brink of emerging out of the classification of a middle power and into a second tier of major power rankings.

Although it is common to speak of "rising" countries, the emerging powers are important not just because they have accumulated more

material resources or military might but also because of their aspirations to influence the way global governance works. Emerging powers such as India and Brazil are more capable than middle or regional powers such as South Korea, Indonesia, or Mexico—but they are not (yet) great powers.

These emerging states are increasingly clamoring for a larger role in global politics and demanding that the governance structures of the international system take greater account of their interests. They are seeking recognition of both their economic importance and their political influence in the international organizations that structure economic, political, and security global governance. It is important to note that although they seek a greater say, states such as Brazil and India do not seek to overthrow the present order.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Brazil sees both reform and revision as attainable and beneficial, both for its growth as a major power and for the stability of the international order.

From the perspective of U.S. leaders, these questions are primary: What do emerging powers want, and are their intentions generally benign or potentially harmful to global order? The United States has to consider whether the interests of emerging powers can be incorporated into present international governance structures without long-term damage to the global order it put in place after World War II. The growing power of new actors such as India and Brazil has objective ramifications for the functioning of the international order. But their growing economic, military, and diplomatic power implies little about what these states might do with their expanded capabilities.

The next important question we should ask is this: Why have today's emerging powers so far stopped short of attempting to overthrow the present system that they so often criticize? To answer this question it is essential to understand the underlying phenomena that shape the behavior of newly influential and capable states such as Brazil in the realm of global governance. In this book, we use Brazil as a case study for understanding how emerging powers seek to shape the international order. We argue that as an emerging power Brazil seeks inclusion, not the overthrow of global governance structures.<sup>6</sup> But inclusion as an influential participant does not mean simply accepting the rules of the existing international order. Emerging powers are not strong enough to be “rule makers” in the traditional sense—and frankly, even the United States is no longer strong enough to be a rule maker in isolation from other powers. But emerging powers no longer wish to be “rule takers” either. Instead,

they seek the opportunity to be part of the club of major powers that act as “rule shapers” in the international order.<sup>7</sup>

The third set of questions revolve around the capabilities that emerging powers may use to influence the international order, particularly in a system where war between the major powers has become vanishingly rare. The traditional route to influence through the accumulation of “hard” military and economic power is no longer the only way that emerging states can influence global governance. We examine the combinations of soft and hard power that Brazil uses to seek influence within the liberal international order and its governance structures. The domestic and international determinants of those combinations are distinct, and we note how and why those sources change over time.

This book seeks to answer these questions by examining the key arenas where states seek influence over the governance of the contemporary order—security, economics, and the global commons—and then evaluating the extent of Brazil’s impact on each area. We seek to understand why Brazil is critical of the present order (although it does not seek its overthrow) and argue that its repeated failures to both significantly revise and reform global governance are caused by its inability to develop the combination of hard and soft power that would make success possible. Because of its emphasis on the use of soft power, Brazil is a particularly good case study of emerging powers’ attempt to balance the use of different kinds of power. Given that soft power is based on the success of a country’s institutions, achieving influence requires both a favorable international context and successful governance at home. To date, theories of international relations have not incorporated the possibility of a developing country rising to a prominent position in international governance largely through the use of soft power.\*

In this chapter, we first examine the foundational principles that guide the contemporary liberal international order. We note that, among the emerging powers, Brazil is most in accord with many of the principles, but it also critically considers a myth the claim that the major powers adhere sufficiently to the principles of the order they lead. The second section examines what emerging powers want from the international

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\*The discussions in the 1980s that Japan might become number one via a soft power approach dealt with a country that already possessed a developed economy.

order; we argue that emerging powers are neither followers nor revolutionaries, but rather are reformers, revisionists, or a combination of the two. Emerging states may seek changes to the present order that would stabilize existing governance arrangements even as an emergent power's rise alters the distribution of power. Or they may follow a more revisionist strategy, seeking to change the principles underlying the international order. The third section discusses hard and soft power and postulates why Brazil is attracted to the latter, without denying the value of the former as a last resort. In the fourth section we justify the use of Brazil as a case study that helps us think about emergence and the requirements to succeed in moving from an emerging power to a major one. The final section explains how the structure of the book illustrates our argument about the choice and challenges of using soft power through the evaluation of Brazil's current efforts to rise in the ranks of international standing.

