Gender in Brazilian Diplomacy: Prohibiting the access of women in Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* (1938).[1]

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Luah Tomas
luahbt@gmail.com
Institute of International Relations (IRI)
Universidade de São Paulo (USP)
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ABSTRACT

This paper explores why women were perceived to be unsuited for diplomacy in Brazil, particularly after an administrative reform in October 1938 prohibited the access of women 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 Getúlio Vargas' government (1930-1945), which instated the *Estado Novo* authoritarian 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, and in civil service more broadly, which stimulated a sexual division of labor 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 our society – still today, only 23 per cent of the Brazilian diplomatic corps is composed of women.

[1] This paper is based on my Master's thesis, which was submitted in September 2020. I have attempted to select the most relevant information in order to think of a future article based on the thesis' main findings. Also, the formatting in this paper is in accordance with my university's requirements. Please ask author's permission before citing.

1 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 faces of those busts, for they were people admired in the history of Brazilian foreign policy. People, no. Men. Men, after men, after men. Later that day, I inquired one of the interns where the bathroom was and was asked 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 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 paper 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 began in 1938 – lasting until 1944 – with an important 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.[2] 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.[3] According to Bertha Lutz, suffragist leader of the important Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (*Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino*, FBPF), this directive would be the first explicit restriction against women's rights in a Brazilian legislative text since 1848.[4] The prohibitive measure would be kept in force until 1953, when Maria Sandra Cordeiro de Mello registered for exams after filing a judicial injunction.[5]

[2] 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).
[3] Decree-Law n. 791, October 14, 1938, art. 30.
[4] FBPF to Oswaldo Aranha, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21.
[5] See chapter 3 of Friaça (2018) for a detailed account of the 1938-1953 period.

The objective is to uncover, analyze and comprehend the common perceptions and assumptions about gender of the advocates of restricting 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. This study is built upon the interlacement of the related literature with primary documental sources from institutions and individuals that are connected to Itamaraty's 1938 decision, followed by a critical reading of discourses using feminist theories and gender as a category for historical analysis, in addition to elements of Political History that emphasize conventional political actors and sources (KARAWEJCZYK, 2013; SCOTT, 1986).[6] 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 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.

What makes Itamaraty's decision stand out, in an international system in which many foreign service doors were closed to women, is that Brazilian women had already been allowed admittance starting in 1918, with much press fanfare, and that in the first half of the 1930s the 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 in Liverpool and Buenos Aires. Why, then, did Itamaraty decide to block women's access to the diplomatic career at that moment? 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 that further explains why still today only 23 per cent of the Brazilian diplomatic corps is composed of women (MRE, 2019).

Additionally, perceptions on gender in MRE have not evolved tremendously, despite advancements. In the first half of 2019, for instance, as Brazil stood for reelection at the United Nations Human Rights Council, newspapers alleged that diplomats received official

[6] The archival research included visits to the Center for Research and Documents of the Contemporary History of Brazil (CPDOC) at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV), the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (AHI), the Brazilian National Archives, and the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Also, the documents collected were written in a variety of languages, mostly Portuguese, and the citations here have all been translated into English by me to the most literal interpretation possible.

instructions to reiterate in international negotiations that the Brazilian understanding of "gender" was that of the biological sex, men and/or women. According to one article, Itamaraty affirmed that it was merely resuming "the traditional definition of gender".[7] This view is often sponsored by the current Minister 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, because, in 1938, previously conquered rights were easily and quickly lost due to one-sided decisions made by men in positions of power.

The 1938 Oswaldo Aranha Reform at the time symbolized a paramount change in Getúlio Vargas' regime. Ascending to power by the so-called "Revolution of 1930", Vargas employed a critical rhetoric against the previous oligarchic republic, 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 fascist-inspired *Estado Novo* (New State) regime in November 1937, and ruled until 1945.[8] As the government consolidated its authoritarian dictatorship amidst international bellicose tensions and the feminist movement lost almost all of its accomplishments under the new Constitution, the 1938 decision to prohibit women needs to be understood as part of a wider process of rationalization and modernization of the Brazilian state and public service, which also found enabling conditions in international diplomatic practices that favored sexual divisions of labor and homosociability.

In light of this, the study explores the perceptions on gender expressed by the leadership of two crucial bureaucratic institutions that had important roles in Itamaraty's female ban. First is the Administrative Department of the Public Service (*Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público*, 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 would have the political ability to define the positions in which women were allowed to serve via the registration requirements of public examinations. DASP was also highly centralized in the figure of its president, Luis Simões Lopes, whose private

[7] "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 in: September 1, 2020.

[8] For the literature on the Getúlio Vargas era (1930-1945) see: Gomes (1980); Levine (1980); Skidmore (2007).

archives holds an important and unsigned study about the admission of women to the diplomatic corps.[9] The second crucial bureaucratic institution is the Ministry of Foreign Relations itself, which, 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 opened all public service jobs to female labor in government, whereas the 1938 prohibition led a domino effect of female bans in subsequent years with 18 other DASP-run entrance examinations closed to women between 1939 and 1941.

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 sources suggest that previous Ministers had a more positive view of female participation in diplomacy.[11] 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 condoned a common shared vision in the international system at the time, which questioned "whether the normal women, admitted in identical conditions, is as efficient as the normal men".[12] 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 (as in McCARTHY, 2009, p. 286), Itamaraty would be uninterested in anticipating "a movement barely initiated" internationally and concerned about maintaining "the manliness values upheld by Brazil's international image" (FARIAS, 2017, p. 51).[13] In order to gain respectability, demonstrate autonomy and achieve national development goals, one of the shared perceptions among government leaders fomented a state that privileged masculine rather than feminine traits in international affairs.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

The study of women in diplomacy and foreign policy is already vast internationally, embracing many disciplines although predominantly focused on women's experiences in

[9] This document, although unsigned, is typed in papers with letterheads from the Federal Council of the Civil Public Service (*Conselho Federal do Serviço Público Civil*, CFSPC), DASP's antecessor created in 1936 and also presided by Luis Simões Lopes.
[10] On Itamaraty's importance see, for instance: Rosembaum (1968), Cheibub (1985), Hahner (1990).
[11] FBPF would give lunches in honor of two previous Ministers and their work in favor of feminism and women in Itamaraty. See, for instance: "Tomam posse os Ministros das Relações Exteriores e da Educação e Saúde Pública", *Jornal do Commercio*, July 27, 1934, p. 5; Rachel Crotman, "Duas Manifestações Feministas no Itamaraty", *Diário de Notícias,* July 29, 1934, p. 21.
[12] 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, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 17.
[13] Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21.

