

Strategies of transnational advocacy networks for Brazilian foreign policy: an introduction

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of NGOs on Brazilian diplomacy during Lula's administration, using shaming as a strategy to place Human Rights violating regimes under the spotlight, but also to pressure their allies. The hypothesis is that NGOs are necessary for the debate about shaming Human Rights violators, but not sufficient to trigger a change of Brazil's position on the country's ties with violators. I investigate the importance of NGOs in transnational advocacy networks and the preferences of Brazilian foreign policy from 2003 to 2010. Finally, I analyze cases in which Brazil was criticized by NGOs for having "friendly" ties with countries accused of being violators of Human Rights. The findings show that Brazilian diplomacy was against the international scrutiny of countries violating Human Rights, highlighting dialogue and cooperation as a better strategy to improve Human Rights records.

Keywords: Brazilian foreign policy, Human Rights, NGOs, Shaming, Transnational advocacy networks

Introduction

By the end of 20th century, with the end of the Cold War, globalization, economic liberalization, systemic financial crises, technological advances and the rise of transnational activism, many analysts talked about "a new foreign policy", more open to topics that used to be considered "low politics" and non-state actors participation in the decision-making process (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013).

Affected by the changes in the international system and by domestic transformations, the foreign policy decision-making process in Brazil could no longer be understood as isolated, where the Foreign Affairs Ministry (Itamaraty) had the monopoly of decisions (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013; Pinheiro, 2009; Farias and Ramazini Júnior, 2010). The greater relevance of several actors, both state and non-state, contributed to the need to broaden the channels for dialogue with other sectors, in particular, the civil society. Actors such as companies, nonprofit organizations, the media and social movements act internationally, developing sophisticated action plans.

In short, as Milani and Pinheiro stated: "Foreign policy is a public policy, since institutional, social and economic factors treat it in this perspective; it lacks, however, an institutional framework that reflects this new configuration politically" (2013:28). Undoubtedly, creating mechanisms that include civil society actors in the formulation process would democratize the discussion forums of Brazilian foreign policy.

It is important to emphasize, however, that these "are actors of international relations, developing, with objectives and goals defined by them, actions at the international level, but we do not call those actions foreign policy" (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013: 21). In that sense, it is important to recognize the importance of non-state actors as influencers on foreign policy, without detracting from the fact that "the responsibility for the public policies is of the government that implements them" (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013: 27).

Finally, it is important to remember that the democratization of the decision-making process of Brazilian foreign policy is also beneficial to the country from an international point of view. Milani and Pinheiro understand that "if, on the one hand, the greater participation of actors in the process of defining the country's choices internationally displaces the Itamaraty from the exclusive center of decisions, plurality renews the country's international insertion credentials by qualifying foreign policy as representative of the broader interests of the nation" (2013: 31-32).

This paper argues that foreign policy is a public policy, and therefore, should include in its decision-making process the actors present in civil society. In that sense, it seeks to better

understand the impact of Human Rights NGOs in Brazilian foreign policy. More specifically, the focus is to investigate how NGOs pressured Brazilian diplomacy during the Lula's administration (2003-2010), using shaming not only as a strategy to place Human Rights violating governments under the spotlight, but also as a tool for criticizing states considered allies of those regimes. Brazil during the Lula administration is an interesting case, specially because of the South-South cooperation discourse used in the country's diplomatic agenda, directly connected to the development and Human Rights (social, economics and cultural) agendas.

First, I present the theoretical framework of transnational advocacy networks through a literatura review, to highlight the importance of these agents in the international system, and expose the central position that NGOs occupy in that scenario, seeking to analyze the strategies of these organizations, in order to understand the limits of its political action. Second, I investigate where Brazil stands regarding the Global Human Rights system³⁴, and the preferences of the Brazilian diplomatic agenda during the Lula administration (2003-2010). Finally, I analyze the criticism of NGOs regarding Brazil's ties with Human Rights violators and the possible impacts of such critics on the country's foreign policy. All in all, this analysis seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How can Human Rights NGOs impact Brazilian foreign policy?; 2) Does condemning Brazil for having bilateral relations with Human Rights violators actually cause behavioral change by the country's diplomacy?; 3) If the change does not happen, why is that so?

