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**Prejudice, Marriage and Motherhood: national and international
perceptions on the 1938 prohibition of women in Brazilian
Foreign Service**

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VERSÃO SIMPLIFICADA

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**Preconceito, Matrimônio e Maternidade:
percepções nacionais e internacionais sobre a proibição, em 1938,
de mulheres no serviço exterior brasileiro**

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais do Instituto de Relações Internacionais da Universidade de São Paulo, para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Ciências.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Felipe Pereira Loureiro

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ABSTRACT

This Master's Thesis explores why women were perceived to be unsuited for diplomacy in Brazil during Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* dictatorship, particularly after an administrative reform in October 1938 prohibited women's access to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations. This decision stands out because women had already been allowed admittance into the Ministry starting in 1918, and female suffrage had just been granted in 1932. It also symbolizes a paramount change in Vargas' government (1930-1945), which instated the so-called *Estado Novo* (New State) regime in 1937 after a coup d'état. The objective is to uncover and comprehend the perceptions about gender of those against women's participation in diplomacy, which stimulated a sexual division of labor in civil service more broadly in which women's roles were limited to national, private, and supportive activities. The study interlaces primary documental sources from institutions and individuals connected to the 1938 decision, followed by a critical reading using feminist theories and gender as a category for historical analysis. The conclusion sees the Ministry's prohibition as part of two wider contexts: the ongoing process of rationalization of the Brazilian public administration that used entrance examinations as tools for implementing sexual divisions of labor; and the enabling conditions the government found in international diplomatic practices that presumed women's incapacity to obtain respect from peers, physical and emotional fragility, inability to discuss "hard politics", and a natural tendency for marriage and motherhood. The resulting understanding sheds light on collective meanings that helped shape norms of behavior and institutions with long-lasting impacts in Brazil's society – still today, only 23 per cent of the Brazilian diplomatic corps is composed of women.

Keywords: Gender, Diplomacy, Public administration, Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público, Getúlio Vargas

RESUMO

Essa pesquisa explora por que mulheres eram percebidas como inadequadas para a diplomacia no Brasil, especialmente após uma reforma administrativa de outubro de 1938 que proibiu o acesso de mulheres ao Ministério de Relações Exteriores. Essa decisão é curiosa porque mulheres já vinham sendo admitidas no Ministério desde 1918, e o sufrágio feminino havia sido conquistado em 1932. A decisão também simboliza um momento de mudança significativa no governo de Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945), que instaurou o regime autoritário do Estado Novo em 1937 após um golpe de estado. O objetivo aqui é revelar e compreender as percepções sobre gênero daqueles que eram contrários à presença feminina na diplomacia, que estimulariam uma divisão sexual do trabalho no serviço público na qual o papel da mulher ficaria limitado a atividades nacionais, privadas e de suporte. O estudo cruza fontes documentais primárias de instituições e indivíduos conectados à decisão de 1938, seguido de uma leitura crítica das fontes usando teorias feministas e o gênero como categoria de análise histórica. Como conclusão entende-se que a proibição do Ministério é parte de dois contextos mais amplos: o processo de racionalização em curso na administração pública brasileira que usaria concursos públicos como ferramenta para implantar divisões sexuais de trabalho; e as condições facilitadoras que o governo encontrou em práticas diplomáticas internacionais que presumiam uma incapacidade da mulher em obter o respeito de seus colegas diplomáticos, uma fragilidade física e emocional, uma inabilidade de discutir “política dura”, e uma tendência natural para o casamento e a maternidade. O entendimento aqui exposto ilumina os significados coletivos que teriam ajudado à configuração de instituições e de normas de comportamento, com impactos duradouros na nossa sociedade – ainda hoje em dia apenas 23 por cento do corpo diplomático é composto por mulheres.

Palavras-chave: Gênero, Diplomacia, Administração pública, Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público, Getúlio Vargas.

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INTRODUCTION

After putting away my belongings in a locker, the receptionist gave me my visitor's badge and directed me to the research room. It was my first day at the *Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty*, in the famous pink building called *Palácio do Itamaraty* that houses the former headquarters of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, in downtown Rio de Janeiro. I then entered a grand and imposing corridor with two rows of busts on each side. I knew most of the names and faces of those busts, for they were people respected and admired in the history of Brazilian foreign policy. People, no. Men. Men, after men, after men. Later that day, I asked one of the interns where the bathroom was. The intern got up and asked me to follow him. As we walked through corridors of the Palace, he told me the women's bathroom was far away because it was built in a rush after the first woman passed the Itamaraty entrance examinations in 1918, overcoming all expectations. The Palace only had men's bathrooms until then. One hundred years later, the women's bathroom still is in the same place, far away, the last door after a series of turns in long dark corridors. The intern was directing me there because people – women – sometimes got lost trying to find it. The men's bathroom is centrally located, one of the first rooms you pass after coming up the staircase, with a view to the Palace's internal lake and palm trees.

This research explores why women were perceived to be unsuited for diplomacy. Twenty years after Maria José de Castro Rebello Mendes entered the halls of Itamaraty and had a bathroom built for her, the Ministry of Foreign Relations (*Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, MRE) decided to prohibit the access of women to the diplomatic career. Oswaldo Aranha's tenure as Minister of Foreign Relations began in 1938 with an important administrative reform that amalgamated the consular and diplomatic careers into one, following an international trend, and establishing the diplomat as the main formulator and executor of Brazilian foreign policy from then on.¹ The so-called Oswaldo Aranha Reform of October 1938 also determined that only candidates of the male sex were eligible to compete in entrance examinations to the diplomatic career.² According to the Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (*Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino*, FBPF), the most important feminist organization of the time, this directive would be the first explicit restriction against women's

¹ For a detailed investigation of the normative changes in Itamaraty during this period, see Castro (2009, chap. 7). Also, this unification followed the footsteps of the United States, which had consolidated its foreign service careers in 1924, and the discussions in the United Kingdom that led to the same measure in 1943 (CALKIN, 1978, McCARTHY, 2009).

² Decree-Law n. 791, October 14, 1938, art. 30.

rights in a Brazilian legislative text since 1848.³ The prohibitive measure would be kept in force until 1953, when Maria Sandra Cordeiro de Mello registered for the exams after filing a judicial injunction.⁴

This thesis' objective is to uncover, analyze and comprehend the common perceptions and assumptions about gender of the advocates for impeding women's participation in diplomacy, and in civil service more broadly, which would stimulate a sexual division of labor in which women's roles were limited to national, private, and supportive activities. In investigating the arguments and justifications presented by some key institutional actors against women's presence in certain civil service positions, we can grasp the "current thinking of the time about women's condition in [Brazilian] society" (KARAWEJCZYK, 2013, p. 84), particularly concerning what was recognized as appropriate places for women's work as well as for men's, mainly among white and middle- to upper-class individuals. This understanding, in turn, can shed light on the collective meanings that helped shape norms of behavior and institutions with long-lasting impacts in our society.