North-American and European countries.[14] In Brazil, the literature either focuses on the history of the feminist movements and their important contributions to the cause of women's rights globally – rarely involving Itamaraty or female diplomats' participation – or it discusses more current issues and the existing obstacles women still face in public examinations and within MRE.[15] On the other hand, scholars who analyze the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rarely discuss women's and gender issues, usually exploring how the institution constructed an idealization of Brazilian diplomacy and *sprit de corps*.[16] 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. More recent scholars of 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 limits and constrains 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. This study, therefore, seeks to expand the understanding presented by the literature up to this point, particularly expanding on Farias' (2017) analysis of the dynamic changes occurring in the interwar years that stirred

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

[15] The literature on the history of the feminist movement specially notes remarkable personalities such as Bertha Lutz, suffragist 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. For works on Lutz see: Hahner (1990); Besse (1999); Marques (2013); Marino (2019). Works that examine current issues of women diplomats in Brazil include: Balbino (2011); Delamonica (2014); Steiner & Cockles (2017); Teixeira (2017), Farias and Carmo (2018); Gobo (2018).

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

debates on what constituted diplomatic practice. According to this author, diplomacy was moving away from behaviors that would end up being categorized as feminine – elegance, politeness, discreetness – towards a more rationalized, results-oriented, and consequently more masculine, vision of foreign relations. 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 would influence to the decision to prohibit women in the Brazilian diplomatic career, and this research seeks to expose other perceptions that converged so that the 1938 decision would be possible. Thus, the identity change that the diplomatic career was undergoing domestically and internationally – more masculinized – would be inserted in a context of problematization of women's role in public life, particularly during a rationalization and modernization process in Brazilian public administration, in a moment of global tensions in which Brazil believed it could not make mistakes internationally.[17]

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, in agreement with scholars who argue that "public policy is never 'neutral'", considering that the political choice 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 (*ibid.*, p. 15). In light of this, we suggest that Itamaraty's decision is an example of how ideologies are put into practice through legal measures.

[17] The Getúlio Vargas foreign policy had the purpose of efficiently achieving national development within a global political dispute between two antagonist power systems: the first lead by the United States and its liberal-democratic push, and the second by Nazi-Fascist Germany. Scholars affirm that Vargas attempted to maximize economic and commercial gains in this context, bargaining its neutrality. Vargas did obtain some concrete advantages for Brazil, the most significant being an Eximbank loan deal to build the first National Steel Company in 1942. For the literature on Brazilian foreign policy in the 1930s and 1940s see: Hilton (1977); Moura (1980); McCann (1995); Abreu (1999).

As an example, the government Accountability Office (*Tribunal de Contas*) questioned in 1920 whether its regulations permitted the registration of three women candidates for the *Tribunal* exam. At this time, only two other women had been accepted into public service by public examinations, Maria José Mendes in Itamaraty and Bertha Lutz at the National Museum. The men at the *Tribunal* conclude that, since there was no mention in the internal regulations of the possibility, "the law does not admit" female participation.[18] In FBPF's archives, where this document is found, there is also a newspaper clipping saying that the *Tribunal* had denied women's registration because the law required the showing of the military card as mandatory.[19] As Brazilian women did not have to serve in the military, they obviously had no card to present, but this was still used as an impediment for their participation in an institution that reproduced gendered rules and procedures.

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*.). In this study, as we discuss the perceptions of government agents, diplomats and leaders of organized social movements in Brazil, 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 would institute notions of gender into organizations, would usually begin 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 resulted in a "gendered division of diplomatic labor" that 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).

3 The Decision in Public Administration

The consequential loss of rights under *Estado Novo* was blatant. The former constitutional guarantee of equal salary was alleviated in 1940, while the practice of sports

[18] "As três candidatas ao concurso para funcionárias do Tribunal de Contas", *A Noite*, July 3, 1920, AN-FBPF, Q0.ADM, CPA.CPB.1, p. 9.
[19] "Um contra no feminismo", *A Noite*, July 11, 1920, AN-FBPF, Q0.ADM, CPA.CPB.1.

"incompatible with [women's] natural conditions" would be forbidden in 1941, and secondary education become sexually segregated the following year.[20] Bertha Lutz, leader of the feminist organization FBPF, observing all that was being regulated and restricted, wrote to a friend that "a relentless masculinism prevails everywhere" as no women had a place in the new *Estado Novo* government.[21] The new regime absorbed some conservative ideals interested in social harmony and would more actively intervene in social relations to maintain order, based on the underwritten belief that a "gender hierarchy would help maintain the social and political hierarchies" of the regime (HAHNER, 1990, p. 176). This perspective found eco in a variety of social forces that included the Catholic Church, which regained political strength during the Vargas years; intellectuals who used scientific and eugenic justifications to assign women the supposedly higher purpose of homecare and maternity; the feminists themselves who would reinforce women's maternal role; and the government itself, which, according to Cowan (2016), privileged "statist approaches to the critical issues of gender, reproduction, women's public roles, and education", favoring values such as "pro-natal eugenics, masculinization, militarization, the revitalization of youth, antiliberalism, and even fascism" (p. 15, 21).[22]

One of the ways the state found to guarantee gender hierarchy, motherhood, and social harmony would be through the Statute of the Family approved in 1941, directed at the protection of the traditional family structure, with one of the objectives being to promote population growth through higher fecundity and productivity (SCHWARTZMAN, BOMENY, COSTA, 1984; COWAN, 2016).[23] The following year, when Brazil was already engaged in World War II, DASP defended that enabling socio-economic conditions for large families also benefited Brazil's national defense, considering the "distressing phase we are going through".[24] DASP also recognized that the public administration should have a special role in "developing the family of the public servant", considering these were individuals closely integrated with the general objectives of the state.[25] Furthermore, DASP highlighted the importance of protecting the public servant's family, "given the low birth rates the group presents".[26]

In studying gender notions in Brazil in the first half of the twentieth century, Blachman (1977, p. 31) argued that the social definition of women at the time was "the biological female

[20] Decree-Law n. 2.548, August 31, 1940, art. 2; Decree-Law n. 3.199, April 14, 1941, art. 54; Decree-Law n. 4.244, April 9, 1942, art. 25.
[21] Bertha Lutz to Carrie Chapman Catt, April 15, 1939. AN-FBPF, Q0.ADM, COR.A939.5, p. 3.
[22] For works on these other social forces, see: Schwartzman, Bomeny and Costa (1984); Hahner (1990); Besse (1999); Caulfield (2000); Ostos (2012); Saffioti (2013); Cowan (2016).
[23] Decree-Law n. 3.200, April 19, 1941.
[24] DASP. *Relatório 1943.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944, p. 171.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 177, 182.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

as wife and mother within the institution of the family", which provides insights into the perceptions that culminated in the 1938 female ban in diplomacy. For instance, a newspaper article published a few days after Itamaraty's prohibition argued that it was not fair to offer women all the "political advantages" that men possessed, given that men would never be able to compete with the opposite sex "in those places that will forever be the female kingdom", the home.[27] The diplomatic career cannot be ignored as likely part of a group of "degenerative" activities for women, as it not only attracted white and upper-class women, responsible for maintaining a morally and physically healthy citizenry, but it also promoted a lifestyle that supposedly made marriage and motherhood more complicated (CAULFIELD, 1993).