#### **EMERGING POWERS AND THE GLOBAL ORDER: FOUR FOUNDING PRINCIPLES AND ONE MYTH**

Emergence is the process by which states are recognized by other state and nonstate actors as legitimately influential within international governance—either because their growing capabilities are potentially disruptive or because they offer the promise of contributing to the successful operation of the present order.\* We avoid the use of the once-popular term “rising” to describe states such as Brazil and India. “Rising” implies a positive change in a set of state capabilities—GDP, military force, technological development—whereas “emergence” implies legitimacy for a rising power's participation in shaping the rules of global order. Emergence requires both vertical and horizontal legitimacy. Vertical legitimacy is achieved when elites and/or public opinion supports efforts by an emerging power to play an influential role in global governance. Horizontal legitimacy is extended by the incumbent great powers when they recognize that an emerging power should be accommodated or consulted on global governance, either because it has enough hard power that it cannot be ignored or because it has enough soft power that it is attractive to

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\*A leadership role in a multilateral institution that has little impact on the behavior of the major players in the international order—for example, being elected president of the Non-Aligned Movement—is not, however, an indication of emergence.

include as part of the solution to major challenges confronting the international order. A major question thus becomes how the process of emergence (which has both objective and subjective components, unlike “rising”) affects foreign policy.

When emerging powers confront a global order made by others that came before them, the question is whether they seek to reform or revise it. *Reform* is focused on the design of global governance institutions and the procedures under which the order is implemented; for example, gaining a permanent seat at the UN Security Council or influence in the multilateral institutions that design the guidelines by which international behavior is judged. *Revision* entails promoting reforms of the governance structures in conjunction with a revision of the *foundational principles* of the order. Although the academic literature in international relations tends to consider “revisionist powers” as those that would create a completely new order, we find it more useful to group those states as “revolutionary.” This additional category allows for a more nuanced analysis of the revisionist aspects of the foreign policy of emerging powers, while at the same time allowing for the possibility that revolutionary major powers may seek to overturn the international order, as Napoleonic France, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union each attempted.

Principles play important roles in international governance, particularly given the anarchic character of the international system, which has no central government to enforce binding outcomes. Principles can be used to judge whether the behavior of states is legitimate,<sup>8</sup> as well as to justify and legitimize action taken by the states powerful enough to create these foundational principles.<sup>9</sup> Foundational principles define what state behavior is proper and not proper (and therefore what kinds of behavior should be punished by the leading states in the international order). These principles may or may not be accepted by other actors in the system, even if they do not necessarily challenge the present order. A state may accept the order while disagreeing with the underlying principles if it finds the existing order advantageous or is unwilling to bear the costs of opposing the foundational principles. In the current international order, four foundational principles—two adopted from earlier Western orders and two developed under U.S. leadership in the post–World War II liberal international order—stand out.

*First Foundational Principle*

The first foundational principle defines the nature of the members of the order. The fundamental starting point for all modern international orders—a product of the series of treaties commonly referred to under the rubric “Peace of Westphalia”—is that states in the system are “sovereign,” meaning that the government of a political unit has governance rights over that unit. Although sovereignty does not mean that a state is free to do whatever it desires, the concept implies that governments decide how their state will respond to the opportunities and constraints presented by the international situation and at home. Sovereignty is violated when one state makes a decision in the name of another or replaces a government of another state. In practice, sovereignty has always been a relative concept. Although minor powers have found that right constrained, the major powers have not seen their internal affairs as subject to outside intervention.<sup>10</sup>

*Second Foundational Principle*

Although the principle of sovereignty became an important part of international relations discussions during the eighteenth century,<sup>11</sup> only with the Second Hague International Peace Conference in 1907 did members of the Western international order accept the second foundational principle that all states are equally sovereign. This claim to sovereign equality has nevertheless been constantly challenged since then, not because states try to influence the choices that other state leaders make but by the consistent attempts of states (sometimes successfully) to coerce or overthrow governments of other states that are behaving in ways with which they disagree.<sup>12</sup>

