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**Decision-Making in Lula's Foreign Policy (2003-2010) : Analyzing  
Practices**

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# Decision-Making in Lula's Foreign Policy: Analyzing Practices

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## *Abstract*

This article analyses practices in Brazil's Ministry of External Relations (MRE) in order to understand the decision making process for foreign policy of the Lula administration (2003-2010) through the lens of practices. More specifically, it seeks to understand if purported operational changes in the ministry during that time have had a concrete effect on foreign policy or are symptomatic of priorities within the administration. The research finds that despite sweeping social change promised by the campaign, the ministry's structure remained stable even as it expanded – even favoring the use of presidential diplomacy in order to expedite proceedings – but that regular bureaucratic processes were circumvented by the most senior officials in dealing with sensitive topics with a tacit division of tasks. The article concludes by suggesting that diplomatic practices were not significantly changed during the Lula period but that the relative clout of rank and file diplomats has diminished. Procedural negotiations such as trade agreements have mostly escaped the change in the decision-making process because they were not picked up by the Itamaraty's hands-on leadership.

Key-words: Policy – Diplomacy – Practices -

## *Resumo*

Esse artigo analisa as práticas do Ministério das Relações Exteriores do Brasil (MRE) buscando entender melhor o processo decisório da política externa dos governos Lula (2003-2010) pelas práticas. Especificamente, trate-se de avaliar se supostas mudanças operacionais no ministério durante este período tiveram um efeito concreto sobre a política externa ou são sintomáticos de prioridades para o governo. O trabalho considera que a despeito de grandes mudanças sociais prometidas durante a campanha, a estrutura do ministério permaneceu estável incluso durante sua expansão – até favorece o uso de diplomacia presidencial afin de acelerar os processos – mas que os processos burocráticos regulares foram evitados pelo mais alto escalão quando se tratava de temas sensíveis, com uma divisão de tarefas tácita. O artigo conclui por sugerindo que as práticas diplomáticas não foram modificadas profundamente no período Lula. Porém, a importância relativa dos diplomatas comuns diminuiu. Negociações técnicas, como acordos comerciais, escaparam em parte dessa mudança de processo decisório porque não foram retomadas pela liderança, muito ativa, do Itamaraty.

Palavras-chave : Política – Diplomacia – Práticas -

## *Glossary*<sup>1</sup>

ALADI: *Associação Latino-Americana De Integração* (Latin American Integration Association)

BFP: Brazilian Foreign Policy

BNDES: *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social* (National Bank of Economic and Social Development)

BRIC(S): Brazil, Russia, India, China, (South Africa)

CAF: *Corporação Andina de Fomento* (Andean Development Corporation)

CAMEX: *Câmara de Comércio Exterior* (Chamber of Foreign Commerce).

FPA: Foreign Policy Analysis

FTAA: Free Trade Area of the Americas

GSP: General System of Preferences

IIRSA: *Iniciativa para a Integração da Infraestrutura Regional Sul-Americana* (Initiative for the Integration of Regional South-American Infrastructure)

IPRI: *Instituto de Pesquisa em Relações Internacionais*

Mercosur : *Mercado Común del Sur* (Common Market of the South)

MFA : Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MFN: Most Favored Nation

MRE : *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*

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<sup>1</sup> Expressions herein and throughout the text that were originally written in Spanish or Portuguese are freely translated into English.

## *Introduction*

Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, born in 1945 to a working class family, cuts a distinctive figure among other occupants of Brazil's highest office. Not socialized into the country's elite whether by birth, education, or profession, one may expect Lula to harbor ideas comparatively new in such matters as domestic, or indeed foreign policy. In turn, these ideas are expected to manifest through his two-term tenure of eight years, from 2003 to 2010, during which he enjoyed comfortable approval rates conducive to a more assertive expression of his own voice, as a consequence of a lesser urgency for coalition arbitration. In order to describe and explain the foreign policies of successive leaders, literature focused on Brazilian Foreign Policy (BFP) has tended to focus on an object that may tentatively be defined as 'principled strategies'. We define principled strategy as a middle-ground between worldviews and causal beliefs, as put forward in Goldstein and Keohane's typology<sup>2</sup> of world-views, principled beliefs and causal beliefs transposed into the realm of strategic thinking. In essence, principled strategies of Brazilian Foreign Policy seek to revise Brazil's position on the world stage by spending political capital on certain causes rather than others, and by strengthening relations with certain countries to the detriment of others, such choices presumed to have been built on ideational grounds.

Most notably, in no small part due to the influence of historians in the development of the field in Brazil<sup>3</sup> (3), strong cross-fertilization may be observed between BFP and structuralist economics as put forward by the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (UNECLAC) and the Caribbean (UNECLAC). In the dominant paradigm theory of Amado Cervo, "developmentalism" has been a staple of BFP beginning with Getúlio Vargas' tenure as President in 1930<sup>4</sup> (4) . Vargas himself quite aptly described the inherently tense relationship Brazil entertained with wealthier countries:

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<sup>2</sup> Judith Goldstein & Robert Keohane (eds.), "Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.8 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Amado Cervo & Clodoaldo Bueno, *História da Política Exterior do Brasil* (Brasília: Editora UnB, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Amado Cervo, "Política Exterior e relações internacionais do Brasil: enfoque paradigmático" *Rev. Bras. Polit. Int.* v.46 n.2 (2003), p.11.

*“It would not be exaggerated to attribute historically our behavior of incomprehension and passivity to provincialism [sic] established by the 1891 constitution and to the complaints of industrial countries interested in keeping us in the condition of mere providers of commodities and consumers of manufactured goods. This expression – essentially agrarian country – of common use to describe the Brazilian economy shows, for the most part, our tardiness”*<sup>5</sup>

Seminal texts consequently favor such terms as ‘paradigm’<sup>6</sup> ‘strategy’<sup>7</sup> or ‘matrix’<sup>8</sup> which allow for a wide range of definitions. As the terms are not usually defined with theoretical references in mind, but rather as an *ad-hoc* grid of analysis to interpret empirical findings, there is a blur regarding the possible criteria for a set of views or beliefs to qualify as a matrix, a strategy or a paradigm. In fact, one may even reject the ideational essence of such terms and view them as mere names for historically coherent periods in foreign policy. But then again, the degree of coherence to qualify is not specified either. Implicitly, using such abstractions to categorize periods of Brazil’s foreign policy history favors the use of bureaucratic politics as an explanation, despite the tendency of political historiography to choose individual governments as units of time. All in all, the use of theories is often simply referential, such as Cervo’s passing mention of Renouvin’s *forces profondes*, or ‘deep forces’ that would guide foreign policy like material constraints or ideologies<sup>9</sup>. The use of such strategies as a starting point of the analysis is especially problematic because it assumes that the execution of the plan is self-evident.

On the contrary, the question of *how* foreign policy was conducted under Lula may help stake out logic in its substance. Indeed, Lula’s arrival to power also meant significant

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<sup>5</sup> Getúlio Vargas *apud* P. D. Fonseca, *Vargas: o Capitalismo em Construção* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> Amado Cervo, “Política Exterior e relações internacionais do Brasil: Enfoque Paradigmático” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* v.46 n.2 (2003), pp.5-25.

<sup>7</sup> Tullo Vigevani, Gabriel Cepaluni, “A política externa de Lula da Silva: a estratégia de autonomia pela diversificação” *Contexto Internacional* v.29 n.2 (2007), pp.273-335.

<sup>8</sup> Leticia Pinheiro, “Traídos pelo Desejo: Um Ensaio sobre a Teoria e a Prática da Política Externa Brasileira Contemporânea” *Contexto Internacional* v.22 n.2 (2000), pp.305-335.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Renouvin & Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Introduction à l’histoire des relations internationales* (Paris : Armand Colin, 1964).

changes in bureaucratic processes, some of which liable to lead to changes in both scope and content of foreign policy even by subsequent governments. In order to do so, the emphasis chosen here is to analyze the practices within Brazil's foreign ministry in order to give an account of the foreign policy decision process. Lula's two mandates are particularly apt for this perspective because they are construed as significant departures from previous administrations both in terms of substance and method. We posit that the interplay between bureaucrats and the political leadership opposes bureaucratic practices with personal values and interests.