Similarly, Marques (2016, p. 670) argued that women's presence in the labor market in the 1930s was influenced by two main aspects: available access to opportunities, and contemporary conceptions of motherhood. The latter greatly impacted the type of work women were allowed to perform outside of the home, with Brazilian labor regulations following "symbolic representations" of masculinity and femininity, and the term "female labor" being used politically to suggest the "set of activities conventionally executed only by women" (*ibid*., p. 671). The former aspect, access to opportunities, is further investigated here through the lens of civil service and entrance examinations.

At the time, the phenomenon of middle- and upper-class women working in offices was already solidifying. This phenomenon had begun for the same reasons women started working in industries, out of women's necessity to complement family income and because, for the employer, female labor was cheaper than men's (STROM, 1992; SAFFIOTI, 2013). However, women's entrance into office work would create what Queirolo (2018) called the "female office worker paradox".[28] On one side of the paradox, women saw an advantage in such positions because they required higher levels of education and offered better monetary and hourly conditions, comparatively to factory work. On the other hand, the eventual feminization of positions mostly occupied by women would create an unequal playing field, as they became constantly devalued, limited and subjected to lower salaries, now in comparison with their male colleagues (*ibid.*, p. 21).[29] The devaluation of women's labor in offices was the reflection of a combination of factors, including: the patriarchal social relations imbued in organizations;

[27] Floriano de Lemos, "Os Direitos de Eva", *Correio da Manhã*, October 19, 1938, p. 4.
[28] This is my own translation of the Spanish original: "*paradoja de la empleada*" (QUEIROLO, 2018, p. 21).
[29] Feminization processes of office positions seems to be common in Westerns societies during this time. Davies (1982) and Strom (1992) have focused on the United States, while Perrot (2005) and Queirolo (2018) would find a similar process in France and Argentina, respectively. Germany's Weimar Republic would also go through rationalization and feminization processes for office jobs (MASON, 1976). In the case of Brazil, one can look at Matos and Borelli (2013), Saffioti (2013), and Marques (2016) for some guidance in this area.

women's supposed natural subservience to men; perception that women's salary were complementary in the household; and the presumed temporary condition of female labor during singlehood (DAVIES, 1982; STROM, 1992; SAFFIOTI, 2013; QUEIROLO, 2018).

In the case of Brazil, information could be gathered in documents produced by Mary Cannon, a U.S. government employee at the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, who travelled to Brazil in early 1943 to study "economic and social conditions as they relate to employed women", funded by and in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State.[30] A 1945 publication contained as a "general observation" – since there were no official numbers – that the proportion of women working in the 1930s was higher than in the 1920s, particularly in government office jobs, positions that offered "shorter working hours and higher rates of pay than those with private firms".[31] In her assessment, Cannon claimed that the typewriter was indeed an emancipation tool for Brazilian women who wished to work just as it had been in the United States. During an interview with a group of "mostly typists" women she found that the majority lived with their relatives and contributed "heavily to the family budget", while still managing to "dress nicely" and travel on vacations. Cannon also estimated that around 60 per cent of women "work after they are married".[32] However, the space for political and public participation of women felt more restricted after *Estado Novo*, even as the area for supportive and routine work seemed to expand.

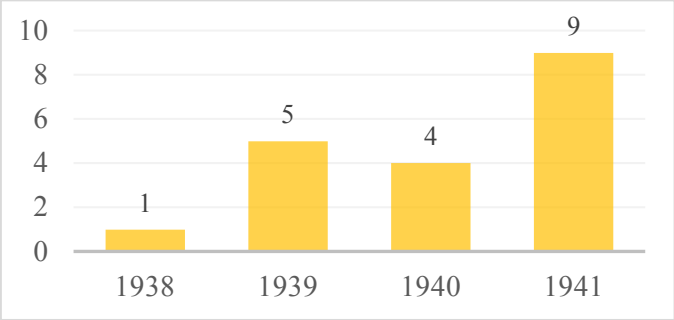
The merit-based public examinations system, portrayed as an instrument to abolish patrimonial and political practices of recruitment, would never be seen or desired by DASP's managing elite as a democratic tool (GRAHAM, 1968; SIEGEL, 1978). The examinations were equally understood as a conducive mechanism to pre-define and 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".[33] The feminist Union of University Women (*União Universitária Feminina*, UUF) argued that there could be no other conditionality besides "those of an individual's normal health, mental and moral capacity". Not only the female sex should not be used as an excluding conditional factor, but the Examination Instructions did not have

[30] Mary Anderson to Division of American Republics, July 29, 1942, NARA, RG 86, GR 1919-1952, Cannon, Mary (1942-1943), Box 2..
[31] Mary Cannon, "*Women Workers in Brazil"*, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Bulletin n. 206, 1945, NARA, RG 86, Bulletins (1918-1963), Box 641, p. 1, 34.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 22; Mary Cannon to Mary Anderson, January 9, 1943, NARA, RG 86, GR 1919-1952, Cannon, Mary (1942-1943), Box 2.
[33] Art. 122, Paragraph 3.

the legal force of "laws and regulations", and, therefore, would not fit the Constitutional directive.[34]

Nonetheless, 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".[35] 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. As Graph 1 shows, the prohibition in the diplomatic career was the first in a series of other sexual restrictions in DASP's public examinations.

GRAPH 1 - Examinations conducted by DASP and opened for men only, 1938-1941.[36]



In 1941, the DASP-run Civil Service Journal (*Revista do Serviço Público*, RSP) published an editorial that could be called a defense of women's participation in civil service, supposedly in response to a group of male students who had requested the exclusion of women from all public service examinations. With an interesting choice of words, it claimed that "women's *intrusion* in activity fields previously reserved for men" was a growing phenomenon and their contribution would be "large and valuable". The editorial then explained sex restrictions on the basis that it would be difficult to imagine a woman police, for instance, just as men would not do well in tasks that "required feminine ability", such as those of a typist, for which women had demonstrated a greater aptitude.[37] Following this line of thought, DASP members seemed to understand that some positions required either masculine or feminine abilities, and, through the analysis of sex segregated public examinations, we see a correlation with the public/private dichotomy.

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[34] UUF to Getúlio Vargas, February 17, 1944, AN-GPR, 35.0.PRO.2054, p. 3.
[35] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 4.
[36] Elaborated by the author, based on: Examination Instructions available at editions of *Revista do Serviço Público* from November 1937 until December 1941. The research on subsequent years was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic that closed libraries by mid-March of 2020, but the available information is already very rich.
[37] "A mulher e o serviço público", *Revista do Serviço Público*, v. II, n. 3, June 1941, p. 3-4. Highlights my own.

Inspired by Okin's (2008, p. 307, 318) discussion on the ambiguities in defining the public and the private "spheres", we further explore what these concepts mean in the context studied here, particularly considering that perceptions differ across time and space. First, there seems to be an assumption that women should not be allowed to occupy in great numbers positions that had a political function, being confined instead to positions of assistance that encompassed much of the problems discussed on female office work. This would give the public/private dichotomy a meaning equivalent to political/supportive, or ends/means. Here, jobs that required representation of the state, decision-making, negotiation or any sort of power over others, were greatly closed to women. Secondly, there also seems to be an understanding that positions that involved assignments in public spaces, or movements and activities outside the four walls of an office, were not suitable for women. Women apparently were not to be seen outside or interacting with random people, even if part of the job description. A woman's job would be those held in private, inside, in one location – or invisible to the public eye. The public/private dichotomy here has a very literal interpretation. Let us explore them below.

