

Critical and Interpretivist Foreign Policy Analysis: Reflecting on Three Challenges Ahead

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Abstract: This text concludes the Special Issue on “New Directions for Foreign Policy Analysis” that aims at exploring some recent research avenues in the critical and interpretivist tradition in International Relations. Rather than summarising the contributions to the Special Issue, it reflects on a series of challenges ahead, focusing on three: the theoretical challenges in identity-focused or practice-theory inspired FPA, the international division of knowledge production in the context of a semi-peripheral academic community like Brazil, and the challenges for developing a truly critical FPA that does not take its Western-established categories for granted. Doing so, it issues an invitation to explore these challenges together.

Keywords: Foreign Policy Analysis; Critical IR; interpretivism.

Readers of this special issue will be forgiven if its title makes them sigh: Is this yet another round of those unending (and by now, tiring) ‘turns’ in International Relations (IR)? We are no longer able to count them. Should anyone still bother? However important some of these agenda-setting initiatives may have been – and some were – the repetition ends up appearing like so many other academic branding exercises, as Baele and Bettiza (2021) have argued. And although the present special issue is surely informed by some of these turns (the ‘emotional turn’, for instance), it has humbler purposes. It is not an invitation to turn to some new agenda that allegedly nobody has ever heard of. Rather, and to stay in the picture, it is an invitation to try out some newer dances, and to try them out together. For – and this is the main intended message – it is high time, and they are worth trying.

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The primary motivation for a special issue on 'New Directions for Foreign Policy Analysis' (FPA) consists in presenting, using and reflecting on *some* of these more recent research programmes. It focuses on those that have emerged out of the interpretivist and post-positivist tradition, a meeting that used to be marginal in more traditional FPA, but also in post-positivist IR. The special issue includes contributions that discuss the role of emotions and ontological security in foreign policy, re-conceptualisations of the link between the ideology and practice of certain regime types (here: radical right populism) and foreign policy, and the connection between FPA and the more sociological and philosophical impetus in recent developments within diplomatic studies. But besides this central focus on interpretivist and post-positivist traditions in FPA, the special issue also aims to connect these reflections with the sociology of knowledge, here meaning the development of this sub-discipline in the context of a semi-peripheral academic community like Brazil.

FPA is that part of IR that, even more than others, displays the discipline's intrinsic connection with, and often confusion of, observational and practical knowledge. Born out of the translation of shared understandings and political maxims of the diplomatic and military professions into an academic field with its own scientific criteria, the Western discipline of IR has a particularly close connection with (foreign policy) practice (Guzzini 1998, 2013). Most visible in the revolving door of academia and public office in the USA, it also shows in the confusion between observational theory and foreign policy doctrine, a vice long decried (Aron 1964: 27), where, in its occasional extreme, theorising world politics is reduced to the generalisation of a gigantic single case writ large, as testified by issue after issue of *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. Consequently, knowledge production in IR, for its closeness to practical elites, at least in some countries, has become an issue of analysis itself. The sociology of knowledge found a not so international discipline of IR (Wæver 1998) that prompted different attempts to remedy the asymmetrical power relations within the global field, but also within the domestic environment, where policy practitioners would resist change to their earlier monopoly of legitimate foreign policy expertise.

In this Afterword, we decided to add some short reflections on the challenges ahead. We focus on three: the theoretical challenges in interpretivist FPA, the international division of knowledge production in the context of a semi-peripheral academic community like Brazil, and the challenges for developing a truly critical FPA that does not take its Western-established categories for granted.