The hypothesis here is that by switching gears from a bottom-up to a top-down system of management, the Lula administration effectively reinforced a tiered system of priorities, in which the routine procedure was often overruled in favor of someone higher in the bureaucratic food chain. Effectively, this implies that Itamaraty has not been transformed so much as selectively cut out of the decision-making process in topics deemed of special interest, or perceived to be requiring more expediency than a bureaucracy would allow. This arbitration between track one and track two diplomacy, between Itamaraty and presidential initiative, should therefore be made as a function of Lula's priorities. These priorities in turn may be a reflection of his values or perceived self-interest.

Succinctly put, we may categorize the hypotheses of this research as follows:

- a) The Weberian process of organizational consolidation by rationality is incomplete. Therefore, the Lula government uses an internal, partisan base within the MRE to implement its policy;
- b) Competing with other ministries, with subnational diplomacy and non-state actors, diplomats adapt to stay relevant and keep their missions;
- c) Politicization negatively affects a ministry's performance. Therefore, Itamaraty is protected by its obligation to perform to a pre-established standard.

## *Mapping out the field*

In order to be sufficiently granular in the description of the practices of Itamaraty, one must tackle its social makeup, and presumably its distinctive characteristics *vis-à-vis* other types of public administrations as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of other countries. The prevailing descriptor in the literature to qualify Itamaraty is professionalism. Authors are quick to point how well-regarded and competent the Brazilian Foreign Service is, with an implicit contrast to the country's developing economy. However, the question of quality tends to overshadow the truly outlying factor of Itamaraty, which is its relative importance in the overall spectrum of foreign policy.

Indeed, the above-average influence wielded by Brazil's MRE has been a lasting feature in the literature devoted to Brazilian Foreign Policy, yet remains understated. Such a high degree of influence may be measured by a cursory glance at institutional topology. Indeed, while the U.S. has a "foreign affairs community", comprised of many agencies, Brazil only has to contend with few claimants to legitimacy in foreign policy issues: mainly the MRE and its interlocutors in the *Câmara de Comércio Exterior* (CAMEX). This is credited in part to the long-standing bureaucratization process within the ministry. Cheibub's seminal work on the subject highlights such a process by segmenting Itamaraty's history in three periods: "patrimonial", from 1822 to 1910, "charismatic" during Rio Branco's tenure at the Ministry (1902-1912), and "rational-bureaucratic" ever since<sup>10</sup>. More remarkably perhaps, the MRE has emerged mostly unscathed from the military dictatorship, with the notable exception of the ministry's spying activities under the *Ato Institucional Número Cinco* (AI-5: 1968)<sup>11</sup>. The "rational-bureaucratic" consolidation was therefore free to operate during more than a century uninterrupted.

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<sup>10</sup> Zairo Cheibub, "A Carreira Diplomática no Brasil: O Processo de Burocratização do Itamaraty" *Revista de Administração Pública*, v.23 n.2 (1989), pp.97-198.

<sup>11</sup> "Do alinhamento recalcitrante à colaboração relutante: o Itamaraty em tempos de AI-5" In: Oswaldo Munteal Filho, Adriano de Freixo e Jacqueline Ventapane Freitas (orgs.), *Tempo Negro*,

On staffing, strong deviations from a representative population of Brazil – historically, a dominance of law graduates and natives of Rio de Janeiro<sup>12</sup> – point toward an easier than expected socialization of new diplomats. Indeed, Gobo’s survey of active diplomats shows that half of those who come from the five southern states (SP, RJ, MG, RS, PR) graduated from either the University of São Paulo (29,6%) or the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (19.6%)<sup>13</sup>. Of those who didn’t come from the Brazilian South-East or South regions, 71.2% graduated from the University of Brasilia. One could find this endogamy still quite palpable when the South is removed. Keeping only the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais (Espírito Santo has a negligible impact in this instance), we see that these three states have almost always been responsible for about 70% of successful applicants<sup>14</sup>. Within this category, Rio’s influence has shrunk: Rio had 69.6% of the intake in the 1966-1971 period, but only 18.4% in 2011-2014. On this last timeframe, the “big three” states are balanced, with 19.5% for Minas Gerais and 16,4% for São Paulo<sup>15</sup>.

Contrary to what the literature indicates, however, diversity does not simply improve with each successive intake of new diplomats. Indeed, while there are fewer white men, the entrance examination has only increased in difficulty over time. A few elements may help to explain such a situation. First, access to higher education has steadily improved over the last fifty years, with a significant rise since the turn of the century: from 4.4% of the population in 2000 to 7.9% in 2010. Secondly, the wage discrepancy with other federal public service jobs has lessened<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, during the 1970s, new diplomats could find difficulties living on a third secretary’s wage. These “pull factors” have increased the proportion of applicants per

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*temperatura sufocante”: Estado e Sociedade no Brasil do AI-5* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. PUC-Rio, Contraponto, 2008; pp. 65-89).

<sup>12</sup> Zairo Cheibub, *op.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Karla L. Gobo Pinto, *Noblesse d’État : do campo ao habitus da diplomacia brasileira* (Campinas : UNICAMP, PhD Thesis, 2016), p.178.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 130.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.127.

<sup>16</sup> Until recently, the diplomatic career was seen by the most ambitious Rio Branco alumni as a simple stepping stone on their way to a career in the much more well-endowed Judiciary branch.

available spot. The steady salary increases<sup>17</sup>, in particular, changed the diplomatic service into a viable career plan. Indeed, one underlying principle behind the modest pay can be found in the idea that good diplomats would not be part of the “working class”, meaning that they would not expect to draw the bulk of their income from their work<sup>18</sup>. This is continuity from the origins of diplomacy, in which diplomats were from noble extraction, tasked with receiving dignitaries, while consular officials had to contend with most of the heavy lifting, in a divide that was only ever breached to accommodate exceptional individuals such as British diplomat Satow. In line with this financial barrier to entry, it used to be possible, during the dictatorship for second or third year law students to pass the examination. Today, the requirement for applicants to possess a degree is a simple formality, and candidates are increasingly overqualified in that regard, postgraduate degree holders being more and more common. Indeed, the average age of entry has climbed from 23 in the 1960s to 28 during the Lula years<sup>19</sup>. With preparation in private institutions, *cursinhos*, requiring more and more time, as well as being costly, the opportunity cost of a serious attempt to join the diplomatic service can be measured in hundreds of thousands of Brazilian reais<sup>20</sup>, far out of bounds with the financial possibilities of the lower middle-class. Therefore, while there is today an increasing diversity of genders, origin – both ethnic and geographic –, the diplomatic career is not much more forgiving of modest socio-economic backgrounds than it used to be.

The socialization process is performed within the premises of the Rio Branco Institute, Itamaraty’s training facility. It should be pointed out that Brazil stands at the very edge of the spectrum, in matters of diplomatic training, given that developed countries usually

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<sup>17</sup> Karla L. Gobo Pinto, *Noblesse d’État : do campo ao habitus da diplomacia brasileira* (Campinas : UNICAMP, PhD Thesis, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 73-74.

<sup>19</sup> Karla L. Gobo Pinto, *op.cit.*, p.146.

