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Human rights foreign policy under Bolsonaro: pleasing the conservative constituency

A política externa de direitos humanos sob Bolsonaro: satisfazendo o eleitorado conservador

La política exterior de derechos humanos bajo Bolsonaro: satisfaciendo el electorado conservador

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Abstract
Why is it difficult for Brazilian civil society organizations to stop the shift of Brazil's positions in international human rights arenas? Why does the human rights dimension of Brazilian foreign policy suffer from the changes brought by Bolsonaro's government? Based on new rational choice institutionalism and of foreign policy analysis, this study analyzes Bolsonaro's human rights foreign policy, with a special focus on gender issues. Our hypotheses are that (1) Bolsonaro's illiberal government, based on conservative and anti-human-rights positions of his constituency, instrumentalizes foreign policy because it allows him space to be more ideological and less pragmatic; and (2) the international arena is nested within the electoral arena (the most important one), and the main objective of international inflections in the human rights issues of the Bolsonaro government is to please and energize Bolsonaro's most conservative electorate. From these two hypotheses, we argue these changes are linked with a reconfiguration of the responsiveness of Brazilian foreign policy to societal pressures, privileging evangelical conservative organizations at the expense of progressive human rights organizations.

Keywords: Brazil. Bolsonaro. Foreign policy. Human rights. Gender.

Resumo
Por que as organizações da sociedade civil brasileiras têm tanta dificuldade para barrar as mudanças das posições do país nas arenas internacionais de direitos humanos? Por que a dimensão de direitos humanos da política externa brasileira sofreu tais mudanças no governo Bolsonaro? A partir do Novo Institucionalismo da Escolha Racional e da Análise de Política Externa, este estudo analisa a política externa em direitos humanos do governo Bolsonaro, especialmente as questões de gênero. As hipóteses de nosso estudo de caso são que (1) o governo iliberal de Bolsonaro, apoiado em posições religiosas do seu eleitorado, instrumentaliza a política externa porque ela permite a ele espaço para ser ideológico; (2) e porque essa instrumentalização está aninhada à arena eleitoral, Bolsonaro alterou radicalmente a política externa em direitos humanos do país para manter a lealdade do seu eleitorado evangélico. A partir dessas duas hipóteses, argumentamos que as mudanças estão vinculadas à reconfiguração do acesso à política externa, privilegiando organizações conservadoras evangélicas em detrimento das organizações progressistas de direitos humanos.

Palavras-chave: Brasil. Bolsonaro. Política externa. Direitos humanos. Gênero.

Resumen
¿Por qué a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil brasileña les resulta tan difícil detener los cambios en las posiciones del país en el ámbito internacional de los derechos humanos? ¿Por qué la dimensión de derechos humanos de la política exterior brasileña ha sufrido tales cambios bajo el gobierno de Bolsonaro? Basado en el Nuevo Institucionalismo de Elección Racional y Análisis de Política Exterior, este estudio analiza la política exterior del gobierno de Bolsonaro en derechos humanos, especialmente en cuestiones de género. Las hipótesis de nuestro estudio de caso son que (1) el gobierno antiliberal de Bolsonaro, apoyado en las posiciones religiosas de su electorado, instrumentaliza la política exterior porque le da espacio para ser ideológico; (2) y debido a que esta instrumentación está anidada en la arena electoral, Bolsonaro cambió radicalmente la política exterior del país en derechos humanos para mantener la lealtad de su electorado evangélico. Con base en estas dos hipótesis, sostenemos que los cambios están vinculados a la reconfiguración del acceso a la política exterior, privilegiando a las organizaciones evangélicas conservadoras en detrimento de las organizaciones progresistas de derechos humanos.

Palabras-clave: Brasil. Bolsonaro. Política exterior. Derechos humanos. Género.

INTRODUCTION

Bolsonaro's election is a turning point in the history of Brazil. Under him, in 2019 the Brazilian government was antagonistic to judicial independence, freedom of the press, and the development of a national educational system, besides threatening various forms of civil society activism. However, resistance to his domestic setbacks generated important victories. For example, many domestic initiatives—such as the creation of a government unit to "control civil society", the approval of qualified immunity for police officers[1], the extinction of participatory public policy Councils[2],

1 This legal change was proposed by Bolsonaro's Justice Minister (at the time), Sergio Moro, and deemed by civil society organizations and public safety experts as a "license (for the police) to kill".

2 Public policy councils are participatory institutions that allow direct engagement of civil society representatives in the policy process and, therefore, represents a space of accountability. These councils were instituted in many areas of policy since 1988 and, specially, since 2003, but were closed by Bolsonaro (see Farranha et al in this issue).

the removal of FUNAI's attribution on indigenous land demarcations[3], and the weakening of the National System to Prevent and Combat Torture[4]—were partially or entirely blocked by the judiciary, the public defender, and Congress, as a result of activism by civil society organizations (CSOs).

Efforts to block setbacks in Brazilian foreign policy/international relations have been less effective. From an international perspective, the Bolsonaro administration has eroded the country's political asset, linked to a cooperative multilateral action, turning foreign policy into a catalyst for his anti-rights project. In June 2019, for example, the minister of foreign affairs instructed Brazilian diplomats to defend the outdated view that there is only biological sex, aiming to hinder debates and to block the use of the term "gender" in the international forums in which Brazil participates. In September 2019, Bolsonaro attacked Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, by mentioning her father's history (a Chilean military man who opposed the Pinochet regime, was tortured, just like her, and died in the custody of the bloody Chilean dictatorship) (Hernandez, 2019). In October 2020, Brazil cosponsored the Geneva Consensus Declaration—basically an international anti-abortion declaration—accompanied by countries like the United States (under the Trump administration), Egypt, Indonesia, Hungary, and Uganda. Also in February 2021, before the UN Human Rights Council, the Brazilian minister of foreign affairs denounced measures being globally adopted to fight COVID-19, drawing a simplistic dichotomy between health and freedom and condemning what he called "lockdowns of the human spirit" (Poder 360 2021).

Those setbacks, both national and international, are very serious. However, when comparing the containment of domestic and international setbacks in the human rights arena, Brazilian CSOs and institutions had different levels of effectiveness in 2019 and 2020. Foreign policy has historically been averse to social participation and to input from political entities outside the Executive branch. However, since the 2000s, it had become a channel for mobilizing progressive struggles and had developed according to a more plural decision-making process (Milani 2012). The Bolsonaro administration has changed this trend. Thus, this article's main questions are: *Why do progressive Brazilian CSOs have so much difficulty in stopping the shift of Brazil's positions in international human rights arenas? Why has the human rights dimension of Brazilian*

3 FUNAI is a government unity that was put in charge of implementing indigenous lands demarcations after 1988 and that developed the proper bureaucratic capacity to perform this task. Bolsonaro removed indigenous land demarcations from FUNAI's mission, putting it in the hands of another government entity that is closer to the interests of big landowners (see Barros and Baines in this issue)

4 This system was created through Federal Law n. 12.847 (Aug 2, 2013), following best practices in the fight against torture. It involves a "Committee" with seats for both governmental and non-governmental representatives and a "Mechanism" with nationally recognized experts. The Committee should set the national agenda for torture prevention, while Mechanism members should conduct assessments and investigations of torture and issue policy recommendations to local and federal authorities.

foreign policy suffered radical changes in Bolsonaro's government? It also seeks to answer a secondary question: *To what extent has the current government's democratic deficit and anti-rights agenda impacted the performance of CSOs?* Our case study analyzes Brazil's international positions regarding gender issues in the UN Human Rights Council between 2019 and March 2021, the period when Ernesto Araújo was the minister of foreign affairs.

We justify the choice for this case given the changes in Brazil's position in the UN Human Rights Council and the alliances made by Brazil on this matter. For example, in a discussion on a resolution aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and girls, Brazil aligned itself with the positions of ultraconservative States and/or theocratic countries (such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) and abstained from voting on the topic. Among the amendments to the resolution Brazil has suggested is the deletion of references to women's sexual and reproductive rights, a measure supported by Saudi Arabia (Chade 2020). These alliances seem to have been strengthened, and the Geneva Consensus Declaration, mentioned above, is an example of how Brazil's interest is expressed in its foreign policy in human rights, especially on multilateral forums (Brazil 2020).