3.1 Ends/Means

As women were more naturally associated with administrative functions – also called "housekeeping" activities (WAHRLICH, 1983, p. 282-284) – the amalgamation of the consular and diplomatic career in 1938 was the last measure in erasing the division of activities carried out within Itamaraty, solidifying the political function as its main purpose and laying out the path for women's exclusion. For instance, in an evaluation report of the 1935 Itamaraty entrance examination, a diplomat did not recognize in women the "necessary conditions for the diplomatic and consular careers", proposing the creation of a position restricted for them, permanently allocated in the Secretariat in Rio de Janeiro as typists, archivists, librarian and clerks. Female qualities, thus, would not be suited for the political functions carried out abroad.[38] This did not, however, prevent Minister Oswaldo Aranha from requesting in 1939 the fulfillment of temporary positions such as Archivists, Librarians, Clerks and Accountants within the Ministry. Interestingly, in the request for Typists, Aranha wrote the Portuguese word flexed in the female gender, "*Datilógrafas*", indicating that this position should naturally be filled by women, and that Itamaraty could hire them, but for subordinated positions. On the

[38] Fonseca Hermes, "Relatório sobre o Concurso para Cônsules de 3ª Classe, 1935", July 24, 1935, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 311.2, Lata 868, Maço 13120, p. 2-3

other hand, when requesting Cryptographers, Aranha explicitly asked for a male candidate, perhaps because the position would involve dealing with political secrets.[39]

DASP's Annual Reports, similarly, paid attention to numbers of female participation and approval in public examinations. In 1940, the report noticed that, up until then, the number of female registrations was kept below 30 per cent and would "present a tendency to decrease".[40] This soon proved incorrect as female registration rose to 35 per cent in 1941 and 39 per cent in 1943, very much driven by DASP's increase in the number of examinations held in those years.[41] The Annual Report of 1942 attempted to explain the growth in women's registration saying that in 1941 there had been particularly two examinations that were "inviting by its own nature to the people of the female sex": Clerk and Typist, counting respectively 37 and 45 per cent of registered women candidates.[42] Indeed, despite registration growth, a larger percentage of women flocked toward positions that were administrative, private, routinized and supportive. Between 1937 and 1940, the top five exams with greater female registration included positions for: Museum Conservator, entailing private and administrative "housekeeping" activities; Typist and Clerk, jobs that had undergone feminization processes; Assistant Statistician, which at the time mostly meant repetitive calculations and fact-checking, in a supportive character; and Education Technician, a realm of women's supposed natural abilities as mothers. On the other hand, the examinations that had less than five per cent of female registration were mostly professions that had little association with femininity, such as Doctors, Veterinarian, Agronomist, and Meteorologist.[43]

3.2 Public/Private

One examination that had its doors closed to women as late as 1944, for an engineer career at the Goiás Railroad in central Brazil, provides great insights into perceptions disseminated about women's roles that also help to understand why women were excluded from diplomatic examinations six years before. In defending DASP's position, its president Luis Simões Lopes argued that the administration did not oppose either sex, after all, at play was the search for candidates with the best conditions to perform efficiently the required duties. Rather

[39] Oswaldo Aranha to Secretaria de Estado, May 22, 1939, AN-DASP, Série: Pessoal, Sub-série: Movimentação, Provimento de Cargos e Funções, 2C.DASP 780.
[40] DASP. *Relatório 1940.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1941, p. 113.
[41] DASP. *Relatório 1943.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944.
[42] DASP. *Relatório 1942.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943, p. 214-215.
[43] DASP. *Relatório sobre as atividades do DASP em 1939.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1940; DASP. *Relatório 1940.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1941. The subsequent DASP Annual Reports brought changes in data presentation that omitted numbers of individual examinations.

than explaining exactly why women were not suitable for that career, Lopes invoked the technical character, "sometimes even rude", of the position allocated in central Brazil.[44]

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Public Works, overseer of the Goiás Railroad, would make a very clear distinction between "field engineers" and "office engineers". Whereas the latter was in charge of calculations, project development, and mostly intellectual work in the "office", for which "there would be, of course, no restrictions to be considered" toward women, the former – "field engineers" – required the command "over a large number of workers", in addition to being subjected to "liv[ing] in mobile camping sites", without comfort, security, or good hygiene conditions. Moreover, because women were "physically and morally more delicate than men", the rudeness of a field engineer's life was inadequate for women-engineers. Finally, the Department said that since it could not separate field and office activities, it would be "convenient" to maintain the sex restriction in entrance examinations.[45] This letter is crucial because it is one of the few cases in which the reasons for women's exclusion is so bluntly explained. The differentiation between field and office engineers hints 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 implied external relationships, as this could possibly cast doubts on their virtue.

The National Department of Private Insurance and Capitalization, under the Ministry of Labor, also asked for a sex restriction in 1944, explaining that the job of inspecting insurance companies required public servants to have contact with the "most intimate and grave facts of such companies", demanding "severe and reflexive appreciation, based on business experiences". For such tasks, the Department needed employees that were "calm, reputable, discreet", as well as "detailed-oriented and firm", which led them to understand that people younger than 25-years-old and women would not be suitable for the position. Additionally, such companies were scattered throughout the country and the inspection function involved "frequent trips between the many states", another aspect against women's participation.[46] Not only women could not travel around the country, but they would also be seen as elements that, without business experience or firmness, could jeopardize the intimate and delicate aspect of the inspecting job.

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[44] Luís Simões Lopes to Getúlio Vargas, June 19, 1944, AN-GPR, 35.0.PRO.2054.
[45] João de Mendonça Lima to Getúlio Vargas, April 5, 1944, AN-GPR, 35.0.PRO.2666.
[46] Edmundo Perry to Diretor da Divisão de Seleção do DASP, September 6, 1944, AN-DASP, Série: Pessoal, Sub-série: Seleção, Concurso, Contador, 2C.DASP 1171, p. 2.