Before we embark on exploring the theoretical challenges to interpretivist FPA, let us briefly give our take on interpretivism. Interpretivism assumes a significant difference between the natural and social world in that the way humans understand the world is not given by the objects of the world we inhabit, but by the meaning we attribute to them. This understanding informs the reasons for our actions. Behaviour is not just a 'throughput' between constraint / stimulus and action / response. Inversely, these understandings

can themselves constitute social facts, like money, which functions as such because people share a belief in its existence (Searle 1995). In other words, shared meanings can be performative, as they interact with the social world (Hacking 1999), not least with our identities (as in the case of gender, for instance). More recently, this has spurred interest in relational and process ontologies that start the analysis not from given agents but from the processes that constitute the identity and properties of agents in the first place (Jackson and Nexon 1999; for a discussion, see Guzzini 2017). Finally, interpretivism also denies the possibility of isolating the material from the ideational or vice versa: they are necessarily co-constitutive.

All of this prompts an engagement with the analysis of meaning (which is never purely subjective, but intersubjective) and meaning-giving (discursive) practices, like symbols and rituals, for instance. This special issue primarily deals with those interpretivist approaches to FPA that propose the inclusion of theories of identity / identification, as seen through (social) psychological lenses, as well as the analysis of diplomatic practices through sociological approaches. In so doing, however, the respective analyses encounter a series of theoretical challenges, some of which we want to highlight.

(1) The usage of ontological security in FPA has long been troubled by two theoretical issues. On the one hand, using psychology immediately raises the issue of how theoretical insights applicable to the individual level can be applied to a collective actor. Although anthropomorphisation is nothing new in FPA, as every rational actor model ultimately relies on a unified and rational single actor assumption, it becomes trickier when emotions or processes of self-identification are at stake. One solution consists in arguing that states are persons in international society (Wendt 2004). Here, anthropomorphisation is not metaphorical, but ontological in the figure of a (social) person. That is an ambitious take, and one that has met resistance (Jackson 2004; Neumann 2004; Wight 2004; yet see also the discussion in Lerner 2021).

A second solution consists in focusing on the actual decision-makers and hence not scaling up at all. Yet, for this to work, some collective ideas and identifications need to enter the picture. Hopf (2002: chap. 1) achieves this by positing that identity is a cognitive device on the individual level that stabilises human orientations and understandings in their social environment. Identities are not subjective; they are relational. Individuals rely on societally shared discursive formations composed of different identity scripts for making sense of themselves and their actions. And so do decision-makers, as members of the same society, when they rely on these scripts for their understanding of the situations in foreign policy. In yet another solution, this link can be made by using other forms of social psychology, as in the study of nationalist mobilisation (Kinnvall 2004, 2017), or, put slightly differently, by focusing on the processes and institutions that provide ontological security to members of a society (Zarakol 2017), i.e. defending not the self but the wider social context (Pratt 2017).

Finally, there is the possibility of seeing a state's identity not as being scaled up but as being the ascription of international and / or domestic society. Here, anthropomorphisation is not an attribute assigned by the observer who imposes an anthropomorphic grid when analysing a collective actor; it is agents themselves in the various social contexts

that attribute such anthropomorphic traits to collective actors, while accordingly making sense of their acts, something the observer then registers and analyses (Guzzini 2012). States, then, *are* what their circles of recognition make of them. Putting it into a more narrative approach to identity (Somers 1994), Erik Ringmar writes that: ‘States too can be intentional, interest-driven, actors, we may conclude, provided that we tell stories which identify them as such’ (Ringmar 1996: 75). Needless to say that these different solutions then rely on quite different social theories which the mere reference to ‘identity’ cannot just patch over.

A second problematic issue is the underlying homeostatic assumption of a return to an equilibrium (security). Even if this equilibrium is always in the making, and never really achieved, it suggests a functionalist analysis, where almost any behaviour can be read backwards to have been functional / necessary for ‘ontological security’. Avoiding this functionalist loop requires at least a careful empirical analysis of the biography and socialisation of these actors.

An even bigger problem arises if this *ex post* ‘need’ is used by foreign policy *practitioners* and not its observers. Free to securitise at will, they are able to condone almost any of their actions as being ‘necessary’ for ontological security. This clearly clashes with the initial inspiration of the approach. After all, ontological security theory in IR was born out of the analysis of a political pathology, when some countries end up preferring conflict to peace because their quest for ontological security overrides the concern for physical security: they ‘need’ a negative Other to stabilise their own search for self-esteem (Mitzen 2006). As such, the theory issued a warning, and not a free license.