Our analysis builds on new rational choice institutionalism (by selecting the formal rules of the game) and foreign policy analysis, which suggests that the explanations of decision-making processes in foreign policy are multifactorial and multilevel. We focus on identifying and examining the relevant actors in the formulation of these positions by the Brazilian state in international human rights arenas, their interests, and resources, and how they are distributed: (1) at the different levels of analysis—domestic and international and (2) in the different arenas in which the games are played. We aim to verify whether and how the changes in actors and agendas, after the 2018 Brazilian election, reconfigured the games, and to point to new dynamics of interaction and the production of new political results in the domestic and international environment.

This paper is organized as follows: first, we make a brief review of how human rights have been approached in Brazilian foreign policy after democratization, focusing on the administrations of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002) and Lula da Silva (2003–2010), the only two presidents to complete two full sequential terms after 1988. In doing so, we set a baseline to understand the changes in this agenda during Bolsonaro's term. Second, we define our core concepts and how they inform our hypotheses and proceed to analytically identify the main actors, arenas, and strategies involved in the decision-making of human rights foreign policy. Third, we apply our analytical model to empirical data, which leads to a confirmation of our hypotheses. In the conclusion, we summarize the findings and contributions from this study.

1 HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN POLICY: CONSTRUCTING AN AGENDA

According to the Brazilian Constitution, enacted in 1988, foreign relations should be explicitly guided by certain principles, the prevalence of human rights being one of them. It was only after redemocratization that Brazil began to participate in the human rights international regime as a constructive actor. Indeed, the 1990s were the period when Brazil ratified important international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Thus, Collor de Melo's (1990–1992), Franco's (1992–1994), and Cardoso's (1995–2002) foreign policies were responsible for achieving and consolidating diplomatic credentials for Brazil in international fora (Braga 2020). Besides the ratification of human rights treaties, Brazil was, for example, a very active actor at the Second World Conference on Human Rights (known as the Vienna Conference), in 1993, leading the drafting committee and supporting the creation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Hernandez 2014). Until 2016, especially during the Lula administration (2003–2010), Brazil became a global player, including in the international human rights debates. Through a strategy of moderate reformism and the building of a Global South narrative, Brazil achieved a higher level of diplomatic visibility, promoting norms, including those of human rights (Hurrell 2008).

The Cardoso administration valued the international human rights regime: it exhibited a greater openness to NGOs, acceptance of mandatory jurisprudence coming from international courts, and a standing invitation to UN Special Rapporteurs (Alves 2001). The Lula administration repositioned human rights foreign policy, being critical to the politicization and selectivity of this international regime. Brazilian diplomacy started to defend the creation of a universal review regarding human rights violations and to rely on quiet diplomacy rather than public condemnation to violators (Belli 2009). The main points of Brazilian human rights foreign policy in this period were about dialogue, capacity-building through trainings to local actors, and the promotion of a human rights perspective linked to social justice (rather than the individualist perspective that characterized the Cardoso administration).

Looking briefly at the UN Human Rights Council, created in 2006, we can see how Brazil was a very active player in the human rights field. In 2008, Brazil presented its first Universal Periodic Review report. The transparency of the Brazilian document and its openness to civil society participation were praised by the other delegations, and the country was invited to share its experience with other countries that had not yet presented their reports (Asano et al. 2009). Moreover, Brazilian delegates presented two voluntary pledges: the creation of a national system of human rights indicators and the elaboration of an annual report on the international obligations assumed by Brazil. Another example

of active human rights Brazilian diplomacy inside the UN Human Rights Council was the country's prominent role in the negotiations of a quite controversial issue: LGBT rights. During the last decade, not only did Brazil propose draft resolutions on this issue, but it also tried to serve as a bridge between the conservative nations from the Global South and the Western delegations and human rights NGOs (Rodrigues and Hernandez 2020).

However, the point here is not to show the differences between the administrations before Bolsonaro's victory but to expose that, despite those differences, both periods (1990–2003 and 2003–2016) were inspired by and propellers of a human rights foreign policy narrative constructed after the democratization process; that is, despite the differences in their strategic choices, both administrations were aligned to the principle of human rights prevalence, present in the Brazilian constitution. Neither administration saw the UN Human Rights Council as a political enemy, as the current Brazilian government does. Of course, the different kinds of actions chosen by the two administrations were not disconnected from their domestic goals, but none of them was disconnected from the Brazilian constitution and, in terms of human rights, to the Brazilian foreign policy legacy, especially the one built after the redemocratization process. In the empirical analysis, we will analyze how this disconnection emerges in Bolsonaro's foreign policy on human rights, especially in the illiberal positions it has taken in the UN Human Rights Council. We will also examine how these positions are formulated, who are the formulators, who are the domestic beneficiaries of this strategy, and what are the channels and actors that this illiberal turn of Brazilian human rights foreign policy privileges.

2 ADDRESSING ACTORS, ARENAS, AND STRATEGIES: AN ANALYTICAL EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOREIGN POLICY IN BOLSONARO'S GOVERNMENT

This paper aims at explaining why the human rights dimension of foreign policy has suffered the most significant changes under the Bolsonaro administration, why progressive Brazilian CSOs have so much difficulty stopping these changes, and how Brazil's authoritarian setbacks and illiberal agenda impact the performance of CSOs on this issue.

To achieve this objective, we define foreign policy as a state's action at the international level based on interactions with and among actors from the domestic and international spheres (Milani and Pinheiro 2013), which produces distributive effects at the domestic level (Soares de Lima 2000). Furthermore, foreign policy is essentially multisectoral, covering a variety of issues, including human rights. That said, the international and domestic actors interested and involved in each foreign policy decision vary according to the issue, giving greater complexity to the policy's formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

We also consider that foreign policy decisions are influenced by the dynamics of both the international (level 1) and domestic (level 2) levels. Different actors from public, private, and social spheres appear on both levels, and a decision is shaped by the complex relationship between these two levels (Putnam 1988).

This dynamic has important implications: when an international actor is not satisfied with the results of a negotiation, it may shift the game by changing their attitude. Similarly, a political leader who fails at satisfying a domestic demand at the international level puts his or her position at risk. Therefore, at level 2, some groups demand international actions that result in policies favorable to them and to the politicians and/or decision-makers who build support coalitions among these groups to keep their political power. At level 1, the chief concerns are with maximizing the ability to satisfy demands from level 2 and, at the same time, reducing the external risks and costs of the decision (Putnam 1988).

According to this argument, a larger win-set[5] on the domestic level makes it more likely for a decision to happen on the international level. However, the relative size of a win-set affects the domestic distribution of international gains. In addition, we consider that different issues result in the construction of different sizes of win-sets (Putnam 1988).

Foreign policy decisions can also be regarded as nested games (Tsebelis 1990). These are games played in multiple arenas, because decisions made in one arena affect the others, or in institutional design games, when players are involved in changing the rules of the game. In Tsebelis's words:

> In the case of games in multiple arenas, the observer considers the game in the principal arena without taking contextual factors into account, whereas the actor perceives that the game is nested inside a bigger game that defines how contextual factors (the other arenas) influence his payoffs and those of the other players. In the case of institutional design, the game in the principal arena is nested inside a bigger game where the rules of the game themselves are variable; *in this game, the set of available options is considerably larger than in the original one. The actor is now able to choose from the new set one strategy that is even better than his best option in the initial set* (Tsebelis 1990, 8, emphasis added).

Actors involved in foreign policy decisions, which are two-level and unfold as nested games, possess different preferences, attributions, and resources. In general, the Executive branch has a central role in formulating and implementing Brazilian foreign policy. The Legislature is a co-participant in the decision-making process (Ratton Sanchez et al. 2006) and can be a veto player on ex-post procedures (Tsebelis

5 Putnam (1988) defines a win-set as the set of positions of the domestic constituency interested in the possible gains of an international decision.