The fact that women were not allowed into careers in diplomacy in the 1930s might not, at first, seem shocking. Indeed, the doors of many other foreign services were closed to women and their political presence in international politics was more an exception than the rule. Striking about the Itamaraty decision is that women had already been allowed admittance starting in 1918, with much press fanfare, and that in the first half of the 1930s the Brazilian feminist movement had achieved significant civil rights victories – female suffrage in 1932, constitutional labor and maternal rights in 1934, and the presence of two congresswomen until 1937. When women lost their right to enter MRE in 1938, there were 18 female consuls, including two representing Brazilian interests abroad, one in Liverpool, Great Britain, and the other in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Although the decision is situated within a specific historical context, the analysis of its motivations brings forth aspects of the institutional development of the Ministry of Foreign Relations that would further explain why still in 2019 only 23 per cent of the Brazilian diplomatic corps was composed of women (MRE, 2019). This is also a worldwide phenomenon as only 15 per cent of ambassadorial positions from every country were held by women in 2017, reflecting until this day the "highly gendered" and the "decidedly masculine" character of diplomacy, making the examination of "the historical and institutional

³ FBPF to Oswaldo Aranha, [1938], Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (CPDOC-FGV), Fundo Oswaldo Aranha (OA) cp 1938.06.21.

⁴ See chapter 3 of Friaça (2018) for a detailed account of the 1938-1953 period.

scarcity of female diplomats” a crucial endeavor (CASSIDY, 2017, p. 2; AGGESTAM, TOWNS, 2018a, p. 1).

We should not lose sight that this research, although contemplating the past, is also a product of the present. If “gender” was not extensively debated these days, the topic of this thesis might have not encountered the same scholarly interest. According to Scott (1988, p. 2), “history’s representations of the past help construct gender for the present”, which says that looking at how gender was understood in 1938 is impacted by and also impacts how we discuss gender today. Indeed, if the justifications given in the 1930s against women in diplomacy had not sparked my personal outrage, this thesis would not exist as it does. The connection between past and present was clear to me throughout the research process, as I often felt depleted of energy after reproducing on these pages some of the insensitive arguments by advocates of the incompatibility of women and diplomacy – one male professor of the time, for instance, called women “our dear ‘ribs’”.⁵ But I was continuously motivated to try to understand how certain perceptions might have impacted decision-making, institutions, and individual lives, in addition to “the ways in which such concepts as gender acquire the appearance of fixity” today, despite their dynamic and socially-constructed nature (SCOTT, 1988, p. 5).

Even though almost a century separates us from the 1938 Brazilian female ban, perceptions on gender in MRE have not evolved tremendously, despite advancements. For instance, a group of Brazilian female diplomats produced a documentary to tell the story of women in the career and their place in Itamaraty, combining personal testimonies and historical facts through an intersectional lens (EXTERIORES, 2018). The project, nonetheless, was not officially endorsed by Itamaraty, being fully financed by private means via crowdfunding, which might suggest an unwillingness on the part of the institution to address such delicate issues.⁶ As another example of this reluctance, former diplomat Cecília Prada, who is now 90-years-old, has been unsuccessfully attempting for almost 40 years to be legally readmitted into Itamaraty after obtaining a divorce from a marriage that forced her resignation from the diplomatic career in the 1950s. The latest denial of her case was in March 2019.⁷

The current Brazilian administration of President Jair Bolsonaro (2019) has also made gender a significant aspect of its foreign policy. In the first half of 2019, as Brazil stood for

⁵ Sergio D. T. de Macedo, "Comentário", *Gazeta de Notícias*, November 22, 1938, p. 2.

⁶ This information was shared by a current female diplomat in the screening of the documentary at the University of São Paulo on March 15, 2019. It was also widely shared in news articles when the documentary was launched in December 2018.

⁷ "A ex-diplomata de quase 90 anos que luta há décadas para ser readmitida no Itamaraty", *GI*, October 26, 2019. Available at <<https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2019/10/26/a-ex-diplomata-de-quase-90-anos-que-luta-ha-decadas-para-ser-readmitida-no-itamaraty.ghtml>>. Access on September 22, 2020.

reelection at the United Nations Human Rights Council, newspapers alleged that diplomats received official instructions to reiterate in international negotiations that the Brazilian understanding of “gender” is that of the biological sex, men and women. According to one article, Itamaraty affirmed that it is merely resuming a “the traditional definition of gender”.⁸ This view is often sponsored by Brazil’s current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto Araújo, when he addresses the problem of “globalism”, conceptualized by him as anti-national and anti-traditional global forces that would transform legitimate concepts into ideologies, such as “gender ideology”, “racialism”, and “ecologism” (ARAÚJO, 2019 p. 11-12; SARAIVA, SILVA, 2019). Therefore, the urgency of studying historical understandings of concepts of gender in Brazilian diplomacy and foreign policy speaks directly to our present time. The easiness that previously conquered rights were lost due to one-sided decisions made by men in positions of power in 1938, negatively affecting the lives and dreams of Brazilian women, shows that the ground on which we stand is precarious and the necessity of vigilance, constant.

The 1938 Oswaldo Aranha Reform in Itamaraty symbolized a paramount change in the Getúlio Vargas’ rule. Ascending to power by means of the so-called Revolution of 1930, Vargas employed a critical rhetoric against the previous oligarchic regime, defying its corrupt and archaic practices and claiming to truly, and directly, represent the Brazilian people. After being indirectly elected president by Congress in 1934, he staged a coup d’état in his last year in office, instituting the *Estado Novo* (New State) regime in November 1937, and kept authoritarian rule until 1945, when he was deposed by the military.⁹ As the government consolidated its authoritarian dictatorship amidst international bellicose tensions, the 1938 decision in Itamaraty to prohibit women’s access to diplomacy should be read as part of a wider process of rationalization and modernization of the Brazilian state and public service, also finding enabling conditions in international diplomatic practices that favored sexual divisions of labor and homosociability, or spaces of same-sex social interaction.