3.3 "Sex Jealousy"

Although women have been constantly portrayed as an obstructing element to society's development and progress when acting extradomestically, Saffioti (2013, p. 66) said that, in reality, "it is society that puts obstacles to the full potential of women". The fearful apprehension that a large number of women would enter the diplomatic career via public examinations in the 1930s led Getúlio Vargas' Chief of Staff to say, for instance, that the Itamaraty's female ban in 1938 "reeks of sex jealousy".[47] The decision would also reflect a reaction to the challenge women candidates posed to perceived social norms when, in "alarming proportions", they became interested in the career.[48] Not only female interest seemed large, but women's approval rates in diplomatic examinations were also higher than men's throughout the 1930s (Graph 2). The unexpected achievement of these women proved that they possessed the "essential attributes for a specialized career", especially considering that Itamaraty examinations were considered "the only serious one in Brazil" already in 1935, prior to DASP.[49] Women's success would make 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".[50]

If anything, women were proving the value of the merit-based system, competing equally and achieving success based on their knowledge and capacity. For Minister of Foreign Relations Oswaldo Aranha, however, women would have an unfair advantage. In Bertha Lutz' later recollections of the 1930s, she remembered a conversation with Aranha after the 1938 prohibition in which he would have said that female candidates were "educated in convent schools, generally knowing more languages and having advantage over the boys". As a response, members of FBPF would have asked whether public examinations were meant to select candidates based on favoritism or on the most apt for the professions.[51]

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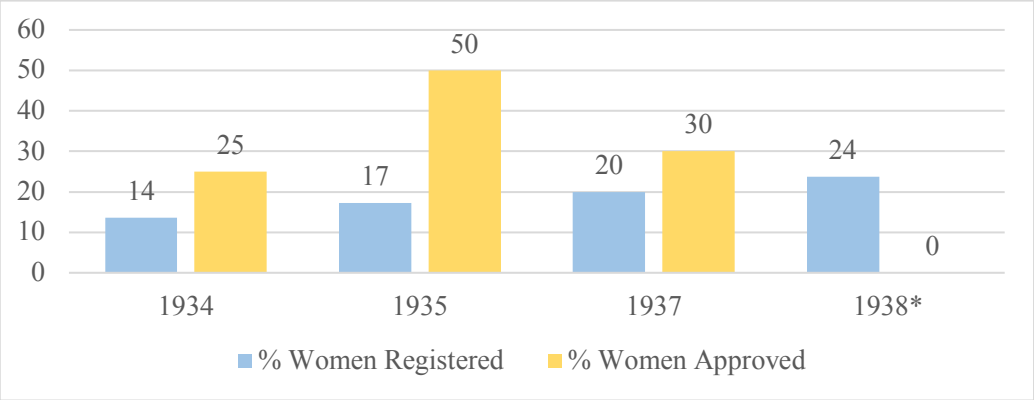
[47] Luís Vergara to Getúlio Vargas, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, LV c 1935/1945.00.00.
[48] The idea that women candidates were challenging social norms can be found in Farias (2017, p. 43) and in: CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14.
[49] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14; Fonseca Hermes, "Relatório sobre o Concurso para Cônsules de 3ª Classe, 1935", July 24, 1935, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 311.2, Lata 868, Maço 13120, p. 3.
[50] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14.
[51] "A Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino, Movimento Feminista de 1931-1937", [n.d.], AN-FBPF, Q0.ADM, EOR.ELV.1, p. 67.

GRAPH 2 – Percentage of women registered vs. approved in Itamaraty public examinations, 1934-1938.[52]



* The registration period for the 1938 examinations was between April and July of that year. Once the October 1938 Reform instated that women could no longer have access to the diplomatic career, the 18 women who had applied had their registration cancelled.[53]

Female success in public examinations was also noted by Mary Cannon, who reported after her trip in 1943 that Brazilian "women have done so well in competitive examinations for government jobs that men are protesting", a perception she observed when young professional women told her that men "resent women who threaten their security, resent them as competitors".[54] In a confidential report to "those responsible for the official policy and program on inter-American cooperation", Cannon added that DASP allowed equal opportunities "at least theoretically", but Brazilian women had said that, as a result of their success rates in public examinations, "men are trying to close the better-paid jobs to women".[55]

4 The Decision in International Diplomacy

As we saw in the previous section, Itamaraty's 1938 decision to prohibit women was not an isolated incident within the Brazilian public administration during the Getúlio Vargas *Estado Novo* regime (1937-1945), serving as the first of many other limitations. Now we zoom into diplomacy to note that the Brazilian decision would also not be an isolated case in

[52] Elaborated by the author, based on: Presidente da Comissão Examinadora to Ministro de Estado, July 7, 1934, AHI, MRE-Atividade Meio, Estante 135, Pasta 1, Maço 11; Fonseca Hermes, "Relatório sobre o Concurso para Cônsules de 3ª Classe, 1935", July 24, 1935, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 311.2, Lata 868, Maço 13120; DASP. *Relatório 1940.* Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1941, p. 103; Luís Simões Lopes to Minister of Foreign Relations, August 12, 1937, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 311.2, Lata 868, Maço 13120; Roberto de Vasconcellos, "Relatório do Secretario do Concurso", August 9, 1938, AN-DASP, Série: Pessoal, Sub-série: Seleção, Concurso Diplomata, 2C. DASP 1177.

[53] Mario de Brito, response to "Relatório do Secretario do Concurso", October 19, 1938, AN-DASP, Série: Pessoal, Sub-série: Seleção, Concurso Diplomata, 2C. DASP 1177, p. 4.

[54] Mary M. Cannon, "*Women in Brazil Today*", U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, November 1943, NARA, RG 86, GR 1919-1952, Publications, Box 15, p. 8.

[55] Mary M. Cannon, "*Brief Summary of the Reports on Brasil*", August 1943, NARA, RG 86, GR 1919-1952, Cannon, Mary (1943), Box 3, p. 2.

international affairs. The opportunities for women to act 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. The most important document here 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.[56] 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".[57] 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. One of these documents presented a summary of arguments both in favor of and against women's admission into the diplomatic career, which are compiled in Table 1.

As another sign that women in diplomacy was considered an oxymoron internationally, a U.S. Consul General in London wrote in 1932 that "theoretically […], the service is open to all women who desire to enter it, but while equality is maintained it is the opinion in the Department that the Foreign Service is not a suitable place for women". According to him, "no one says this publicly, but it is a fact". When discussing women's suitability for the "shipping part of a consulate", the Consul noted that "no bad results followed" after a U.S. female officer had worked in the shipping office in Valparaiso, Chile; however, he added that "I should never assign a woman to such a job and think few senior consular officers would".[58] Although judging that there were no "bad results" from the female appointment experience, for him this still was not a convincing evidence in favor of women.

[56] We do not know who in fact conducted this study, although one of the documents is titled "Study conducted by the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Relations" – the shortest document, presenting summarized conclusions. The documents are unsigned, but are typed in papers with letterheads from DASP's antecessor agency and were found in the personal archives of Luis Simões Lopes.

[57] Highlights from original text. CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 5. The diplomatic and consular careers had been officially prohibited to women in the United Kingdom in 1921, soon after the British public service had allowed women's participation in its higher rankings (McCARTHY, 2009).

[58] American Consul General to Dept of State, June 3, 1932, NARA, RG 59, CDF 1930-1939, Box 271, 120.1/214, p. 3. This was a response to a questionnaire from the British FCO about the U.S. Consular service and we recognize that it mostly represents his own opinion and not that of the U.S. Department of State.