The hypothesis that NGOs play a necessary role for Brazilian foreign policy, as they represent civil society in the decision-making process, but that is not enough to cause a mere change of position in the Brazilian diplomatic agenda, because of the administration's preferences during the analyzed period.

Transnational Advocacy Networks and the role of Human Rights NGOs

In order to analyze NGOs impact on Brazilian foreign policy, it is necessary to outline the role of those organizations in the international system and their position within transnational advocacy networks, answering the following questions: 1) What are transnational advocacy networks? 2) What are their strategies? 3) How could they influence foreign policy? Only in that way, it is possible to investigate the limits of their political action.

³⁴ "The Global Human Rights System, an amalgam of norms, standing institutions, global campaigns and funding" (Hopgood, 2014).

This paper will use the contribution of Keck and Sikkink (1998), *Activists Beyond Borders*, as the backbone of this section. The book is a seminal, interdisciplinary work on transnational advocacy networks and puts into perspective the role of these actors in influencing the foreign policy decision-making processes around the world and changing violating Human Rights practices. Other important contributions that will shape this section should be mentioned: the work of Richard Price (2003), that does an extensive literature review on the role of transnational civil society advocacy in world politics; the essay by Hans Peter Schmitz (2010) that looks to “open the black box” of advocacy networks and explore their internal debates; and the work of Robert Charles Blitt (2004) on Human Rights NGOs’ regulation.

Keck and Sikkink (1998) call networks motivated by shared principles and values, transnational advocacy networks. According to the authors, advocacy networks grew increasingly larger and became more complex in the second half of the 20th century. Their goal is to build and deepen new links between states, international organizations and civil society. In order to do this, they make creative use of information and develop sophisticated strategies.

Florini calls transnational civil society the organized advocacy groups that take collective action without borders, fighting for what they believe to be the public interest (1999 *apud* Price, 2003). Schmitz states that transnational Human Rights networks are those that represent "a form of collective cross-border action designed to promote compliance with universally accepted norms" and seek to hold governments accountable by exposing the gaps between their international commitments and their domestic conduct (2010: 1).

The term "transnational" implies that advocacy networks are participants in both domestic and international politics. In that sense, some of the key goals of advocacy networks are promoting the implementation of standards through the pressure they make on key actors, and monitoring, which verifies compliance with international standards. Thus, networks contribute to redirecting discursive positions, and eventually influencing changes in policy and behavior (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

Transnational network activists are united not only by shared principles and values but also by having a common discourse and by exchanging information and services with one another. Actors of activism networks include: international and domestic research and advocacy organizations, social movements, institutes or foundations, the media, churches, trade unions, intellectuals, parts of regional or local intergovernmental organizations, and sectors of the executive or legislative branch of a government (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

The position of nongovernmental organizations in advocacy networks is central. Human Rights NGOs, according to Blitt (2004), are independent organizations that can operate at

national, regional or international level, their activities can be research and/or advocacy, and they can be financed by their members and/or corporate donations. Kaldor understands NGOs as "domesticated" social movements, due to their professionalization and bureaucratization (2014 *apud* Costa da Silva, 2016: 5).

Keck and Sikkink (1998) emphasize the power of activist networks arguing that the change in states' position on Human Rights topics during the 1970s and 1980s is partly linked to the interactions between states and transnational advocacy actors, after governments came to consider promoting Human Rights in other countries as a foreign policy goal. An example of the international Human Rights NGO force is given by Gordenker and Weiss, who assert that these organizations played a central role in the adoption of the Human Rights language in the final draft of the Charter of the United Nations (1996 *apud* Blitt, 2004).