<sup>20</sup> While no standardized measure of the total cost of preparation can be consolidated, one may note that a complete preparation year costs between 20 000 and 30 000 Brazilian reais at leading preparation institutes. Given that it is very unlikely for a candidate to be approved before his third attempt, the financial burden numbers in the hundreds of thousands, taking into account the inability to pursue a full-time career in the meantime.

only train their diplomatic service for the duration of one (France) to two (U.S.) months, mostly in the subjects of drafting and foreign languages. In the two years of mandatory Rio Branco instruction (eighteen months of coursework, and six months of internship), specific norms of behavior are developed<sup>21</sup> and a worldview instilled via the syllabus<sup>22</sup>, the content of which has in recent years been the subject of direct oversight by the Ministry's Secretary-General<sup>23</sup>. The extent of the Secretary-General's involvement in the daily activities of the Rio Branco Institute is however unclear. While reports in the press have mentioned mandatory reading lists including some of Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães' own works – of which he is quick to recommend the reading –, he would strenuously deny any direct involvement in Rio Branco. In truth, his influence may have been slightly overstated, if only because only Friday afternoons are usually available for the introduction of new seminars and classes, due to the ordinarily high load of teaching.

Nonetheless, we may surmise that of all the teachings offered at Rio Branco, socialization aspects have stood out in the mind of diplomats. Indeed, technical know-how, such as drafting language for telegrams and other official documents used to be learnt on the job by emulation, while substantive teachings in areas such as international relations or history appear redundant to those who successfully passed the entrance examination. Rather, diplomats are quick to stress the peculiar atmosphere of teaching at Rio Branco, with (usually) small classroom sizes and an underlying message of discipline emanating from the faculty, often comprised of diplomats. A comparison with military boot camp is apt, in a sense: very few diplomats said to have enjoyed their time in training. Furthermore, some military rituals have an egalitarian function: shaved heads, uniforms all serve to equalize a group of different origins. Similarly, the backgrounds of diplomats prior to their entry in the

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<sup>21</sup> Cristina Patriota de Moura, *O Instituto Rio Branco e a Diplomacia Brasileira* (São Paulo: Editora FGV, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence E. Cohen, "What's the Matter with Itamaraty?" *State Department Diplomatic Cable*.

<sup>23</sup> Sean W. Burges, "The Possibilities and Perils of Presidential Diplomacy: Lessons from the Lula years in Brazil" in Denis Rolland & Antônio Carlos Lessa (eds.), *Relations Internationales du Brésil: Les Chemins de la Puissance* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), p.2.

career are purposefully suppressed, even when they would be useful. Indeed, diplomats vying for a position abroad are never able to use their skills as an advantage: a native speaker of Japanese has no meaningfully increased chance of landing in Tokyo, while an economist is barely able to edge out competitors in applying for a post at the World Trade Organization. A point-based system for grading applicants, in which a doctorate would be slightly more valuable than a Bachelor's degree, was scrapped in the 1980s over concerns that it lessened the value of the Rio Branco experience as an equalizer.

The sentiment that the value in Rio Branco as a rite of passage lies in its socializing and disciplinary aspects is visible in the wariness that senior staff has towards the expanded intakes of 2006 to 2010 included<sup>24</sup>, where there were more than a hundred available positions, compared to the norm of twenty to thirty. The assumption here is that increased class sizes, while viable for teaching content-heavy subjects such as International Law, remain a problem if one seeks to instill discipline and specific behaviors. There were concerns that one could not effectively “control” a hundred students at one time. Indeed, diplomats that have started their career in these five years of expansion are considered internally as subpar, and it is expected that many of them will encounter a glass ceiling at the rank of *Ministro de Segunda Classe*, one step below ambassadorial appointments<sup>25</sup>. It should be noted that the sanctity of the diplomat's status as *concurado*, is zealously enforced by Decree n° 9202 of 1946, stipulating that only the Minister and heads of diplomatic missions overseas can be political appointees, while in practice both the MRE's top official and ambassadors posted overseas are almost always diplomats. This stands in contrast to the American “spoils system”, where around a third of ambassadorial appointments are handed out as a reward for political donations.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

All in all, it seems that, despite the overtly transformative outlook boasted by the ruling party in the Lula years, most of which shared by both Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães and Celso Amorim – they took the very unusual step of becoming members of PT as soon as they left the MRE, a move for which current diplomats seemed to find no precedent – Rio Branco mostly remained unchanged. Only marginal reforms were tentatively introduced: the 2008 entrance examination removed French, again<sup>26</sup> as a mandatory language by letting applicants choose from a pool of German, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Japanese or Russian, in an attempt not to favor those from privileged backgrounds, since French could be seen as more elitist. One year later however, the examination reverted to its usual linguistic patterns, mainly as a result of complaints from the French ambassador.

The more significant overhaul in the Ministry's social makeup is the decision to include affirmative action quotas from 2011 onwards. Although just outside the perimeter of Lula's time, it highlights the strong ethnic homogeneity in the MRE: around 1% of *afrodescendentes*<sup>27</sup> and no career ambassador that saw himself as such until 2011, when Benedito Fonseca Filho came to head the New Technologies division in Brasilia – dealing mostly with internet governance. This racial homogeneity belies the *de facto* monopoly of economic and cultural elites over Itamaraty, a prime example of what Bourdieu called *la reproduction des élites*. While social markers were directly assessed during the oral examination, abolished in 2005, they are now indirectly assumed to be a corollary of the significant financial investment a candidate has to undertake to pass the examination. The lack of oral examination retains however the merit of letting through outliers: applicants with

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<sup>26</sup> Karla L. Gobo Pinto, *op.cit.*, p.139 sqq.

<sup>27</sup> José Jorge Carvalho, "Inclusão Étnica e Racial no Ensino Superior: Um Desafio para as Universidades Brasileiras." In: Margarete Fagundes Nunes. (Org.). *Diversidade e Políticas Afirmativas: Diálogos e Intercursos. Diversidade e Intercursos*. (Novo Hamburgo: FEEVALE, 2005), pp.21-40

enough cultural capital to go through the process but with nonstandard gender identities or ethnic backgrounds.<sup>28</sup>

Brazil's MRE is therefore a coherent, thoroughly institutionalized entity with specific sets of norms and behaviors, which we may qualify as *habitus* in that they are dynamic and transmitted onwards. However, such a description of Itamaraty should not imply, as it is often done in the literature, the complete isolation of the ministry from the realms of political influence, other factors of exogenous change<sup>29</sup> or competition from other ministries. The question then, is the suitability of the MRE to different theoretical outlooks. We argue here, that, as an entity with linkage to other actors, the case of Itamaraty is a particularly apt choice for the use of approaches close to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). The field has been developing steadily since the 1960s<sup>30</sup> as a reaction to the common reliance in International Relations (IR) theory on systemic factors to explain state behavior, to the detriment of domestic factors. Theoretically, one may argue that IR theory and FPA have diametrically opposed, and therefore have complementary goals. By likening both to theories of markets and firms respectively, Kenneth Waltz argues that not only there ought not to be neorealist theories of foreign policy, but that cross-fertilization between both is unfeasible<sup>31</sup>. Further efforts to build up the field of FPA, such as Allison's bureaucratic politics framework have made FPA into a different field of study altogether, with a wide array of factors to consider. It has been chiefly preoccupied with explaining decisions that are consequential for foreign actors<sup>32</sup>, although defining FPA and its domain has not been easy. Using Hudson's terminology, the *explanandum* of FPA would be the mechanics of decision and its *explanans* – that which explains – a significant variety of factors ranging from an often ill-defined

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<sup>28</sup> Karla L Gobo Pinto, *op.cit.*, p.108.

<sup>29</sup> Leticia Pinheiro & Carlos Milani "Introdução" in Leticia Pinheiro & Carlos Milani (eds.), *Política Externa Brasileira – a política das práticas e as práticas da política* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2011), pp. 13-32.

<sup>30</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis : Classic and Contemporary Theory* (London : Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p.5

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz "International Politics is not Foreign Policy" *Security Studies* v.6 n.1 (1996), pp.54-57.

<sup>32</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, *op.cit.*

national interest to bureaucratic politics, *inter alia*. We choose here to link these mechanisms of decision-making to the coexistence with other actors.