TABLE 1 – Arguments on women's admission to the diplomatic career, according to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Commission, 1936.[59]

Arguments IN FAVOR of women's admission	Arguments AGAINST women's admission
Women are allowed to access public service positions regardless of sex.	Question whether women can be as efficient in the "specific conditions" of the foreign service.
Women have worked in similar positions, "amongst others for which they were previously judged incapable".	Different costumes, opinions and religions in other countries, complicating women's abilities to do their job and impairing foreign missions.
Women have worked in positions at the League of Nations.	Women's presence would cause difficulties in personnel relations, due to the intimate character of foreign missions' work.
Possibility of obtaining "the best elements" for the Foreign Service, widening the "recruitment field".	"The normal woman" would not be physically resistant to the different environments to which diplomats are subjected.
Women diplomats could "verify feminine or feminist influences" in foreign countries, in addition to possessing "certain qualities of tact and intuition peculiar to their sex".	Women would not be able to be sent to any location, creating a "privileged class", serving only on the most comfortable posts.
Women already serving as diplomats in other foreign services, with "good performances".	The type of services women would be "more apt to perform", social and philanthropic, would already be secured by wives and daughters of diplomats.
Exclusion of women would be based "in part on prejudices, in part on fear of innovations".	Women's entrance would cause initial "disturbance and inefficiency" that would not be worth the effort.

Whereas some were attempting to frame diplomacy as feminine to promote women's participation in international affairs, the turbulent interwar years would also help generate a new diplomatic profile, based on a "new model of manliness" that would seek a "more business-oriented approach to foreign policy" (FARIAS, 2017. p. 47). A Brazilian male ambassador, for example, assured that the idea of the diplomat as a "lady of society with pants", because of their tendency to be overly gentile, amiable and "useless", was in the past – now, he said, diplomacy meant "action".[60] During the interwar years, however, feminists around the world would appropriate women's supposed tendency for peace – a sentiment growing naturally from women's concern with the reproduction and care of life – to demand a voice both domestically and internationally, also considering men's "natural" aggressiveness a "liability to the continued existence of the world" (McGLEN, SARKEES, 1993, p. 4-7). This association between peace and feminism would be a common trend amidst Brazilian women as well. Consul Leontina Cardoso assessed in 1938 how expansionist Germany could eventually turn its gaze towards the American continent, seeing the "educated woman" as one of the forces – along with Pope Pio XI and Franklin D. Roosevelt – working against Hitler's advance, using

[59] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 16-19.
[60] Adalberto Guerra Duval, "A Diplomacia no Estado Novo", *Revista do Serviço Público,* v. III, n. 3, September 1938, p. 10.

powerful "spiritual weapons".[61] As women were often victims of the "violent means employed by men to solve international conflicts", Cardoso had high expectations that women could help obtain the "distant ideal of universal peace", being "unconditionally pacifist" and marked by the "conciliatory spirit".[62] This view, however, would lose the narrative battle for women's participation in foreign service.

In this section we once again propose a categorization of the justifications used against women's participation in diplomacy in light of the previous discussion on sexual division of labor and public/private dichotomies.[63] The first and main understanding affecting foreign service at this time would give the dichotomy the corresponding meaning of international/national. 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; the situation, according to the document, was different in "specialized services" carried out abroad, such as those of the diplomatic and consular careers.[64] Nonetheless, not all women were excluded from acting as country's representatives internationally. Understanding the public/private dichotomy in a context of masculine/feminine spaces of sociability, certain women would be allowed to engage in discussions involving feminine or "women's issues". The final categorization explores the public/private dichotomy as celibacy/marriage. The logical incompatibility between being a female diplomat and a wife would be persistently and vigorously reminded, and many foreign services would implement either a formal or an implicit marriage ban for those women who insisted in joining diplomatic corps. It is impossible to overlook that women would be allowed to serve internationally as diplomats only when they were stripped off of the main aspect that defined them as women in that society: marriage and children.

4.1 International/National

The Brazilian study on women's admissions into the diplomatic career and the three letters of protest received from consuls and feminists seemed to indicate that the debate initially would be on whether women should be allowed to serve overseas, on the "convenience or not

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[61] Leontina Licinio Cardoso, "Progresso Feminino", *Diário de Notícias,* October 16, 1938, p. 3.
[62] "O sentimentalismo exuberante das mulheres ante a fria discrição da diplomacia", *Diário da Noite*, February 9, 1935, p. 1.
[63] Dichotomies are widely used in classical theories of International Relations, and have been criticized by feminists IR scholars as hierarchical and as highly gendered binary oppositions, usually associating the less-desirable concepts with femininity, as in the following cases: realist/*idealist*, power/*weakness*, sovereignty/*anarchy*, and self-help/*dependency* (TICKNER, 2001, p. 34).
[64] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 1.

of the designation of [women] to exercise their duties abroad".[65] Minister Oswaldo Aranha also explained that, domestically, women's participation in public service was unquestionable, but if "inside our frontiers, women's aspirations have expanded, […] in positions of representation abroad, they still could not overcome existing obstacles".[66] Even as some "more advanced" nations already experimented with female representatives abroad, such as the United States, the study would look to the British for inspiration, as it was "always at the forefront of feminine achievements" but still would not accept women in its foreign service.[67] Brazilian female consuls, who appear to not have seen the Brazilian study, still learned that the British report might have "certain influence" on Itamaraty's "bosses", protesting that, in the case of Brazil, the rights to women had already been granted and it would be unfair to remove them now.[68]

The first problem presented by the Brazilian study to justify women's exclusion was that women "are not accepted in every country in perfect equal grounds as we wished".[69] Sending women to serve overseas would represent, ultimately, a risk: a risk for the country to be represented, as women would not be capable of exercising their duty efficiently facing a number of possible hostilities; and a risk to bilateral relations, in exposing the host country to a situation understood as uncomfortable. According to Aranha, the Brazilian experience with women consuls overseas had produced embarrassments both to Brazil – with a supposed repercussion "on the ground of ridicule" in the Buenos Aires press – and to the host countries, because they "do not welcome such designations, although they accept them out of courtesy".[70] According to Friaça's (2018) research, however, Argentine newspapers seemed to portray Beatta Vettori as discrete and "charmingly feminine", which perhaps was in fact the kind of repercussion that embarrassed Aranha. Nonetheless, Vettori had arrived in Buenos Aires in March 1938 accompanied by her journalist husband and would discuss with a positive outlook the participating of women in Brazilian diplomacy (p. 114-115).[71]

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[65] Consuls to Oswaldo Aranha, "Memorial", July 1, 1938, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 300.13, Lata 866, Maço 13096.
[66] Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21, p. 2.
[67]CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 3.
[68] Consuls to Oswaldo Aranha, "Memorial", July 1, 1938, AHI, DT-MRE, Code 300.13, Lata 866, Maço 13096, p. 2. Prohibitions after the initial admittance of women also happened in Turkey and France. See: Marbeau (2004); and Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-kurum (2018).
[69] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 1.
[70] Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21, p. 3. These justifications were also common in the U.K. and the U.S. See: Calkin (1978); McCarthy (2009).
[71] Beata Vettori had a successful career in Itamaraty, acting in a variety of posts and two as ambassador. After almost 40 years of service, she retired in 1971, continuing to be active in international relations. See Friaça (2018). Additionally, Mexico had a woman ambassador abroad at the time who did encounter bad press coverage in the host country; see Huck (1999) and Kiddle (2015).