Finally, according to Keck and Sikkink (1998), there are circumstances where new transnational advocacy networks are more likely to flourish: 1) When communication channels between domestic organizations and their rulers are blocked or do not produce results, which encourages these organizations bypass their governments and look for international support; 2) When political entrepreneurs promote them; 3) At conferences or when other type of contact between activists happen (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Schmitz, 2010).

In this sense, investigative research on the strategies of transnational advocacy networks is the appropriate way to analyze their capacity for political action and their impact on changing not only the rhetorical positions, but also the behavior of states regarding Human Rights.

Transnational Advocacy Networks: strategies and influence

In order to analyze the strategies of transnational advocacy networks, it is necessary to emphasize that the political role of these organizations is outlined, mainly, by their campaigns. According to Keck and Sikkink, campaigns are "strategically linked activities where members of a network develop bonds and mutually recognized roles in the pursuit of a common goal" (1998: 16).

Campaigns are processes of construction of topics within certain contexts, with the objective of promoting substantive changes in an area, and the ones developed by Human Rights NGOs often focus on a country or a specific issue, such as torture or the death penalty. According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), the strategies of transnational advocacy networks can be divided into four categories: information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics.

Information politics are fundamental to a campaign. Keck and Sikkink argue that the ability to generate information quickly and effectively is "the most valuable trading currency" of NGOs, leveraging these organizations as legitimate international players. Information politics are expected to act on two fronts: they need to be reliable and attract attention (1998: 19). Therefore, they must be both dramatic and technical, used in a timely context to persuade public and policymakers to act, using facts to inform and testimonials to portray the situation also in terms of human stories. In that sense, framing is an important component, looking for opportunities where conditions are most conducive to leverage the central issue of the campaign.

The second kind of strategy according to Keck and Sikkink (1998) is symbolic politics. This type of strategy appears when important events occur and are framed as symbolic in a way that they not only develop audience awareness but also broaden the foundations of advocacy networks. Therefore, activists use symbols, actions or stories to make sense of an issue, and facilitate the transmission of information using analogies (Blitt, 2004).

The third type is leverage politics, when networks push more powerful actors, to change their policies or positions. Leverage politics occur mainly between activists and governments, financial institutions or other private actors. To be effective, NGOs need to raise their status through information and symbolic politics first, since organizations with more prominent profiles are more likely to succeed in lobbying for political change, and their legitimacy depends on their reputation as providers of objective expertise and reliable information (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

According to Blitt effective use of leverage politics "depends on the ability of NGOs to [...] exploit the moral authority inherent in the rhetoric of Human Rights" (2004: 290). There are two types of leverage politics: material (when Human Rights groups provide information about a violating country, and pressures an ally to cut off military or economic aid to this regime) and moral (through shaming, when a country is called to respond for Human Rights violations, believing that to discredit that regime internationally may motivate behavior change). Shaming frames the Human Rights violating state as an outcast, one that should be despised by the civilized international community (Blitt, 2004).

The fourth and last type of strategy analyzed by Keck and Sikkink (1998), accountability politics, is the monitoring of the promises made by countries. In other words, this type of strategy allows members of transnational advocacy networks to use previous positions and commitments made by a state as a way of exposing the differences between their discourse and practice, imputing responsibility or ensuring stated policies.

Now that the strategies of transnational advocacy networks have been exposed, it is possible to analyze their political influence acting as organisms that seek to change discursive, political and behavioral positions of more powerful actors. Keck and Sikkink (1998) identify five stages or types of influence by networks: defining agendas, influencing discursive positions, influencing the institutional process, influencing policy change, and ultimately influencing the behavior of a state. The authors use the concept of stages of influence, not just types, because they believe that one change can impact the other, triggering an interconnected reaction, where governments are more prone to behavior change as they become more permeable to networks. Because of this, countries that have made changes of discursive positions are more likely to commit to procedural changes, which can directly impact political changes. Therefore, significant changes are more likely in cases where other types of impact have already been achieved.