Consequently, when ontological security changes from being an observational concept into being a practical one, it becomes a form of nationalist apology. For agents can now unilaterally legitimate any securitisation of their policies as a necessary defence against threats to their ontological security, as only they are entitled to define what counts as a threat – for the very sake of their ontological security. This unilateral understanding of threats and the resulting self-victimisation can become a welcome instrument of blackmail in diplomatic practice, where national concerns well beyond the usual national interests are justified and make compromises or diplomacy almost impossible. The fault is always elsewhere. Indeed, as Maria Mälksoo (2015: 223) has argued, the problem is that such a move normalises ‘a state’s need to seek and sustain the intactness and consistency of its identity [which] could dangerously depoliticize the act of protecting a biographical narrative of the state’, normalising, in turn, strategies of securitisation.

Partly for this reason, the more recent theoretical discussion by scholars working with ontological security introduces more contingency into the analysis, getting out of the functionalist circle and exploring processes of de-securitisation. In one instance of these revisions, ontological anxiety may not necessarily prompt any sense of discomfort that requires correction but can generate opportunities to be explored (Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi 2020; Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020; Rumelili 2020), ones where securitisation would not be the default coping strategy (Browning and Joenniemi 2017). This allows a conceptualisation of agency that can be more emancipatory (Berenskötter 2020) and

may also involve de-securitisation moves that bring ontological security closer to classical peace research concerns (Browning and Joenniemi 2017).

As Lupovici's (2012) point about ontological dissonance implies, there is no necessity that crises be resolved rather than being constantly patched up and their solution hence adjourned. Relatedly, the very identification of the 'Other' need not be an antagonistic one. The space distinguishing Self and Other can be understood in a relational manner, where the Other is always already part of the Self and becomes a source of learning for the Self, and thereby a crucial component of ontological security (Untalan 2020). All of this diminishes the functionalist drive of the analysis and re-introduces agency, politics and potentially non-violence into the analysis (for a more detailed discussion, see Guzzini 2022: 45–52).

(2) Also the more sociological contributions to FPA have to face thorny theoretical issues. The starting point is constituted by the many contributions that sociologised the diplomatic field. These range from the analysis of diplomatic encounters in which symbolic interactionism à la Goffman is used for the analysis of politics of stigmatisation (Adler-Nissen 2014; Zarakol 2014) to practice-theory-oriented analyses of the diplomatic field (Constantinou et al. 2021; Pouliot and Cornut 2015), as for instance in a Bourdieu-inspired analysis of international pecking orders within international organisations (Pouliot 2016). Others focus on the rituals within the diplomatic field (Kuus 2015; Nair 2019) or the gendered role and constitution of bodies (Neumann 2008; Standfield 2020, 2022). FPA and Diplomatic Studies have moved well beyond the self-reflection of diplomats towards their observation – including the observation of their self-reflection (Sending et al. 2015: 4–5).

Yet one difficulty arises in the decision of how and where to delineate the diplomatic field in the first place. Not only diplomats make foreign policy. Firms and NGOs have established their own channels, often connected but not limited to the multilateral environment, and transnational bureaucratic fields have become prominent (Kuus 2014, 2018). With more sites and actors, can one still speak of a dominating / hegemonic diplomatic culture and field with, say, 'Davos' as being representative of such a field (for a critique, see Graz 2003)? Or do we see an increasing fragmentation, indeed re-articulation of diplomacy (Cornago 2013)? This issue is particularly important if one considers one of the crucial moves to think FPA through diplomatic studies. Whereas traditional FPA is focused on understanding the causes, domestic or external, of political decision-making and behaviour, diplomatic studies (in what has come to be called International Political Sociology (IPS) is primarily interested in how diplomatic practices contribute to constituting world order, where the latter is seen as a social space itself. And here, fragmentation or diverse social fields and doxa considerably complicate the analysis.