*Third and Fourth Foundational Principles*

In addition to the foundational principles regarding sovereignty and sovereign equality, the modern post-World War II liberal international order is guided by two other overarching principles. The third principle relates to the system’s efforts to safeguard the world from military aggression, in particular nuclear war. The UN Security Council and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are the key elements in this regime. A fourth principle of the liberal international order is promoting

a market-based global economic order, not only in trade but also in finance and development assistance. An emphasis on free market principles as the basis for the global economy is seen as the best path toward development and prosperity of all states, particularly after the end of the Cold War.

**BUT THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER** is also founded on a myth, which holds that its foundational principles are equally adhered to by all powers, great and small. The emerging powers have questioned this myth, claiming that the five nations with veto power in the UN Security Council—the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China—do not behave as if they are fully bound by Security Council decisions regarding the appropriate use of military force. They also do not behave as if they are fully bound by the NPT commitment toward nuclear disarmament, nor do they support the sanctioning of nuclear proliferators that they consider to be their important partners, such as India in the 1970s for the Soviet Union, India today or Israel for the United States, or North Korea for China. Similarly, countries such as Brazil regularly accuse the major powers of violating the global market-based economy principle to promote the competitiveness of their national economies, either through the use of nontariff barriers or of preferential treatment for some of their domestic industries (notoriously agriculture in Europe and the United States). From the perspective of countries in the Global South, it appears paradoxical to promote a global free market in capital but to regulate labor flows across national boundaries, regularly placing obstacles to external migration to developed economies—given that labor is as much a factor of production as capital and there is no a priori reason why it should not flow equally freely in a global economy based on free market principles. Finally, for countries such as Brazil that have been historically forced to accede to IMF conditions in return for financial assistance, the status of the U.S. dollar as the de facto global reserve currency is galling because it allows the United States to ignore many of the recommendations that international financial institutions regularly impose on other states to ensure smoothly functioning global capital markets.

The incongruence between great power behavior and the principles on which the order is based was not fully apparent until after World War II. Before then, the international system, which became global as a consequence of nineteenth-century European imperialism, operated under a thinly institutionalized governance structure built around the



balance of power among a few large states in the Global North. Parallel governance structures operated across subsets of the international system: the League of Nations was relevant for some nations, European imperialism governed others, and in the Western Hemisphere, the dominant U.S. power structured relations among states to varying degrees. Imperial European states did not accept the notion of sovereign equality of the polities of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The Pan-American Union, which included the Latin American states, was usually incapable of raising the costs to the United States of its intervening against regional governments perceived as detrimental to U.S. interests.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, national rather than imperial states became the basic building block of the international order, and the international system became truly global. The liberal international order created by the United States and its European allies after World War II needed to address the incongruence between the actions of major powers, which treated some states as more equal than others, and the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality preferred by the middle and smaller powers, the numbers of which were rapidly growing as decolonization proceeded. This incongruence, however, was not a problem confronted by the Soviet Union within its sphere. Its international order was based on the foundational principle that the Soviet Union provided the correct interpretation of Marxism and had the historical responsibility to lead and to intervene when necessary to protect socialism. But the United States, even though it believed that it understood how to best achieve security and prosperity for all, made no such claims of an inherent right to impose its interpretations on friend and foe alike.

### *Foundational Myth*

Therefore the United States needed a foundational myth that it felt justified its occasional violations of the principles undergirding the liberal international order. This myth would also need to indicate to the other major powers that U.S. actions running counter to the system's founding principles were intended to provide public goods, such as international security or international trade, not to overturn the global order. This myth has been referred to in many ways—all emphasizing the “exceptional” nature of the United States and both its ability and its willingness to provide public goods to the world, such as freedom,

security, and democracy.<sup>14</sup> It holds that, when confronted by norms violators, the United States sees the need (and therefore has the right) to defend the prevailing order unilaterally and in ways that, in the short term, contradict acceptable behavior in a system characterized by sovereign equality.<sup>15</sup>