The effectiveness of the campaigns, however, depends on important issues. For example, many topics cannot achieve sufficient status to be leveraged by networks. That happens because, according to Keck and Sikkink (1998), problems that can be associated with intentional actions of identifiable individuals have more potential to be chosen for campaigns than very structural and difficult to explain causes. The campaign can also depend on the characteristics of the actors (if they are vulnerable to moral and material constraints), as well as on the networks themselves (how strong they are) (Schmitz, 2010).

Finally, Keck and Sikkink (1998) understand that it is fundamental to turn to the place that standards occupy in the relation between networks and states. Norms and practices are mutually constituted, but practices turn standards into reality. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 42) sum up the whole process of NGOs influencing change by stating:

Activists pressured governments and international organizations to develop formal procedures to investigate the Human Rights situation in member states. The work of NGOs exposed state repressive practices, causing other states to respond by demanding explanations, and repressive states in turn produced justifications. The combination of changing international norms, compelling information, institutional procedures for action, and targeted lobbying and pressure campaigns created awareness and often caused states to modify their Human Rights practices.

The Limits of Transnational Advocacy Networks Action

For the purpose of this paper, it is also necessary to discuss the limits of transnational advocacy networks action, so we can understand better their ability to impact on foreign policy.

First, Schmitz (2010) points out several problems with the organization of campaigns, such as: difficulty in establishing and maintaining networks, bias of some organizations selecting themes, focusing on media exposure rather than principles, domestic movement difficulties in gathering international support, local resistance to outside interventions, among others.

In addition, there are criticisms over NGOs structures, stating that they are not necessarily democratic and transparent, not representative of the public interest and may reflect disparities that exist in the international system (Blitt, 2004; Price, 2003). These problems, according to Price, may directly affect the influence of these organizations, since "their power depends on their legitimacy as agents who deal with (rather than produce their own) democratic deficits" (2003: 590). Schmitz reinforce the emergence of skepticism about impartial activism and the perception that "Human Rights groups have compromised their principles in favor of economic interests, media exposure, and organizational growth" (2010: 3).

Another issue is that, although Keck and Sikkink (1998) are the backbone of this analysis, the authors use the concept of networks because they believe that it encompasses the notion of organisms where relations between actors take place openly. The authors do not believe in a hierarchy within the networks of activism, stating that these are "forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange", showing a very optimistic view of how transnational advocacy networks actually work. In this sense, the boomerang effect must also be dismembered (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 17).

The boomerang effect is treated by Keck and Sikkink as a phenomenon that happens when domestic groups go directly to the international arena to seek allies to contribute to pressure in their own country. The relationship established, according to the authors, is mutually beneficial: for domestic actors, usually from the Global South, access to information and influence is gained, while for the central actors, usually from the North, the notion created is that they not only fight for their peripheral partners, but with them (1998: 21).

However, it is necessary to better investigate this relationship. Keck and Sikkink (1998) themselves point out that Global North actors in advocacy networks have a cultural environment of optimistic internationalism. For the members of the networks located in the South, however, to justify an external intervention in domestic matters is a complex issue, since it stirs memories of the colonial/neocolonial era (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 23). The apprehension is not without reason: the gap between the situation itself and the way it is portrayed by transnational advocacy groups often causes locals to lose control over how their stories will be told.

From this point of view, one of the biggest criticisms of transnational networks arises, and one that Keck and Sikkink recognize: "where we see ties between activists of different nationalities and cultures, others can see cultural imperialism" (1998: 53). Criticism is based on the belief that networks of activism can be attempts to force Western values into societies that do not want them. However, there is a problem with the cultural imperialism argument. Even if it could be valid, it can also be used by violating governments that want to delegitimize allegations against them. Therefore, activists need to give local people more control and voice in the definition of campaign content, as well as develop strategies beyond shaming that actually touch on long-term social change.

