The Politics of Brazilian Foreign Policy and Its Analytical Challenges

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The Politics of Brazilian Foreign Policy and Its Analytical Challenges

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Starting from the perspective that foreign policy is a public policy, this article discusses the conceptual and political implications of the new configuration of Brazilian foreign policy. Therefore, we abandon its automatic association with the cruder versions of realism and bring it to the field of politics, thus recognizing that its formulation and implementation fall into the dynamics of governmental choices which, in turn, stem from negotiations within coalitions, bargaining, disputes, and agreements between representatives of diverse interests. As a result, we remove foreign policy from a condition linked to inertial and supposedly self-evident and/or permanent national interests (which would be protected from injunctions of cyclical nature related to partisan politics) and undress it of features generally attributed to so-called state policies. Finally, we suggest ways for an innovative research agenda on the role of diplomatic agency, political institutions, and nonstate actors in Brazil's foreign policy.

It used to be common among foreign policy analysts both from academia and from the media to ascribe the sources of Brazilian foreign policy mainly to a single agency. The main responsibility for Brazilian foreign policy making was generally attributed to either an individual (generally, the President or the Foreign Minister) or an institution (the Foreign Ministry, best known as *Itamaraty*). The reasons for this are well known: On the one hand, Brazilian presidentialism concentrates too much agency in the president's hands (Abranches 1988), giving him/her, when particularly attentive to foreign policy issues, a great latitude for action. On the other hand, the long-standing professionalism of Brazilian

diplomats thanks to the process of institutionalization of Brazilian diplomacy, gives it a highly complex, bureaucratic, and professional profile (Cheibub 1985), and therefore, a strong authority to formulate foreign policy even when the presidency was being conducted by strong hands.

On top of such distinctive aspects, twenty-one years of authoritarian regime (1964–1985)[1] with very restricted political participation (a weak Congress with limited scope for action and a silenced civil society) greatly reinforced this picture by insulating foreign policy questions from public debates. Although nowadays it is still possible to attribute a major role to presidents, foreign ministers, and diplomats in the foreign policy formulation process, the time for ascribing them a relative autonomy or even a quasimonopoly in this process has long since passed.

Similarly, it used to be common to attribute exclusively the work of handling issues of high political and strategic sensibility (the so-called *high politics*) to the Brazilian diplomacy. Today, however, such attribution suffers from the very difficulty of distinguishing between high and low politics, as well as from the fact that traditional areas of low politics (culture, education, health, and technical cooperation for development) may actually play an important role in the projection of regional and global power. Finally, if the strong presence of Itamaraty in the decision-making arena of foreign policy and its alleged isolation from public debates have led some analysts in the past to follow Henry Kissinger's maxim that "foreign policy begins where domestic policy ends" (Kissinger 1969, 27), this hypothesis entails a very different conceptualization of foreign policy from the one adopted in this article.

In light of this, we believe that Brazilian foreign policy today requires new parameters of investigation that can incorporate the diverse range of actors present in its decision-making process, as well as ways of evaluating distinct forms of participation which take into account the multiple kinds of political interaction (influence, participation, cooperation, resistance, and conflict). In this article, we seek to discuss what we call a new configuration of Brazilian foreign policy, introducing some of its characteristics and discussing how to face them analytically. We do this based on the strong belief that foreign policy is a governmental action like any other public policy. In the Brazilian case, if foreign policy has not yet been looked at as public policy, this has been due to Itamaraty's historically prominent position and to a democratic deficit in the national political life. Therefore, we claim for the reinforcement of the intellectual dialogue between foreign policy and domestic policy analysts, both in Brazil and elsewhere, a move that we believe will make the understanding of foreign policy not only more consistent but also more politically relevant (Ingram and Fiederlei 1988).

In order to do so, we first offer a brief overview of how the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has developed in the academic world, especially in Brazil. Following that, we introduce new research questions emerging from contemporary world politics as well as from the particular scenario of Brazilian politics. We then present and analyze some areas in which the multiplicity of agendas and actors clearly indicates this sense of change and confirms the thesis that foreign policy should also be analyzed as public policy. To conclude, we suggest some paths for future investigation and analysis. We thus aim to contribute to strengthening the research agenda of Brazilian foreign policy and to offering new ideas that

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[1]On April 1, 1964 a military *coup détat* supported by rightwing conservative civilian politicians overthrew president João Goulart (1961–64), who had taken over the presidency after president Janio Quadros resignation (1961). That was the first moment of a long period of political distress during which five army generals and one military junta governed Brazil under very restrictive legislation and no respect for human rights. In 1985, civilian politician Tancredo Neves was elected as president by the congress after a period of eight years of gradual political liberalization, which started still under military rule. A serious disease, however, took the life of Mr. Neves before he could take over the presidency. Also indirectly elected, vice president José Sarney was appointed the new president. The political transition from the authoritarian regime to democracy was then initiated.

could also be useful for analyzing foreign policy determinants in any other country.

FPA in Brazil: A Brief Overview

Since the publication of Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin's (1954) seminal work—*Decision Making Process as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*—FPA has included the domestic level, and in particular the decision-making process, as an explanatory variable for states' behavior on the international level. By including the contributions of the liberal tradition in the field of international relations (IR)—in particular the role of individuals and institutions in the process of policy formulation—FPA has affirmed the power of agents in states' international choices. Converging with this vision, Sprout and Sprout (1956) highlighted the importance of the perceptions and interpretations of individuals and groups about the international context in FPA.

The conflict in Vietnam (1965–1973) and the controversies coming out of the US Congress as well as public opinion contributed to the conviction that understanding the motivations and strategies of American foreign policy required taking domestic variables into account. With the publication of *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, Rosenau (1967a, 1967b) reinforced the premise that domestic actors and factors were as relevant in the formulation of foreign policy as the international variables, strengthening his previous argument (1966) concerning the need to develop a theory that would take into account the different levels of analysis to explain states' foreign policy. A few years later, another very relevant study contributed to the thesis that it was necessary to "open the black box" of the state: Allison's research (1971) on the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. In this way, FPA continued to expand toward different approaches to the study of states' international behavior until structural realism became theoretically dominant. The publication and widespread acceptance of Kenneth Waltz' *Theory of International Politics, in 1979*, however, greatly contributed to relegating FPA to a secondary plane of concern for a few years.