The reason we label this a myth rather than a principle is that many states, including emerging powers such as Brazil, do not support episodic U.S. violations of the principles of the international order as legitimate. Yet, because they perceive the costs of opposing such unilateral behavior as outweighing its benefits, they thus accept it *de facto* without granting it legitimacy.<sup>16</sup> For example, the UN Security Council did not support the U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The subsequent U.S. invasion of Iraq and the lack of a condemnation of it by the Security Council did not indicate the other major powers' acceptance of the U.S. action as correct behavior, but rather their inability to prevent such behavior. When the United States invaded Panama in 1989, Latin American states did not believe that the United States had the right to punish Panama for transgressions of rules about the drug trade that it had unilaterally defined. The Organization of American States (of which the United States is a member) condemned the invasion as a violation of international law, yet the Latin American members took no further action to force the U.S. to desist.<sup>17</sup> This open criticism of U.S. unilateral behavior implies disagreement, not acceptance of its legitimacy.

Much of the international relations literature revolves around the choices made by great powers in maintaining the global order. It has long been preoccupied with what happens when a dominant power is overtaken by a rising power, such as when Germany twice tried to become a hegemon. Recent discussions of the implications of the rise of China for the liberal international order fall into this category.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, this book focuses on choices made by emerging states, the second-tier great powers. These are the states that have the resources to potentially affect the international system: they have more resources than middle powers, but not enough to rival the system's great powers. At this stage, emerging powers can either become followers or seek revisions and reforms of the present order's foundational myths and principles. In this book, we show that Brazil seeks revisions and reforms that would make the four principles undergirding international order more salient and more effective in fully constraining U.S. unilateral behavior. The question for dominant powers such as the United States is whether

emerging powers such as Brazil can play a constructive role in supporting the prevailing global order and can become more effective in doing so if their interests can be accommodated or whether these states' demands and behavior will corrode global governance.

### **EMERGING POWERS: WHO, WHAT, AND WHY?**

Emerging power status is determined by the accumulation of power that spans military, economic, political, and social arenas. For example, North Korea may have a large army and a few nuclear weapons, but because of its economic weakness, totalitarian governance, and repulsive social policies, it has no ability to influence anything beyond its own security; the North Korean government knows that and does not seek to become a player in discussions about the future of the international order. We argue that as states develop their power across domains relevant to the governance of the prevailing international order, they will reach a point where they will seek to "emerge" into global leadership positions. Emerging powers are identified as such because they are on a path that will move them from the middle ranks to great power ranks. No one (except their neighbors) is particularly interested in the small power that rises to a middle power position, but those countries that rise to the top rungs are watched closely.

All decisions regarding international behavior carry some costs, domestic as well as international, and international behavior of consequence will require that states pay the costs of cooperation or of confrontation.<sup>19</sup> These costs are inversely related to capabilities; therefore weaker states face greater costs than more powerful states and have a more limited range of choices available to them. All existing theories of international relations contain some argument about how costs influence choices, even those theories that postulate that costs are not always calculated rationally.<sup>20</sup>

Emerging powers face a set of choices that guide their international behavior that are unavailable to middle and small powers. These choices provide opportunities to promote their interests, and we expect them to seek out those opportunities. We can thus postulate that an emerging power has three goals as it rises in the international order. The first is to gain influence. A second corollary goal is to reduce the costs to itself of different foreign policies. A third goal is to open up new opportunities within the international system. The fundamental means of achieving

these goals is by building up its hard and soft power resources in a balance that has resonance with the interests of the major powers in the international order and is sustainable at home over the medium to long term.

Emerging powers have the same interests of other states—the defense of their sovereignty and the pursuit of national goals at minimal cost. Security against invasion or coercion is implied in defending one's sovereignty. Developing the national economy is also a strategy for defending sovereignty, because the wealthier a state is and the more diversified its economy, the less vulnerable it is to sanctions, the more costs it can absorb in pursuing its interests, and the more options it has.