Finally, with the characteristics of transnational advocacy networks defined, their strategies delimited and their limits of action exposed, we can go to the analysis of the impact of such strategies in the Brazilian foreign policy, in order to pressure the country to take positions that are more in line with the international standards for Human Rights.

Brazil and Human Rights

According to Blitt (2004), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had its origin in the post World War II period, mainly motivated by the horrors of Nazi concentration camps and war refugees. The author reinforces that there were no legal obligations or mechanisms of compliance imputed to the document, but the Declaration was a milestone for internationally recognizing the rights of individuals and the shared ideals of the United Nations.

There are other documents that helped established international Human Rights standards, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). In addition, other complementary treaties have been signed, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the Convention Against Torture And Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Blitt, 2004; Milani, 2011).

Human Rights issues were seen as topics of low politics in Brazil. During the period of the military dictatorship, the country "assumed a position of suppression of rights at the domestic level, and denial of violations, abroad" (Costa da Silva, 2014: 7).

During the military regime, Brazil took advantage of the principle of nonintervention in internal affairs to block international investigations, "vehemently denying the existence of violations and emphasizing that progress had been made in the economic, social and political

areas" (Costa da Silva, 2014: 8). The country's position only changed with re-democratization, the ratification of major international treaties, and the explicit recognition of UN work in the area (Costa da Silva, 2014).

Milani (2011) states that since the re-democratization, Brazil committed to the rules of the Global Human Rights system. "The art.4 (section II) of the Constitution establishes that Human Rights must prevail in Brazil's international relations" (2011: 44). The Brazilian diplomacy historically defends internationalism, multilateralism, and support liberal values, including Human Rights (Engstrom, 2014). The country is a major signatory to international agreements, and the only treaty not ratified by Brazil is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.³⁵

Additionally, Brazil has achieved an international status leveraged by its role as one of the main agents of the G20, for acting in forums such as BRICS and IBAS, and being a Global South voice for soft power. The new status highlights the country as one of the players to focus on international Human Rights debates. Therefore, many external observers have high expectations for Brazil in terms of defending Human Rights principles (Engstrom, 2014). It is also possible to see this expectation in NGOs, which see Brazil as a mediator of regional issues, as a possible partner in promoting Human Rights in BRICS projects or as an important agent in the discussion of specific topics, such as Internet freedom³⁶ (Canineu and Donahoe, 2014).

However, Engstrom (2014) understands that it is important to state the difference between the expectations that Brazil plays a more active role, particularly by international Human Rights NGOs, and the country's willingness to do so. The author understands that Brazil shows reluctance in criticizing the behavior of other countries on Human Rights, mainly because the principle of noninterference is deeply rooted in Brazilian foreign policy. I argue that Lula administration's preferences for South-South relations and cooperation is also a strong variable to consider.

In this sense, Brazilian diplomacy during the Lula administration classified the Global Human Rights system as "unjust (strong countries that criticize the weak), hypocritical (selectively applied norms) and ineffective (diplomatic shame does not improve Human Rights in the country accused of violations)" (Engstrom, 2014: 17). At first sight, Brazil can be categorized as a country that, on paper, is a promoter of Human Rights. A more cautious analysis shows that, even by signing treaties and making commitments, Brazil also appears as one of the critics of the selectivity of the Human Rights system and how its mechanisms can be

³⁵ More at OHCHR - United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Available at <https://goo.gl/3MwXob>. Accessed May 2017.

³⁶ More at <https://goo.gl/GRi5dr>, <https://goo.gl/ZcFvNQ> and <https://goo.gl/Tik8Bj> Accessed December 2016.

used as a political weapon against developing countries in the international system. In that context, Brazil's actions should be analyzed from a critical point of view, to better understand how international scrutiny for maintaining relations with Human Rights violating regimes may influence a change of position by a country seeking, simultaneously, greater international projection and a diversification of strategic partnerships, as is the case for Brazil.