Before considering Itamaraty's relationship with political leadership, it is worth to tackle the subject of its monopoly over foreign policy in general, which has been challenged in recent decades. Indeed, empirical studies focusing on domestic determinants of foreign policy may choose to turn their attention to inter-bureaucratic politics in areas of policy where expertise has several claimants. Classical examples of such disputed territories include defense and trade, both pointing toward competing bureaucracies in Brazilian foreign trade policy<sup>33, 34</sup>. Of particular note is the existence of the previously mentioned *Câmara de Comércio Exterior*, a joint unit dedicated to foreign trade policy, chaired by the Ministry of Commerce, to the detriment of Itamaraty. While there are undoubtedly a wide variety of tools with which to wage bureaucratic warfare, Berridge distinguishes seven of these in which competency disputes between a MFA and its trade and/or defense counterparts often materialize worldwide<sup>35</sup>. They include:

- The requirement that all staff dispatched to foreign embassies that are not affiliated with the MFA report directly to the ambassador instead of their own ministry
- Presence of MFA personnel in the staff of heads of governments and/or state and tasked with liaising with the MFA
- A veto power given to the MFA for all treaties signed by other elements of the government
- Mandatory notice of any foreign travel of non-MFA personnel
- Chairing inter-agency committees on specific themes (environment, human rights, etc.)

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<sup>33</sup> Vinícius Araújo Bezerra, "Bureaucracy and Brazilian Foreign Trade: Participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Decision Making Process" *Revista de Estudos Internacionais* v.6 n.1 (2015), pp.181-193.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey W. Cason, Timothy J. Power, "Presidentialization, Pluralization and the Rollback of Itamaraty: Explaining Change in Brazilian Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Cardoso-Lula Era" *International Political Science Review* v. 30 n.2 (2009), pp.117-140.

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey R. Berridge, *Diplomacy : Theory and Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.16-17.

- Temporary exchange of staff between the MFA and other ministries
- Finally, the merger or acquisition of competing ministry in order to exert direct control.

It should be noted that the Brazilian cases fulfill all the above conditions under Lula except the last: the *Agência Brasileira de Promoção de Exportação e Investimento* (Apex-Brasil) was only acquired by MRE in 2016, under Temer. However, the studies of such interbureaucratic conflicts are best performed under the assumption that the winning party may exert real control over the shaping of foreign policy, which we choose to call autonomy. A tentative definition of bureaucratic autonomy would be the *relative* “independence of both will and action”<sup>36</sup>, thereby creating twin requirements of independent goal formation and subsequent capacity to translate these goals into policy. This is a problem, because Itamaraty is, by objective metrics, very much in control of foreign policy, but it would be stretch to affirm that is free to both set objectives and implement them.

Consequently, with respect to the Lula era, the case can be made that theories hinging heavily on bureaucratic preeminence to explain foreign policy are less impactful, given the particularly high level of presidentialization that characterized his governments’ foreign policy<sup>37</sup>. Generally speaking, the trend identified by the literature of this relative erosion of Itamaraty’s monopoly on foreign policy can be made to coincide with democratization<sup>38</sup> at the earliest, although conflation of presidentialization with politicization has made Itamaraty’s loss of clout more apparent in the Lula years than they have been under his predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003)<sup>39</sup>. In essence, choosing to structure Brazil’s foreign policy in paradigms of bureaucratic warfare observed on a systemic level may undersell the growing individualization of decision-making. In that optic, Itamaraty’s loss of monopoly may incite a shift from a bureaucratic model to an inter-bureaucratic model where several agencies fight for supremacy, with the possible inclusion of civil society and non-state actors.

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<sup>36</sup> Devin Caughey, Sara Chatfield, Adam Cohon, “Defining, Mapping, and Measuring Bureaucratic Autonomy” *MPSA Presentation* (2009), p.3.

<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey W. Cason & Timothy J. Power, *op.cit.*, p.124.

<sup>38</sup> Rogério de Souza Farias & Haroldo Ramanzini Júnior, “Reviewing horizontalization: the challenge of analysis in Brazilian foreign policy” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, v.58 n.2 (2015), p.8.

<sup>39</sup> Paulo Roberto de Almeida, “Never Before Seen in Brazil: Luis Inácio Lula da Silva’s grand diplomacy” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* v.53 n.2 (2010), pp.160-177.

On the other hand, by focusing on routine procedures, one may infer what constitutes priorities in the government agenda, and wherefore, what principles and/or values can adequately be used to rationalize successive policies. This beckons a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the ministry during the Lula years. Unfortunately, there is little to draw from when trying to contextualize Itamaraty's procedures in the broader scope of foreign ministries. This is surprising, because MFAs have distinctive characteristics, such as several concurring strands of mimetic and normative isomorphism<sup>40</sup>. By sustained interaction with the MFAs of other countries, the structure of these bureaucracies has tended to go toward homogenization. A series of "best practices" has emerged, such as the use of geographical and thematic divisions to classify subjects of interests, as well as the three levels of hierarchy of secretary, counselor and minister. This intrinsically relational nature of MFAs is not quite tackled in the literature either, and systematic studies with a large number of cases are lacking. What few studies exist pertain to the realm of diplomatic history monographs<sup>41</sup>, appealing more to the particularities than what can be generalized. Hurrell would qualify these works as "interesting" instead of "useful"<sup>42</sup>.

In the case of Brazil, this is regrettable given Itamaraty's unique history of (co)production of foreign policy. Authors are divided on the lineage of the *Política Externa Independente*: whether San Tiago Dantas was in a leading, auxiliary or simply subordinate position vis-à-vis Jânio Quadros when the latter signed his landmark article in *Foreign Policy* is still up to discussion. However, there can be no denying that Brazilian diplomats were particularly involved in the foreign policy debate, as evidenced by the creation of the *Revista*

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<sup>40</sup> Paul J. DiMaggio & Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organization Fields" *American Sociological Review* v.48 n.2 (1983), pp.147- 160

<sup>41</sup> B. Hocking & D. Spence, *Integrating Diplomats : EU Foreign Ministries* (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), and Zara L. Steiner, *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries* (London : Times Books, 1982).

<sup>42</sup> Andrew Hurrell, "Diplomatic Culture: Some Latin American and Brazilian Questions" Paper Prepared for ISA Meeting (Montréal, 2004).

*Brasileira de Política Internacional* by three diplomats: Afonso Arinos, Araújo Castro, and San Tiago Dantas himself<sup>43</sup>.

### *Theory and Methods of the study*

We have previously criticized the theory permeating much of the literature tackling Brazil's foreign policy. Indeed, much of it relies on the works of historians, mostly preoccupied with an accurate transcription of events. From the analysis laid out previously, we assume that in the particular case of Brazil, where Itamaraty has had a well-established bureaucratic history (a), a tradition of relative independence (b), and the lack of real competition from other ministries, such as trade or defense (c), a theoretical base relying on *practices* is particularly appropriate.

Practices have a long history in social sciences, perhaps beginning with Bourdieu<sup>44</sup>, but acquiring relevance in International Relations only recently. Adler and Pouliot state that a practice is a “performance [...], that is, a process of doing something”. Furthermore, “[...] As a form of action, practice differs from preference or beliefs, which it expresses, and from discourse or institution, which it instantiates”, adding that “In a way reminiscent of routine, practices are repeated or at least reproduce similar behaviors with regular meaning”<sup>45</sup>. We must here insist that the analysis is concerned with *process* instead of *outcome*. Given the particularly fluid and intangible aspect of practices, using it as a theoretical focal point implies specific methodological choices. The corresponding tools are thus semi-directive interviews. The validity of these interviews can be strengthened with such tools as complementary written sources (a), strategies of interviewee bias mitigation (b) such as interviewing individuals of different ranks, age, origin, and political beliefs.

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<sup>43</sup> Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional v.1 n.1 (1958).

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique* (Genève : Droz, 1972)

<sup>45</sup> Emanuel Adler & Vincent Pouliot, “International Practices”, *International Theory*, v.3 n.1 (2011), pp.6.