During this period of relatively low visibility of FPA in the United States, a distinct picture characterized Brazil. Before the 1980s, studies about international politics and Brazilian foreign policy were spread over disciplinary fields other than IR (such as History, Public Law, and Journalism), as well as in books and articles by diplomats. After 1980, contributions about Brazil's international behavior published by younger academics who had benefitted from the institutionalization of the social sciences and the emergence of national graduate programs began to constitute what could strictly be seen as a Brazilian academic community of IR specialists in addition to the works signed by journalists and diplomats who were considered hitherto the main analysts of IR and Brazilian foreign policy (Pinheiro and Vedoveli 2012). Moreover, these scholars started to pay attention to the more flexible and proactive behavior of developing countries due to increasing economic multipolarity and therefore to seek theoretical perspectives on decision making that could provide analytical tools to understand the more autonomous foreign policy of peripheral and semiperipheral states during the Cold War, despite the systemic and structural restrictions. Indeed, at least in the Latin American context marked by US hegemony, systemic and structural theses could not fully explain the search for autonomy, which led these analysts (Moura 1980; Lima 1986; Camargo and Vasquez-Ocampo 1988; Hirst 1992, to mention just a few) to look for alternative perspectives to understand, interpret, and explain foreign policy under Getulio Vargas (1930–45 and 1951–54) and under the authoritarian regime (1964–1985).

The interest for Brazilian foreign policy decision-making processes was gradually enlarged and strengthened also thanks to two distinct factors: academically,

the increasing dialogue between Brazilian scholars and the IR community, either by means of their graduate studies in European and North American universities or their participation in international conferences sponsored by IR associations all over the world (Herz 2002; Salomon and Letícia 2013); and politically, the redemocratization of the political regime and the economic liberalization, which led to an increasing number of actors and interests in foreign policy agendas. Moreover, developments such as the end of the Cold War, globalization, the information technology revolution, and the rise of transnational networks of activists and social movements, *inter alia*, were responsible for the outstanding diversification of theIR agenda (Salomon and Letícia 2013), making the set of international constraints on foreign policy much less predictable. By way of example, we could recall the Brazil–US World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on pharmaceutical property rights and agricultural subsidies (Oliveira 2007) and Brazil's participation in the international climate change regime (Viola 2004). Worldwide, various analysts started referring to the rise of a *new foreign policy* (Hill 2003a; Neack 2003; Hudson 2005), a research agenda that would settle more deeply in Brazil in the transition to the twenty-first century.

Brazilian Foreign Policy: New Agendas and Agents

Until recently, it was common to refer to Brazilian foreign policy as a state policy relatively immune to changes and to the interference of governmental agencies, businesses, media, and civil society. This is in part due to the professionalism and negotiation capacities of Itamaraty and its relative autonomy in defining Brazilian foreign policy agendas, as well as results from its historical process of institutionalization (Cheibub 1985). Nevertheless, since the transition of the 1980s and 1990s, several events illustrate a loss of this alleged and somehow cult-like belief in the autonomy of Itamaraty. A first movement of exodus of diplomats to other governmental agencies[2] during the early 1980s was followed by a second associated movement in the 1990s, marked by an increasing presence of diplomats in the state apparatus due to a deeper integration of foreign policy issues by other governmental agencies (França and Sanchez Badin 2010). The latter was due in large part to the changing nature of domestic issues, which interacted with the effects of political, economic, and cultural globalization to increasingly resemble international issues. However, the presence of diplomats within other governmental agencies created awareness of the potential articulations and tensions between domestic policies and Brazilian foreign policy, as discussed by several authors in Pinheiro and Milani (2012). As a result, what was once a commonsense argument—the relative autonomy and bureaucratic insulation of the Foreign Ministry in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy[3]—started to be questioned.

In light of this new scenario, we should ask ourselves: Is it also possible to speak of a new decision-making configuration within Brazilian foreign policy today? In which way would this supposedly new configuration derive, or even promote, a reconfiguration of foreign policy itself? As will be argued, recent studies point to

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[2]As Cheibub points out (1985, 130), this movement was mainly caused by diplomats' perceptions that their salaries were quite low. It should be emphasized, however, that the integration of diplomats by other agencies was possible only because of a recognition of the high quality of their professional training.

[3]In this respect, we would like to highlight that although it is correct to affirm that the Brazilian diplomatic agency, because of its institutional characteristics, was strongly preserved from political injunctions throughout its history, it would not be correct to postulate complete autonomy or isolation. If in its infancy, as an independent institution, public interests overlapped with private concerns due to the patrimonialism that characterized national politics in general (Cheibub 1985), after this period, sectorial policy always had access to how public policy was being made, including foreign policy. The difference was mainly in the absence of regular channels of transmission of the demands of social interests for state agencies, as well as (and for good reason) the possibility of these agencies selectively absorbing the demands of society.

a plurality of agents and actors of Brazilian foreign policy. This plurality involves not only state actors that have not been traditionally tied to the alleged autonomy of Itamaraty (federal ministries and agencies, subnational entities, etc.) but also innumerable nonstate actors and social movements that may defend public and collective interests (public health, human rights, education, culture, and so on) and the interests of specific groups and economic sectors in Brazilian society (associations, nongovernment organizations [NGOs], and businesses) (Lima 2009; Carvalho 2010; Mesquita 2012).

This plurality of actors and agents stems from the fact that both the international and the domestic orders—despite structural differences and inequalities within and between them—leave open, sometimes unpredictably, various spaces for political action. In this sense, plurality ends up challenging our analytic capacity for locating with any precision the institutional locus and the proper agent of foreign policy decision making. The plurality of actors and agents in Brazilian foreign policy (such as international departments of "domestic" ministries and a range of international technical cooperation agents) creates, in fact, a growing complexity in the decision-making process itself.[4]

These events have made it necessary for academics to reinvent their research agendas and theoretical frameworks for explaining who makes foreign policy decisions and how. Some scholars thus began to speak of a *pluralization* of Brazilian foreign policy actors as well as of the strengthening of presidential diplomacy (Danese 1999; Cason and Power 2009), whereas others started to refer to the *horizontalization* and *verticalization* of the decision-making process (Pinheiro 2009; França and Sanchez Badin 2010).