1997; Anastasia et al. 2012). The Judiciary has ad hoc attributions, especially on judging the unconstitutionality of international treaties and the compliance of domestic decisions with international treaties ratified by Brazil (Ratton Sanchez et al. 2006).

To say that the Executive branch has the main formal attributions does not mean that it acts autonomously and insulated. For the last three decades, Brazilian foreign policymaking has been pluralized with an increasing number of actors who influence or attempt to influence it (Cason and Power 2009). In addition, "pluralization of the foreign policy-making process since the mid-1990s has to be understood in relative rather than absolute terms. Pluralization departs from a unique baseline: the quasi-monopolistic reputation of Itamaraty (the Ministry of Foreign Relations and its bureaucracy)" Thus, this pluralization means that decision-making is more accessible to governmental (other ministries and agencies) and nongovernmental actors (CSOs) (Faria 2008). Milani (2012) summarizes the main actors at the domestic level involved in formulating and implementing Brazil's foreign policy, especially in the human rights area.

Chart 1 — Actors at the domestic level involved in formulating and implementing Brazil's foreign policy

1st sphere — government actors
• Federal Executive branch
• Agencies of the top level of relevance (national scope)
• Agencies of the second level of relevance (regional and local, but also with international action)
• Subnational governments (states and cities)
• Federal Legislative branch (Senate and Chamber of Representatives) and Judiciary branch
2nd sphere — nongovernmental actors
• Political parties (*sui generis* actors since they can be part of the governments)
• NGOs, business coalitions, and labor unions (civil society organizations)
• Media and public opinion
• Think tanks, research groups, religious organizations, and ethnic groups

Source: Milani (2012), translated by the authors.

Based on Milani's (2012) contributions, we analyze the Executive branch (the presidency and ministries involved on the human rights dimension of the foreign policy) in the first sphere (government actors) and CSOs (both the progressive ones and those aligned to government preferences) in the second sphere.

The political interaction among those actors in foreign policy-making can vary between cooperation and conflict, leading to either solidarity- or interest-based systems. In a solidarity-based system, cooperation prevails among equals; in an

interest-based system the interaction revolves mainly around conflicts over differences (Pizzorno 1975; Monte 2015). Milani (2012) points out that the political interaction among domestic actors has had important influence in Brazil's human rights foreign policy for the past two decades. According to the author:

> [...] demands of domestic non-governmental actors (Committee for Justice and Peace, Caritas, etc.) and domestic bureaucratic politics among Itamaraty, the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Justice, the different secretariats (especially the special secretariat for Human Rights) and congress expand the zones of conflict and enrich the process of redemocratization of the State, in addition to engendering new institutional arrangements that are more open to debate, such as the Brazilian Committee on Foreign Policy and Human Rights. Created in 2006, the committee comprises a coalition of civil society entities (Abia, ABGLT, Conectas, Gajop, Ibase, Inesc, among others) and the State, with the objective of strengthening citizen participation and democratic control of Brazilian foreign policy in the field of human rights (Milani 2012, 61-62, translated by the authors)[6].

In the current human rights backlash (Hopgood et al. 2017), exemplified in the changes in Bolsonaro's international agenda, conservative and illiberal CSOs are also trying to access these human rights fora. In the empirical analysis presented below, we will highlight the case of ANAJURE (a conservative association of evangelical jurists, founded by Damares Alves, the current Minister for women, family, and human rights) and its role in influencing Bolsonaro's human rights foreign policy. Changes in the actors that now have access to different stages of foreign policy-making have lead to different results.

The role of CSOs in international politics has become increasingly important since the end of the Cold War. They were elevated to legitimate representatives of the public interest (Willets 2011). Accordingly, they became active actors that the States and international bureaucracies were forced to deal with. In the human rights field, CSOs are compelling agents and an indispensable part of the international regime. They are responsible for pushing the States and international organizations to adopt, update, and enforce human rights standards. And they do not act individually most of the time. They build transnational coalitions among themselves (Tarrow 2007; Sikkink 2011) to organize campaigns, for example. Their traditional role is to monitor State behavior and to lobby, but they also push to participate in the process of formulating

6 "[...] as demandas de atores não governamentais domésticos (Comissão de Justiça e Paz, Cáritas, etc.) e a política burocrática doméstica instaurada entre o Itamaraty, a Presidência da República, o Ministério da Justiça, as diferentes secretarias (sobretudo a secretaria especial de Direitos Humanos) e o congresso ampliam as zonas de conflitualidade, enriquecem o próprio processo de redemocratização do Estado, além de engendrar novos arranjos institucionais mais abertos ao debate contraditório, a exemplo do Comitê Brasileiro de Política Externa e Direitos Humanos. Criado em 2006, o comitê conforma uma coalizão de entidades da sociedade civil (Abia, ABGLT, Conectas, Gajop, Ibase, Inesc, entre outras) e do Estado, tendo por objetivo o fortalecimento da participação cidadã e do controle democrático da política externa brasileira no campo dos direitos humanos."

public policies, including human rights foreign policy. And they also interact with international organizations, especially their bureaucracies. In this sense, they seek allies inside these organizations, for instance, aiming to raise some issues (Joachim 2007).

But to guarantee international participation in the human rights debates and fora, CSOs need to access these fora; that is, they need to be acknowledged as a legitimate agent by the international organization. In terms of the United Nations, this means that a CSO needs to obtain consultative status to be allowed to present issues and develop agendas. This point has been considered by the human rights literature on agenda setting (Joachim 2007), but in general, the analytical models normally consider CSOs as pro-human-rights actors. But the current situation of the world, specifically the current situation of Brazilian foreign policy, brings some political and analytical challenges. The issue of access no longer involves the making of a pro-human-rights platform.

Also, despite this recent pluralization of actors with influence in foreign policy-making, we understand that foreign policy is still relatively distant from citizens and public opinion. Considering the substantial changes President Bolsonaro has made in international human rights issues, Soares de Lima and Albuquerque (2019, 15, translated by the authors)[7] argue that "because it is a theme highly centered on the Executive Power, in which there is less need for composition of forces with Congress, we propose that Bolsonaro uses Brazilian foreign policy as a space for declaratory policies that seek to deepen the loyalty of a more radical portion of the electorate".

Brazilian foreign policy in the Bolsonaro government has been characterized as disruptive. In this sense, there is an important inflection regarding the commitments assumed during the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB) governments, like the aim to guarantee that Brazil is recognized for good international behavior, and the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) governments, like the objective to reform the international system in the face of the new dynamics of power[8].

Among the disruptive discourses and practices, we highlight the nationalist speech, grounded on religious values and a strong defense of the moral agenda, that attacks globalism on international politics. From this new perspective, under Bolsonaro,

7 "por ser um tema altamente centrado no Poder Executivo, em que a necessidade de composição de forças com o Congresso é matizada, propomos que Bolsonaro utiliza a PEB como um espaço de políticas declaratórias que buscam a fidelização de uma parcela mais radical do eleitorado."

8 As Spektor points out, the right-wing ideologization of foreign policy does not coincide with the supposed ideological alignment (to the detriment of pragmatism) of Brazil's foreign relations during both PT and PSDB governments (Spektor 2018). Despite these criticisms, Saraiva (2011) shows that there was an important combination between ideology and pragmatism in foreign policy during the Cardoso (1995–2002) and Lula (2003–2010) governments. In this sense, ideology guided international behaviors in a context of pragmatic flexibility about the weight attributed to ideological aspects in decisions. Thus, "[d]espite the variation experienced and in different measures, one can say that, both in the Cardoso term and in the Lula government, pragmatism prevailed over ideology" (Saraiva 2011, 65).

Brazilian international relations became guided by a critique of multilateralism (Belém Lopes 2019), especially against those institutions/organizations whose agenda conflicts with the traditional, conservative and religious values of the president's most loyal constituency.