But these states' behavior is fundamentally affected by the fact of emergence—a position that provides both increased vulnerabilities and increased opportunities. These powers face a high cost if they overtly challenge the prevailing order, because they have not yet achieved the levels of hard and soft power to rival the status quo major powers and thus are vulnerable to retaliation.<sup>21</sup> Note that even Brazil, which is critical of the rights of great powers to act in ways that violate the rules, does not advocate for the elimination of the permanent seats on the UN Security Council or of weighted voting at the IMF. Brazil's perspective is that some states count more than others in drawing up the international order, but once the rules are in place, all states, even the leaders of the prevailing order, must follow them. Brazil opposes an unequal distribution of influence, but argues that the inequality can be mitigated if representatives of the currently excluded states are included.

So how does an emerging power actually behave as it accumulates newfound influence? One would not expect it to be a "rule follower" because the rules, which determine the costs and benefits of behavior, were formulated by the leading powers and therefore bias those costs and benefits in their favor. Hence a new player would want to at least tweak the rules to take more account of its specific situation.

Emerging powers thus seek to revise or reform the international order to achieve greater recognition of their economic importance and political significance, as well as an influential role in international organizations that underpin global governance. But only a state that has the potential to develop into a superpower to rival the United States (or to replace it were it to decline) can conceive of replacing the existing international order; we leave it to others to discern when, if ever, the Chinese might decide that those costs are worth the expected benefits. All other

emerging powers today can at most aspire to (merely) major power status. Because being a “follower” or a “revolutionary” is not a rational strategy for emerging powers, their goals are either to reform the governing structures of that order or revise its foundational myths or both. We expect the choice to reform or revise to be determined by how much an emerging power would benefit from either approach. We argue that Brazil sees both reform and revision as attainable and beneficial for its continued development along the path to major power status.

### **SEEKING INFLUENCE: HARD AND SOFT POWER**

Joseph Nye argues that the currency of international influence lies in the use of both hard power—the use of military, political, and economic coercion or wealth to purchase allegiance—and of soft power: “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.”<sup>22</sup> We claim that the combination of hard and soft power approaches that emerging states use to seek influence in global governance varies according to those states’ geostrategic significance for the international order. An emphasis on hard power will be attractive for emerging states that are strategically valuable and relevant to leading powers. India, for example, borders both China, a U.S. rival, and Pakistan, a nuclear-armed country that is a major focus of U.S. security concerns about international Islamist terrorism. Turkey’s strategic position also makes its hard power of significance to leading states. Among the reasons that Turkey is valuable to the United States are its geostrategic position bordering Eurasia and the Middle East and its ability to project hard power along its borders into these regions. Turkey’s soft power, either in the form of cultural influence over Turkish peoples in Central Asia or religious influence in the Islamic world, is viewed much more ambivalently by leading powers.

Other emerging powers without such traditional geostrategic assets—such as Brazil and South Africa—will find it necessary to convince the existing great powers that their emergence will have a stabilizing effect on the international order because of their ability to exert soft power. This approach has the potential to convince leading powers of the value of incorporating emerging states into the existing order because of their ability to lower the costs of order maintenance. Soft power will be the preferred option for emerging countries such as Brazil and South Africa because it will generate less resistance from those at the top than pursuing

hard power. Great powers are reluctant to accept the proliferation of hard power unless it contributes to their needs, and in the absence of their strategic value, these emerging states lack that justification.

Yet neither the hard nor soft power of emerging states is likely to have a meaningful or existential impact on the security of the creators of the international order. The choice of targets of emerging states' power—which are largely either other emerging states or developing nations—reflects the fact that these emerging states have insufficient resources to aspire to be rivals of the great powers that created the international order. Using both hard and soft power for these states is a means to get “buy-in” from the leading powers for a more influential role in system governance.

However, having sufficient military power to keep great powers respectful and cautious in their behavior toward the goals and aspirations of emerging powers remains important. This perspective is captured in the Brazilian view on nuclear capabilities: they want to gain, as Japan and Germany have, the capability to produce nuclear weapons, although they promise never to develop them in normal circumstances.\*

Therefore, the most successful combinations of hard and soft power by emerging powers are often determined by great power needs. The use of hard power by emerging states is acceptable if it is oriented toward deterring systemic challengers at a lower price. From a great power perspective, emerging states' soft power should be focused on the unrepresented states in the Global South that the emerging powers claim to represent, offering great powers a less costly means to restrain minor rule breakers and expand the reach of the international order.