Other researchers joined the field. Works that sought to understand this new reality include discussions on the possibility of a reconfiguration of foreign policy. This is the case, for example, of research on the distribution of constitutional powers in foreign policy at both the executive and the legislative levels (França and Sanchez Badin 2010; Silva et al. 2010). Other research showed that the participation or influence of the legislature in formulating foreign policy does not necessarily occur through institutional mechanisms between the branches of government but through political practice (Alexandre 2006; Diniz and Ribeiro 2008; Anastasia, Mendonça, and Almeida 2012), revealing the stakes of some congressmen in foreign policy and negating a previous hypothesis about the legislature's relative abdication of foreign policy themes (Lima and Santos 2001).

Other research highlights include studies that focused on the implications of the presence of different executive agencies, and of their relationship with organized social actors, on the actual content of foreign policy. This group includes Faria, Nogueira, and Lopes (2012), who described the role of Itamaraty as a coordinator of distinct governmental agencies, and the contributions by Pinheiro and Milani (2012), which analyze the participation of the General Secretariat to the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministries of Health, Culture, and Education, and the subnational entities in the formulation of Brazilian foreign policy. Beyond the field of state institutions, other studies offer relevant contributions to the reflection on civil society's participation in the debate and/or practice of Brazilian foreign policy. To cite a few, we recall the analysis of organized civil society's participation in the United Nations social conferences of the 1990s (Lima 2009) as well as research on the work of civil entities in the formulation of policies related to Mercosur (Mesquita 2012). These studies on Brazilian foreign policy analyze distinct dimensions of today's foreign policy formulation. Based on this wide and diverse set of research projects, we are able to build some common denominators

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[4]It is true that this reconfiguration of the decision-making arena did not happen only in Brazil. Other developing countries have also experienced these changes and to some extent also due to similar reasons.

that may help us think about the contemporary configuration of Brazilian foreign policy, its politics, and the related analytical challenges.

Besides offering evidence that sustains the hypothesis of the constitutive nature of today's international issues, it is necessary to adopt a different perspective from which we can draw a renewed set of theoretical categories and interpretative frameworks to better understand and analyze states' foreign policy, especially in Brazil. We refer here to the revitalization of the field of FPA within IR, or rather, to the return of analytical presumptions that understand foreign policy as a result of initiatives taken by different actors (mainly, but not exclusively, from the state) in interaction with the international environment.

It is clear then, based on the above statements, that the fundamentals of realism, in which the notion of national interest is detached from a comprehensive theory of the state, fail to take into account the contemporary transformations in the field of foreign policy. The premises affirmed here speak to a series of challenges:If foreign policy remains an important, even if transformed, locus of agency, what other actors besides the state would be endowed with agency in foreign policy? If domestic and external power relations are diluted, how can policies and mechanisms be integrated? How can we think about foreign policy as a continuum between the national and the international? In trying to distinguish the contents of foreign policy and IR, are we to define everything that is politically and strategically projected outside national borders as foreign policy? In normative terms, considering that foreign policy involves values, identity, and principles, should there be complete citizen transparency? Would it be relevant to account publicly on issues of foreign policy? How do we deal with the notion of responsibility in the field of foreign policy? Who should the state and its agencies be considered responsible to?

If these questions are already visible within countries of the North, they are just as valid in developing countries. Furthermore, the combination between a condition of young democracies with the recent implementation of economic liberalization programs has generated in these countries a growth in the number of actors and a significant diversification of interests, creating a political environment that could be characterized by a pent-up demand for participation in international issues. As Lima (2000, 295) explains in the Brazilian context, the simultaneity of political and economic liberalization gave way to a new phase in the country's foreign policy, which she calls "competitive integration." The latter is marked by a new reality whereby foreign policy, previously characterized by policies without (or with very low) distributional effects, had to learn to take into account sectorial interests, which impacted the alleged relative autonomy of Itamaraty in conducting foreign policy.

Foreign Policy as Public Policy

States and Governments in Action

Something that seems to converge across the different studies entertained above is the need to consider foreign policy as public policy, that is, the state and the government acting on the international level. This implies understanding the government as a state institution—the main one, indeed—and governments as the producers of public policy (Souza 2006). In fact, one must also consider the participation of other state institutions in this production—the legislative and judicial powers. Finally, we do not deny the important role played by other actors in this production (confederations, corporations, NGOs, and social movements), which may have great capacity to influence the content of policy. Therefore, their presence should be problematized and incorporated into research (Ingram and Fiederlein 1988). Nevertheless, we reaffirm the premise that the responsibility for public policies, including foreign policy, falls to the government that implements

them. Together with Parsons (1995, 3), we could argue that the idea of foreign policy as public policy presupposes that there is a sphere of politics and a domain of life that "is not private or purely individual, but held in common."

Such a concept allows, in the first place, differentiating foreign policy from international action by nonstate actors. Corporations, NGOs, and social movements, among others, are all actors of IR, acting on the international arena with defined goals and objectives, but whose action cannot be labeled "foreign policy."

Second, this idea allows us to conceptually reaffirm the link between foreign policy and some form of "state authorization." The primary actors of foreign policy, according to Articles 21 and 84 of the Brazilian Constitution, must give a seal of institutional, judicial, and political approval: the federal agencies of subnational entities that seek to build a foreign aid agenda, for example, must obtain approval from a primary actor that can guarantee state authority in the conduct of this foreign policy, according to the constitutional powers of the federal Brazilian system. It is not for us to authoritatively define who this actor with a public seal is, but the examples of agenda pluralization listed above indicate that, analytically, it is no longer possible to assume a monopoly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

There is indeed much organized foreign action by the Brazilian state beyond the walls of Itamaraty. What remains is to understand whether we can call them foreign policy, in the sense of a public policy authorized by the state. Put differently, it seems to us that the academic research on the practices of foreign policy (Pinheiro and Milani 2012) reveals the dynamic plurality and constant evolution of foreign action by the Brazilian state, even as we continue to lack a political and juridical arrangement capable of reflecting this reality and ensuring a more democratic institutional path (subject to the control of society). Analytically, it would be easier to recognize that a significant level of foreign action would result, ipso facto, in the plurality of the field of Brazilian foreign policy. We do not believe, however, that this is a more accurate and more democratic way to create a new institutional arrangement for the Brazilian foreign policy making. A simplified and automatic recognition of plurality could result in the fragmentation of foreign policy agendas and the possible ambiguity or inconsistency of policy, even in cases where the greater presence of various agencies of the federal bureaucracy in international issues is articulated with a search for greater capacity to implement their agendas through increasingly specialized and robust international consultancies (França and Sanchez Badin 2010). Plurality coexists with hierarchies, asymmetries, and distinctive competencies among actors, with varying views of what constitutes the public good. Coordination and convergence are fundamental to our idea of foreign policy as a public policy—an idea that is both conceptual and political.