Constructing social meaning on existing biological differences between male and female bodies, one of the arguments defended that "unfavorable or unhealthy" climatic conditions, such as extreme weather – too hot, under British perspective – or high altitudes, would affect disproportionally the already inferior feminine resistance, because "the normal woman is not physically capable of enduring well life in such conditions".[72] The perception was, according to the Brazilian report, that diplomatic and consular activities would not be "the most adequate to the physical constitution of women", and female's supposed inherent fragility would inhibit them to act in a concrete and effective way "when in contact with the public".[73]

In the translation of the British Comission's report in the Brazilian study another difficulty for women involved missions in countries "semi-civilized or subjected to frequent disturbances of order", when women and children were traditionally the first to be evacuated. In such cases, "it is not possible to admit that a woman [consul] would stay in her post while other women would search for shelter", putting the female diplomat in a dilemma between protecting herself, because of her supposed fragility, and staying and fulfilling her duty.[74] However, experiences showed that women would indeed perform quite well under disturbances that happened not in "semi-civilized" countries, but in Europe during World War II. Brazilian consul Zorayma Rodrigues, head of the Consulate in Liverpool at the time, was praised in the Brazilian press for "fully complying with [her] duty", particularly when the Consulate, apparently destroyed, saw "its personnel, led by a lady, […] exposed to all dangers to save the archives held there" (as in FRIAÇA, 2018, p. 93). U.S. Women's Bureau representative Mary Cannon, in one of her speeches on Brazilian women, shared a tale of "the heroism of the woman consular officer in Liverpool who went alone to the office at 3 o'clock in the morning during one of the early bombings to make safe the essential papers".[75]

4.2 Masculine/Feminine

Women were entering a homosocial space, defined according to Neumann (2008) as spaces that preferred same-sex company, mostly due to a history of single-sex socialization that would create a certain set of expected norms and behaviors. Considering the predominance of men in diplomacy, the Brazilian CFSPC study presented as another justification against

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[72] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 7, 19.
[73] *Ibid.,* p. 2.
[74] *Ibid*., p. 22.
[75] Mary M. Cannon, "Women in Brasil", October 1943, NARA, RG 86, GR 1919-1952, Cannon, Mary (1943), Box 3, p. 4. Similarly, U.S. ambassador to Norway Florence Harriman stayed put in her post even after the German invasion in 1940, communicating promptly news about the situation and the whereabouts of the Norwegian king to Washington, which granted her an acclaimed photo in *Life* magazine (NASH, 2016, p. 227).

women's participation in Itamaraty the level of discipline and intimacy demanded from employees at posts, which would not be befitting with "a lady".[76] Furthermore, the "assiduous collaboration" necessary between supervisors and subordinates in posts with little personnel would not be compatible with "sex differences". The presence of a woman diplomat overseas, particularly if single, could also mean embarrassments, because, "forced to live alone", she would provoke "in some places, possible comments in detriment to the country's representation", an argument adapted from the British Commission report that said that a woman alone would "provoke unpleasant comments". Additionally, it was common in certain cases for single male employees to share accommodation, which would be "embarrassing for a woman".[77]

Frequently in diplomacy, the line that would determine an interaction 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 (NEUMANN, 2008; MCCARTHY, 2009; WOOD, 2015). Mentions of women's physical appearance and femininity would also be strategies used to undermine women's presence as heterosocial spaces threatened to become the norm. In the Brazilian press, a Portuguese former male ambassador that believed in a woman's capacity to become an "effective agent for world peace" wrote that he saw as a fundamental condition that "the diplomatic career be rigorously prohibited to ugly women", because, as another journalist pointed out, a pretty woman diplomat alone and "without self-defense" could potentially be forced or persuaded to exchange favors for "little kisses".[78]

Another trend was explained by Minister Oswaldo Aranha who indicated that women could still be appointed as international representatives even if they were not part of the diplomatic career.[79] Perhaps Aranha was referring to the frequent government appointments of Brazilian women delegates to a variety of international conferences during this time. Herren (2016) discussed that these "turbulent" years would be characterized by inconsistencies and ambivalence in how national governments used women representatives, banning them from foreign services but simultaneously employing them as delegates in international negotiations in light of their competence and expertise in certain areas (p. 183). Brazil would be a good

[76] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 18.
[77] *Ibid*., p. 1, 18.
[78] Julio Dantas, "A mulher diplomata", *Correio da Manhã*, April 2, 1933, p. 4; Oto Prazeres, "Consules com 'chaperon'", *Jornal do Brasil*, September 11, 1938, p. 5.
[79] Oswaldo Aranha to Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, RCL c 1938.10.00.

example of this ambivalence.[80] In a preparatory report for the 1938 Lima Conference, the author emphasized with "satisfaction" the participation of Brazilian women in inter-American women's rights efforts, in which they would have an "outstanding role, which dignifies the glorious juridical culture of Brazil". Among the 16 Brazilian women listed whose action had "already transposed the national frontier" were Bertha Lutz, several of her colleagues at FBPF, female consuls, diplomatic wives and other experts in different fields, mostly assigned to international conferences on women's and labor rights.

4.3 Celibacy/Marriage

Based on the premise that "marriage is political", unions would often jeopardize a woman's diplomatic career, whereas a married men had his masculinity reassured, being supported by his wife's unpaid domestic labor – freeing him to fully pursue his public career goals – and sitting in a more prestigious scale in the workforce (ENLOE, 2014, p. 10). In the 1930s, women in diplomacy would be seen as a potential risk for marital hierarchy and family formation, aspects that, in turn, were perceived as rivals to a woman's career efficiency and ascension. It was expected that women, after marriage, would resign from their professional role in favor of the family and of the traditional expectations of domesticity and motherhood.

Minister Oswaldo Aranha confessed feeling that among the prejudices that women would face if sent abroad had to do with ideals of family. For Aranha, the only solution for a married woman "whose husband works in [Brazil] and cannot accompany her overseas" would be abdication from diplomacy in favor of family union.[81] Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, a Brazilian novelist and conservative intellectual, wrote to Aranha in protest and received in response an extra dimension to the family problem: the social position of the diplomatic husband overseas and the non-definition of the official proper treatment assigned to him.[82] In Coelho Lisboa's reply letter, she would emphatically note this argument as "vanity of men, terrible and cruel!", pointing out that the husband should "have the position he deserves – equality, if he is of value by her side, and inferiority, if he is inferior". For her, the "best element" of a couple should "impose itself naturally", from the point of view of "human values only".[83]

The idea of putting the husband in the same social position as the diplomatic wife – a figure who has always had a well-defined social position in diplomatic and foreign relations –

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[80] Extensive work on women at the League of Nations also indicates this was the case for other countries, although the organization would replicate most of the problems discussed for women in offices and in diplomacy, with female participation restricted to supportive activities or to "women's" issues. See: Herren (2016); Garner (2018); Macfadyen et al. (2019).
[81] Oswaldo Aranha to Bertha Lutz, July 11, 1938, CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1938.06.21, p. 4.
[82] Oswaldo Aranha to Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, RCL c 1938.10.00, p. 1.
[83] Rosalina Coelho Lisboa to Oswaldo Aranha, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, OA cp 1939.00.00, p. 2-3.