Brazil: an ally of human rights violators?

Brazil faced several criticisms regarding its ties with regimes that violate Human Rights during Lula's administration. These criticisms were manifested on two fronts: on the one hand, the mainstream media condemned what it calls condescension with regimes that were considered authoritarian. On the other hand, activists and members of civil society organizations reinforce that although Brazil has advanced in several fronts³⁷ of the development agenda (directly linked to economic, social and cultural rights), the country's performance in the international arena remains ambiguous regarding certain regimes accused of systematic violating Human Rights (Milani, 2011).

This paper will analyze the criticisms of Human Rights NGOs, as members of transnational advocacy networks, pressuring Brazil to prioritize Human Rights values in its relations with regimes accused of being systematic violators. These organizations believe that Brazil has a relevant status in the international system, and therefore must fulfill its responsibilities regarding the protection of Human Rights.

Asano and Nader (2011), from Conectas, affirm that, often, the diplomacy of the Lula administration (2003-2010) opposed principles to pragmatism. Likewise, Engstrom (2014), in a publication from Amnesty International, suggests that because of Brazil's ambition to build alliances at the South-South level, the country prioritized strategic interests, leaving in the background issues related to shared international principles. Human Rights Watch (2004), in an open letter to President Lula, reinforced the impression of an ambiguous performance of Brazil regarding Human Rights, and condemned the country's "unwillingness" to take a stand against some regimes considered Human Rights violators, stating:

³⁷ See Human Rights Watch (2015). Why is Venezuela's Democracy Still at Risk? Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/14/why-venezuelasdemocracy-stillrisk>. Accessed December 2016.

_____ (2016). Colombia Peace Deal's Promise, and Flaws. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/27/colombia-peace-dealspromise-andflaws>. Accessed December 2016.

_____ (2014). The Brics Have a Chance to Succeed Where the World Bank Has Failed. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/30/brics-have-chancesucceed-whereworld-bank-has-failed>. Accessed December 2016.

Brazil has taken important steps on several international fronts, including on protecting the rights of sexual minorities, defending the International Criminal Court, and curbing the deadly trade in small arms. You have also elevated the issues of poverty and hunger on the global agenda. At the same time, we were disappointed by Brazil's failure to condemn certain abusive governments at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and by your unwillingness to speak about abuses in countries that you visited, such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Cuba.

A high profile case of criticism of Brazil's relations with authoritarian regimes is with Iran. Engstrom (2014) criticizes the country's rapid endorsement of the 2009 Iranian presidential election, and Lula's invitation to Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to visit. In addition, there was the agreement between Brazil, Iran and Turkey known as the Teheran Declaration (2010), which was widely criticized in the national media at the time. The Lula government has also been accused by NGOs of turning a blind eye to systematic human rights violations by the Iranian regime (Asano and Nader, 2011).

The "questionable and ambiguous" positions on North Korea, Sri Lanka and the Democratic Republic of Congo at the United Nations Human Rights Council have also been a topic of scrutiny (Asano and Nader, 2011: 120). Brazil's abstention votes at the Council initiated some of the toughest criticism the country faced, with Human Rights Watch (2009) stating that "Brazil is aligned with Human Rights violators and not with its victims".

According to Conectas (2009), Brazil's discourse was about the need for cooperation with countries accused of Human Rights violations, contrary to the strategy of international constraint, but reinforcing that "the lack of firm reaction of the international community can be dangerously understood as a *carte blanche* to the dictatorships of today". Brazil also faced attacks because it abstained or voted against resolutions against Cuba, Sri Lanka, North Korea, and other regions and countries considered systematic Human Rights violators. Regionally, the criticisms were focused on the position of the Brazilian diplomacy not to publicly express any position that could undermine the country's relationship with Cuba and Venezuela (Engstrom, 2014).