In the third place, by understanding foreign policy as a public policy, we are breaking with the crude realist assumption that state behavior can only be understood in reference to the national interest of an intentional actor, thus building a bridge between foreign policy and domestic politics. In other words, we are recognizing that its formulation and implementation is also part of the choice dynamics of governments and their nonlinear relationships with stakeholders in society, a condition that hitherto most of the studies about Brazilian foreign policy were unable to take into account or even be committed to look for it. Governmental choices depend on coalitions, bargaining, disputes, and agreements among representatives of diverse interests, which express the very dynamic of politics. As a result, we are removing foreign policy from an inertial condition associated with supposedly self-evident and permanent national interests, immune to the contingencies of partisan politics.[5] We are, then, stripping foreign policy of the

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[5]That being said, even if Itamaraty is to be considered relatively apolitical compared to other ministries, Amorim Neto (2006, 57) reminds us that its employees are "also minions of the president," which means that Itamaraty may be indirectly "contaminated" by political dynamics.

characteristics usually assigned to a "state policy," which previously granted it a unique position compared with other government public policies.

It is worth mentioning that even policies that are considered to be state policies did not emerge as such. That is, their ontology is not grounded on the state but on governments and their interactions with various governmental institutions and with social actors. Such interactions vary in intensity and frequency depending on the domestic structure and, moreover, on the commitment of the *polis* to democracy.

At some point, therefore, state policies were undoubtedly government policies. There are numerous variables that explain the eventual transformation of a government policy into a state policy, ranging from its actual or alleged efficiency (even if for rhetorical and ideological purposes) to its sclerosis for lack of alternatives. In this sense, just as government policies may become state policies in particular historical periods and political contexts, they may also stop being so. Studying foreign policy as public policy, theoretically and methodologically, implies trying "to understand how and why governments choose certain actions" (Souza 2006, 22), thus conceding it a political dimension of contingency and transience. In saying so, we are making a strong claim for bringing the contributions of Political Science back to the study of foreign policy, but not only from the perspective of decision making. Moreover, we are basing our argument on the normative assumption that foreign policy must also follow the public criteria of transparency, accountability, participation, and responsibility. Finally, we also take the contributions of Sociology as necessary to understand the role of diplomatic agency in terms of learning and socialization.

Foreign (Public) Policy and Democracy

Despite the premise of its uniqueness due to the fact of being subject, in varying degrees, to limits and opportunities generated internationally, foreign policy can and should be seen as a public policy because, like all public policies, it is also a function of institutional contingencies, rules, and preferences of domestic actors. This is not a new statement. It has already been made by several experts in the academic communities of core countries (Lowi 1964[6]; Ingram and Fiederlein 1988) as well as of peripheral countries (Lafer 1993; Sanchez Badin et al. 2006; Lima 2013; Lopes 2013; Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Tokatlian and Merke 2013). But if this thesis is applicable to all countries, why underline the Brazilian case in particular?[7] The assumption that Brazilian foreign policy should be seen as a public

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[6]Despite the initial refusal of Theodore Lowi to include foreign policy in his effort to categorize public policy unless it presented direct domestic implications, in 1972 the same Lowi would decide to address this issue. Thus, while in 1964, Lowi claimed that "Foreign policy, for which no appropriate '-tion' word has been found, is obviously a fourth category. It is not dealt with here for two reasons. First, it overly extends the analysis. Second, and of greater importance, it is in many ways not part of the same universe, because in foreign policy making America is only a subsystem. Winston Churchill, among other foreigners, has consistently participated in our foreign policy decisions. Of course, those aspects of foreign and military policy that have direct domestic implications are included in my scheme" (1964, 689); eight years later, according to Ingram and Fiederlein, "Lowi added a fourth category called constituent policy to his 1964 classification scheme, and although this category was mainly residual, he described it as having particular relevance to foreign policy. Again in a footnote he remarked that some variation of foreign policy 'can be captured in the fourth category, constituent or systems maintenance'. He went on to say, 'I have argued at length that the so-called foreign policy area actually breaks down into the four types captured in the paradigm.... And, as shown with different types of agricultural policy, the politics of each type of foreign policy will vary accordingly' (1972, 310). Examples of such different foreign policy types are not provided, however" (1988, 727).

[7]By way of example, it is worth noting that despite the differences between the dynamics of foreign policy formulation in Brazil and Argentina—the latter being historically more politicized than the former (Arbilla 2000), which could lead to the assumption that research on the domestic constraints of its formulation and content was more advanced—a phenomenon similar to what happens in Brazil occurs in Argentina, where the dialogue between policymakers and scholars of IR is also relatively incipient, leading to prioritize the analysis of its final content over the characteristics of the decision-making process that shapes it (Tokatlian and Merke, 2013).

policy offers an alternative vision to those which prioritize the analysis of content either because of a realist inclination or simply because they value research on results more than research on processes. However, it differs mainly from theses that sustain the uniqueness of foreign policy—which are generally pursued by their operators based either on the alleged need to ensure coherence and stability to foreign policy in the long term or on the belief that the professional training and the ethos of national diplomatic agents would impose an "holistic vision of the national interest and the prudential judgment of the common good" (Lima 2013, 144). Such theses reject the conception of foreign policy as the result of a choice between different, and often conflicting, alternatives.

