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**Public Opinion on Foreign Policy Revisited:
A Latin American Perspective**

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A Latin American Perspective**

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Abstract

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This thesis seeks to be a contribution to a broader debate on how public opinion builds up its perceptions on foreign policy and foreign affairs. Its two main objectives are to examine: (a) which are the determinants that explain public opinion knowledge on foreign affairs; and (b) whether public opinion is sensitive to framing effects on this issue. The analysis was done by mixing quantitative methods and survey experiments, while its novelty is that brings unprecedented evidence from Latin America. The main findings of the thesis are two-fold. On the one hand, Latin American public opinion knowledge on foreign affairs is low. In this regard, both traditional individual variables and contextual ones, namely the size of the city, are useful to predict a person's knowledge. On the other, public opinion perceptions regarding foreign policy, either presented on a general or specific way, are sensitive to framing effects.

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Introduction

1. Shortcut to a 100-Year History

For many social scientists, 2017 will be remembered as a centennial year. The reader might be thinking of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the beginning of what Eric Hobsbawm called “the short twentieth century.” Nevertheless, for those scholars focused on public opinion research, the October Revolution was only one of the important events that occurred during 1917. While Vladimir Lenin and his comrades were taking control over the Winter Palace in Petrograd, Walter Lippman, silently and in a small room in New York, was also starting a revolution. Five years later and after the publication of “*Public Opinion*” (1922), this work would quickly become a cornerstone for an area that was making its first steps during the 1920s: the connection between public opinion and public policy formulation. A consensus exists that Lippmann’s book was one of the first contributions to a field of studies that has evolved both quantitatively and qualitatively over the years.

This path highlights a longstanding discussion regarding what public opinion itself means. Scholars have defined this concept in many different ways¹, even occasionally affirming that it does not exist (Habermas, 1991), that it would be unreachable and barely didactic to quote all of them. Notwithstanding, this assumption does not imply that conceptual precision must be abandoned. Following a classical definition, public opinion will be understood as a statistical distribution of utterances, expressed by various segments

¹ For a detailed discussion, see Converse, 1987.

of the population, which also should be classified and distinguished by the degree of competence (Lazarsfeld, 1957:43). We can subsequently affirm that public opinion can be measured quantitatively² if performed in an appropriate manner and if differentiated between various segments of the population.

Second, the idea of a single model for analysing public policy was gradually abandoned as states assumed more functions and government agencies began to split in different branches (Kingdon and Thurber, 1984). Currently, the area of public policy analysis is sufficiently delimited that it has created the appearance of multiple subfields, among which foreign policy analysis stands out as an example. Due to its particularities, the latter cannot be considered similar to the others, but its interaction with public opinion warrants a unique status that requires examination.

2. Delimiting a Broader Research Agenda

Political scientists and internationalists, among others, have paid increasing attention to the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy formulation. As a consequence, a growing number of contributions have enriched an agenda that has become more complex in turn (Nincic, 1992: 787). In this vein, new research techniques and cumulative research have allowed scholars to conduct more in-depth analysis regarding how public opinion perceives foreign policy issues. Considering only several examples, these advances have enabled academics to analyse how public opinion on foreign policy has evolved along time in the same country (Page and Shapiro, 2010), as well as how it

² This is a controversy that is still latent. For example, authors such as Noelle-Neumann defend the idea that because expressed isolated, preferences captured by polls cannot be considered a synonym of public opinion (1979: 153).

differs between countries depending on their domestic structures (Risse-Kappen, 1991). Moreover, attention has also been directed within states to determine whether citizens' preferences on trade are affected by the states' characteristics, as well as citizens' own skill endowments (Ardanaz et al., 2013).

To avoid any misconception, our first step will be to structure this rich debate by distinguishing the different research questions that have mobilized scholars during the last century. The following subsections will briefly present the main references in the area to better delimitate how the empirical contributions of this thesis dialogue with previous efforts conducted by other researchers.

2.1 Why study public opinion on foreign policy issues?

Before moving to the core of this thesis, one issue arises that precedes any study that seeks to analyse public opinion on foreign policy issues: why research this topic?