A related problem is the tacit generalisation of rules and rituals as they evolved in 'traditional', that is, implicitly Western diplomacy. This does not mean that this only happens in Western Ministries, as multilateral organisations include non-Western representatives, who often continue established habits. It also occurs in many foreign offices all over the world, such as Itamaraty, which have practitioners socialised according to these rules in their organisation and practices. Still, this bird's-eye view essentialises these

practices, underestimates the differences that exist even among European foreign offices (Neumann 2012), and neglects other diplomatic traditions and practices. Moreover, this historical diplomatic space is not just an encounter among unequal actors but also carries a colonial heritage. It is performative in constituting certain role positions of these actors, as, for instance, Sam Opondo analyses with regard to African actors (Opondo 2010, 2016).

The field of FPA, as imagined in the USA and in Europe, is still in the process of consolidation in Brazil (Salomón and Pinheiro 2013). This is clear if one looks at the undergraduate and graduate teaching programs on IR, the main journals in the field, congresses and seminars of the Brazilian Association of International Relations (ABRI), and investigations conducted by research labs at important universities in the country. Also, one may see the growing production of manuals and books with materials for the classroom (see Introduction to this SI, vol. 45(2)). While all this reveals an engagement with FPA mainstream debates, as circulated globally, it is also an expression of a broader renewal movement of the Brazilian analytical tradition of foreign policy.

Unlike in the Anglo-Saxon world, the development of the discipline of International Relations and the sub-area of Foreign Policy only occurred in Brazil by the mid-1970s. This late institutionalisation and development of the academic area of FP in Brazil initially resulted in a (low) density of theoretical studies on foreign policy (de Lima 1992). For several years, the Brazilian literature on the topic consisted of works of a historical nature, ranging from texts on diplomatic history referring to longer historical periods to more specific studies on the foreign policy of a particular government (de Lima 1992; Herz 2002).¹ Moreover, given that the constitution of the FP field in Brazil followed the very process of professionalisation and bureaucratisation of the Brazilian diplomatic service, foreign policy studies had (and, in a way, still have) a strong practical orientation, with an emphasis on descriptions of and prescriptions for the country's external behaviour (Herz 2002). This condition has been reinforced by the academic-intellectual training of Brazilian diplomats, which also generated a strong symbiosis between the activities of formulating and analysing foreign policy. As emphasised by Letícia Pinheiro and Paula Vedoveli (2012), Brazilian diplomats do not cease to be scholars in order to be bureaucrats: they are both at the same time.

The prerogative historically given to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Itamaraty in conducting and analysing foreign policy has been historically reinforced by a political culture that for years has accepted this monopoly as legitimate, as it has assumed the existence of an essence, coherence and, therefore, a strong continuity in the way international issues are dealt with in Brazil (Mariano and Mariano 2008). All this has impacted the scholarly community dedicated to the analysis of Brazilian foreign policy, spurring debates on the so-called paradigms of Brazilian diplomatic action, which are not theoretical paradigms but foreign policy strategies. In this line, for instance, scholars have perceived across time the continuity of liberal-realist principles within a diplomatic

paradigm which Pinheiro (2000) calls ‘pragmatic institutionalism’ – a paradigm which has permitted Brazil to reconcile in its foreign policy doctrine domestic and international interests via the combination of participation in multilateral institutions and the search for autonomy and economic development. This idea of a continuity in Brazil’s foreign policy thinking and action is not, however, consensual. It is also seen as less a fact of reality than the product of a narrative constructed by the diplomatic field and reinforced by some scholars in Brazilian academia dedicated to the subject (Soares de Lima 1992, 2005). It is part of a feedback loop in which academic interpretations about foreign policy actions validate diplomatic practice, and vice versa. Moreover, as mentioned before, it reveals a central characteristic that lies at the origins of the FPA field: the connection / confusion between observational and practical knowledge.