It must be noted, finally, that in defending this position, we are not saying that in the past or present, Brazilian foreign policy qua public policy results from a democratic process of formulation. In other words, although all foreign policy is a public policy, not all public policy is formulated democratically, even if they should be precisely because of their public nature.[8]

At this point, it is important to make a clarification. If public policies were defined as "the pure and genuine expression of the general interest of society, because its legitimacy derives from a democratic legislative process or from the application of technically rational criteria and knowledge to the solution of social problems" (Oszlak 1982, 20), one certainly could not admit its existence inside nondemocratic regimes. But this is, in our view, an ideal interpretation of public policy—ideal both in the Weberian sense and in the sense of the will of those who formulate them. Public policies also exist in authoritarian regimes. They are public, however, in what refers to their goal, but only partially public—or even private—in their formulation.[9] From an analytical standpoint, this interpretation of public policy that highlights its public goal and denounces the democratic deficit of its formulation seems quite appropriate to us when it comes to analyzing Brazilian foreign policy, both past and present. By admitting the possibility of its existence, we not only reaffirm our analytical commitment to investigate it as such but also simultaneously contribute to reveal—and denounce—the role partiality and favoritism play in their formulation, highlighting our normative commitment toward improving a democratic foreign (public) policy.[10]

We do not deny, however, that there are differences between foreign policy conceived as a public policy and other public policies implemented primarily in a

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[8]Not coincidentally, it was possible for Pinheiro to analyze a group of foreign policy decisions taken during the Brazilian authoritarian regime using the tools of Public Policy Analysis, in particular of the policy production cycle (Pinheiro 2013).

[9]If this is so, their formulation "is no longer the result of a process of negotiation and compromise among different social sectors and political forces and becomes much more closely depend on the initiative or proposal of technical groups and trusted employees (. . .). However, [as the author continues] these circumstances should not necessarily be seen as indicative of greater 'relative autonomy' of the state. Public policies keep privileging certain sectors of national or transnational capital over others. This, however, does not usually follow from sectoral pressures, but results from implicit or explicit agreements with certain business groups, i.e., it produces a separation of the state in relation to class organizations, even if not in relation to class interests" (Oszlak 1982, 39).

[10]In saying so, we concur with Lopes (2013, 28) in defending the democratization of Brazilian foreign policy. Unlike this author, however, we do not propose to discuss whether or not this is plausible, reflecting on the potential and the limits of this hypothesis; neither restricts our analysis on the limits of democratization of foreign policy to the cultural and organizational aspects of Itamaraty. We believe that, from an analytical point of view, foreign policy in general, and Brazilian foreign policy in particular, should always be seen as public policy, even if we can identify a set of contingent elements that distance it from democracy in moments or in issue areas where the interests that it contemplates are restricted and selective. In other words, as primarily a government policy, foreign policy is and should always be regarded as a public policy even when—for those who defend that its formulation should be separated from and immune to the interests of society on the basis of its alleged condition of "state policy"—the apparent lack of democratic accountability during its formulation and conduct make it look more like a private policy in its decision-making process, although public in its goal. In our postulation, the adjective "public" refers to the idea of belonging or relating to a political community, thus allowing that the analysis of the content of foreign policy (the "what") and the research on its formulation and conduct (the "how") may contribute to its greater transparency and accountability.

domestic setting, beginning with the fact that foreign policy seems to display more continuity than other public policies "whether because of the narrow rules of power politics, as the realists would say, or because of the constraints of interdependence, in the liberal view" (Hill 2003b, 242). Besides, while the origin and destination of public policies were restricted until recently to the domestic environment, foreign policy was, by definition, always directed toward an external environment (although it has always responded to internal and external variables).

Nevertheless, the days are gone when public policy was derived from, and oriented solely toward, domestic issues. In this way, the classic realist idea that foreign policy begins where domestic policy ends must be done away with. It is nonetheless important to note that, as put by Alons (2007, 211–12), the conditions under which states will give precedence to either domestic or international incentives in the process of foreign policy formulation vary according to the degree of concentration of power in the hands of the government relative to society and the degree of power concentration in the international system.[11] Either way, we must take into account that the closer the issues are to the realm of low politics, the lower the concentration of power in the hands of the government, particularly in democratic regimes. Or rather, as it has been said by Rosenau (1967a, 1967b, 49), the "more an issue encompasses a society's resources and relationships, the more it will be drawn into the society's domestic political system and the less it will be processed through the society's foreign political system."

Therefore, two important aspects must be highlighted: an "ever-growing and intimate relationship, in terms of synergy, between foreign policy and other public policies" (Ardissone 2013) and a new dimension of public policy that has developed in Brazil in recent years, as an extensive range of social policies have been subject to internationalization through bilateral and multilateral cooperation programs. From education to health, agricultural development to cultural programs, we have witnessed a continuous process of internationalization of public policy that, in parallel to the economic processes of globalization, correlates to the globalization of politics and the reproblematizing of hierarchies (for example, between high and low politics) of Brazilian foreign policy. The emblematic cases of the creation of international offices by Brazilian public agencies such as EMBRAPA (agriculture), FIOCRUZ (health), and IPEA (socioeconomic and development research) and emerging international development cooperation projects illustrate this argument (Ayllón and Surasky 2011; Mawdsley 2012; Milani 2012a, 2012b).

A New Role for Itamaraty?

In regard to this new profile of foreign policy and its particularities, it is worth noting that even if we recognize that its ontology bears in the government, it remains being one of the areas of policy (together with defense and macroeconomic policy) that most closely approximates the thesis of the state enjoying a certain level of autonomy. Such policies notoriously keep a certain distance from politics, which varies in function of exogenous, endogenous, structural, and circumstantial factors. And just what are these factors? The effects of the end of the Cold War, economic liberalization, the intensification of globalization phenomena, and the redemocratization of the Brazilian political regime on the formulation and content of foreign policy have been repeatedly mentioned as factors that

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[11]Although we are quoting Alons (2007, 211) in this respect, we do not subscribe to her final conclusions. She conceives of polarity as power concentration, when "internal polarity is low and external polarity is high, domestic considerations will be decisive. On the contrary, when internal polarity is high and external polarity is low, international considerations will be decisive."

help explain the end of the insulation of foreign policy. These phenomena were responsible, respectively, for the encapsulation of global issues (environment, human rights, etc.) in the logic of bipolar competition, removing them from the realm of security; for introducing distributional effects in foreign policy decisions, producing winners and losers depending on the direction of policy; for galvanizing the interaction between the domestic and the foreign, sometimes even diluting states' borders and withdrawing them from the guaranties of the Westphalian sovereignty model; and finally, for the exponential increase of potential actors participating in Brazilian foreign policy.