This anti-globalist shift is rhetorically justified by the need to align the international actions with the religious and traditional values of Brazilian citizens. In such thinking, there is a fallacious idea that the internationalization of the moral agenda through foreign policy corresponds to the democratization of the latter (Belém Lopes 2019). We consider that the absolute embracement of values from a single group does not democratize foreign policy-making; rather, it increases the gap between citizens and foreign policy.

Based on the above literature and concepts, our hypotheses are:

1. The performance of an illiberal government, based on conservative and anti-human-rights positions shared by its electorate, finds fertile ground in foreign policy, characterized by low social participation, low monitoring, and relative bureaucratic isolation, making it difficult to contain setbacks. Hence, it is in the international realm that the Bolsonaro administration may have more room to be more ideological and less pragmatic.

2. The international arena is nested within the electoral arena (the most important one), and the main objective of international inflections in the human rights issues of the Bolsonaro government is to please and energize Bolsonaro's most conservative electorate.

From these hypotheses, we predict that the changes in Brazilian human rights foreign policy under Bolsonaro will reconfigure the accessibility of the foreign policy making by CSOs. Thus, some conservative CSOs will become more influential in governmental and/or international forums where international human rights issues are debated and decided. In turn, progressive CSOs will channel their efforts to the international forums, since they no longer will have access to the domestic foreign policy making.

Chart 2 summarizes the actors in the governmental and nongovernmental spheres (Milani 2012) and their main arenas and strategies. Those elements will guide our analysis presented in the next section.

Chart 2 — Actors, arenas, and strategies

Actors	Arenas	Main arena	Strategies
President	• Executive • Congressional • International • Electoral	Electoral	Nominate the ministers and the accessors on foreign and human rights policies. Direct dialogue with the electorate through social networks and online pronouncements
Ministers (foreign affairs and family, women, and human rights)	• Executive • Congressional • International	Executive, aiming to improve the loyalty of Bolsonaro's constituency	Controlling the agenda
Presidency special advisor on international affairs	• Executive • Congressional • International	Executive, aiming to improve the loyalty of Bolsonaro's constituency	Political influence over the head of the Executive branch
Coletivo RPU	• International • Civil society	International	Vocalization of preferences; pressure advocacy; shaming
ANAJURE	• International • Civil society • Executive • Congressional	Executive Congressional	Vocalization of preferences; pressure advocacy

Source: The authors.

We now analyze the main actors, their preferences, and the resources they mobilized in order to shape Brazil's human rights foreign policy between January 2019 and March 2021. As mentioned before, we analyze government actors of the Executive branch (the presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights). We also highlight how CSOs with opposite ideological orientations—the Coletivo RPU[9] and ANAJURE—started to act in the face of Bolsonaro's religious and ideological politics.

3 ANALYSING BOLSONARO'S HUMAN RIGHTS FOREIGN POLICY

Jair Bolsonaro won the presidential election in 2018. He rose as a competitive and important politician in Brazilian politics after a trajectory of authoritarian and

9 "Coletivo RPU Brasil" is formed by 31 entities from the Brazilian civil society and monitors human rights in the country through the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism". More Information available at: https://plataformarpu.org.br/o-coletivo-rpu

anti-human-rights discourses. As Avritzer (2021) points out, Bolsonaro presents himself as a leader capable of tearing down public policies, including Brazil's foreign policy (Spektor 2018).

Despite identifying himself as a political outsider at the time of the elections, Bolsonaro was Rio de Janeiro's city counselor in 1990 and, from 1991 to 2018, he had a seat in the House of Representatives. Bolsonaro is a former army captain, and his political platform has always been characterized by emphatic discourses on public safety, focusing on issues like the liberation of weapons for citizens and the protection of public safety agents. In addition, he advocates in the defense of Christian values, is opposed to the discussion of gender in schools, and strongly criticizes the action of LGBT defenders (Agência Lupa, 2019).

As a representative, Bolsonaro advocated in favor of the military and was known for his anti-democratic and anti-human-rights speeches and law propositions. Among them, he defended, in 1993, the authoritarian rule and the closing of the National Congress (Broke 1993). In 1994, he advocated for the death penalty and life imprisonment of criminals, both forbidden by the Brazilian Constitution and international human rights treaties of which Brazil is a signatory. He claimed that former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso should have been killed by the military dictatorship and regretted the fact that the regime "only tortured but did not kill enough" of the political opposition at that time (Agência Lupa, 2019).

Regarding gender issues, he insulted Maria do Rosário, a leftist congresswoman, saying that "[he] was never going to rape [her] because [she did not] deserve it". He also declared that he could not stand seeing a gay couple in front of his children, and that he would, hypothetically, beat up a son who had "gay behavior." Finally, he praised a well-known torturer during his vote in the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff in the House of Representatives in 2016.[10]

His government style has some particularities, highlighted by Avritzer as:

> *no concerns with governability,* expressed in his cabinet nominations and the way he faced the new coronavirus pandemic; a relationship of opposition and cooptation with the political system, which ensures that his opposition in Congress does not generate political instability*; and a broad constituency that ratifies his positions on social networks, which allows him to relativize the media opposition he faced* (Avritzer, 2021, 52, emphasis added, translated by the authors)[11].

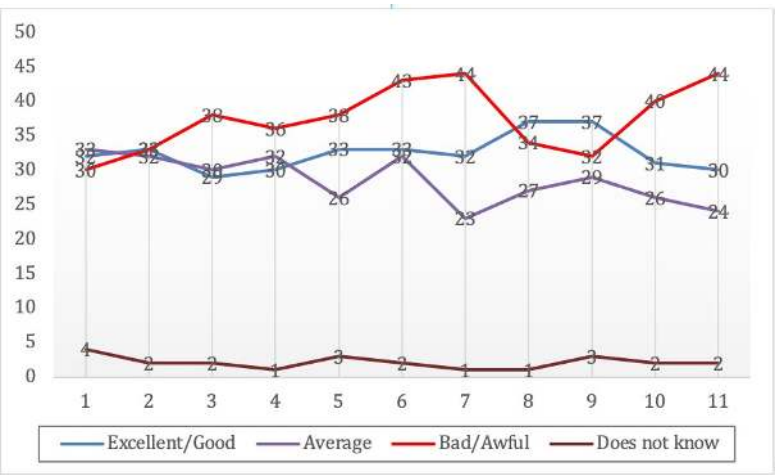
10 These are only some examples of Bolsonaro's authoritarian and anti-human-rights speeches and action. For a complete retrospective on his behavior, see: https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/lupa/2019/01/01/trajetoria-bolsonaro-presidente/.

11 "[...] *preocupação zero com a governabilidade, expressa na nomeação de cargos para os seus ministérios* e na forma como ele enfrentou a pandemia do novo coronavírus; a relação de oposição e cooptação com o sistema político, fazendo com que a oposição a ele no Legislativo não se manifeste como forma de instabilidade política; e *a ampla base ratificadora de suas posições nas redes sociais, que lhe permite relativizar a oposição midiática por ele enfrentada."*

This strategy, called *(des)governo/(un)government* by the author, is best represented by key ministers in public policy areas like human rights. Minister Damares Alves was nominated as the minister of women, family, and human rights[12] for her ability to tighten up the human rights policy, undo previous trends and advancements, and create conflict between the bureaucracy and the public policy community (Avritzer 2021), including CSOs.

This strategy is motivated by expected electoral gains––the main interest of all elected politicians, according to new rational choice institutionalism (Feno 1978). As mentioned before, conservative Christian values are at the core of Bolsonaro's political platform, and his government is constituted by a growing religious right. Hence, the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights became an institutional space for the actions and consolidation of this group in neoconservative terms and through a populist logic (Almeida 2021).