Brazilian foreign policy thinking – which has also included ideas coming from the Brazilian intelligentsia, the political and the military milieu and from social leaders (Cervo 1994) – has adopted, like everywhere else in the world, its own specific way of reflecting on international relations and on the progress of the country’s foreign policy. In this thinking, as claimed by Amado Cervo (1994), theory was not a priority. Only from the 1990s on did foreign policy studies produced in the country start incorporating clear theoretical and methodological debates and analytical tools developed in Europe and in the USA. Since the ‘turn’ to ‘*foreign policy as public policy*’ (Milani and Pinheiro 2013) and to what became known as the ‘horizontalisation’ of foreign policy, in reference to the debate about participatory democratisation in Brazilian foreign policy (Farias and Ramazini Junior 2015), studies have started including new actors and new agendas and gained analytical density and new theoretical dimensions, especially those coming from FPA (Saraiva and Hernandez 2023).

Nevertheless, although it has now become common to see academic studies adopting a diversity of analytical frames to approach foreign policy, the tendency is still to conceive theory as a mere support to either corroborate a previously identified external behaviour of the state or to predict a future one. This take on theory has excluded debates on the ontological and epistemological consequences of adopting a given theoretical framework. The same occurs with methodology, which is not easily seen as a set of epistemological and ontological premises that inform our ways of producing knowledge. In fact, the present state of affairs in Brazilian academia reveals a typical mistake – that of seeing methodology essentially through a preoccupation with methods and, therefore, with procedures and techniques for collecting data, criteria for the selection of documents and speeches, choice of statistical tools, case selection protocols, etc. (Oliveira 2014). For Haroldo Ramanzini Júnior and Rogério de Souza Farias (2021), the academic community of FPA in Brazil is presently working within a ‘neopositivist’ tradition, prioritising the conduction of case studies, the identification of cause-and-effect relationships and the production of results to be generalisable to other classes of events (ibid: 114–116). Again, this idea of methodology as method has contributed to avoiding an intellectual engagement not only with epistemology, but also with the political and ethical stakes resulting from the adoption of a certain logic of knowledge production.

This diagnosis, which follows the diffusion, since the 2000s, of FPA approaches in Brazilian IR university programs and scholarly publications, is not absolute and has been challenged by more recent initiatives, such as those that have provided the background for this special issue (see Introduction to this special issue). On the one hand, these initiatives explore new theoretical debates linked to the emergence of interpretivist and post-positivist approaches in IR (de Jesus 2010; Gomes 2014; 2016) and to the necessity of articulating definitions of foreign policy ‘outside the central axis of academic production in this field’ (Gonçalves and Pinheiro 2020: 35). On the other hand, this desired renewal of the FPA field in Brazil has led to a reflection on the way in which new (theoretical/conceptual/analytical) knowledge on foreign policy circulating globally is appropriated in the context of a semi-peripheral academic community like Brazil. Which kind of ‘dialogue’ is established by these encounters?

André Luiz Reis da Silva (2023) has recently presented an analysis of doctoral theses and master dissertations produced in the country on Brazilian Foreign Policy as part of a broader project aiming ‘to rethink academic production on Brazilian Foreign Policy from the point of view of the reception and theoretical production of FPA and its application to studies regarding Brazil’s international insertion’ (ibid: 4).² Although the analysis has not yet presented the results on the theoretical and methodological choices adopted by Brazilian graduate students, results concerning the very choice of research themes, and their temporality, have revealed a strong relationship between research interests and both the agenda and priorities of governments³ and topics related to present-day international events and conceived as relevant for the public opinion. This tendency in Brazilian IR academia in the field of FPA indicates a knowledge production pattern similar to what Pinar Bilgin and Oktay F. Tanrisever (2009) identified in their study of IR in Turkey. As in Brazil, Turkish IR studies have historically articulated two types of knowledge: knowledge about the world ‘out there’ and about the world ‘in here’ (ibid: 175). Turkish scholars have ‘(...) either reported on the state of world politics or on Turkey’s domestic and foreign policy dynamics; reducing the possibility of framing a contribution to the global study of IR by ‘theoretically grounding their accounts on Turkey (or any other case)’ (ibid: 174).