Thus, it is worth mentioning the speech of Minister Celso Amorim on the case of Equatorial Guinea, to illustrate how Human Rights and strategic interests can conflict in a bilateral scenario between Brazil and an ally. During Lula's visit to the country, ruled by the same dictator since 1979, Amorim stated that "business is business" (Asano and Nader, 2011: 124). Lula's Minister of Foreign Relations during his two terms justified Brazil's position on systematic Human Rights violators stating that "dialogue and cooperation are more effective in ensuring the exercise of Human Rights than arrogance based on a supposedly moral

superiority", arguing that it is necessary not to see countries accused of Human Rights violations as pariahs or to isolate them (Amorim, 2010 *apud* Asanos and Nader, 2011: 123).

In this sense, NGO pressure is characterized by questioning the role that Human Rights have played in Brazil's relationship with countries such as Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea (Asano and Nader, 2011). Brazil appears as a Human Rights supporter at the rhetorical level, while its performance is located in a gray area, where relativisms can occur and strategic interests, such as commercial opportunities and support for the Brazilian campaign for a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, are more important for the country, or as Asano and Nader state, "on several occasions, the limit between dialogue, discretion and cooperation, and omission and connivance, has been tenuous" (2011: 123).

However, it should be made clear that, while the criticisms made by these Human Rights organizations are valid, it is also necessary to address not only the selectivity practiced by states, in terms of putting the spotlight on countries because of strategic interests and political preferences, but also the selectivity of NGOs in reporting violations.

First, the shaming of transnational Human Rights organizations is directed mainly at violators, with criticism of countries considered supporters or allies of the accused regime appearing only as a coadjutant issue. More than that, some studies prove that NGOs often produce publications or news stories about some countries more than others because they seek to maximize opportunities for advocacy, funding, public support and media attention. Ron et al, reporting on Amnesty International's publications, reinforce this perception by showing that "[NGO activists] are better able to shape international human rights standards when addressing abuses by powerful states". In this research, some of the countries on the "most repressive" list did not appear at all on the "most reported" list (2005: 574).

Ron et al acknowledge that too much focus on reports of strong states abuses can contribute to the marginalization of reports about abuses in smaller and poorer countries. Thus, selectivity is also a problem for NGOs, which in the name of pragmatism and "considerations of effectiveness and visibility [...] give more attention to some areas" (2005: 576).

NGOs, however, recognize that selectivity is a problem for Human Rights only at the diplomatic level. They do record that Brazil should criticize the selective use of Human Rights and be concerned about it being used as a political weapon by the Global North countries to condemn their opponents' violations and conveniently shut up about allies' violations and their own (Milani, 2011), but NGOs also note that Brazil cannot fall into the same trap by quelling in the face of systematic Human Rights violations of its allies.

Human Rights NGOs give two explanations for the selectivity by countries from the Global South: 1) the double standard approach of the North countries with allies and opponents violations and 2) the fear that they may be next in the shaming list (Human Rights Watch, 2013). In the case of Brazil, in the country's profile on the websites of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, there are several records of violations such as executions by the military police, prison conditions, torture, children's rights, freedom of expression, indigenous people's rights, housing rights, reproductive and sexual rights, security of Human Rights defenders, among other issues.³⁸

Finally, in addition to strategic interests having a more important role in the definition of diplomatic positions, the fear of being next in the shaming list for Human Rights violations compels more expressive reactions on the part of Brazil, showing a gap between its discursive position as promoter of Human Rights and its more constrained practice of avoiding changes at the bilateral level with violating countries.

Discussion

Nongovernmental organizations not only exist as agents of transnational advocacy networks, but as actors interacting in the international environment, whose initiatives contribute to the formulation of foreign policy domestically. According to Krain (2012), the shaming strategy used by these organisms as a pressure tool to change countries' behavior and positions on Human Rights is an important method of addressing violations.