In light of this, our study explores the perceptions on gender expressed by the leadership of two crucial bureaucratic institutions that played important roles for the 1938 women’s ban. First, the Administrative Department of the Public Service (*Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público*, DASP) had the political ability to define women’s accepted positions in public service via registration requirements of public examinations. After the establishment of Vargas’

⁸ "Itamaraty orienta diplomatas a frisar que gênero é apenas sexo biológico", *Folha de S. Paulo*, June 26, 2019. Available at <<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2019/06/itamaraty-orienta-diplomatas-a-frisar-que-genero-e- apenas-sexo-biologico.shtml>>. Access on: September 22, 2020.

⁹ For the literature on the Getúlio Vargas era, 1930-1945, see: Carone (1977); Fausto (1978); Gomes (1980); Levine (1980); Gomes (1996); Skidmore (2007); Fausto (2013); Gomes (2013).

Estado Novo, DASP inherited the work of the Federal Council of the Civil Public Service (*Conselho Federal do Serviço Público Civil*, CFSPC), whose objective upon its creation in 1936 was to subsidize the modernization of the public administration in Brazil and to disseminate a trustworthy and impartial merit system in personnel recruitment. These two agencies are often used as synonyms in this study not only because DASP continued and expanded much of CFSPC's work and their documents are usually archived together, but also owing to the fact that both were highly centralized in the figure of their president at the time, Luis Simões Lopes, whose private archives hold an important and unsigned study about the admission of women to the diplomatic corps.

The second crucial bureaucratic institution is the Ministry of Foreign Relations itself, contributing expertise and acting as pioneer in the implementation of rationalization measures in the diplomatic field. The Ministry of Foreign Relations, as a fundamental institution in Brazilian public administration, had an influence on women's position in civil service.¹⁰ The first woman to be admitted into Itamaraty via public examinations in 1918 ended up opening all public service jobs to female labor in the Brazilian government, whereas the 1938 prohibition brought a domino effect of female bans in subsequent years in the country's public service. Between 1939 and 1941, 18 other DASP-run examinations were closed to women, including for positions as Mail Carrier, Detective, Police, and Inspectors of all kinds.

Itamaraty, thus, executed the first executive order toward the implementation of a sexual division of labor in public administration under Oswaldo Aranha's leadership, also a significant fact as sources suggest that previous Ministers had a more positive view of female participation in diplomacy. Using the justification that nominating women to posts overseas would cause "harm to the greater efficiency of their representation abroad, creating embarrassments to their own government and to those of other nations, with no benefit to the interests of the State", Oswaldo Aranha employed a shared vision held by foreign government officials working in the international system at the time, which questioned "whether the normal women, admitted in identical conditions, (would be) as efficient as the normal men".¹¹ As a consequence of a diffuse supposition that the "representation of national interests abroad is the only career for which women are totally unsuited", according to a British ambassador in 1945 (apud McCARTHY, 2009, p. 286), Itamaraty chose to impede female access because it was not interested in

¹⁰ On Itamaraty's importance see, for instance: Rosembaum (1968), Cheibub (1985), and Hahner (1990).

¹¹ Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21; CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, Fundo Luis Simões Lopes (LSL) apu 1935.08.14, p. 17.

anticipating “a movement barely initiated” internationally, concerned about maintaining “the manliness values upheld by Brazil’s international image” (FARIAS, 2017, p. 51).¹² In order to gain respectability, demonstrate autonomy and achieve national development goals, one of the shared perceptions fomented nation states that privileged masculine rather than feminine traits in international affairs.

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

In the field of International Relations (IR), the 1990s established a group of U.S. feminist scholars as references in critiquing the lack of women and the role of gender in the discipline, which stimulated a series of subsequent studies applying a gender lens to traditional IR topics.¹³ More specifically, the study of women in diplomacy and foreign policy is already vast internationally, embracing many disciplines although predominantly focused on women’s experiences in North-American and European countries.¹⁴ In Brazil there has been a growing interest on the topic over the past decade, with pioneer works conducted by diplomats themselves, a common trend in the study of Brazilian foreign policy more broadly.¹⁵ The literature on the history of the Brazilian feminist movement, however, has already unveiled important contributions to the cause of women’s rights globally, specially noting the work of remarkable personalities such as Bertha Lutz, who fought for the inclusion of the term “equal rights of men and women” in the United Nations Charter at the San Francisco Conference in 1945.¹⁶

While works in the field of gender and women’s History rarely discuss the involvement or perceptions of Itamaraty and female diplomats, the area of International Relations seldom explores in depth the historical constructions of current norms and practices. Most of the Brazilian literature on the topic discusses current female diplomats and the existing obstacles they still face in public examinations and within MRE, recognizing it as a “masculinized space

¹² Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21.

¹³ The U.S. pioneers are: Peterson (1992); Tickner (1992); Elshain (1995); Enloe (2004); and Sylvester (2004).

¹⁴ See, for instance: McGlen and Sarkees (1993); Stienstra (1994); Denéchère (2004); Neumann (2008); Sluga and James (2016); Cassidy (2017); Aggestam and Towns (2018a); Bashevkin (2018); Nash (2020).

¹⁵ Pinheiro and Vedoveli (2012) have discussed the academic production of Brazilian diplomats. On the topic of women in diplomacy, for instance, Friaça’s book (2018) was originally produced in 2012 as part of Itamaraty’s requirements for professional ascension. The same is true for Balbino (2011). Whereas Delamonica’s piece (2014) is a Master’s thesis, it was written on the first years of her diplomatic career.

¹⁶ The literature on Bertha Lutz’ international work is somewhat vast. See, for instance: Hahner (1990); Besse (1999); Soihet (2006); Marques (2013); Marino (2014); Marques (2016a); and Marino (2019). After World War II, the literature largely ignores Brazilian women acting internationally on behalf of women’s rights, with attention given only the Beijing Conference in 1995. See: Haddad (2007); Sardenberg (2015); and Olcott (2017).

of power” (BRANDÃO et al., 2017, p. 281).¹⁷ On the part of the literature that focuses on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it rarely discusses women’s and gender issues, usually analyzing how the institution constructed an idealization of Brazilian diplomacy and *sprit de corps*.¹⁸ Cheibub (1985), for instance, presents a pivotal analysis of the institutional development of Itamaraty as the main formulator of Brazilian foreign policy in the twentieth century, whereas Moura (2007) focuses on the role of the diplomatic school Instituto Rio Branco on the socialization and formation of new diplomats. Internationally, the perceived prestige of the Brazilian foreign service and its diplomats would be critiqued in the 1960s by Rosembaum (1968), with Fontaine (1970) discussing the involvement of a variety of government agencies and interest groups in the foreign policy-making process in Brazil.