Since 2018, the evangelicals in Brazil are the group that has supported Bolsonaro's actions the most, and his election and continuity in office is enabled, although not exclusively, by this continuous support (Camurça 2020). Graph 1 shows how the evaluation of President Bolsonaro has changed over the first two years of his government:[13]

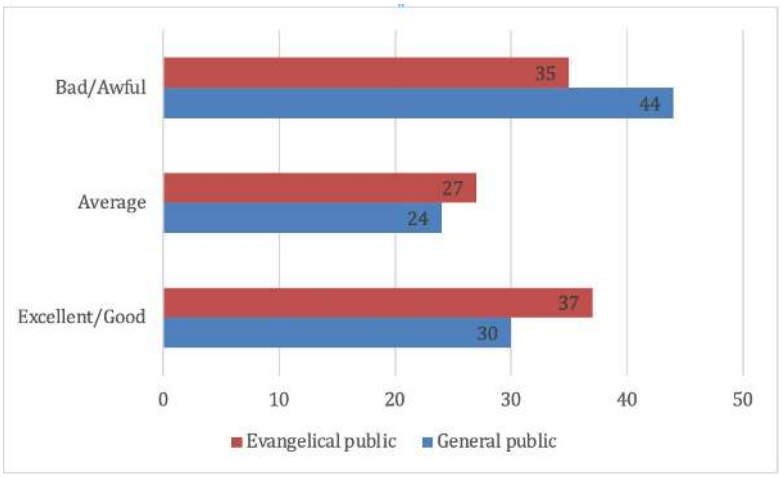


Graph 1 — Evaluation of President Bolsonaro (April 2019 to March 2021): Datafolha surveys
Source: The authors, with data from Datafolha (2021).

Data shows the growing share of the population that considers the Bolsonaro government "Bad/Awful," from 30% to 44% in two years. In this context of diminishing popular approval, the evangelical group is the most loyal constituency to Bolsonaro, as graph 2 demonstrates.

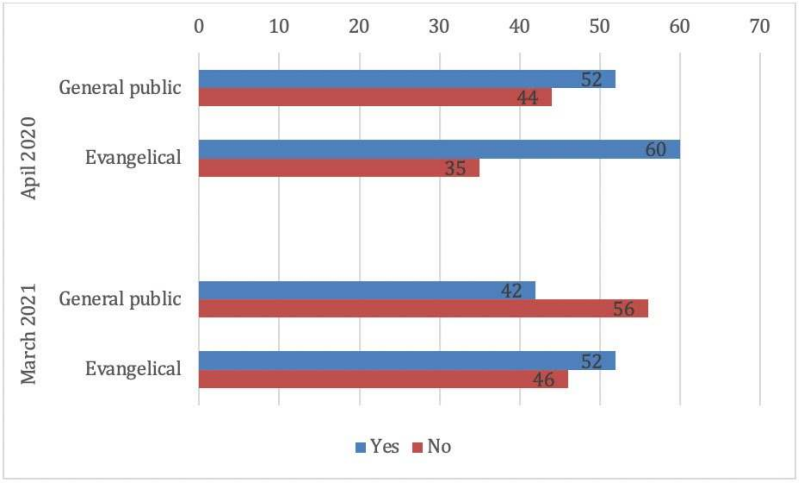
12 Avritzer also includes the nomination for the education and environment ministers as significant expressions of the (*des)governo*/(un)government strategy.

13 The questions included in the survey are: "President Jair Bolsonaro completed a year and eleven months in office. In your opinion, is President Jair Bolsonaro doing an excellent, good, average, bad, or awful government?"



Graph 2 — Evaluation of President Bolsonaro (March 2021): general and evangelical publics
Source: The authors, with data from Datafolha (2021).

Similarly, graph 3 shows that, over time, the evangelical share still considers Bolsonaro capable of leading the country, even in the face of his troubles managing the COVID-19 pandemic. While 52% of the general public expressed in April 2020 that he could lead the country, this opinion was supported by 60% of the evangelicals. In March 2021, we see a decrease in the approval by this group (from 60% to 52%), but it is still superior to the general evaluation (42%).



Graph 3 — Is Bolsonaro able to lead the country? General and evangelical publics (April 2020 and March 2021)
Source: The authors, with data from Datafolha (2021).

This constant popular support is reflected in government policies and changes in the Executive branch. As Almeida (2021) argues, evangelicals have a longtime political trajectory, being close to other governments, but under the Bolsonaro administration this relationship between political power and religious trends has become organic

and more institutionalized. In this sense, there is a cross-cutting application of neoconservative and religious values in the government structure, with gender issues, in particular, being deconstructed in different policy areas.

> Under the guidance of the presidency, the theme of the family must cut across the different ministries, offering a unified political-moral discourse. In Education, the boundary between family and school; in justice, the legal definition of family as heterosexual; in Foreign Affairs, the removal of the word gender from international documents [...] (Almeida 2021, 6526, translated by the authors)[14].

In addition, Bolsonaro, as an "elected autocrat" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018), treats the political opposition as enemies and builds up a populist wall that separates "us"—the people with religious values—from "them," using the valorization of the family as a tool. In this sense, international organizations, like the UN Human Rights Council, and progressive CSOs are seen and treated as enemies.

This analysis exemplifies how the international arena, where foreign policy is aimed at, is nested within the electoral arena, and how Bolsonaro's international actions are undertaken to increase the loyalty of his constituency by pleasing those with conservative and religious values. Bolsonaro disregards the UN Human Rights Council and promised to withdraw Brazil from this organization (Fernandes 2018). As we know, he did not fulfill that promise, but he made significant changes in Brazilian orientations and decisions in this organization.

In addition to the shifts regarding Brazil's vote on gender issues addressed earlier in this paper, Brazil has changed a historical trend regarding the Israel–Palestinian conflict inside the UN Human Rights Council, for example. According to Belém Lopes (2021), the Brazilian voting behavior has changed in several items in this area, always in favor of Israel, an unusual shift that shows a new alliance with Israel. This alignment among Brazil, Israel, and the United States is also intended to meet the religious constituency's values and requests[15].

3.1 Identifying and characterizing human rights foreign policy: the government actors

These significant turns in Brazil's human rights foreign policy have at least three important political actors at their core: former Minister of foreign affairs Ernesto

14 "Por orientação da presidência, a temática da família deve atravessar os diferentes ministérios, oferecendo um discurso político-moral unificado. Na Educação, a fronteira entre família e escola; na justiça, a definição jurídica de família como heterossexual; nas Relações Exteriores, a retirada da palavra gênero dos documentos internacionais".

15 This "Christian-Judaic" alliance may not be intuitive to most readers. Klein and Gherman in this special issue explain how it was built and how differences between these two religious traditions were accommodated in Bolsonaro's thinking and discourse and among his constituency.

Araújo, the Minister of women, family, and human rights (Damares Alves), and the Presidency special advisor on international affairs (Filipe Martins).

Ernesto Araújo was the Minister of foreign affairs from January 2019 to March 2021. He was the formal executor of the changes in Brazil's international trends, discourses, and actions. Araújo, who is a career diplomat, came to the post of minister for his ideological predilections, such as his admiration of Olavo de Carvalho—an "organic intellectual" for some parts of the government during the first years of Bolsonaro's mandate. He also supported Bolsonaro in the electoral contest (Belém Lopes 2021). In Araújo's words, Bolsonaro "[...] was the only political leader capable of bringing the people to power, the only one who believed in freedom, nationalism, God, and the interaction between them." (Araujo 2019).

Araújo strengthened the nationalist discourse, based on religious precepts and the defense of the moral agenda, which attacks so-called globalist policies (Belém Lopes 2020). In this sense, his activities in the Ministry were guided by criticisms of international organizations, especially those whose outputs conflict with the moral agenda of Bolsonaro's electoral base. As an example, he stated that the word "multilateralism" should be avoided when referring to international institutions, in defense of sovereignty and the national sentiment (Lott 2020).

Attacks on globalism are not just a criticism of multilateralism or the functioning of international institutions. In Araújo's view, globalism means the combination of the globalized economy with "cultural Marxism"[16]. Thus, Brazilian foreign policy was thought to be part of a universal insurgency, led by the Trump administration, against "globalism", "climatism," "racialism," "gender ideology," "abortionism," and other "isms."