Nonetheless, interviewing diplomats presents a specific set of challenges. As described by Erving Goffman, individuals are prone to choose roles according to how they perceive themselves in the presence of others. They can be on-stage, with foreign onlookers, or off-stage, with colleagues who share their sets of practices. To be more precise, we have to take into account intertextuality, both in time and in space<sup>46</sup>. Indeed, the subject of the interview often has not reflected on the practices he/she has demonstrated, since these practices pertain to the category of tacit know-how that are applied rather than thought about. Consequently, conclusions have to be extracted *in spite* of the interviewee. This process implies some concern with the topology of actions, as defined by Bourdieu. Indeed, practices are dependent on situations, dispositions and positions<sup>47</sup>. These differences cannot be comprehended only with “context”. This context, according to Pouliot, is a confluence of the history of the social field and the history of bodies or *habitus*<sup>48</sup>.

In this typology, “situations” refer to the pure expression of practices, hardly accessible and perhaps irremediably altered by the mere presence of an observer by mechanics such as self-consciousness of the interviewee. “Positions”, on the other hand, are more easily understood, since they are determined by the rules of the game (a), the cartography of allocated resources (b), and the historicization of social rivalries (c). As for dispositions, they are problematic given that they necessitate both being foreign to the studied practices and in the midst their realization. This is why the literature recommends participant observations. Ironically, due to practices of secrecy that are unequivocally constant throughout the history of modern diplomacy<sup>49</sup>, an outside presence in either internal deliberations of diplomats or international negotiations is almost impossible. Nonetheless, there are techniques to bypass such a problem, if one is careful enough to avoid putting the

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<sup>46</sup> Iver B. Neumann, “Discourse Analysis” in Audie Klotz & Deepa Prakash (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: a Pluralist Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Vincent Pouliot, “Methodology: Putting practice theory into practice” in Rebecca Adler-Nissen, *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking Key Concepts in IR* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p.55.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p.47.

<sup>49</sup> Sanderijn Duquet & Jan Wouters, “Diplomacy, Secrecy and the Law“ *Working Paper No.151* (2015), pp.1-22.

interviewee in the position of theoretician. Both Neumann and Pouliot mention the use of hypothetical scenarios in order to place the subject on a blank slate. In doing so, one eliminates the tendency of diplomats to remain overly cautious and evasive to avoid divulging sensitive or unpleasant information. Furthermore, the use of foreign diplomatic viewpoints also fulfils the requirement of context familiarity and foreignness, since foreign diplomats in Brasilia are both familiar with international diplomatic practices, and unfamiliar with the practices of Itamaraty.

The above outlined the logic for the retrieval of information from interviews. In accordance with this logic, interviewees were sought according to a diversity of career advancement (at the time of Lula), nature of assignment, and assumed political preferences. Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and Secretary-General Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães were both interviewed; Marco Aurélio Garcia could not be reached as a result of his death in late 2017. Below these main figureheads, Ambassadors Adhemar Bahadian and Roberto Abdenur were also interviewed, as well as (still active) anonymous diplomats of the rank of *conselheiro*, as well as *Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais* (IPRI) director Paulo Roberto de Almeida.

To provide an external diplomatic viewpoint to these interviews, narrative-heavy cables from Wikileaks' "cablegate" archive of 2867 documents sent from Brazil to the State Department in Washington D.C. from 2003 to 2010 were also exploited in conjunction with unreleased notes and an interview of Political Officer Lawrence E. Cohen (2002-2005). In addition with "open-source" information such as Itamaraty's *Regimento Interno da Secretaria de Estado* (2008) and academic literature on the inner workings of the ministry, this has constituted the factual basis on which we describe diplomatic practices in the Lula era.

## *Practices in Lula's Foreign Policy*

### A) The novelty of presidentialism in Brazil's foreign policy

Elements of context must be established before delving into the practices of diplomats, the first of which is the relative power of the head of state to determine Brazil's foreign policy in general, and diplomacy in particular. Indeed, if we assume that the defining method of conception and implementation of Brazil's foreign policy under Lula is presidential diplomacy, the term must be adequately defined. A simple definition of the term may be found with Sérgio Danese: "the personal conduct of foreign policy matters, beyond mere routine or ex-officio attribution, by the president [...]"<sup>50</sup>. Presidential diplomacy is by no means in itself a remarkable phenomenon: since the conduct of foreign affairs is often considered one of the main prerogatives of the executive, it has long been centralized, notably because corresponding bureaucracies have been institutionalized fairly late, in comparison with the military or finance-related matters. Envoys were, by definition, an ad-hoc assignment that precluded a consolidated bureaucracy. It would, therefore, be erroneous to immediately accept that Lula's arrival to power marks a definite beginning for a presidential Brazilian foreign policy. Cason & Power in particular offer the persuasive argument that the shift towards increased presidentialization started with the previous Cardoso presidency.

If foreign policy is taken into the hands of the chief executive beyond both precedent and the letter of the law, then the logic governing the choice of one subject over another is of crucial importance. Krasner elegantly argues that "the ability of bureaucracies to independently establish policies is a function of Presidential attention. Presidential attention is a function of Presidential values"<sup>51</sup>, and we will here choose to supplement values with

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<sup>50</sup> Sérgio Danese, *Diplomacia Presidencial : História e Crítica* (Rio de Janeiro : Topbooks, 1999), p.51 .

<sup>51</sup> Stephen D. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? Or Allison's Wonderland" *Foreign Policy* n.7 (1972), p.168.

subjectively-determined interest. Krasner emphasizes the dichotomy between presidential diplomacy and bureaucratic diplomacy, in a sort of zero-sum game. In other words, diplomats pick up the slack wherever the subject does not warrant direct involvement of the presidency. Considering Lula's background as an experienced politician, always keen on consolidating his base of support, we assume that these "uninteresting" subjects are often complex, iterative negotiations that are too complicated to meaningfully present to the public, and for which a positive message cannot therefore easily be delivered to domestic audiences. A common example would be Brazil's World Trade Organization (WTO) agenda. By contrast, it is expected that parts of the international agenda in which "wins" can be delivered are more likely to be picked up by Lula. Consequently, presidential diplomacy is mainly concerned with the arena of "high politics", such as security and global governance issues.

However, the interest-driven hypothesis fails to properly account for Lula's bias in choosing to take matters in his own hands, if only because foreign policy in general is not a primary consideration of the Brazilian electorate<sup>52</sup>. Indeed, Krasner's use of "values", which we may conflate with world-views, offers a better picture. In particular, Lula's particular view of Latin American issues has affected the presidentialization of diplomacy under his tenure. The ideational substance of PT promotes a view of Latin America as a brotherhood of peripheral countries with shared objective, and a common legacy of marginalization. In that respect, there was sympathy for governments with a similarly left-leaning platform. Therefore, concerning Latin America, diplomacy has tended to be directly handled by Lula, and there its implementation followed a shorter circuit. Diplomats themselves tend to use the term of "centralization" to refer to this period, arguing that the number of stakeholders shrunk to incorporate Lula, his personal advisor Marco Aurélio Garcia, Celso Amorim and Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães. It is difficult to attribute to each of a three a definite sphere of influence.

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<sup>52</sup> Janina Onuki & Amâncio Jorge de Oliveira, "Eleições, Partidos Políticos e Política Externa no Brasil" *Revista Política Hoje* v.19 n.1 (2010), pp. 144-185.

The U.S. State Department felt that Celso Amorim took care of trade, developed countries, multilateral issues, Africa and the Middle-East, Guimarães focused defense and security and some developing countries, and Garcia South America and “leftist countries” in general<sup>53</sup>. The President himself has likened his special envoy Garcia as a “second Minister [for Foreign Affairs]”, and indeed in practice the argument is whether Garcia has wielded as much or more influence than Celso Amorim. Garcia, given his role as a founder of PT as well as his longstanding relationship with the Latin American left, has a very clear political positioning.