More recent scholars that study Itamaraty and the Brazilian diplomatic corps have started to address women issues, even if generally. Lima and Oliveira (2018), for instance, analyzed the social profile of individuals accepted into the diplomatic career in the second half of the twentieth century, showing how women have maintained a participation of less than 25 per cent of the incoming cohorts of new diplomats over the decades. Similarly, Gobo (2016) studied the elitist aspect of Itamaraty’s diplomatic *habitus*, which have limited and constrained the widespread access of women, blacks, homosexuals, and even individuals from different regions of Brazil, arguing that only in the 1990s the institution would take effective measures to diversify its diplomatic staff.

Finally, the literature preoccupied with the history of female presence in Itamaraty that addresses the 1938 prohibition is extremely limited. Brazilian diplomat Guilherme Friaça (2018), for instance, conducted a seminal work on the one hundred years of women in diplomacy, recovering archival documents and collecting oral testimonials to tell the most comprehensive story of Brazilian women diplomats to date. Despite its significant contribution to the field, Friaça’s work prioritizes breadth instead of depth, not fully situating Itamaraty’s many institutional changes within their broader historical context. On the same note, Brandão et al. (2017) examined past formal and informal barriers to women’s presence in MRE to elucidate the current female underrepresentation in Brazilian diplomacy. Their study, however, see the 1938 female ban as an anomaly considering the government’s previous support for

¹⁷ Works that examine current issues of women diplomats in Brazil include: Balbino (2011); Delamonica (2014); Steiner & Cockles (2017); Gobo (2018).

¹⁸ The symbolism of Barão do Rio Branco, Minister of Foreign Relations during four consecutive presidential administrations (1902-1912), is often the underline subject mainly due to his important role in the peaceful and successful solution in frontier negotiations between Brazil and its South-American neighbors (BURNS, 2003).

feminist causes, overlooking the impacts of the gendered and rationalizing discourse promoted by the new *Estado Novo* regime.

This research seeks to expand on the literature, particularly expanding on Farias' (2017) analysis of the dynamic changes occurring in the interwar years that stirred debates on what constituted diplomatic practice. According to Farias, diplomacy was moving away from behaviors categorized as feminine – elegance, politeness, discretion – towards a more rationalized, results-oriented, and consequently more masculine, vision of diplomacy. In light of these new perceptions, women's presence in diplomacy and international politics would be assumed to “effeminate”, or weaken, state power (FARIAS, 2017, p. 41). This change might have contributed to the decision to prohibit women in the Brazilian diplomatic career, and this thesis seeks to expose other perceptions that converged so that the 1938 decision was possible. In this sense, the identity change that the diplomatic career was undergoing domestically and internationally – more masculinized – is inserted in a context of problematization of women's role in public life, particularly during a rationalization and modernization process in the Brazilian public administration, and in a moment of global tensions in which Brazil's government officials believed it could not make mistakes internationally.¹⁹

Reading the existing literature on the history of Brazilian foreign policy one could easily assume that “women are just not there” or even that women's rights were a neglected issue in Itamaraty (JAMES, SLUGA, 2016, p. 2).²⁰ Both suppositions are untrue, particularly in the Americas during the interwar years, as we show in this study through the conscious mentioning of many Brazilian women engaged in diplomacy and foreign affairs. The usual silence on this merely reflects that the “core historical narratives of international politics” are also a product of power relations and that “adding women” is required to expose their irrational underrepresentation (ibid., p. 9). In an attempt to unveil the social perceptions that converged to make the female prohibition in 1938 possible and considered natural for decision-makers in their social and historical context, this thesis relies on feminist scholars to help explain female exclusion, subordination, and the sustained “unjustified asymmetry” between the social positions of men and women (TICKNER, 2001, p. 11).

We start with the assumption that the decision to prohibit the access of women to the diplomatic career is not a random or trivial act, isolated of social meaning, as we agree with scholars who argue that “public policy is never ‘neutral’”, considering that the political choice

¹⁹ For the literature on Brazilian foreign policy in the 1930s and 1940s see: Hilton (1977); Moura (1980); McCann (1995); Abreu (1999).

²⁰ See, for instance: Albuquerque (1996); Pinheiro (2004); Cervo and Bueno (2011); Ricupero (2017).

of who benefits from such policies are usually based on individuals' perceptions (CAULFIELD, 1993, p. 150, TICKNER, 2001). According to Duerst-Lahti (1987), an individual's perception is always biased, influenced by context, learning processes, socialization, and past experiences. Therefore, shared stories about the "nature" of women and men are inevitably filtered into one's choices, particularly when in positions of power and decision-making. In light of this, the scholar proposes that instead of believing what we see, "we tend to see what we believe", which justifies the importance of studying the perceptions of such individuals as they hold the power to shape the structures in which they belong (DUERST-LAHTI, 1987, p. 15).

As predominantly male institutions are likely to create a particular mode of masculinized behavior that becomes the norm, the norm consequently becomes associated with the institution and reproduces itself almost invisibly. The assumption of neutrality promotes a disguised patriarchal structure with certain gender, racial and class norms that serve the reproduction of male interests and power, based on the "abstract discourse on rationality, rules and procedures" (SAVAGE, WITZ, 1992, p. 27). The reproduction of the masculinized "norm" in international relations is reflected both in the small number of women acting in international politics as well as in the prioritization of characteristics understood as masculine for state behavior and survival. The construction of an equality between what is masculine with what is human legitimizes an international order in which there is little space for women or traits understood as feminine, taken as inauthentic and less-valued (TICKNER, 1992).

Feminist scholar Tickner (2001, p. 31) claims that such structures are gendered and "socially constructed, historically variable, and upheld through power relations that legitimizes them", and that the goal of a feminist scholar is to "make strange what has previously appeared familiar". Similarly, scholars such as Scott (1986) propose the use of gender as a useful category of historical analysis to help identify and signify both social and institutional relationships of power. In her view, a gender analysis is able to "decode" the meanings instilled in the "complex connections among various forms of human interaction", especially in politics (ibid., p. 1070). For this decoding, researchers must examine how both explicit and implicit "understandings of gender are being invoked and reinscribed" in a variety of relations involving women and the state, laws, labor, institutions and social structures (ibid., p. 1074).

Gender, here, is understood as "the socially constructed roles that define the characteristics, appropriate behavior, realms of activity, and roles assigned to men and women, in relationship to one another, within a given historical, cultural, and sociopolitical context" (GARNER, 2018, p. 1). In Western societies, gender has historically been associated with the binary male/female, also usually referring to white, middle- and upper-class, and heterosexual

men and women from the global North (ibid., p. 1). In this study, as we discuss the perceptions of government agents, diplomats and leaders of organized social movements, we presume a white and upper-class (and likely colonized) discourse on gender perceptions.