However, evidence of the effectiveness of shaming is mixed. While many studies demonstrate its effectiveness, others suggest that the strategy has little impact. For Krain (2012), we can expect shaming to have different effects on different types of violations. Hafner-Burton (2008) argues that governments placed in the spotlight for committing abuses continue or even increase some violations after shaming. For Schmitz (2010), states can learn to continue to violate human rights internally even after agreeing with the Human Rights discourse, and even use improvements achieved to divert international attention from the public.

Further research should focus on the several domestic and international issues that directly influence the behavior of countries in relation to Human Rights violators, more specifically, on the fact that Brazilian diplomacy may simply consider itself not influential enough to impact on behavior change in countries such as China and Iran, and that in such a

³⁸ More at the websites <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/brazil/> and <https://www.hrw.org/americas/brazil>. Accessed December 2016. More at Human Rights Watch (2016a). Brazil: Country Profile. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/americas/brazil>. Accessed December 2016.

case, since those issues are outside their direct influence, it is more important to consider Brazil's strategic and economic interests rather than values and principles (Engstrom, 2014).

With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, it is also important to highlight what Schmitz (2010) understands as a trend for human rights NGOs to seek new alliances with humanitarian and development groups, noting that this change may be the beginning of a transformation where organizations move to a position of fighting against the structural causes of violations, such as ethnic divisions and competition for resources. In this sense, Brazil's domestic experiences with the promotion of economic and social rights can generate important opportunities to promote effective policies beyond its borders. An effort in this direction can be seen in the internationalization of public policies to combat hunger and poverty implemented by the Lula administration, such as Fome Zero (Fraundorfer, 2013).

Future research could also focus on Brazil as a major international player for Human Rights issues when it comes to linking the idea of development to economic and social rights, fighting for a less reactive role of transnational NGOs, and promoting preventive activism, that attacks the structural causes of violations, not just a reactive one, which reports violations that have already occurred and are based on shaming to impact on the policies and behavior of countries.

Conclusion

The main goal for this paper was to present an introduction on the relationship between Brazilian foreign policy during the Lula administration (2003-2010) and Human Rights NGOs who advocate against the “friendly” relationship between Brazil and Human Rights violating regimes. In that sense, the first thing to notice is that NGOs are necessary actors in the decision-making process of Brazilian foreign policy, representing civil society on important debates regarding Human Rights and promoting the democratization of a process that was, until very recently, mainly focused on the actions of Itamaraty, the Ministry of Foreign Relations. In that sense, I argue that Brazilian foreign policy, as a public policy, benefits from contributions made by nonstate actors that represent civil society.

Secondly, it's important to highlight that, Lula's diplomatic agenda not only followed fundamental principles of Brazilian foreign policy (like multilateralism and non-intervention) but also showed a preference for South-South connections, and a clear prioritization of Brazil's strategic interests, such as commercial opportunities and support for the country's campaign for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, over shared international principles.

Directly linked to these preferences, is the fact that, despite NGOs efforts, the administration used the non-intervention principle and the strong discourse of South-South cooperation to justify the country's decision to not condemn internationally Human Rights violators, specially the ones in the Global South. Another factor to consider is the selectivity and politicization of the Global Human Rights system, which Brazilian foreign policy constantly criticized during Lula's administration. In that sense, the paper shows that, while important and necessary, the impact of NGO shaming in Brazilian foreign policy was not strong enough to change the country's position regarding Human Rights violators, even in the rhetorical sense.

During the Lula administration, the "business as usual" approach dominated Brazilian foreign policy regarding bilateral relations with countries accused of systematic Human Rights violations, and shaming by NGOs did not appear as a factor of influence in changing positions. Strategic interests still appeared as the agent that leverages more consistent changes. Therefore, shaming would appear as a relevant factor in specific cases, only when it contributes to the understanding that, by continuing to collaborate with a Human Rights violating country, Brazil may undermine its strategic goals in the long run.

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