Although assisted by several senior diplomats during his tenure as Lula’s advisor, Garcia held no formal role within Itamaraty, and was therefore technically exempt from the rigors of protocols. Garcia was consequently free to travel and speak on Lula’s behalf without the mandatory escort of Brazil’s most senior diplomat on site<sup>54</sup>, as would be the case if Guimarães were to do the same. Garcia also did not have to be greeted by someone of the same rank and generally would attract less media attention. Garcia’s staff abroad was also left to his own discretion. More importantly however, was his ability to decide if he wanted to disclose the content of his meetings to the Brazilian ambassador on his way home. When such debriefings took place, these meetings Garcia took part in seldom were to be found in diplomatic cables, officially because Itamaraty’s policy is to avoid giving second-hand accounts of meetings in which no diplomat was there to take notes<sup>55</sup>. These relatively lax working conditions gave Garcia complete freedom to act on Lula’s behalf without bureaucratic oversight. And indeed, he often travelled alone, only to report in person to Lula, as was for example the case when Garcia held informal talks with Hugo Chávez: Garcia’s report would go directly to Lula’s Chief of Staff José Dirceu<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, in Latin American affairs in particular, where Garcia had his own network of contacts, the standard operating

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<sup>53</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (11/02/2009).

<sup>54</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (26/03/2004)

procedure of bottom-up policy-making, in which overseas officials report to Brasilia, which in turns sends information up the ladder was in effect reversed, because these diplomats had no access to the meetings in the first place. In a sense, this process is a repetition of Garcia's tenure as PT's advisor for international affairs (1991-2001), where he travelled with Lula on dozens of occasions<sup>57</sup>.

Furthermore, other elements indicate that this *modus operandi* was not restricted to Garcia's free-roaming behavior. The MRE's own internal rulebook, *Regimento Interno da Secretaria de Estado* (RISE) indicates that the *Secretaria de Planejamento Diplomático* (SPD) was responsible for the "formulation, analysis and follow-up of local or global policies within the diplomatic area". However, under Lula the SPD – comparable to other Ministries' "policy planning" departments – was gutted in a "reshuffle" that incorporated their staff into the Minister's staff<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, managing the fine line between Itamaraty's and the Defense Ministry's area of competence was another responsibility phased out of the SPD's workload, which under Lula mostly worked to supplement Amorim's staff in speechwriting. It is worth noting that the SPD's location within Itamaraty's facilities is fairly remote: located in the seventh floor and then moved, it did not have the easiest access to the Minister's office. Therefore, instead of being tasked with the coordination of policy-making in the MRE, the SPD essentially functioned as the Minister's staff "back-office". This situation is symptomatic of the tendency during these years for policy to be produced upstairs, and then justified after, in a process that critics have likened to improvisation<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Kjeld Aagard Jakobsen, "Análise de Política Externa: Continuidade, mudanças e rupturasno Governo Lula" *Doctoral Thesis* (São Paulo : IRI-USP, 2016), p.46.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Minister, Second Class Paulo Roberto de Almeida

## B) Politics as an element of Brazilian diplomatic practices

Officially, diplomats are expected to keep their political preferences to themselves. Indeed, as a typical Weberian bureaucrat, the Brazilian diplomat is supposed to act as a result of implicit behaviors or explicit rules within the MRE without the undue influence of exogenous groups such as political parties. The reluctance of the diplomatic service to unionize with an explicit partisan platform is one revealing example: the *Associação dos Diplomatas Brasileiros*, formed in 1990 is explicitly nonpartisan and refuses the label of workers' union. This is in contrast to other foreign ministries worldwide: France's Quai d'Orsay is mainly represented by the right-leaning *Confédération française démocratique du travail* (CFTC), contrasting with more left-leaning school teachers, for instance.

However, Lula's foreign policy has been characterized by an uptick in politicization that is difficult to measure due to the taboo nature of the subject within the ministry. We rely therefore on outlying senior officials, which admittedly is not a perfect process. The subject of politics within Itamaraty mostly centers on the figure of Secretary-General Guimarães. He was remarkably fired in 2001 from his job as director of the *Instituto de Pesquisa em Relações Internacionais* (IPRI) which he had occupied in 1995<sup>60</sup>, and therefore left without an assignment, in the *Departamento de Escadas e Corredores*<sup>61</sup>, in which a few dozen diplomats from all ranks await a new position, often without an office or desk in the meantime<sup>62</sup>, leading some to elect domicile in the library within the ministry's annex<sup>63</sup>. Guimarães was fired for criticizing, in an interview, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) project. He had been previously fined under a law restricting federal officials from expressing their opinions without prior authorization. According to the procedure, interviews and statements hinging on politics or the positions of the current government must be signed off by the Secretary-

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<sup>60</sup> Interview with former Secretary-General Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães.

<sup>61</sup> Edson Porto, "Decisão Britânica encerra novela da diplomacia brasileira" *BBC Brasil* (2003).

<sup>62</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Minister, Second Class Paulo Roberto de Almeida

General. Guimarães would later recuse himself from exerting pressure using that tool when he assumed the position<sup>64</sup>. The act of contradicting the position of the Brazilian government publicly on several occasions is therefore grounds for removal of the current assignment, this is what we consider as a benchmark of Itamaraty's reaction to indiscipline.

During that time of Guimarães' eviction, the MRE was led by Celso Lafer, who went on to become *persona non grata* on ministry grounds until the end of the Rousseff government. The animosity between Lafer and Guimarães is made visible in the significant break in protocol during Celso Amorim's inaugural address, where he barely acknowledges Lafer and makes an implicit jab, instantly stating he would nominate Guimarães for Secretary-General by undertaking specific measures<sup>65</sup>. Indeed, the rules had to be amended because Guimarães, having had his career badly damaged by his politics, had never led a diplomatic mission abroad, and therefore was not a fully-fledged ambassador, as was required. Both Amorim and Guimarães' inaugural addresses are peculiar in that they depart from the norm of praising their predecessors in a long, comprehensive tribute. Beyond speeches, both were quick to act on their dislike of more outwardly right-wing diplomats such as Luis Felipe de Seixas Correa, not fully backing his WTO presidency bid, or even less politicized diplomats such as Roberto Abdenur, whose personal affinity with Amorim eroded during his assignment in Washington D.C. from 2004 to 2007. Celso Amorim's own political preferences are difficult to gauge, as he took great care in appearing as a thoroughly professional diplomat. His reputation within Itamaraty, beyond his brilliance, is that of a very career-oriented man. That being said, to be pushed by Guimarães as a more realistic alternative for the top job<sup>66</sup>, he had to give assurances of his compatibility with PT's platform. Unlike Guimarães however, he did not indulge in political debate during the earlier years of his career, but we can surmise

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with former Secretary-General Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães.

<sup>65</sup> Celso Amorim, "Discurso de posse como Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores" (2003).

<sup>66</sup> Lula initially considered Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães as Minister, but the latter thought his confirmation would not be painless, and decided on mild-mannered Amorim instead.

a certain affinity with left-leaning ideas from a few hints, such as his unfinished PhD thesis at the London School of Economics, where he worked under the supervision of Marxist sociologist Ralph Miliband<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, as director-general of *Embrafilmes* (1979-1982) he greenlit Roberto Farias' *Pra Frente, Brasil* (1982), in which the treatment of the subject of torture prompted censorship of the film as well as Amorim's eviction.

Celso Amorim's *modus operandi*, in order to assert his authority over ongoing negotiations, was to make personnel changes when senior diplomats were deemed not sufficiently aligned with the "government's policy" – Amorim would say that he was trying to conciliate both *politica de Estado e politica de governo* <sup>68</sup>. Asked personally about the question, Amorim would point toward "sad situations" but would not elaborate much, aside from hinting that he acted out of necessity. His decision to remove José Alfredo Graça Lima from his position as chief Brazilian negotiator of the EU-Mercosur agreement in July 2004<sup>69</sup> and replace him by the more amenable and considerably younger Regis Arslanian then at the helm of the Trade Negotiations department in Brasilia, – and who enjoyed a close relationship with Guimarães –, was seen as one such move. The previous year, Amorim removed Clodoaldo Huguency from FTAA negotiations<sup>70</sup>: he was replaced Adhemar Bahadian, a personal friend of his from their time together at GATT in Geneva. These substitutions, considered to be a quite rash by Itamaraty's subtle standards, may have brewed some resentment in the ranks of self-described conservatives in the ministry. To be more precise, it was not the substitutions themselves that have caused internal turmoil, but rather the extent of the reshufflings. Indeed, Bahadian added that the change of the whole negotiating team was very unusual<sup>71</sup>. He did not expect to be able to bring a whole team with him. Furthermore, Bahadian remembered almost daily phone conversations with Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, a

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<sup>67</sup> Celso Amorim, *Teheran, Ramallah and Doha : Memories of an active and haughty foreign policy* (2015), p.31.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>69</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (23/07/2004).