The gendering process presented by Acker (1990, p. 146), a subtle procedure that institutes notions of gender into organizations, usually begins with the quickest and easiest action at hand: “construction of divisions along the lines of gender”, or in other words, the creation of sexual divisions of labor, of clearly defined places and behaviors allowed for men and women. This process also results in a “gendered division of diplomatic labor” that has assigned the public and representational work to men, and the domestic and supportive roles to women, who found themselves invisible as “non-state actors in the field of international politics” (JAMES; SLUGA, 2016, p. 7-8; McCARTHY, 2016, p. 179).

Sources and Methods

The archival research began in Rio de Janeiro, at the Center for Research and Documents of the Contemporary History of Brazil (*Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil*, CPDOC) at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV). There, I explored the personal papers of Oswaldo Aranha and Luis Simões Lopes, where I found the most relevant documents relating to women in diplomacy as well as letters, reports and drafts on themes associated with DASP, Itaramaty, public administration, and foreign policy. Followed by the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty*, AHI), where I focused my attention on documents around women’s issues, public examinations and ministerial administrative reforms. Beyond the importance of the papers collected, the personal experience of being in the place where it all occurred, and where the only woman I encountered was the receptionist, was significant by itself.

Finally, at the National Archives (*Arquivo Nacional*), I dove into the records of FBPF, DASP and the Presidency. Immediately, I faced two restrictions. First, a significant part of FBPF’s records were closed for public consultation because the documents were being digitalized, but they luckily became available online in early 2020. Second, I was limited to consulting only five folders per day as per Archives’ rules, which restricted my research scope considering the lack of complete information on some of the records’ inventories. As Araújo (2017, p. 26) described, DASP’s papers are composed of “1404 archivist units, distributed in 841 boxes of documents”, counting with only a “summary in the description of the content of each unit”. Because of this complexity and daily limitations, I chose to focus on folders that dealt with matters of recruitment and public examinations in areas where the literature

suggested possible female bans, such as the engineer and inspector careers. Furthermore, in order to fill information gaps on DASP's work, I later gave greater attention to the Civil Service Journal (*Revista do Serviço Público*, RSP), a publication launched by CFSPC in November 1937 – immediately after the establishment of *Estado Novo* – as an instrument to inform public servants as well as to foment an administrative culture capable of promoting an *sprit de corps* in Brazilian public service and an “adequate mentality” toward efficiency and rationalization.²¹ Physical RSP editions were found at the Library of Economics and Administration at the University of São Paulo (FEA-USP).

After the Rio de Janeiro archival trip, I noticed a difficulty in finding documents that dealt directly with women's issues, comparatively. My search led to many empty roads, but the silence, despite its frustration, is common in women's history and indicates the historical imbalances of power imbued in the “fact creation and fact assembly” of archives (FLORES-VILLALOBOS, 2019, p. 36). Dias (1984, p. 14) has said that information about women “hides itself, sparse and fragmented, between the lines of documents”, emphasizing that it hovers “outside the central corpus of explicit content”. In an attempt to complement and connect scattered information, I relied on Brazilian newspapers – accessed through the National Library's (*Biblioteca Nacional*) digital database – not only to find women's voices but also to understand how the issue of women in diplomacy was being presented and discussed publicly. Additionally, I visited the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), in College Park, Maryland, where I examined the type of information that the U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro was reporting back to the Department of State, which gave an indication of the level of importance provided by US officials to certain Brazilian events. Given the good relationship between Oswaldo Aranha and the U.S. government in the second half of the 1930s, and as Luis Simões Lopes admired and was inspired by the U.S. civil service, I also looked for how women were perceived in the public administration of that country, especially through the documents and publications of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor.

This study is thus built upon the interlacement of primary documental sources from different institutions and fundamental individuals that are connected to Itamaraty's decision to prohibit the access of women to the diplomatic career in 1938 in order to comprehend the perceptions from diversified and complementary perspectives. The focus of the analysis is the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and its relations with the Brazilian public administration, more

²¹ “Revista do Serviço Público”, *Revista do Serviço Público*, ano I, n. 1, November 1937, p. 5; Luís Simões Lopes to Getúlio Vargas, “Breve exposição dos trabalhos do CFSPC”, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 65.

specifically with CFSPC and DASP, as well as with the international system, via diplomatic practices conducted mostly by foreign service officers. The temporal analysis of the study encompasses documents that, generally, reach all of the Getúlio Vargas government, between 1930 and 1945, with a substantially higher volume of documents referring to the 1936 to 1938 interval. The documents collected were written in a variety of languages, mostly Portuguese, and the citations reproduced here have all been translated into English by me to the most literal interpretation possible.

The collection of primary documents was followed by a critical reading and analysis of the sources using gender as a category for historical analysis, and elements of Political History, emphasizing conventional political actors and sources (KARAWAJCZYK, 2013, p. 18; SCOTT, 1986).²² The focus is on the political history of two actors/institutions that represent *one* of the possible viewpoints within the Getúlio Vargas government, which the study also does not take as unique or homogenous. We also took “rhetoric seriously” in the analysis of the texts collected to “illuminate motivations, convictions, and calculations” of decision-making actors, examining the way understandings of gender “establish meaning and construct social relationships” (HOGANSON, 1998, p. 14; CAULFIELD, 1993, p. 147). In order to “find gender in history”, we valued textuality, or “the ways arguments are structured and presented”, and assume that meaning is shared both explicit and implicitly (SCOTT, 1998, p. 7). This process brought to light an understanding of the power relations in the production of masculine and feminine ideals through discourse, and how it would ultimately brew a gendered structure that made possible and acceptable a decision to exclude women from the diplomatic career.

The study does not intend to identify with precision who was responsible for the women’s ban to Itamaraty in 1938. The lack of irrefutable evidence on the specific decision-maker – unsigned and unpublished documents, absence of reference to the decision in Itamaraty’s public announcements of the 1938 reform, lack of official exposition of motives, and only reactive responses to civil society protests – is by itself an indication that the individuals involved might have been conscious of its possible controversy.²³ Our intention is to pursue “meaningful explanation” rather than “universal, general causality”, thus

²² A cultural approach to Brazilian society’s perceptions is beyond the scope of this research, and therefore I recognize the context limitations of the wider discussion of women in Brazilian society. The cultural history of the 1930s, tangentially present, serves mostly to frame the views of selected actors and institutions.