Despite all these effects and even considering that the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Itamaraty depends on presidential authorization (Lima 2000) and on the president's inclination to perform presidential diplomacy (Danese 1999; Cason and Power 2009), we acknowledge that this agency has been permanently central, if not protagonist, to Brazilian foreign policy, trying to prevent eventual distortions of the governmental program and/or excesses that could compromise strategic regional and global partnerships. That is, in view of the institutional characteristics that historically granted the Foreign Ministry a prominent place in the definition of foreign policy matters (Cheibub 1985)—characteristics that have been reinforced during the years of the authoritarian regime (1964–85) (Oszlak 1982; Pinheiro 2013)—the abovementioned effects put onto shaky grounds, but do not revoke, the institution's capacity to concentrate a level of coordination of Brazilian foreign policy issues. Put differently, the conduct of foreign affairs remains heavily concentrated in the institutions of the state, particularly—though no longer exclusively—in the Foreign Ministry.

We are not affirming, however, that social actors have not changed their pattern of participation in the formulation of foreign policy. If formerly the sources of legitimacy of Itamaraty's institutional authority (which in turn impacted its ability to define the direction of foreign policy) were found on patrimonialism, charisma, and bureaucratic rationality (Cheibub 1985), today it has a new source of legitimacy: the assumption of the exercise of democracy.

It should be emphasized that the growing presence of relevant nonstate actors in discussion forums about the country's international position does not automatically make them decision makers in the final analysis of Brazilian foreign policy. Likewise, this does not deprive them of a jurisdiction or of an effective contribution in defining the country's policy choices in international debates. However, at the end of the day, it is within the state realm that decisions are made. What has changed is that before it was possible to speak of a concentration of these matters within Itamaraty, whereas today foreign policy issues—because they have become so diversified—populate the activities of other ministries and government agencies, creating a new institutional arrangement (França and Sanchez Badin 2010; Silva et al. 2010). Perhaps, it is for this very reason that Itamaraty has responded to the diversification of issues with concern, creating new thematic divisions within its administrative structure (Rivarola Puntigliano 2008; Figueira 2010) and no longer (or not only) using geographic divisions as administrative organizational criteria. Nevertheless, even though Itamaraty's response has been important to answer the new demands associated with Brazil's international presence, not to mention the previously existing ones,[12] it did not prevent other domestic ministries and subnational agents from going international (Pinheiro and Milani 2012).

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[12]This is, for example, the case of Itamaraty's historical resistance to letting go of its role in the realm of trade, especially within global and regional multilateral forums. Keeping trade negotiations within its mandate helps avoid more private commercial interests to completely overtake the agenda. We thank Maria Regina Soares de Lima for making us aware of this aspect.

In this sense, the various issues now pertaining to the foreign policy agenda are integrated not only through the channels of Itamaraty but also through other desks and government agencies (health, education, defense, culture, environment, agriculture, etc.) or even through the channels of subnational entities (Alsina 2003; França and Sanchez Badin 2010; Pinheiro and Milani 2012; Leite, Suyama, and Waisbich 2013). Just as relevant are the demands of social movements and activist networks, which have opened the debate on Brazilian foreign policy and its democratization, such as the Brazilian Network for the People's Integration (REBRIP),[13] and the Reflection Group on International Relations (GR-RI)[14]. Some of these activists have also taken part in Itamaraty's Dialogues on Foreign Policy, organized between February and April 2014. Foreign policy is a public policy, given that social, economic, and institutional actors treat it as such, yet it continues to lack an institutional framework that politically reflects this new configuration. Hence, there are a large number of variables that explain the reconfiguration of Brazilian foreign policy.

Research already done on the subject demonstrates that the explicatory factors of the multiplication of actors and the decentralization of agency power vary according to context, both in the systemic realm and in the domestic sphere. Such variability ensues from the historical processes of institutionalization and the degree of systemic and national relevance of the different issues of foreign policy (health, international commerce, human rights, international regulation of education and culture, international action by states and cities in the sphere of cooperation and aid, etc.). As it has been explained by Hermann and Hagan (1998, 128), the "nature of the foreign policy problem can also help to dictate whose positions count. Economic, security, environmental, and human rights issues, for example, may all be handled by different parts of the government or by different sets of actors, each brought together to interpret what is happening and make judgments about policy. These actors may not be at the apex of power but are often given ultimate authority to make foreign policy decisions for the government because of their expertise, past experience, particular point of view, or official position."

Nevertheless, we can seek convergences between such variables in order to locate factors that are prone to greater regularity, such as the type of international regime and its density or relevance in the regional South American sphere; the actions of intergovernmental organizations, businesses, and transnational networks; the construction of spaces of regulation and social integration amidst the anarchical relations of states; the necessity of dealing with human survival and the protection of global public goods (the climate, biodiversity, and the oceans) despite potential contradiction with national interests; the importance of each thematic agenda within domestic public policies; the existence of public opinion and the pressure of media on specific issues; and the number of domestic actors involved as well as the way they participate (consultation, partnership, protest, and resistance).

In this way, when it comes to the participation of other agencies of federal, state, or municipal executive powers (which are undeniably more sensitive to the injunctions of politics), plans to establish a definition of foreign policy can be achieved. In fact, unlike what happens at Itamaraty, where leadership is rarely the object of political dispute, the leaders of other ministries and entities, as well as

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[13]*O Globo* (newspaper), September 8, 2010.