<sup>70</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (20/05/2003).

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Ambassador Adhemar Bahadian.

sign that his assignment was directly supervised. This departure from Itamaraty norms fueled strong reactions from those who felt discriminated. Indeed, Luis Felipe Lampreia, a friend of Celso Lafer, who had been slighted by Amorim during the transition would privately tell U.S. Ambassador Clifford Sobel in 2008 that Amorim “hates Americans”, was “obsessed [with the U.N. Security Council seat]” and was “of the left”<sup>72</sup>. This stands in contrast to the notion that diplomats usually did not know who their colleagues voted for<sup>73</sup>.

Other accounts compound the politicization of Itamaraty’s upper echelons by the severity of the measures employed by those who were not aligned. Ambassador Abdenur thought that Celso Amorim was unnecessarily harsh in his disciplinary actions<sup>74</sup>, although we can argue here that the departure from Itamaraty’s practices was not the punishment in itself – Guimarães was dealt the same fate – but rather the manner. Indeed, Abdenur recalled being called by Amorim’s chief of staff instead of a personal conversation or a chance to explain himself. Furthermore, there was retaliation against the *protégés* of disgraced ambassadors, as well as ending the career of senior ambassadors (of similar age to Celso Amorim) with a posting at a consulate, which was perceived as particularly humiliating. As far as practices are concerned, several accounts therefore show a departure in Itamaraty’s career system, in two ways. First, the hybrid advancement process of cooptation (a senior diplomat brought “known coworkers”<sup>75</sup> with him to a new posting whenever turnover made it feasible) was damaged by making associations with certain senior diplomats harmful to career advancement. Secondly, senior diplomat themselves could be punished with demotion to a consular posting or being kept in limbo. There was no evidence to substantiate the notion that retribution against

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<sup>72</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (18/01/2008).

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Ambassador Adhemar Bahadian.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Ambassador Roberto Abdenur.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

coworkers and end-of-career demotions were regular occurrences before Lula, these were considered a novelty<sup>76</sup>.

Another aspect of politicization is the conflation of political timeframes, in which the domestic agenda has a significant impact on the ability of the MRE to function. Indeed, on top of significant growing pains Itamaraty had to contend with in order to follow through Amorim's *ativa e altiva* foreign policy – from 2003 to 2005 included, foreign diplomats in Brasilia struggled to have their *démarches* answered by the MRE, let alone have a frequently available counterpart to liaise with<sup>77</sup> –, the year of 2006 was characterized by the spectacular *Mensalão* corruption scandal. Bogged down in the mire of a corruption scandal that started in May of 2005 but extended throughout the end of Lula's first term, the President had comparatively less time to devote to international issues, especially as he felt his reelection was at stake. Itamaraty worked at a markedly lower pace during that time<sup>78</sup>, a sign that, ultimately, the office of the Presidency could act as both a facilitator and a bottleneck. Regarding practices, therefore, there was a widespread belief that the ability to conduct Brazil's diplomacy was now synchronized with the political calendar.

### C) The New Normal: New Practices under Lula

Now that we have shown where departures lie in Itamaraty's "kitchen"<sup>79</sup>, it is important to attempt to sketch out how these differences have materialized in the actual conduct of Brazil's diplomacy.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with U.S. State Department Political Officer Lawrence E. Cohen (Brasília : 2002-2005), 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Adhemar Bahadian.

We have previously mentioned that foreign policy under Lula operated at the rhythm of domestic politics and with the necessary input of either Amorim, Guimarães or Garcia. This could, in theory allow for fast decisions. But the situation on the ground was one of systematic bottlenecking<sup>80</sup>. Foreign governments in general and Americans in particular were disappointed by the pace of regular procedures, and therefore it seemed easier for them to interact with other ministries<sup>81</sup>. This bottleneck was amplified by the lack of available diplomats, relative to the abrupt expansion of Brazil's foreign policy.

In practical terms, this implies a violation of administrative statutes. Indeed, Itamaraty should always be the official point of contact for foreign governments. However, in practice this requirement was avoided by categorizing meetings with Economy Minister Palocci or Defense Minister Jobim, two of the most frequent hosts, as "visits of courtesy"<sup>82</sup>. The consequence of this is more concentration of power in the President's office, given that the heads of other ministries, unlike Itamaraty, were political appointees with stronger personal ties to Lula. Indeed, in order to comply with the image of the MRE as a "professional" ministry, Lula conducted two rounds of interviews to choose his Minister of External Relations<sup>83</sup>, clearly showing that the process was not subject only to political considerations. Amorim claimed not to have interacted with Lula's campaign staff prior to his interviews.

Therefore, concerning the fate of new diplomatic events, it seems that situations were managed by Guimarães, Amorim or Garcia (track A), captured by other ministries (track B), or left to be processed by Itamaraty's bureaucracy (track C). The logic of that triage lies outside the scope of this article, but we may assume here that it depends on the importance that Lula attaches to a given topic, according to his values. Much of the literature agrees that

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Lawrence E. Cohen.

<sup>81</sup> Sean W. Burges & Fabrício H. Chagas Bastos, "The Importance of presidential leadership for Brazilian foreign policy" *Policy Studies*, v.38 n.3 (2017), p.286.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Adhemar Bahadian.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Celso Amorim

sovereignty is one such value<sup>84</sup>. Centering on this concept of sovereignty, the political underpinnings of Lula's foreign policy also appear clearer. Indeed, insofar Guimarães' political opinions are reflection of PT's platform<sup>85</sup>, notably through a share used of the center-periphery dichotomy, the issue of sovereignty has often appeared as a red line where MRE's autonomy was abruptly cut off. The Mercosur-European Union Preferential Trade Agreement negotiations, started under Cardoso, were put on ice as soon as the new administration settled in. The new government was simply unwilling to loosen its access restriction to the manufactured goods market in exchange for improved access to Europe's food market. During the Lula years, the European side often bemoaned a lack of willingness to compromise and there were almost no advances<sup>86</sup>. The EU agreement reflects the overall direction of Lula's trade policy, in which only three, minor bilateral agreements were signed with Israel, Palestine and Egypt. On the contentious issue of technology transfers in armament purchases, Guimarães stepped in to reject France's offer<sup>87</sup>. Generally speaking, it seems that Amorim and Garcia have indeed let Guimarães deal with defense and security related issues<sup>88</sup>. His compulsory retirement in 2009 opened a power vacuum for Defense Minister Nelson Jobim to be engaged directly<sup>89</sup>. Indeed, Jobim had to be accompanied by Guimarães' chief of staff Marco Pinta Gama in his 2008 visits to Russia and France, in an effort to keep him under control. It should be noted that Itamaraty's *Regimento* or rulebook stated that coordination with the Defense Ministry fell under the umbrella of the SPD, absorbed into Amorim's staff but was in practice left to the *Coordenação-Geral de Assuntos de Defesa* (CGDEF) under Guimarães' supervision<sup>90</sup>. This clearly demonstrates that instead of being driven by explicit rules, tasks were shared according to tacit preferences and personal availability of Amorim,

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<sup>84</sup> Juliana Pinto Lemos da Silva, "Política Externa e a Semiperiferia" *Prelúdios* v.5 n.5 (2017), pp.53-88.