²³ Some examples of sources are: CFSPC, “Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular”, [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14; Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21; Oswaldo Aranha to Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, Fundo Rosalina Coelho Lisboa (RCL) c 1938.10.00; “A reforma do Ministério das Relações Exteriores”, *Correio da Manhã*, October 19, 1938, p. 1.

apprehending the social and institutional motivators that led key powerful (male) individuals in Brazilian public administration to consider and decide in favor of the female prohibition (SCOTT, 1986, p. 1067). In fact, it matters less who decided, and more the conditions that enabled the decision in that moment in history, as well as what the justifications presented indicate about how women were understood and seen in the Brazilian society at the time.

Initially motivated by the question of why women were prohibited to register for the diplomacy entrance examinations in 1938, the research naturally led me to a common and diffuse assumption that women and diplomacy were incompatible. As women were in fact considered suited for other activities, I sought a deeper understanding of the perceptions that would be instrumentalized by certain men in power to decide on women's position in diplomacy, in public service, in the labor market, and ultimately in Brazilian society. I was led to wonder what I could grasp, from the justifications used in favor of female bans in certain job positions, about the social definition of women at this time in Brazilian and – to some extent – international history, that prioritized women in national, domestic, private, supportive, and usually invisible, functions. Therefore, I suggest that Itamaraty's decision is an example of how social perceptions of appropriate behavior for both men and women can influence and permeate institutions, limiting women's possibilities to act or, in other words, how ideologies are put into practice through legal measures, similarly to what Scott (1996) proposed:

“Debates about gender typically invoked ‘nature’ to explain the differences between the sexes, but they sought to establish those differences definitively by legal means. By a kind of circular logic, a presumed essence of men and women became the justification for laws and policies when, in fact, this ‘essence’ (historically and contextually variable) was only the effect of those laws and policies” (SCOTT, 1996, p. ix).

In this sense, the research was guided by a set of questions that have supported the objective to comprehend the common perceptions and assumptions on gender that favored a sexual division of labor that limited women's capacity for action within Brazilian public administration. Some of the accompanying questions were: who had decision-making power to define women's position in diplomacy and in public service in general? How and which gender beliefs affected decision-makers? What roles were women expected to play? How the quest for rationalization and efficiency impacted women's positions in government? How did the international system, the upcoming war, and Brazil's international position influence female prohibition? How did the women see themselves in general and in response to the female ban in particular?

The first line of my argument is that the 1938 decision to ban the access of women to the diplomatic career in Brazil was not an isolated incident in the Brazilian public administration. Itamaraty's prohibition was the first of a series of other female bans in public examinations for positions that required a more public, social and political role. Understanding that social perceptions are incorporated into organizational structures through actors' power in political decision-making, the relationship between domestic (private) and non-domestic (public) life influenced perceptions around female work, family and domesticity, affecting women and men's social role and segregating them into distinct work positions. In light of this, entrance examinations to civil service positions represented a significant tool in solidifying gender norms, sexually dividing the spaces in which men and women could occupy in public service, and reinforcing women's subordinating and private roles – also assigning diplomacy as a political and public activity. For instance, the study conducted by Brazilian authorities on the issue of women's admissions into the diplomatic career seemed to indicate that the debate initially was on whether women should be allowed to serve overseas.²⁴ Women employees, therefore, were not undesired as a whole, but only on activities that represented political functions in the Ministry and the representation of Brazilian interests internationally, given that these roles, as it was perceived by Brazil's officials of the Vargas regime, could also compromise the ongoing modernization process that would seek a specific international participation to promote national development. Therefore, at the end of the day women were stripped of the opportunity to act as diplomats in its entirety.

The second line of my argument is that Itamaraty's prohibition was also not an isolated case in international affairs. Opportunities for women in foreign services around the globe were fairly restricted, which provided a set of ideal conditions that were used by members of the Brazilian government to start implementing a sexually divided vision of civil service. In light of a supposed special aspect of diplomacy and international representation, justifications against women's participation included perceptions that female representatives would be inefficient abroad because of social prejudices and their supposed mental and physical fragilities, consequently risking bilateral relations between countries. Masculine spaces of diplomatic interaction – from cigar lounges to golf courses –, as well as subjects considered inherently masculine, such as high politics, security and economics, should continue to be the sole responsibility of men, even as many women thrived in international movements and conferences mostly dealing with issues associated with femininity though, such as humanitarian

²⁴ CFSPC, “Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular”, [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14.

and social affairs. Furthermore, the logical incompatibility between being a female diplomat and a wife was persistently and vigorously remembered by foreign officials in many countries, particularly in the United States and Great Britain – countries that, as it will be shown, played an important role in our investigation given how they influenced Brazilian officials. As a result, most foreign services implemented either a formal or an implicit marriage ban for those women who insisted in joining diplomatic corps. It is impossible to overlook that women were allowed to serve internationally as diplomats only when they were deprived of the main aspect that defined them as women in that society: marriage and children. Only as single women they would be allowed to act publicly in the name of their country – alternatively, they could be diplomatic wives, a highly valued, unpaid, asset in diplomatic circles.

Division of chapters

The following pages begin with Chapter 1, which defines the two main actors of our story, Oswaldo Aranha and Luis Simões Lopes, and how they relate to each other, as well as to the 1938 Itamaraty Reform. It follows with a historical context of the Getúlio Vargas government and Brazil's society at the time, exploring the Brazilian feminist movement and its connections around the world (especially in the U.S.); the domestic politics that led to the *Estado Novo* coup of 1937; and the Brazilian foreign policy at the brink of World War II. Then, the chapter analyzes more deeply the rationalization process occurring in Brazilian public administration, with a magnifying glass into DASP and the Ministry of Foreign Relations, including the formation of the enabling conditions that culminated in limiting the diplomatic career only to candidates of the male sex in late 1930s in Brazil.

In chapter 2, we begin with an overview of why the Brazilian feminist movement suffered a severe blow after the establishment of the *Estado Novo* regime, losing almost all of its accomplishments, while the government introduced a number of family-based social policies and incorporated into its bureaucratic structure a masculinity discourse that had a direct impact on women's role within public service. We analyze the phenomenon of the feminization of certain office occupations to explore the role of DASP in determining a sexual division of labor in Brazilian public administration via the merit-based recruitment system. The common perceptions presented here assume that women were not allowed to occupy positions that had a political function, being confined instead to positions of assistance. There also seemed to be an understanding that positions that demanded travel and activities outside walled offices were not suitable for women. Finally, the chapter wraps up taking into consideration that the 1938 decision might also have reflected an irrational (male) fear that women were becoming

interested in the diplomatic career on “alarming proportions”, as well as the female higher approval rates in diplomatic examinations throughout the 1930s.²⁵

Finally, chapter 3 begins with a historical and theoretical overview of gender issues in diplomacy, focusing on the changes occurring in diplomatic practice between the First and Second World Wars. We then present a discussion on how different understandings of the public/private dichotomy relates to women in diplomacy, which serves to orient the remaining sections of the chapter, always backed by comparisons between justifications against women’s presence with the experiences of those few women that were already part of international politics, in order to examine the validity of official arguments. The first common perception was that women were considered adequate only for positions within the country – nationally and privately – that did not require representing overseas. Secondly, diplomacy was characterized by informal male-dominated spaces of interaction and masculine topics of discussions, segregating women into negotiating “women’s issues”. At last, the chapter ends with a study of the celibacy/marriage dichotomy, as women in diplomacy were ultimately seen as a potential risk for marital hierarchy and family formation. In sum, women would be judged as inapt to diplomacy because of their presumed incapacity to obtain respect from peers, physical and emotional fragility, inability to discuss “hard politics”, and natural tendency for marriage and motherhood – in addition to the uncertain position of the diplomat’s husband.