In this same line of reasoning, one sees how Brazilian Foreign Policy Studies are still mostly oriented to saying how the ‘world’ is, and how it guides and defines the external behaviour of the state; and/or how Brazil, as already impacted by ‘the world’, presents itself to the ‘outside’ through its foreign policy decisions/practices, as domestically formulated. The ‘world’, or international politics, is conceived as a ‘whole’, seen as naturally given and as objectively theorised. Brazil is seen as a ‘part’ that needs to rationally tailor its ‘insertion’ into this ‘whole’ (the very idea of ‘international insertion’ – *inserção internacional*, in Portuguese – is the central grammar, as seen in da Silva’s (2023) analysis, which orients numerous foreign policy studies in the country). This reveals a ‘disciplined’ national foreign policy academic community and the reinforcement of an international division of labour in which scholars working in/on the developing world are ‘(...) expected to adopt concepts and theories fashioned in and for the developed world, but not

always encouraged to question the relevance of concepts and theories in their scholarly analyses' (Bilgin and Tanrisever 2009: 176).

By following some of the movements presented in this Afterword, one may envisage that the engagement in Brazil with FPA interpretative theorisations may make FPA acquire a new dimension: FPA not only as an IR sub-discipline, with its master and hegemonic narratives and parochial considerations about the state, its subjects and its inclusions and exclusions, but as *knowledge about the world*. By opening avenues to inquire and theorise about the 'international', these movements can eventually prompt the Brazilian academic community to reflect upon the bigger picture of which they are a part (Bilgin 2008).

But how can Brazilian FPA stake out its contribution without falling into an established international division of academic labour in which semi-peripheral academic communities are also expected to adopt the dominant critical trends without questioning what it is as well as what is gained from the meaning of 'critical'?

Critical approaches have problematised the asymmetrical relations of power with the goal of letting 'the subaltern speak', to use Spivak's (2010) memorable phrase. Yet critical approaches may also end up reproducing and reinforcing the existing epistemic power asymmetries. More precisely, if the reference or usage of critical theory merely means the import of another set of Western approaches into the Brazilian context, then it is not clear that this leads to a truly critical thought-in-action, one that inserts 'alternative knowledge into the dominant power structures of the West' (Brummer 2022: 2). To be critical, therefore, would be to assume another structure of knowledge as valid *in its own terms*. And from that we could try two-way insertions of knowledge, without knowing or considering as tacitly which one is 'the alternative' and which other is 'the reference structure'.

For central concepts, typologies and ideal-types are often first developed with Western experiences and cases in mind. They provide the reference through which all is theorised. A truly more critical FPA in which we would hear other voices would start from other conceptualisations that are not automatically using underlying Western reference. Not only would these concepts and understandings speak back to the core or other countries in making them revisit their own terms, but we would translate them and speak to each other. To assure that the dialogue is not in terms already decided, the dialogue needs to start from more positions at the same time.

'Provincialising Europe' is hence an invitation to become aware of the multiple languages and experiences from where to start. The world has many provinces, none of which can claim universality, but all can share in a process of mutual translation that produces a space that is the closest we can get to the universal. This is no plea to essentialise any of the multiple experiences and languages. It is an invitation to reflect, contextualise and historicise the origins of the terms of our analyses, wherever they come from, and join in the mutual translation and adaptation of these terms.

From where can we start, then? Certainly not by solely asking the same authors and the same individuals that have historically been asked, consulted and authorised to define categories, perspectives, methods, theories and disciplinary fields. We must enlarge the scope of contexts, the imaginary where other authors and individuals might be as prepared as the usual suspects to offer answers for certain not-so-new questions (who is silenced, and so on) but, most importantly, to shift the questions, moving focus, problems and effects around. In this way, the analysis would also, in good critical tradition, touch on the politics of how certain taken-for-granted concepts attribute meaning to our lives and legitimate power positions.