<sup>85</sup> With significant differences of opinions on subjects such as nuclear proliferation and Brazil's nuclear program.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Carlo Pettinato, European Commission's Lead Negotiator on Mercosur Agreement.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>88</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (13/02/2009).

<sup>89</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (19/05/2009).

<sup>90</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

Guimarães and Garcia. By definition, this task distribution is therefore more arbitrary than they would be, if they were sorted by the book.

Furthermore, foreign relations with “friendly countries” whose leaders shared a similar political platform were also an example of an area where routine procedure was overtaken by Lula’s closest diplomatic operatives. Indeed, bilateral relations with “Bolivarian” Latin American countries did show a tendency to exert executive privilege over foreign policy. In Bolivia’s 2005 political crisis, Lula sent Marco Aurélio Garcia along with other diplomats from Mercosur, and the following year when Evo Morales’ government seized one of Petrobras’ facilities, Garcia was sent again to defuse the situation. It is unclear how Garcia and Amorim shared the Bolivarian area between them. Amorim would remark that he had made at least as many official visits to Ecuador and Venezuela as Garcia had<sup>91</sup>, but that does not explain why one went instead of the other. In the Petrobras situation, Brazil had significant leverage, given that the contract was signed with Petrobras’ Dutch subsidiary. Indeed, the Netherlands have a bilateral treaty covering protection of investments with Bolivia<sup>92</sup>, but Lula decided not to pursue litigation on that front, and wrote it off as a loss. Going over both Itamaraty and the Ministry of Justice was badly received in both institutions, but also understood as part of the Latin American exception. Similarly, Lula asserted his prerogatives when he tripled Brazil’s payment of Paraguayan electricity from Itaipú from 120 million US\$ to 360 million US\$ sidestepping all procedures and going over Itamaraty’s objections<sup>93</sup>, leaving it to his successor Dilma Rousseff to urge Congress to validate the measure.

For diplomats below the rank of Ambassador, the Lula years did not bring significant changes in day-to-day activities. However, career development was negatively affected,

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Celso Amorim.

<sup>92</sup> Agreement on Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Bolivia (1992).

<sup>93</sup> United States Diplomatic Cable (31/07/2009).

because of overcrowding in the rank of Second Secretary<sup>94</sup> and the subsequent lack of visibility in the prospect of reaching the next rank. Those who were not tasked with a particularly small area, such as Timor Leste, were unlikely to feel like they contributed directly<sup>95</sup> to Brazil's position, one way or another. Generally speaking however, in the absence of cooptation – the benchmark of Itamaraty career progression –, objective indicators of a diplomat performance such as the quantity of cables dispatched and foreign officials received in an Embassy are badly received by diplomats<sup>96</sup>. Yet, the expanding numbers of diplomats in the lower strata increase the relevance of these metrics to the detriment of personal endorsements, in the context of a delay of up to nine years to reach the rank of First Secretary, instead of three. Ambassador Victoria Cleaver would even state that “Many among the younger [diplomats] are unable to climb, and are even considering leaving the career”<sup>97</sup>. This has fueled the sentiment of a dichotomy between Amorim and Guimarães' staffs and entourage, and the bulk of the Ministry, especially in Brasilia.

### *Concluding remarks*

Studying the question of *how* Brazil's foreign policy was manufactured required a series of preliminary considerations. First, it was necessary to highlight the particular work environment of diplomats. Indeed, Itamaraty is a particular case of a highly homogenous group that is comprehensively re-socialized in a long, two-year training period. This generates an environment where diplomats are fully cognizant of the institution's norms of behavior, and therefore, where dissent is hidden by self-censorship and discretion. However, Itamaraty was not forcefully transformed by the incoming Lula administration: perhaps conscious of the highly developed sense of self-consciousness in the MRE, they opted to carve a decision-

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<sup>94</sup> The first promotion, from Third to Second Secretary, is automatic, while the next are based on merit.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with anonymous diplomat.

<sup>96</sup> Marc Loriol, “La Carrière des diplomates français : entre parcours individuel et structuration collective” *Sociologies* (2009), pp.1-18.

<sup>97</sup> Vera Batitsa, “Itamaraty Corta Cargos e Vai Reduzir Privilégios” *Estadão* (2017).

making process outside of the ministry walls instead of changing longstanding internal procedures. Despite a clear imperative of asserting Lula's new South-South geography, Guimarães could not readjust staffing numbers in foreign embassies at the risk of unbalancing the whole system<sup>98</sup>: Brazil's embassy in Rome is still of a similar size to its China mission.

Given that the locus of change was not to be found in the MRE's DNA, it was necessary to turn to presidential decision-making process, where several elements were in evidence. It appeared, perhaps as a result of a very busy agenda, that Lula had essentially delegated his foreign policy to three advisors which roughly defined areas of competence: Garcia with the global left, Guimarães with defense, and Amorim with the rest. The case of Garcia was particular in that he was able, with Lula's backing, to bypass any domestic challenges or even ignore consultations with other stakeholders and overall rule compliance. The choice of a presidential foreign policy did not damage Itamaraty's capacity to function so much as they made certain units useless: the MRE's policy planning division of SPD, for instance, had to assist in speechwriting instead of coordinating policy conception as per its statutes. The impression that Itamaraty was essentially working in a vacuum was amplified by the sheer lack of personnel during the Lula years: despite a significant uptick in the rates of admission to the career, the MRE simply could not deal with Amorim's wildly ambitious plans to engage with the world on all fronts at once. Brasilia only had a dozen diplomats following Europe, making it impossible for them to do a decent job of following through on Lula's visit to the Old Continent where he would visit several countries in quick succession.

True differences with the previous Cardoso administration were to be found mostly in the extent of the process of foreign policy politicization. Indeed, although Lula had to go with his second choice of Minister – Amorim was certainly more outwardly neutral, he surrounded himself with definitively left-leaning auxiliaries. Amorim and Guimarães did not hesitate in directly removing the old guard from positions that challenged their stances in order to replace them with others they knew would be loyal to them. Antônio Patriota would be the most known example of a diplomat who directly benefited from his proximity with Amorim.

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Secretary-General Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães.

One could argue that Lula's reluctance to embrace more discrete diplomats and hold on to Guimarães as a centerpiece of his foreign policy implementation has raised the bar for politicization inside Itamaraty's walls. It is difficult however to distinguish personal animosity with other conservative diplomats from an assumed project of allowing more politics to bleed in the MRE's day-to-day activities.

Nonetheless, what Amorim's strong grip on the MRE did show was the precise delimitations of what could be considered areas of specific interests that mandated exceptional procedures. These procedures would be to effectively expedite their treatment by Amorim, Guimarães or Garcia themselves instead of working their way through the bureaucracy. In other cases, foreign government would attempt to circumvent Itamaraty's *de jure* monopoly over foreign policy and interact with other ministries directly. The end result was the feeling that the rank and file of the MRE saw their relevance in the overall foreign policy machine lessen<sup>99</sup>.

Retaking the initial hypotheses, we can affirm that Lula was able to select from Itamaraty's imperfectly bureaucratic employees several diplomats able and willing to carry out his priorities (a). However, Itamaraty was unable to react to the continuous loss of monopoly to other ministries (b), even though it implied more power eventually falling under the President's office. Finally, performance was not seen by Lula as enough of an issue to warrant a change in approach (c), Amorim, Guimarães and Garcia's tenures were unhindered, and it seems that Lula was satisfied with the global image that Brazil and himself enjoyed during those eight years.

Consequently, it seems that the strength of practices within Itamaraty is irrelevant in the context of a presidential diplomacy's landmark policies, insofar the strict respect of hierarchy, vital to any bureaucracy, is part of these practices. Complex, iterative negotiations, such as trade agreements remain however ensconced in the routinized practices of diplomats. Perhaps it explains why they are singularly absent in Lula's diplomatic legacy.

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<sup>99</sup> Interview with Minister, Second Class Paulo Roberto Almeida.

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