[14]The GR-RI (*Grupo de Reflexão sobre Relações Internacionais*, Reflection Group on International Relations) is an informal group that gathers intellectuals, political activists, civil society movements, and political party representatives, besides some officials from distinct ministries. Its main goal is to discuss the main issues of Brazil's foreign policy publicly and collectively but also to create linkages between knowledge and policy in the field of international relations. See http://brasilnomundo.org.br.

their employees and policies, tend to reflect the political coalitions that support the government. Hence, foreign policy becomes politicized from the outside in, which is characteristic of democracy. After all, contemporary foreign policy in general, and Brazilian foreign policy in particular, is a "political space," where meaningful action is pursued by social agents (Hill 2003b, 238). In other words, the formulation of foreign policy, as any other public policy, "implies defining the meaning of an action. It thus contains normative and prescriptive elements which give an insight into a desirable future" (Oszlak 1982, 27). During the 2014 presidential elections, for instance, even though foreign policy was not a key issue of political debate among the three main candidates (Senator Aécio Neves, environmental leader Marina Silva, and Dilma Rousseff), two distinct views on what should be the institutional format for the participation of civil society in the agendas of foreign policy were in dispute. One of them, long defended by industry sectors and associations such as FIESP (Federation of São Paulo State Industries, in Portuguese), has advocated for the removal of the coordination of international trade negotiations from Itamaraty and the creation of a non-ministerial body similar to the USTR (United States Trade Representative) or even for the transformation of CAMEX (Foreign Trade Chamber, in Portuguese) in an institutional space for the consultation and formulation of foreign trade policy.[15] In both cases, Itamaraty would lose agency and agenda in international politics, despite its recognized protagonism after the election of Ambassador Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo as Director General of the WTO. The removal of the trade agenda from an eminently political ministry and its insertion in a trade regulatory agency more susceptible to the influence of corporate interests and business lobbies could pose the risk of privatization of this issue area, which goes in the opposite direction to the movement of democratization of the decision-making process. Moreover, this change could open the door for corporate interests to guide Brazilian foreign policy in other areas (energy and biofuels, climate change, regional integration, and development cooperation).

It is appropriate, however, to point out the one important caveat regarding this reference to a new Brazilian foreign policy characterized by strong politicization. We agree with the thesis that the intensification of the political component of foreign policy is largely due to the increased internal distributional impacts arising from the asymmetric results of external action for different social groups (Lima 2000, 289).

Nevertheless, by identifying the present era as politicized in contrast to the past, we run the risk of depoliticizing previous eras of foreign policy, thus confirming the thesis of a clear separation between bureaucracy and politics—which, like Loureiro, Luiz Abrucio, and Silva Pacheco (2010, 11), we do not endorse. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that politicization here means intensifying the public debate of ideas, values, and interests on policy choices, acknowledging the existing disputes within and between bureaucracies.

Finally, in adopting the term *politicization*, we intend to do away with the belief that the field of foreign policy, because of its supposedly unique character, should be taken out of the arena of political confrontation. There is a specific agenda about how Brazil should insert itself internationally, making choices that reveal distinct political projects about the place of Brazil in the world. The state, in its complexity and multiplicity, generates foreign relations of various types, supporting the politicization of foreign policy agendas (Smith 1998). The distinct actors bring to the field of foreign policy a more plural politics, constituted by differentiated languages, ideas, values, symbols, and material demands. The intensification of politicization of foreign policy agendas is derived from the greater plurality of

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[15]FIESP. "Documento de Posição. Propostas de Integração Externa da Indústria 2014." Available at www.fiesp.com.br/arquivo-download/?id=159608.

actors with different visions, ideas, and principles that reach into public space—even if their discussion does not reach the entire specter of the political community, be it the city, the state, or the nation. Within this new configuration, as domestic ministries expand their areas of interest to issues that are foreign in nature, foreign policy becomes more politicized.

Let us also remember that the Brazilian political system is characterized by so-called coalition presidentialism (Abranches 1988), in which the president, in order to maintain effective governance, needs to build a base of support among parties and to choose the ministry from this same base. Therefore, the dynamic of political parties indirectly affects foreign policy issues when external matters become part of the agenda of domestic ministries, thus fostering an interinstitutional dialogue as well as enlarging the space and ability to respond to demands of society (Figueira 2010, 16). What we are postulating, then, in view of the fact that themes of public life have arrived at the foreign policy agenda through other means, is that the politicization of foreign policy takes place largely through the expansion of ministerial participation. In this sense, even if we could still speak of a relative insulation of diplomatic agency, we certainly cannot speak of a foreign policy insulation.

We cannot avoid mentioning that the interest and expertise that political parties have on foreign issues may vary. It has already been demonstrated by the theory of issue ownership (Petrocik 1996; Simon 2002) that as long as "the parties are considered to handle some issues better than others, so candidates are best off focusing on issues that benefit their parties" (Gardarian 2010, 1047). This means that we do not always expect to have a fierce and intense debate among political parties on foreign policy, although there may be situations in which, due to the high level of importance ascribed to certain issues, political parties cannot afford to stay unresponsive to them (idem, ibidem).

By the same token, we cannot avoid accounting for the role public opinion might have on the actual politicization of Brazilian foreign policy, or rather on the state–society dialogue about Brazilian foreign policy, since it is the public opinion that mobilizes (and is mobilized by) greater attention to foreign issues by political parties as well as NGOs and social movements. Even if we take into account the vast literature indicating the low interest and impact of public opinion on foreign policy, we agree with Gardarian (2010, 1048) in that "this does not preclude voters from using their foreign policy views as a basis for political evaluations or vote choice, particularly when elections make those attitudes salient."

Moreover, despite the relevance of facing the question of public apathy (Lopes 2013, 159–67), we should also face the hypothesis that presently foreign policy issues go beyond the traditional ones. They might come dressed with different vests or colors or associated with other issues like internationalization of capital and political support for neighbor countries, technical cooperation, and geopolitical priorities, etc. Therefore, we might ask ourselves whether we are not looking in the wrong place for the public interest in foreign policy questions—or, maybe, solely on the more obvious ones.

Finally, it is worth inquiring into the fading positive effects—stability and continuity—resulting from a strongly institutional foreign policy, hitherto guaranteed by Itamaraty's leading role in its formulation and implementation. That is, how does the relativizing of this unique institutional component, represented until recently by the relative monopoly of Itamaraty that helped to create within the imagination of the elite "a model of state autonomy in the diplomatic discourse that considers foreign policy a question of state, unassociated with and above domestic politics, the place of conflict and factions" (Lima 2005, 2), affect the credibility of the country in the international system? Again, we would like to point here to a new source of legitimacy for Itamaraty's institutional authority that, like previous ones, impacts not only the content and substance of foreign policy but

also the way Brazil is evaluated by other states. That is, if, on the one hand, greater participation of actors in the definition of Brazil's international choices disrupts the centrality of Itamaraty in the decision-making process with likely harmful effects on its coordination capacity, on the other hand, this plurality renews the country's credentials for international action by qualifying foreign policy as representative of the broad interests of the nation[16] (MRE 1993, 145).