²⁵ CFSPC, “Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular”, [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14.

CONCLUSION

The decision to prohibit the access of women to the diplomatic career, as part of the Ministry of Foreign Relations' administrative reform of October 14th, 1938, is a symptom of larger phenomena. The decision, made during a moment of consolidation for Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* (1937-1945) as an authoritarian dictatorship, is significant in two ways. First, it is paramount to the rationalization process happening simultaneously in Brazilian public administration that perceived each individual as naturally apt to certain jobs, implementing sexual divisions of labor via female bans to specific entrance examinations. Second, it is important in the context of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, which saw women as a risk to Itamaraty's international prestige – considering the small female presence in international politics more generally –, given that the Ministry did wish to appear weak before other nations at such a volatile global moment. Thus, a handful of powerful men during the *Estado Novo* were able to control the space available for female labor, and, with the help of a masculinizing rhetoric disguised as rationalization and efficiency, defined gendered norms of behavior that would have a much larger, and longer, impact on the position of women in Brazilian society.

We have explored the perceptions on gender expressed by the leadership of two crucial bureaucratic institutions that had important roles in the 1938 female prohibition. The first one is the Administrative Department of the Public Service (DASP), whose objective was to subsidize the modernization of public administration and to disseminate a trustworthy and supposedly impartial merit system in personnel recruitment, where it had the political ability to limit the positions in which women were allowed to serve. DASP presented a highly centralized administration in the figure of its president, Luis Simões Lopes, whose private archives hold an important and untapped study about the admission of women to the diplomatic corps. The second crucial bureaucratic institution is the Ministry of Foreign Relations itself, which, as a fundamental institution in Brazilian public administration and the country's foreign affairs, had an influence on women's position in civil service. The Ministry, thus, executed the first executive order toward the implementation of a sexual division of labor in public administration under Oswaldo Aranha's leadership, also a significant fact as primary sources suggest that previous Ministers had a more positive view of female participation in diplomacy.

Despite significant achievements of the Brazilian feminist movement in the first half of the 1930s, the consequential loss of rights under the *Estado Novo* was blatant. The new regime absorbed some conservative ideals interested in social harmony, and more actively intervened

in social relations to maintain order and gender hierarchy. This perspective found eco in social forces that included the Catholic Church, eugenic intellectuals, and feminists who often reinforced women's maternal role in society. Additionally, the Brazilian government promoted social policies that lauded traditional family structures, higher fecundity and population growth, and the position of the husband as the main breadwinner. Motherhood was thus included in the modernization process of society in a broad sense. In the 1930s, female presence in the Brazilian labor market was indeed influenced by conceptions of domesticity and motherhood, which greatly impacted the type of work women performed extradomestically, usually consisting of activities that were considered as extensions of female "natural" abilities as wives and mothers.

The merit-based public examinations system, portrayed as an instrument to abolish patrimonial and political practices of recruitment, was never seen or desired by DASP's managing elite as a democratic tool. Examinations were understood as a conducive mechanism to delimitate with almost surgical precision the pool of candidates eligible for access to public service. For instance, although the 1937 Brazilian Constitution established that "public positions are equally accessible to all Brazilians", the directive was followed by a requirement to observe the "capability conditions prescribed in laws and regulations".¹ The possibility of applying conditionalities was cited in the Brazilian study on the admission of women to the diplomatic corps as a justification for the government to "restrain the entrance of women (in foreign public service)".² The public administration, therefore, used this conditional element to delimitate the space available for women in civil service, based on the social and gender perceptions of its managing elite. In defending DASP's position, Luis Simões Lopes argued that the administration was not opposed to either sex, because at play was merely the search for candidates with the best conditions to perform efficiently the required duties.

DASP members, thus, seemed to understand that some positions required either masculine or feminine abilities, and we see here a correlation with the public/private dichotomy. First, there seems to be an assumption that women should not be allowed to occupy positions that had a political function, being confined instead to positions of assistance, that required routine and standardized activities, such as typist, stenographers, and clerks. Jobs that required representation of the state, decision-making, negotiation, or any sort of power over others were largely closed off to women, particularly diplomacy and military positions. Secondly, positions that involved assignments in public spaces, or movements and travels *outside* the walled office

¹ Art. 122, Paragraph 3.

² CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 4.

(whose symbolic role was similar to the space of the house) were considered unsuitable for women, such as mail carrier, police officers, detective, and inspectors of all kinds. A woman's suitable job would be those held in private, inside a given closed space, and in just one location – in other words, invisible to the public eye. For instance, in one case the career of engineer was differentiated between “field” and “office” engineers, hinting at a larger perception also found in the literature and directly related to the Itamaraty case: women could do work that was domestic, internal, inside the office, rather than work that was visible, public, national, or that implied external relationships, as this could possibly cast doubts on female virtue.

The Itamaraty decision of 1938 also reflects a reaction to the challenge and threat that women candidates posed to perceived social norms. The fact that institutions tend to be structured based on masculine understandings and perceptions of reality because male bodies are predominant is one of the reasons why women are excluded from, segregated or have a difficult time incorporating into organizations and institutions. In the 1930s, not only female interest seemed larger than expected for the diplomatic career, but women's approval rates in Itamaraty examinations were also higher than men's throughout the decade. The unexpected achievement of these women made the modernizing elite fear that “soon half, or almost, of the Ministry's initial positions will be occupied by women”, recommending “restrictive providences” in order to not find itself “embarrassed to find qualified staff for the performance of duties abroad”.³

The opportunities for women to act around the globe were also fairly restricted, which provided a set of ideal conditions that were used by members of the Brazilian government to start implementing a sexually divided vision of civil service. The most important document that we analyzed in this regard is an unsigned report examining the convenience of women acting as Brazilian representatives abroad, and, more generally, their presence in the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The study was mostly based on a report from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which had decided in April 1936 to “maintain the exclusion of women from the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, for being convinced that female employees do not perform with advantage to the Public Service activities of this nature”.⁴ The available papers of the Brazilian study form a compilation of seven documents, of which five are translations of the British report. Out of the entire 27 pages, only six are specific to the Brazilian section, which also frequently paraphrases the British justifications.