In the last decade, analysts have examined whether it may be possible for states to follow both hard and soft power paths to emergence. India and Brazil seem to represent differing routes to leadership positions in the international order, although both are critical of certain aspects of the prevailing international order. India has accumulated hard power, including developing nuclear weapons and a long-range strike capability. In addition, its accelerating economic development and broad global cultural influence have given India both hard and soft power capabilities, which it has used to increasingly align with the United States while

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\*Brazil's constitution prohibits the production of nuclear weapons, but the constitution can be amended or even replaced—Brazil has had six constitutions since replacing its empire with a republic in 1889.

keeping a wary eye on China's rising capabilities. Brazil, in contrast, is geostrategically secure and has deemphasized hard power and relied predominantly on soft power, seeking to emerge through its diplomatic leadership of the Global South.<sup>23</sup>

Analysts, policymakers, and the public are familiar with the hard power route to emergence and rivalry, the path that India appears to be pursuing. But the soft power route undertaken by Brazil is uncharted territory, and Japan's failure to become "number one" in the 1980s reinforces skepticism about soft power's ultimate potential. Jonathan McClory, an expert on soft power, summarizes the pro-soft power agenda well:

The ability of a state to drive change in international affairs in the 21st century will rest on shaping narratives, setting international norms, mobilizing transnational networks, and winning the battle for global public opinion. This is not to say that soft power alone will always win the day—far from it—but its relative strategic importance will continue to grow.

He also points out that

more research is needed on understanding and measuring soft power from the perspective of individual states, and how it is deployed. This could help researchers move towards outcome attribution in the use of soft power. . . . [F]uture research is needed to better understand how soft power can be leveraged to meet objectives; how soft power strategies can be evaluated; and how causal links between soft power and policy outcomes might be established.<sup>24</sup>

Brazil's extensive experience with soft power and its repeated failure to emerge to major power status make the country a particularly useful case for this research agenda.

### **WHY BRAZIL?**

We use Brazil as a case study to examine the possibility that states can pursue a soft power path to emergence. Brazil has some historical constants that allow us to discuss its national aspirations for international standing without detailed attention to variations in domestic policy or

politics. Yet this does not mean that the country is a black box internally: domestic politics do play a key role in developing Brazil's hard and soft power, and when these politics lead to internal disarray, they fundamentally undermine Brazil's international influence.

Whether as an empire or republic, dictatorship or democracy, or left, right, or center, Brazilian governments have shared a key aspiration to seek an influential global role for their country. And they have done so even in the face of a lack of interest or opposition from their own citizens. A recent but emblematic example can be seen in the opening speech by President Dilma Rousseff to the UN General Assembly in 2013; in that speech she staked out Brazil's leadership claim to the global Internet freedom agenda and blasted the United States for abrogating to itself the right to use the Internet to spy on governments and citizens of countries posing no threat to it. She delivered that speech even after weathering a summer of protest by Brazilians tired of government spending on international vanity projects such as the 2014 World Football Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics.<sup>25</sup>

Another reason to use Brazil as a case study is that it has aspired to great power status for more than a century, permitting us to observe Brazil's efforts to use hard and soft power to emerge, as well as the reactions of status quo powers to its efforts and designs. Brazil has always supported the liberal status quo during its ascendant periods and been on the winning side in the major confrontations against revolutionary powers that sought to overthrow that global order (in both World Wars I and II and in the Cold War). Brazil believes that it should be accepted in the leadership councils because of its geographic and economic size and because of its peaceful and responsible (from its point of view) international behavior, as evidenced by its consistent support for the liberal international order in moments of great international crisis. Moreover, Brazil has not instigated any major international crisis, preferring to pursue diplomatic avenues for the resolution of conflict.<sup>26</sup>

Even when external constraints placed on Brazil have hindered its international goals, the country has not fought to undermine the international system. In 1926, for example, the League of Nations granted Germany, the defeated country in World War I, a permanent seat at its council, but not Brazil, a state on the winning side. Brazil withdrew from the organization in protest, but did not seek to demonstrate its power through pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy. Similarly, in the creation of the United Nations, Brazil, whose troops participated in the Allied



victory in Italy, aspired to a permanent seat on the Security Council, but the Soviet Union and Great Britain vetoed that arrangement. Brazil, however, accepted recognition of its status as an important but not major international player, instead establishing the tradition of being the first country to speak at the annual General Debates of the UN General Assembly.<sup>27</sup> Brazil is also tied with Japan for the most times a country has been elected to the UN Security Council as a nonpermanent member: both have been elected ten times.