The connection between public opinion and foreign policy did not appear to be a very promising field of studies, a misconception that has dated to the first half of the past century. Pioneering works presented a number of discrepancies, but in general, the majority agreed in stating that foreign policy formulation was distant from the average citizen, which would cause public opinion to have little influence on foreign policy formulation (Lippmann, 1922; Almond, 1956). This perspective was reinforced during the 1950s and 1960s with the contributions of the then-mainstream Realist school of International Relations, which suggested that foreign policy formulation should be isolated from an

in stable and irrational mass opinion (Morgenthau, 1950; Rosenau³, 1961). The passage of time thus shaped an idea that is still supported: public opinion pressure does not have a significant effect on foreign policy (Jacobs and Page, 2005; Baum and Potter, 2008).

Notwithstanding, political and social changes in Western societies have contributed to the appearance of a trend that challenges the belief of an irrelevant public opinion on foreign policy formulation (Sobel, 2001). Then, the emergence of this trend can be explained through two main reasons. On the one hand, democratic regimes have consolidated almost the entire hemisphere, allowing civil society to have greater influence on foreign policy formulation. This active role can be explained through two principal mechanisms: (a) directly, due to accountability instruments that affect leaders' decision processes (Foyle, 2004), and (b) indirectly, through the attention that leaders might pay to public opinion in order to remain in power (Hinckley, 1992).

On the other hand, if mass media previously behaved as a gatekeeper⁴ regarding foreign affairs (Hill, 2003: 275), recent technological changes have allowed the average citizen to access information from almost any corner of the world, which in turn irrevocably changed the linear top-down path of the 20th century gatekeeping process (Shoemaker et al., 2017). Hence, with an increasing democratization of information, mass media and elites have gradually lost their former monopoly regarding international affairs information (Chin-Fook and Simmonds, 2013).

³ It is worth noting that James Rosenau, author quoted in this passage, later would contradict the fundamental core of Realism and, as the ideologist of what it would be known as Postinternationalism, would defend the idea that most of the interactions that sustain world politics unfold without the direct involvement of states.

⁴ Understood as the only source of information from which most of the population gets their information about an issue (Puglisi and Snyder 2008).

Assuming that public opinion plays an important role in foreign policy formulation (Burstein, 2003), this thesis will analyse how public opinion preferences are formed related to foreign affairs. Nevertheless, it is still imperative to provide an overview of the preceding works in the area.

2.2 To know or not to know? That is the “first” question

The initial recommendation any electoral consultant makes to her/his employer is that candidates need to be familiar to voters to be elected. Alongside the consequences of this requirement in electoral campaigns, all public opinion analysis consultants agree that, in order to have an opinion about something, you first need to know that that something exists. This requirement does not imply that people with a high level of knowledge on international politics are the only ones who have opinions on the subject. In fact, longstanding literature has demonstrated that less knowledgeable people use their own fundamental values and shortcuts to form opinions on foreign affairs (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987). However, there is no discussion regarding how a person's level of knowledge not only affects her/his opinions on international politics, but also how the latter are formed.

The first contributions that tried to analyse public opinion political knowledge on international issues were not so “optimistic”. Addressing the main ideas stated in his aforementioned work, thirty years later Lippman (1955) still characterized public opinion as uninformed regarding foreign policy issues. In this line, Gabriel Almond (1956) reinforced this argument, affirming that the average American citizen had little or no knowledge regarding national security policy due to its highly technical component, its

element of secrecy, and the gravity of the stakes and the risks involved. Hence, the points in common among both authors gave way to what later would be known as the Almond-Lippmann consensus. This consensus can be characterized as the idea that mass public is neither informed nor sufficiently interested regarding foreign issues.

First, and maintaining our focus on public opinion's knowledge regarding foreign affairs, scholars seem to have reached a consensus on one central point. Despite the different perspectives on this issue, current authors agree that it is too simplistic to describe homogeneous public opinion knowledge on foreign policy issues (Curran et al., 2009; Yyengar et al., 2009). Individual characteristics, as well as influences of the context, must be considered in order to determine a person's level of knowledge regarding foreign policy issues.

Second, the positions remain divided when discussing public opinion interest about foreign policy issues. There is a group of scholars that still defends the argument that the average citizen pays little attention to international affairs. In this vein, not only would the characteristic response to foreign policy issues be one of indifference, but reactions would only behave as a mood during a crisis (Caspary, 1970) and alternate between the extremes of indifference and pugnacity (Kennan, 1951: 59). Public opinion normally would remain uninterested on what occurs abroad from this perspective, while it would be only activated when elites and media decide to do so, typically presenting positions articulated by government officials (Powlick and Katz, 1998).