Following from these claims about what would be a critical lens to FPA, and considering, for instance, the Latin American scholarship as a point of departure, one example may illustrate this argument, without the intention of presenting the state of the art in Latin American (critical?) scholarship of FPA. Jorge Schiavon, a Mexican professor at CIDE (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico) has recently launched the book *Comparative Paradiplomacy* (2019), in which he offers concepts, definitions, questions and hypothesis (in chapters one and two) that are assessed, in the following chapters, in a comparative perspective. Comparison is made between eleven countries from all regions of the world through a typology that enlarges Alexander Kuznetsov's framework of paradiplomacy (2015) precisely by including four types of central–local coordination in foreign affairs that characterise sub-state governments' power, which he defines as 'participation in national foreign policy decision-making and implementation'.

In this way, the original typology is amended by also introducing different logics. Therefore, when we look at the types of paradiplomacy (Table 2.4 on page 29), Argentina, Brazil and Mexico are classified as complementary, other Southern countries vary between complementary and exclusive, while all Northern countries from Europe plus Canada and Australia are classified as inclusive, the only exception being the USA, which displays the complementary type of paradiplomacy.

In Brazil, for instance, this complementary type of paradiplomacy has been stimulating rich research about the internationalisation of public policies made by, for example, the Ministry of Social Development and intersectoral entities like the National Food Security Council (CONSEA, in Portuguese), which is composed of two-thirds civil society representatives and one-third government representatives (the chair is held by a representative from civil society) (Leite, Pomeroy and Suyama 2015). It considerably broadens (i) the role of non-state actors in foreign policymaking, putting the quest of understanding participation-in-context at the centre of analyses; (ii) the implementation step, which is crucial in the public policy cycle but not much in FPA; and (iii) the perspective of 'diffusion from below', which means the official adoption by the government and the subsequent international diffusion of a norm produced by those non-state actors, such as the norm of food sovereignty by Via Campesina (Dias and Carvalhais 2021), which is a global coordination of peasant movements born in 1992.

Our proposal here is, in fact, a unassuming one. Like trying a new dance, it involves experimentation, the sharpening of all sorts of senses, a surprising feeling of fulfilment, or of deep disappointment. But what may matter at the end of this dance is the chance of putting together, like in a prom, newcomers and professionals, and to make them dance, and talk, and dance.

Notes

- 1 According to Monica Herz, the establishment of IR in Brazil was confused for a long time with the constitution of the field of Brazilian Foreign Policy (BFP) itself: studying 'International Relations' essentially meant studying Brazilian foreign policy (Herz 2002).
- 2 The study identified and analysed the production of theses and dissertations on Brazilian Foreign Policy, from 2000 to 2019, based on a systematic literature review, the structuring of a database with the construction of thematic and chronological classifiers and statistical analysis.
- 3 A clear example is the coincidence between academic production on Brazilian Foreign Policy concerning the South American region during the 2000s, when this agenda was a priority for the government.

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Análise de Política Externa Crítica e Interpretativista: refletindo sobre três desafios futuros

Resumo: Este texto conclui a Edição Especial “Novas direções para a Análise de Política Externa”, que tem como objetivo explorar alguns caminhos de pesquisa recentes na tradição crítica e interpretativista das Relações Internacionais. Ao invés de resumir as contribuições para a Edição Especial, reflete-se sobre uma série de desafios futuros, concentrando-se em três: os desafios teórico da APE inspirada na identidade ou na teoria/ prática, a divisão internacional da produção de conhecimento no contexto de uma comunidade acadêmica semiperiférica como o Brasil e os desafios para o desenvolvimento de uma APF verdadeiramente crítica que não tome como certas as categorias estabelecidas pelo Ocidente. O texto faz então um convite para explorar tais desafios.

Palavras-chave: Análise de Política Externa; Abordagens Críticas das Relações Internacionais; Interpretativismo.

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