However, this approach has meant that Brazil generally has not held much strategic importance for the incumbent great powers in recent decades, reinforcing the role of soft power in Brazil's attempts to influence global order. Brazil perceives these efforts as reflections of its commitment to a politically democratic and basically capitalist world. Its vision of capitalism, however, falls more along the lines of European social democracy than the U.S. advocacy of liberal market economics. In fact Brazil seeks not only the welfare state of the Europeans but also more "guidance" by the state over the economy than even West Europeans are willing to accept these days.

Brazil is an important case for the analysis of soft power. According to the Soft Power Index developed by the Institute for Government and *Monocle Magazine*, in 2012 Brazil ranked seventeenth in potential influence. This position put Brazil at the top of developing countries, with Turkey at twenty, South Africa at thirty-four, India at number thirty-six, and China at twenty-two. The authors of the study cautioned, "Many states routinely undermine their own soft power with poorly-conceived policies, short-sighted spending decisions, domestic actions, or clumsy messaging."<sup>28</sup> Brazil has been vulnerable to domestic turmoil, as occurred in the 1980s when the military regime was unable to confront inflation and once again today. The country is therefore a poster child for learning about soft power: one needs both the appropriate international context for it to be relevant and domestic successes in order to wield it.

This history does not mean that Brazil sees no place for hard power. Although Brazil has no major territorial disputes with its neighbors,\* Brazilian governments have been concerned with preventing anyone

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\*A small demarcation issue exists with Uruguay, but this does not threaten to become a major complication.

from either seizing the Amazon in the name of preserving biodiversity or the environment or the pre-salt hydrocarbon basins in the Brazilian Atlantic Ocean.<sup>29</sup> The country also believes that having a modern and effective military will significantly enhance its respect and reputation and will provide it influence internationally. Baron Rio Branco, Brazil's foreign minister from 1902–10 and the father of Brazilian diplomacy, expressed this sentiment after his sole loss in international arbitration in 1903.<sup>30</sup> In 2012 his views were echoed by a rear admiral at the Seventh Annual Conference on National Security at the Naval War College, when he linked “equipped, trained and credible” military force to the good image a country must have to exercise soft power.<sup>31</sup>

Brazil has accepted systemic constraints, even when they present obstacles to the achievement of its international goals, and its efforts to reform the system to accommodate its growing power could well be achieved without overthrowing the global order. But Brazil has also articulated the need to revise some aspects of the global order to more adequately reflect the interests of developing nations. It has tried to revise current norms to favor developing states more explicitly, such as reinforcing the norm of sovereign equality or making demands that great powers follow the rules. These revisionist aspects of Brazil's foreign policy therefore have posed challenges to incumbent great power preferences. Clearly the incumbent great powers do not all share the same allegiance to liberal security and political, economic, and social principles: witness the contrasting approaches of the United States, France, Great Britain, and China. But they all oppose Brazil's demands that sovereign equality be an effective, not merely a symbolic, norm. We see in the following chapters how opposition from incumbent powers has influenced Brazilian behavior as it is emerging and how the combination of opposition by great powers and strategic mistakes by Brazil both accounts for its past failure to emerge and for the difficulties it faces in emerging today.

### **CHARTING BRAZIL'S PATH TO EMERGENCE**

In 2016, it seems clear that Brazil's efforts to emerge during the past two decades once again stalled before enabling it to achieve major power status.<sup>32</sup> During this period, Brazil sought to play a role across the key domains that the present international order purports to regulate: international security, international economy, and the global commons. Brazil's

aspirations to secure a more influential role in international security were thwarted by the failure to secure a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Even when Brazil gains a seat at the major power table on issues such as global trade, it is not powerful enough to prevent other major powers from shifting discussions to entirely different institutional settings; for example, from the World Trade Organization—where Brazil has a major leadership role—to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations, from which Brazil is excluded.