This shows that the foreign policy under Araújo's guidance became invested in a moral crusade, at the expense of real and pragmatic strategies. The hostility with China, Brazil's most significant commercial partner, in defense of and in alignment with Trump's United States exemplifies this blindness and lack of rational strategies (Belém Lopes 2021).

Araújo tried to change Brazil's foreign policy to a liberal-conservative alliance (liberal in the economy, conservative in values) to promote a "healthy, trustful and successful society" based on the following values: nation, family, and traditional ties. He agreed that these guidelines were making Brazil an international pariah and praised the ostracism he helped to cause (Coletta 2020). As a result of this rhetoric, we

16 This term is used by some Bolsonaro's supporters as a so-called "perspective taken on by the left when it ceased to seek power through weapons and began to pursue its political dispute within the scope of culture" (Silva 2020: 78). According to Costa (2020: 40 *apud* Silva 2020: 78) the "cultural Marxism" thesis believes that "[...] the evils of the culture – feminism, affirmative action, sexual liberation, LGBTQ rights, the decay of traditional education and environmentalism - are the responsibility of insidious influence of the Frankfurt School. Lukács and Gramsci are also responsible, but they are less relevant because they did not immigrate to the United States. The adherents of Marxist culture are accused of teaching children sex and homosexuality, promoting the destruction of the family [and] controlling the media [...]"

highlight the special ties Brazil has built with some conservative governments, like Israel, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Poland, and India. Except for India, these countries had not been a priority in Brazilian international relations during previous governments. These new special relationships were justified by the religious and ideological features of Bolsonaro's politics rather than by pragmatic reasons. Araújo left the government in March 2021, after criticism from the Legislative branch and pressure from the media and civil society.

In the first two years of Bolsonaro's government, foreign policy decision-making was characterized by many official and unofficial formulators. In this scenario, the Presidency Special Advisor on International Affairs, Filipe Martins, stands out as an important actor (Belém Lopes 2021). This position, once held by Marco Aurélio Garcia during Lula's government, is part of the so-called institutional presidency, that is: "... the cluster of agencies that directly support the chief executive" (Inácio e Llanos 2015, 41).

The nomination of Martins, another follower of Olavo de Carvalho, was sponsored by Eduardo Bolsonaro, son of the President, congressman, and chairman of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Commission in the House of Representatives. Eduardo Bolsonaro is dedicated to foreign policy and communicates international actions to his father's constituency, along with Martins. According to Spektor (2018), they both:

> [...] guide a good part of the signs of the new government on the foreign agenda through regular posts on social networks, in which they defend a maximalist break in international affairs and promote the mobilization of the electorate against opposition leaders, the foreign policy establishment and the traditional press (Spektor, 2018, p. 268, translated by the authors)[17].

Similarly to Araújo, Martins was an important actor in the alignment that Brazil made with the United States, especially during the Trump administration. He maintained his position even after the resignation of Araújo.

Damares Alves is the Minister of women, family, and human rights. She is one of the most vocal ministers and one of the main supporters of the Bolsonaro administration and its conservative principles. According to a December 2019 poll, Alves was the second most popular minister of Brazil and the only one who was more supported by the poor than by the rich (Caram 2019).[18] She is an important political character whose role needs to be carefully examined for one to understand the conservative turn of in current human rights foreign policy.

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17 "[...] pautam boa parte dos sinais do novo governo na agenda externa por meio de postagens regulares nas redes sociais, nas quais defendem uma ruptura maximalista em assuntos internacionais e promovem a mobilização do eleitorado contra lideranças de oposição, o *establishment* de política externa e a imprensa tradicional".

18 Damares Alves was evaluated by 43% of the respondents as "Excellent/Good," just losing to Sérgio Moro, former minister of justice (Caram 2019).

Alves is an evangelical pastor and a lawyer (although the university where she obtained her degree has been unauthorized by the Ministry of Education since 2011). At the end of the 1980s, Alves began her career in politics, but it was only at the end of the 1990s that she became the congressional aide for a conservative congressman in Brazil and an evangelical leader. Up until 2018, Alves had been an aide for different conservative and evangelical congressmen, like Arolde de Oliveira and Magno Malta, both very vocal supporters of the Bolsonaro family's political project.

Alves was also the Director for legislative affairs and one of the founders of ANAJURE, the National Association of Evangelical Lawyers, an important organization to address if we want to understand the anti-human rights and anti-gender turn of Bolsonaro's foreign policy. This association became known in Brazil for defending the rights of teachers and schools to not address human rights and political issues, especially gender debates.

As a Minister today, Alves controls an important part of the Brazilian human rights agenda, which since 1988 had been traditionally dominated by progressive organizations. First, we should pay attention to the name of the institution she leads: Women, Family, and Human Rights. This mix of elements already shows the meaning, framework, and scale of priority of her ideological views. Up to 2019, Brazil had never had a ministry devoted to family. And "family" is not a neutral and inclusive term here. It stands for a very strict, conservative, and heteronormative understanding of family that is formed by a heterosexual couple and their kids, satisfying perfectly Bolsonaro's conservative evangelical constituency.

One of Alves's first controversial stances after she took office as a minister was that boys would wear blue clothes and girls would wear pink, a clear metaphor to express a traditional and non-inclusive understanding of gender (G1 2019). She announced this as "a new age in Brazil." In 2019, also satisfying the evangelical conservative audience, Alves challenged evolutionary theory, saying that the evangelical church had allowed scientists and educators to dominate the science realm (Veja 2019).

However, controlling the agenda involves not only the ability to set the tone of the debate and public policies but also to control who participates (or not) in decision-making bodies and processes. In 2019, for example, Bolsonaro and Alves terminated the committee responsible for monitoring the third National Program for Human Rights (PNDH-3), one of the most comprehensive and progressive human rights programs of Brazil, elaborated in a very collaborative and participatory way in 2009 during the Lula administration. And in 2021, Alves issued an ordinance that created a working group to review the PNDH-3, but with all fourteen people in this group coming from her ministry; that is, CSOs would not have a seat in this body. This excluded all members of the Human Rights National Council, a council composed of people from civil society and other governmental bodies who were critical of this ordinance (Valente 2021).

Another important change was the creation, in 2019, of the National Secretariat of the Family, in addition to the National Secretariat of Policy for Women. Even with the creation of a new body within the scope of the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights, few resources were allocated to combat gender-based violence despite an exponential increase in complaints and cases of violence. In September 2020, only half of that year's budget for these activities had been used, and there was a 25% reduction in the 2021 budget for actions in this area. According to Biroli and Quintela (2021), the National Secretariat of the Family is a symbol of the government's objective to make the family the core of all public policies.

Alves, however, is not just a national political agent. Her position makes her the main representative of Brazil at the UN Human Rights Council. Her participation in this international space mirrors her role in the national sphere. But, as we indicated in our hypothesis, in the international realm she has fewer obstacles to overcome because of the nature of Brazil's foreign policy, which allows her to spread messages and propose and/or participate in actions more freely, satisfying the beliefs of Bolsonaro's evangelical conservative constituency.

We could mention many different examples of this, but one of them is very interesting because it summarizes Alves's international actions: the Geneva Consensus. The Geneva Consensus was an initiative launched in 2020 by the then-conservative United States, Brazil, Egypt, Hungry, Indonesia, and Uganda. These countries cosponsored a declaration named the Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family (Brasil 2020). The Consensus was supposed to strengthen women's health, but the title of the Declaration did not even mention the word "rights" and, of course, its content reflected a conservative, religious, and heteronormative understanding of family. Actually, the Declaration is a kind of anti-abortion and pro-life diplomatic manifesto. It aims, like Alves, to reaffirm the family as the main unit of society, to avoid any international initiative that could guarantee abortion as part of a women's sexual and reproductive health program, and to protect the national jurisdictions from such initiatives (Chade 2021a). After Biden's victory, the United States left the initiative, and Brazil became the leader responsible for trying to gather more support for the declaration (Chade 2021b).