Parallel to this new configuration of the decision-making arena, which reveals greater agency capacities on the part of different actors, the following questions emerge: who makes the foreign policy decisions and where? Who are the actors responsible for the decision and the implementation of Brazilian foreign policy? How, and in the name of whom, are decisions made? To whom are agents responsible? The answers to these questions are far from unanimous. We, however, believe that at least two paradigms have been overcome: the monopoly of Itamaraty over diplomatic action and the thesis of the continuity of Brazilian foreign policy consensus. At the end of the day, opening the "box" of the decision-making process and the implementation of foreign policy means that there are multiple potential influences and ways to share a decision, as well as multiple potential disputes between bureaucratic agencies, posing the need for more transparency and information toward a wider public, and finally, the need for new institutional arrangements that are able to take into account social and political demands.

Final Considerations

The implications of the new configuration of the foreign policy formulation process are innumerable. On the one hand, the current configuration potentializes the dialogue about the different global and regional models of insertion available to Brazil, either through the constitutional distribution of powers (Silva et al. 2010) or through the creation of preference coordination mechanisms to deal with issues that are transversal in nature (Figueira 2010). In this same way, however, plurality entails intra- and, principally, interbureaucratic disputes since foreign policy issues no longer fit within rigid thematic characterization ("issue areas") and are increasingly more transversal. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that one of the reasons for the convergence of different thematic areas is the weakening of the dichotomy between *high* and *low* politics.

However, the increase in the number of governmental organs involved in foreign policy themes does not result exclusively in disputes and conflicts of interest. The very fact that they are all part of a same government raises the expectation that there are more convergences than divergences among them. This is evidenced, for example, by the investigations on the so-called "health diplomacy" (Buss and Ferreira 2012; Mello e Souza 2012) and on the role of education in the foreign policy agenda (Pinheiro and Beshara 2012). Besides, it is worth noting that these agencies may enter in distinct moments of the process, which means that they may have distinct degrees of participation, influence, and control, as well as different demands for accountability, both horizontally (between the branches) and vertically (between the state and society). After all, if we admit that the practices of foreign policy are closer today to everyday life, that the choices are related to more diverse and ever more disperse interests, that foreign policy is not just the expression of a self-evident national interest but rather the result of competition, we are by extension opening the necessary discussion on the submission of foreign policy to the controls and rules of a democratic regime. In so

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[16]According to one of Itamaraty's internal discussion documents, "In dialogue – which, to some extent, is no longer an 'option' but a necessity imposed by the democratic circumstances – if we lose a measure of 'liberty', we win with those who also have forms of sensitivity to international issues and, above all, we reinforce the legitimacy of the Brazilian diplomatic positions" (BRAZIL 1993, 145; Apud Lopes 2013, 59).

doing, however, we cannot help but agree with those who emphasize the need for more rigor in the use of concepts that constitute this reflection—such as transparency, accountability, social participation, responsibility, and authoritativeness—since such concepts carry an implicit political charge (Farias and Ramanzini 2010).

In conclusion, we would like to propose some analytic paths for future research, besides our call for a more intense dialogue between IR and Political Science to analyze foreign policy. In the first place, we consider it peremptory to advance the sociological, organizational, and institutional debates about the role of Itamaraty and the need for establishing new institutional arrangements in dialogue with other political institutions and nonstate actors. To do so, the discussion on the sociology of organizations, the process of institutional learning and transformation and its impact on the definition of the country's international role, is a theme of major importance. For instance, the Itamaraty should be studied as a very important locus for the formation of Brazilian social thought, addressing its role in the construction of national identity, its dialogue with the production of academic work (Pinheiro and Vedoveli 2012), and the consequences of a foreign policy legacy that also produces interests within the bureaucracy, thus strengthening the idea of continuity.

Second, it is imperative that we rethink the place of Itamaraty in Brazilian public administration and its relationship with civil society. Moreover, it is also very important that we take into account the degree of institutionalization of the mediation channels between interests of the state and the society since it is decisive to evaluate the actual capacity of societal groups to influence or even to block public policies, including foreign policy, considering that the more dispersed and perhaps fragmented these interests are, the larger is the possibility that they may cancel each other out (Van Waarden 1992, 44). Regarding the professionalization of the public machine, the current framework reveals that Itamaraty can no longer be considered the only island of professionalism and competency, nor can we ignore that there exists much expertise to be mobilized outside the institution's walls. In keeping with this new reality, the existence of an international agenda within different bureaucracies (whether they are new or have been recently strengthened) cannot be dissociated from a contemporary reality in which international cooperation for development, particularly technological, technical, and scientific cooperation, has gained enormous visibility and importance—thus politicizing the relations of exchange among countries, as well as the very concept of public values and interests, both for institutional and nonstate actors.

A third point to be emphasized is that research on this theme should not be restricted to the contemporary period (however rich and therefore more analytically relevant and politically urgent it may be) or to the Brazilian reality. Research on past experiences—when globalization and its impacts on the domestic/international dichotomy were not significant variables and when there were no clear distinctions about public policy and its formulators—can help us better understand the directions taken by Brazilian foreign policy. In the same way, the incorporation of a comparative perspective between the reality of Brazilian foreign policy and other emerging powers can enlarge our analytic capacity to understand the contexts and tensions in the field of foreign policy. This is not to propose a renewal of the Comparative Foreign Policy projects developed in the 1960s, which were interested in quantitative methodologies and in tracing correlations among a large number of countries. The comparative research we are proposing here would seek to understand, in distinct national contexts, how multiple state and nonstate, domestic and inter/transnational actors are integrated into foreign policy agendas. Such a comparison could entail a new way to understand and make sense of the processes of foreign policy politicization (Milani 2012a, 2012b). As highlighted by Hill (2003a, 10), FPA should be "open, comparative, conceptual,

interdisciplinary and cross the borders between the national, international and global." Recognizing these characteristics allows us to expand not only the analytic scope of comprehension of foreign policy but also the possibility of democratic participation in its formulation. Moreover, by bringing the reality of developing and southern countries to the debate on contemporary foreign policy making, we do not espouse any kind of relativism. On the contrary, our aim is to highlight particularities that, at the end of the day, are also part of the complex world of IR.

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