³ CFSPC, “Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular”, [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14.

⁴ Highlights from original text. Ibid., p. 5.

Whereas some individuals, including some women, were attempting to connect diplomacy with essentialist feminine characteristics to promote female participation in international affairs, the turbulent interwar years also generated a new diplomatic profile. Diplomacy was moving away from behaviors being categorized as feminine – elegance, politeness, discretion – towards a more rationalized, results-oriented, and consequently more masculine, vision of diplomacy. Therefore, not only the diplomatic career was undergoing an identity change domestically as well as internationally – more masculinized –, but the Itamaraty decision to prohibit women in 1938 is also part of a wider process of problematizing sexual divisions of labor and the role of women in public spheres, in its variety of meanings.

The first paragraph of the Brazilian study on women's admission into the diplomatic corps clarified that women's collaboration in public service was not at stake, and their rights were fully guaranteed in the *national* arena. One of the issues was that women “are not accepted in every country in perfect equal grounds as we wished”.⁵ Oswaldo Aranha indicated as one of the main “existing obstacles” to female representation abroad a presumed unpleasantness and “social prejudices” from other countries. Because diplomacy's success depended on representatives being “well accepted” in host countries, unwelcomed women would have their utility “sensibly diminished”, being “doomed to fail” in their duty and possibly harming “the influence of diplomatic missions accredited to those countries”.⁶ For Brazil, this could also compromise the ongoing modernization process that sought a specific international participation to promote national development.

Hence, sending women to serve overseas represented, ultimately, a risk. A risk for bilateral relations between countries given that women, supposedly more fragile, would not be capable of exercising their duty efficiently when facing a number of possible hostilities and adversities, even as numerous personal experiences of women diplomats showed otherwise. It was also a risk for years of establishing homosocial norms and behaviors in diplomatic practice that could bring a woman's – or the nation's – honor into question, segregating women's participation in international affairs to topics understood as feminine, such as social and humanitarian issues, where many women indeed thrived, usually as delegates. Overall, in spite of the great individual achievements of some remarkable women, breaking the initial glass ceiling of the diplomatic career did not mean immediate acceptance into homosocial spaces of informal information-gathering. Frequently in diplomacy the line that determined an interaction

⁵ CFSPC, “Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular”, [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7, 18, 26.

as professional or social was very thin and blurred, and women diplomats had to find creative ways to handle delicate situations, particularly considering that men were already accustomed to the behavioral expectations of foreign representation.

Finally, it was a risk to marital hierarchy and family formation, as women were naturally expected to exclude themselves from the labor market upon marriage, or either to remain unmarried and childless as the price to pay for their ambition. The first obstacle for a married woman diplomat in Brazil was the legal necessity to obey her husband in accordance with the country's 1916 Civil Code. In what was viewed as a complex situation, a woman "subjected to the marital power" of the husband could be restrained in a position of leadership in a consulate or embassy. Another concern was the humiliation to which married women would submit their husbands. The idea of putting the husband in the same social position as the diplomatic wife – a figure with a well-defined social position in diplomatic and foreign relations – was considered foolish. The concern over male dependency and husband misplacement in international relations seemed to be more a societal fear over social norms than a reality in female diplomats' lives, who either were mostly single or resigned after marriage for many decades to come. In Brazil, only in 1996 a couple of diplomats were able to serve in the same foreign post with both of them receiving full salaries and benefits.

Despite attempting to contribute to the literature on the subject of women and gender in diplomacy, international politics, and civil service, this thesis also opens many possible doors for further research and in-depth analysis. First, as it is often highlighted, we have dealt with a social conception of women that mainly sees them as white and upper-class, broadly ignoring issues of race that have bluntly appeared in primary sources of personalities such as Oswaldo Aranha and Bertha Lutz. Some scholars of Itamaraty have recently entered this realm of research, but it is still vastly incipient and limited, especially in History. Second, issues of gender relating to temporary workers in Brazilian civil service, particularly in Itamaraty, seems to present a vast potential for deeper analysis of sexual divisions of labor in public administration. Third, we have indicated that Brazil at the time, at the brink of World War II, was preoccupied with reflecting an international image of strength, unity, and sovereignty, which offers many opportunities for further exploration of the gendered discourse of diplomatic and military foreign policy decision-makers. Lastly, despite important works already conducted on Bertha Lutz' international importance for women's rights domestically and globally, many other Brazilian women were engaged in transnational feminist movements and in foreign-policy making during this time. Their voices still need to be heard.

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

CFSPC	Federal Council of the Civil Public Service (<i>Conselho Federal do Serviço Público Civil</i>)
CLT	Consolidation of Labor Laws (<i>Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho</i>)
DASP	Administrative Department of the Public Service (<i>Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público</i>)
FBPF	Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (<i>Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino</i>)
FCO	U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGV	Getúlio Vargas Foundation (<i>Fundação Getúlio Vargas</i>)
MRE	Ministry of Foreign Relations – Itamaraty (<i>Ministério das Relações Exteriores</i>)
RSP	Civil Service Journal (<i>Revista do Serviço Público</i>)
UUF	Union of University Women (<i>União Universitária Feminina</i>)

Archives

- Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty (AHI), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - Dossiê Temático Ministério das Relações Exteriores (DT-MRE)
 - Dossiê Temático Situação Política Interna (DT-SPI)
 - Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Atividade Meio (MRE-Atividade Meio)
- Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - Fundo Q0, Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino (FBPF)
 - Fundo 35, Gabinete da Presidência da República (GPR)
 - Fundo 2C, Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público (DASP)
- Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (CPDOC-FGV), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - Fundo Getúlio Vargas (GV)
 - Fundo Luis Simões Lopes (LSL)
 - Fundo Luís Vergara (LV)
 - Fundo Oswaldo Aranha (OA)
 - Fundo Rosalina Coelho Lisboa (RCL)
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park (MD), United States
 - Record Group 59, Department of State Central Files (RG 59)
 - Central Decimal Files (CDF) 1930-1939
 - Record Group 86, Women's Bureau (RG 86)
 - General Records (GR) 1919-1952
 - Bulletins (1918-1963)

Newspapers and Publications

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