This kind of position and coalition moves Brazil away from its historical position and alliances on women's health. In March 2021, Brazil did not sign a declaration made by more than sixty countries to celebrate Women's International Day and to establish a list of commitments regarding women's health, alarming the international community of democratic countries (Chade 2020). Brazil, which was accompanied by ultraconservative countries like Poland, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Russia, and China, explained that the country did not join the declaration because it makes references to sexual health rights and supports feminist movements, two points that

are in complete disagreement with the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights (Chade 2021d) and, we add, with the Brazilian evangelical conservative audience (Chade 2021c).

The kind of coalition that Alves helps Brazil galvanize at the UN Human Rights Council spills over to other international initiatives of her ministry and, again, to initiatives that coincide directly with the will of Bolsonaro's evangelical and conservative electorate. A good example is Alves's Family Secretary, Angela Gandra, who comes from a very traditional and conservative Brazilian family of jurists (Piva 2021). Gandra has been very active internationally—in quite a few transparent ways (Chade 2021e)—in promoting projects based on the traditional and religious understanding of family and integrating efforts to advance women's sexual and reproductive rights.

Alves is criticized by the progressive and pro-human-rights sectors of Brazil for her international actions, and her reactions to them show how Bolsonaro's (anti) human rights foreign policy is nested within the internal political and electoral arenas. For example, in March 2021, Jerzy Kwaśniewski, an ultraconservative Polish activist from Ordo Iuris organization, said Brazil should be the pro-family global leader. Alves tweeted the news with the subtitle: "Then do you understand the reason why international leftists criticize us a lot? Go Bolsonaro!" (Alves, 2021c). When confronted by Manuela D'Ávila, an important leftist and feminist politician in Brazil who ran as the vice-presidential candidate in 2018, about a speech she made at the UN on vaccination, she finished her reply on Twitter, saying: "...The losers of 2018 elections are still crying. They do not accept they lost." (Alves, 2021a).

And a final example to illustrate this argument: many entities challenged the speech made by Araújo and Alves in 2021 at the UN Human Rights Council because Alves said that Brazil had guaranteed vaccines for the elderly, indigenous peoples, and health professionals, which was not true. Neither one even mentioned issues like racism, police violence, and attacks against journalists. The original title of the op-ed that covered this speech was: "Dozens of entities contest the speech of Araújo and Damares at the UN." Alves shared the op-ed in her personal Instagram, changing the title to "Dozens of *leftist* entities contest the speech of Araújo and Damares at the UN" (Alves, 2021c).

After the analysis of government actors, we seek to identify and characterize the non-government actors involved in Brazil's human rights foreign policy, the focus of the following section. In the findings section, Chart 3 brings a summary of the information provided about them.

3.2 Identifying and characterizing human rights foreign policy: the non-government actors.

One of the strategies of the Bolsonaro administration to implement its conservative views and anti-human-rights policies, including in its foreign policy, is to exclude the CSOs from deciding, formulating, and executing public policies. One of the first measures of the government, for instance, was to issue an executive order allowing the government to monitor the activities of CSOs and international organizations, triggering many criticisms from these organizations (Aguilar 2019). In terms of human rights foreign policy, the exclusion is similar, which we can demonstrate by looking at the way the CSOs have to organize themselves nowadays.

CSOs, especially in the human rights field, have at least two ways to act: monitoring, pressuring, and shaming States, on the one hand, and promoting advocacy to try to increase their leverage to formulate and execute public policies, on the other hand (Fiona 2021). In terms of human rights foreign policy, in 2006, the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights and Foreign Policy was created to increase transparency as well as the openness to CSO participation in the elaboration and execution of Brazil's human rights foreign policy (Brazilian Committee of Human Rights and Foreign Policy 2006). The goals of the Committee were to promote the creation and strengthening of formal mechanisms of citizen participation in the elaboration, execution, and monitoring of Brazilian human rights foreign policy; to put forward spaces of collaboration and dialogue among different actors, governmental and nongovernmental, attending this policy; to promote human rights foreign policy education activities, aiming to raise the knowledge and awareness of the actors and organizations; and to produce and spread information on the elaboration and execution of this policy, making it more transparent (Milani 2012).

This Committee was originally comprised of some of the most important human rights CSOs in Brazil and of key government bodies: the Human Rights and Minorities Commission of the House of Representatives, the Ministry of Health, and the Federal Attorney General for the Prosecution of the Rights of Citizens. Besides, the Committee regularly met with members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Human Rights Secretariat (Araujo 2017). However, in April 2013, the Committee suspended the participation of the Commission of the House of Representatives when Marco Feliciano (Câmara dos Deputados 2021) was elected as its president, saying the Commission had not been aligned with the Committee's human rights principles since his election (Brazilian Committee of Human Rights and Foreign Policy 2013). Feliciano is a right-wing conservative congressman, an evangelical minister, and a supporter of Jair Bolsonaro (Moraes 2020).

One of the most interesting characteristics of the Committee was the periodic meetings it promoted before and after the UN Human Rights Council sessions with Brazilian diplomats. These meetings worked as spaces to align positions between CSOs and the government, when possible, and to justify positions on resolutions and votes

before the society, increasing transparency. Thus, it was a channel through which human rights organizations could monitor Brazilian human rights foreign policy closely, shaming decision-makers when necessary, but also having an opportunity to participate in the formulation and implementation of this policy (Araujo 2017).

The Committee started to weaken in 2016 and 2017, when president Dilma Rousseff was impeached and replaced with Michel Temer, who, for instance, turned the Secretary for Policies for Women—until then a special Secretariat, linked directly to the presidency—into a subunit of the Human Rights Secretariat (Brasil 2018). Then, in 2017, periodic meetings between members of the Committee and the Brazilian government began to cease, and human rights CSOs directed their resources to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), as Brazil would be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council that year (United Nations 2021). Nevertheless, when Bolsonaro was elected with an anti-human-rights, anti-CSO, and anti-UN platform, governmental channels of participation, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, became completely closed to human rights organizations. Constructive dialogue on human rights foreign policy between the government and its international agents (like Araujo, Martins, and Alves) and human rights CSOs was not possible, as they were viewed by the Bolsonaro administration as political enemies.

Facing these constraints, human rights CSOs kept their work before an anti-human-rights government by directing the entirety of their resources to monitoring activity, and, because of that, the UPR became the focus they chose to agglutinate around. Human rights CSOs no longer have constructive and periodic meetings with the Brazilian diplomacy. Instead, they act collectively through a monitoring platform called *Coletivo RPU* (Coletivo RPU 2021). This initiative is formed almost exclusively by CSOs, with the important exception of the Federal Attorney General for the Prosecution of the Rights of Citizens. The organizations that the Coletivo came to congregate are often attacked by the government, as we saw when we discussed, for example, the social media activities of Damares Alves. One of the few alternatives to these human rights CSOs is to use the media (traditional and social) to denounce and shame the anti-human-rights and anti-gender actions of Bolsonaro's foreign policy, like the Geneva Consensus Declaration (Asano, Corrêa and Kane 2020).

As we already mentioned, controlling the agenda also includes deciding who has access to the government. The Bolsonaro administration explicitly blocked the access of human rights organizations to foreign policy formulation and its implementation process. But if our hypotheses are correct and this government uses this policy mainly to satisfy its conservative and evangelical constituency, it makes sense that it would also grant access to foreign policy making process to conservative and evangelical organizations, such as ANAJURE, which Alves co-founded.

ANAJURE is a conservative right-wing Brazilian association founded in 2012 and composed of evangelical lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and law professors and students. Its activities focus especially on religious freedom and freedom of expression. The association has more than six hundred members and is present in twenty-three of the twenty-seven Brazilian states. ANAJURE is affiliated with different international institutions of the same type, like the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) and the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) (Anajure 2021).