would be considered foolish.[84] The position of the husband was a frequent justification against the participation of women in diplomacy internationally, constantly referenced in the documents collected and in the literature on women diplomats. The main preoccupation was that a married woman diplomat could ultimately compromise masculinity ideals and masculine power within a variety of social institutions. This anxiety seemed to be shared by a Brazilian male professor of international law, who showed his support for Itamaraty's decision of October 1938 to prohibit women writing that some "gracious little ladies" were now throwing "tantrums and pouting" because of the prohibition. Although he believed that women – whom he called "our dear 'ribs'" – would not succeed in obtaining a reversal of the measure, he feared the truth of an old proverb that would say: "when a woman wants, the devil also does". The author seemed to show some discomfort that women would be getting used to "entering [jobs] everywhere, to sticking their nose in all doors, to snoop at everything".[85]

The concern over male dependency and 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. One Brazilian female diplomat would write that, in fact, celibacy was the "norm among women diplomats", pointing out that "marriage and maternity could disturb good work performance" (FRIAÇA, 2018, p. 297). Among the first 20 women accepted into Itamaraty – between 1918 and 1938 – ten remained single, two were divorced at the beginning of their careers, one was already divorced when appointed, and another got married in her 40s, after 17 years of being a single diplomat woman (ibid.). At the end, only six Brazilian women seemed to have successfully managed marriage and careers, but some of them would end up resigning.[86] To reconcile professional and family demands, it was understood that women in diplomacy would need to "forsake one role for the other", an idea embraced by Oswaldo Aranha and also by a British male ambassador who considered

[84] The study of diplomatic wives is extremely vast in the United States and European countries. In Brazil, however, the topic does not seem to attract as much attention, either in the literature or in the archival documents we collected – the only wives ever mentioned were the women diplomats who resigned to accompany their male spouses, also diplomats. In light of this, we can only assume that the experiences of Brazilian diplomatic wives were similar to those studied in the U.S. and Europe for the purpose of this research. One exception is the case of Aracy de Carvalho Guimarães Rosa, married to Brazilian writer and diplomat João Guimarães Rosa, who through her husband's position at the consulate in Hamburg would help a number of Jews obtain Brazilian visas during World War II (HAAG, 2011).

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

[86] Marriage as an impediment to women's continuation and ascension in the diplomatic career is also largely discussed in the literature. For some examples see: Calkin (1978); Morin (1994); McCarthy (2009); Nash (2016); Niklasson and Robertson (2018).

"unthinkable that a diplomatic […] officer should produce babies and at the same time do her work properly" (McGLEN, SARKEES, 1993, p. 160).[87]

The choice between career or marriage was a concern in the Brazilian study, which concluded that the presence of women in the diplomatic career could be a "paradoxical favoring of celibacy and infertility by the State, contrary to its superior interests and moral principles".[88] Additionally, considering that the women with the capacity to study and pass the diplomatic examinations were usually those of a higher social class, they would be the ideal candidates for perpetuating the Brazilian race, which ultimately led to a more "strict control of their sexual activity" (CAULFIELD, 1993, p. 161). Celibacy, thus, meant complete dedication and availability it would be the price women would have to pay for their desire to work extradomestically in a society that expected them to follow their natural roles of mother and wives (PERROT, 2005, p. 225).

Conclusion

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations determined in 1938 that only male candidates could register for the entrance examinations to the diplomatic career and this paper has explored why women were perceived to be unsuited for diplomacy in that socio-historical context. Although Brazil was among the first countries to allow women into diplomacy in 1918, the decision twenty years later to ban further female presence would not be an isolated incident within the Brazilian public administration as well as in international affairs.

Domestically, public examinations would be used by the Administrative Department of the Public Service (DASP) to determine which spaces men and women could more adequately work, already assigning diplomacy as a political and public activity incompatible with women's supposed natural abilities for domesticity and motherhood. The common perceptions assumed that women were not allowed to occupy positions that had a political function, being confined instead to positions of assistance. Therefore, jobs that required representation of the state, decision-making, negotiation or any sort of power over others, would be greatly closed to women. Secondly, there seemed to be an understanding that positions that demanded movements, travel and activities outside the four walls of an office were not suitable for women.

We also analyzed the justifications presented by Brazilian and foreign actors in order to find that the decision to send a woman representative overseas was seen as a risk. Although

[87] Oswaldo Aranha to Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, [1938], CPDOC-FGV, RCL c 1938.10.00; "Women in Diplomacy: The FCO, 1782-1999", Foreign and Commonwealth Office, History Notes 6, May 1999, p. 28.
[88] CFSPC, "Admissão das mulheres nos Corpos Diplomáticos e Consular", [1937/1938], CPDOC-FGV, LSL apu 1935.08.14, p. 3

women diplomats acting overseas provided examples that in part contradicted the justifications presented mostly by male government officials against their presence in international diplomacy, the perceptions that women were fragile and would not be well accepted as representatives seemed to linger on. Overall, in spite of the great individual achievements of some remarkable women, breaking the initial glass ceiling of the diplomatic career would not mean immediate acceptance into the homosocial spaces of diplomatic practices. Women diplomats would seem to find a more difficult time navigating the informal relationships important for information-gathering and trust-building activities, as well as occupying positions of true political decision-making in matters of "hard" politics. Additionally, it seemed impossible for a woman diplomat to "win" in her personal life. If married and appointed to serve overseas, not taking her husband along would be "unthinkable" and would challenge her supposed feminine commitment to the family, whereas bringing the husband would mean forcing him into unemployment, dependency, humiliation, and would cause social complications in diplomatic circles.

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. Those who chose to overcome socially-imposed limitations and entered diplomatic positions were often forced to choose between their domestic or public lives, with many women opting for celibacy in order to succeed.

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Abbreviations

CFSPC	Federal Council of the Civil Public Service (*Conselho Federal do Serviço Público Civil*)
DASP	Administrative Department of the Public Service *(Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público*)
FBPF	Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (*Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino*)
MRE	Ministry of Foreign Relations – Itamaraty (*Ministério das Relações Exteriores*)
RSP	Civil Service Journal (*Revista do Serviço Público*)
UUF	Union of University Women (*União Universitária Feminina*)

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  - Dossiê Temático Ministério das Relações Exteriores (DT-MRE)
- Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
  - Fundo Federação Brasileira para o Progresso Feminino (FBPF)
  - Fundo Gabinete da Presidência da República (GPR)
  - Fundo Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público (DASP)
- Biblioteca Nacional, Hemeroteca Digital (http://bndigital.bn.gov.br/hemeroteca-digital/)
  - A Noite
  - Correio da Manhã
  - Diário da Noite
  - Diário de Notícias
  - Gazeta de Notícias
  - Jornal do Brasil
  - Jornal do Commercio
- Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (CPDOC-FGV), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
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  - Fundo Luis Simões Lopes (LSL)
  - Fundo Luís Vergara (LV)
  - Fundo Oswaldo Aranha (OA)
  - Fundo Rosalina Coelho Lisboa (RCL)
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