As we show in this book, Brazil's attempt to rise and its failure to emerge at the beginning of the twenty-first century reflect a historical pattern: periodically, favorable international and/or domestic conditions materialize that—in combination—give Brazil's leaders the hope that attaining great power status is once again possible. Brazil sought to emerge during periods of great challenge to the liberal international order—after both World War I and World War II—when it believed that its marginal contribution of hard power and soft power would have an outside importance to the winners of these global struggles. It also sought to emerge during periods where the liberal international order appeared open to reform and revision, such as after the U.S. defeat in Vietnam in the 1970s and the U.S. retrenchment following the Iraq war in the 2000s.

However, Brazil's leaders have found repeatedly that they lack sufficient power, or even the right combination of power, to compel and attract incumbent great powers to accept them as one of their own or to incorporate Brazil's revisionist proposals into a new international order. For example, Brazil's efforts to build up its hard power during the 1970s by developing a large defense industry and a covert nuclear program were met with opposition and hostility from the United States. Brazil's efforts to use soft power to intervene in the security and economic domains in the 2000s, even in combination with other emerging powers such as China and India, came to naught. And when international conditions become less favorable for Brazil's exercise of power, the weakness of its domestic institutions, which have been historically prone to economic and political crisis, become more salient and further undercut the hard and soft power needed to power its emergence.

And now, the international system is changing in ways that are less “friendly” to the use of soft power, as indicated by Russia's militarized conflicts with Georgia and Ukraine and China's saber rattling in the

South and East China Seas. In addition, Brazil's own store of soft power may be at risk—its great economic achievements of the past decade, which led to marked reductions in inequality and poverty and a great expansion of the middle class, have been tarnished by a vast corruption scandal that has engulfed the Brazilian political and economic elite.

Brazil's aspirations, attempts, and failures to emerge—and particularly its latest try, which relied almost entirely on soft power—have important implications for international relations theory. In each of the cases examined in this book, it is clear that Brazil's leaders never accepted the legitimacy of an international order in which leading powers could violate norms and rules without facing consequences. We suggest that, although a soft power path to great power status may be possible, it is actually the more difficult path for emerging powers to pursue. Major powers may have highly unattractive domestic policies and serious economic weaknesses, but if they have the right kind of hard power, they remain globally influential. Contemporary Russia under Putin is a case in point: its economy is increasingly strained, its politics more and more illiberal, yet with a full arsenal of nuclear weapons and a reviving conventional military capability, no one would deny that Russia remains an influential power. Soft power, which is all too often misunderstood by governments as diplomacy, is actually based on the attraction of a state's domestic model. And this means that until a country like Brazil achieves a stable, rather than episodically attractive, model for its domestic political, economic, and social order, its use of soft power will be prisoner to the ebb and flow of its internal situation.

This book examines Brazil's efforts to emerge across time and across the various domains most relevant to the liberal international order: security, economics, and the global commons. Chapter 2 reviews Brazil's history of attempting to emerge and failing to do so during the twentieth century, examining closely its foreign policy during World War I, World War II, and the height of the Cold War in the 1970s. Chapter 3 analyzes the rise and stall of Brazilian foreign policy during the past twenty years, beginning with the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, through the peak of Brazil's latest rise under Luis "Lula" Inacio da Silva, and up until the doldrums of Dilma Rousseff's second term in office. In chapter 4, we turn to Brazil's efforts to influence order making and international security during its most recent attempt to emerge. Chapter 5 considers Brazil's efforts to reform global economic governance during the same period. Chapter 6 focuses on Brazil's role in proposing and

maintaining international regimes to regulate the global commons, examining two proposals that became globally significant during its most recent attempt to emerge: climate change and global Internet governance. We conclude with a chapter that reviews how Brazil has attempted to influence global order across time and why it so often has failed, and consider three scenarios for how Brazil might attempt to emerge once again in the future.