As an evangelical conservative association, ANAJURE has access to the domestic channels aimed to formulate public policies, including foreign policy. Through these channels, ANAJURE has been making efforts to implement its goals, among which is to assist and defend evangelical churches in cases of alleged violations of religious freedom and/or freedom of expression; to become a national forum to try to insert religious elements (even implicitly) in the Brazilian laws (especially draft bills); to lobby before authorities to try to influence the nomination of strategic positions in the government and in the States (Almeida 2021); to act internationally in order to build ties with other associations of the same kind; and to construct alliances to influence discussions inside international organizations such as the UN.

Sergio Moro and André Mendonça, both former ministers of justice during the Bolsonaro administration, always had a good relationship with ANAJURE and were present in different events of the Association. Besides minister of justice, Mendonça, a presbyterian minister, was also the federal solicitor general and, in July 2021, was appointed by Bolsonaro to the Supreme Court with wide support from ANAJURE (Anajure 2020d). With his nomination, the president finally met the promise he made, during a worship in 2019, to appoint a "terribly evangelical" (Calgaro and Mazui 2019) judge (Anajure 2019d).

The lobby of ANAJURE also worked with the nominations of the minister of education, Milton Ribeiro, and the chief federal prosecutor, Augusto Aras. Ribeiro is also a presbyterian minister, and Aras was the only candidate to sign the letter of principles drafted by ANAJURE, (Filho 2020) therefore agreeing that family institutions must be heterosexual and monogamous, that religious doctrines should not be considered as hate speech in any circumstance, and that every homosexual should have the choice to become a patient in "conversion therapies." (Anajure 2019d).

As previously mentioned, ANAJURE seeks to act internationally. This is not a casuistic goal but an institutional objective that includes, for example, being accredited in international organizations as an authorized CSO to widely participate in the debates, fora, and activities. ANAJURE has already achieved this status inside the Organization of the American States (OAS) (Anajure 2019c) and is pursuing the same at the UN (Anajure 2020b). In the case of the UN, accreditation has not been approved yet

because Cuba (Anajure 2020c) and China raised some questions regarding the work ANAJURE does in countries like Portugal, the United States, and Jordan (Frazão 2020). But Itamaraty has assisted ANAJURE in this process, revealing the level of synergy and access given by current Brazilian foreign policy to the evangelical conservative association (O Estado de São Paulo 2020).[19]

ANAJURE is completely aligned with the ideas and actions of the human rights foreign policy of the Bolsonaro administration, especially regarding issues like gender, "family," and LGBT rights. The Association, for instance, supported Brazil's candidacy for a seat at the UN Human Rights Council, in opposition to the human rights CSOs, which––given the turn in Brazil's human rights foreign policy––were against it (Anajure 2019b). ANAJURE also supported Bolsonaro when he used the term "christophobia" in his speech before the UN General Assembly in 2020, satisfying, as we pointed out in our hypothesis, his national evangelical conservative constituency (Anajure 2020). According to Almeida (2021), this neologism was chosen to oppose the criminalization of homophobia, guaranteed by the Supreme Court in 2019 (Barifouse 2019). Again, religious values replace gender issues and undermine progressive achievements in this area, since Brazil has no record of religious persecution to Christians––quite the opposite, Christians make up the majority of the population.

As mentioned above, Araújo had instructed Brazilian diplomats to not use the term "gender" in international fora and to always oppose resolutions that use this term, especially if it related to issues like abortion or LGBT rights. ANAJURE published a long and well-structured document supporting and "substantiating" this position (Anajure 2019). According to the document, it is legitimate to do not address gender issues in foreign policy doctrines and defended the conservative position arguing that it rejects gender theories that address sexuality as a social construction.

Therefore, despite ANAJURE's argument that its goal is to defend religious freedom internationally, it is actually engaged in a struggle to establish a cultural hegemony of Christian values throughout the country and internationally. It is an actor with privileged access to Brazilian human rights foreign policy in the Bolsonaro administration. When this synergetic relationship unfolds at the international level, it helps keep the loyalty of Bolsonaro's evangelical constituency.

3.3 Findings: actors, preferences and resources

Chart 3 summarizes our findings and corroborates both of our hypotheses. Brazil's foreign policy is more ideological and less pragmatic due to governance

19 About the privileged access that ANAJURE enjoys with Itamaraty in a context of blocked channels to human rights CSOs, see also: https://anajure.org.br/anajure-se-reune-com-representantes-do-itamaraty-e-conare-para-tratar-sobre-reassentamento-e-integracao-de-refugiados-no-brasil/.

standards (low social participation, low monitoring, and predominance of the Executive branch when compared with other policies) in addition to the (des)governo/(un)government generated by Bolsonaro's political strategy (H1). Moreover, the international arena, where foreign policy is aimed at, is nested within the electoral arena, the most important one for the president. Hence, changes in the human rights dimension of the foreign policy, especially regarding gender issues, must be seen as a tool to improve Bolsonaro's most loyal constituency (the religious/evangelical share) (H2).

Chart 3 — Actors, preferences, and resources

Actors	Interests/preferences	Resources
President (Jair Bolsonaro)	Electoral success	Agenda powers Appointment of ministers, advisers, and members of the Supreme Court Direct dialogue with its constituency
	Changes in Brazil's foreign policy	
	Treating the opposition as an enemy	
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Ernesto Araújo)	Changes in Brazil's foreign policy	Definition and implementation of foreign policy
	Criticizing the multilateral international order, especially on human rights issues (anti-globalist agenda)	
Minister of Women, Family, and Human Rights (Damares Alves)	Foreign policy in human rights settled by a nonsecular view and submitted to the will of a religious, and electorally victorious, majority	Definition and implementation of human rights policy
Presidency Special Advisor on International Affairs (Filipe Martins)	Changes in Brazil's foreign policy	Political influence over the head of the Executive on defining the agenda on foreign policy Strict relationship with the "Bolsonaro family," especially with Eduardo Bolsonaro (son of the president, congressman, and chairman of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Commission in the lower chamber)
	Criticizing the multilateral international order, especially on human rights issues (anti-globalist agenda)	
Coletivo RPU	Monitoring human rights in Brazil from the perspective of the UPR recommendations	Vocalization of preferences; pressure, advocacy, shaming; focusing on the international level in view of the limitations of domestic channels
	Struggle against setbacks in the human rights policy	

(Continuação)

Actors	Interests/preferences	Resources
ANAJURE	Promoting a view of human rights based on Christian values	Vocalization of preferences; pressure, advocacy
	Valuing religious freedom and freedom of speech	

Source: The authors.

FINAL REMARKS

This article shows how different actors, in the international and domestic levels and considering different dynamics, have acted in the redefinition of the human rights foreign policy in Brazil. We think that it contributes to a more analytical, not only prescriptive, view of Bolsonaro's human rights and foreign policies.

The main findings point to a new dimension of the politicization of Brazilian foreign policy: its use as a permanent electoral tool (Belém Lopes 2021). This politicization does not mean foreign policy becomes more plural. Instead, it brings homogeneity to human rights issues in all policies, strengthening contact and dialogue with CSOs aligned to the Christian and conservative values that unify the government, especially ANAJURE. Progressive CSOs, like Coletivo RPU, must adjust their strategies to influence international institutions, since the institutional channels with the government have been closed or hollowed out. Accordingly, the decision-making process regarding human rights foreign policy has become less plural, less conflictive—since there is just one view on table—and based on Christian values.

Our analysis helps to understand how complex the meaning and reach of the current human rights backlash is. It is a kind of transnational phenomena, shared by different countries, and is also directly linked with the electoral arena in the countries and national groups and their values. In this sense, our case study showed how the human rights backlash is also composed by strong anti-secular elements and groups who vote, support their political leaders, and expect to be pleased by them.

Bolsonaro and his ministers justify an anti-secular and conservative human rights foreign policy by saying that they are satisfying the will of a Christian/evangelical majority in Brazil. However, this justification subverts completely the meaning of democracy, whose full realization depends on the protection of minority human rights and on the guarantee that their voices be effectively represented and heard. Brazil does not need a "terribly evangelical" human rights foreign policy. It needs a terribly democratic human rights foreign policy.

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