With the advent of new technologies and in a more globalized world, however, other academics have illustrated that certain sensitive foreign issues have attracted public attention to the point of becoming part of the electoral agenda (Holsti, 1992). Even when it is true that the public's attention usually tends to be directed to their daily affairs instead of what occurs abroad (Mueller, 2002), this does not mean that foreign policy affairs are electorally irrelevant (Soroka, 2003). In this line, more recent articles have defended that foreign policy affects the public's vote choices (Aldrich et al., 1989), as the division between domestic and foreign affairs is increasingly tenuous, and the latter is consistently used as an electoral tool to assume an advantage in the domestic realm (Sagarzazu and Mouron, 2017).

Therefore, one important question arises from the aforementioned debate: what determines whether a person will know more or less about international issues, considering that the level of interest on foreign affairs might necessarily affect her/his level of knowledge?

2.3 “Consistencies” of what is known

The level of knowledge a person has about foreign affairs cannot be understood as a synonym of the consistency of her/his perceptions toward international politics. Morales Castillo et al. have recently shown that for the Latin American case, even when there is a high level of ignorance about international issues, differences of opinion among Latin Americans are better explained as a result of the values reflected in their political ideology

(2015: 5). Nevertheless, and due to the excessive use of the expression, it is worth first asking: what does “consistency in fact” mean?

Firstly, consistency has been used as a synonym of coherence within a questionnaire. From this perspective, it is presumed that a consistent perception is one that remains stable, even when requested in different ways and between short periods of time. This connotation suggests that a coherent respondent should maintain the same opinion throughout a whole interview, despite the moment when she/he is interviewed. A longstanding agenda exists in this regard, with contributions being made by different fields of study, the ones which have tried to determine how a respondent will behave in a largely consistent way (Cuber and Gerberich, 1946; Gerberich, 1947). Hence, respondents’ coherence has been a problem that affects all those who work with public opinion polls, independent of whether we are referring to foreign affairs or any other issue.

Second, consistency also has been understood as coherence but, in this case, between broad political topics. What is analysed in this perspective is not the homogeneity of answers within a questionnaire, but the maintenance of the same position among diverse issues (Page and Bouton, 2008). For example, a coherent respondent would be one that presents a right-wing position for domestic politics and, at the same time, has an even more conservative opinion concerning international affairs.

As part of this agenda, pioneering evidence suggested that the average citizen did not have a structured and stable framework of beliefs related to foreign policy issues when compared to her/his domestic politics preferences (Verba et al., 1967). However, this trend

seems to have been reversed over the years with the advent of research that shows that public opinion preferences on domestic and foreign policy are correlated highly (Monroe, 1979). For example, a recently published article has demonstrated that public opinion was somewhat coherent for the Brazilian case during the João Goulart government in Brazil (1961-1964), supporting redistributive reforms domestically and a neutralist approach in foreign affairs (Loureiro et al., 2015).

Third, the idea of consistency has also been reinterpreted as the degree of variability an opinion presents over time. Conclusions presented by preceding works are dissimilar when taking this interpretation into consideration. A large number of works have stated that mass public opinion is volatile when concerning foreign policy issues (Bailey, 1948; Rosenau, 1961). Almond affirmed that public opinion behaves apathetically when it should be concerned and panicked when it should be calm, giving place to constant change of moods with irrational effects (1956: 376). In contrast, more recent research supports the idea that, at least in America, public opinion has followed a more stable pattern and maintains the country's main foreign policy guidelines without major variations (Wittkopf, 1990; Page and Shapiro, 2010). There is evidence both supporting and refuting the argument that public opinion attitudes toward foreign issues are stable, leaving the debate open regarding public opinion stability when it relates to foreign issues.

Finally, the term consistency has been understood as the sensitiveness an opinion presents in relation to new stimuli. Thus, a perception would be more consistent if it does not change when exposed to different pieces of information about the same topic. Then, this

way of reinterpreting the concept of consistency is related intrinsically to the idea of framing effects, which states that small variations in the presentation of an event or topic will have large effects on the perception that the public has on these issues (Chong and Druckman, 2007). This agenda has accumulated relevant contributions regarding foreign policy issues throughout the last two decades, particularly those whose main focus are casualties in war (Gartner, 2008; Boettcher and Cobb, 2009; Gelpi et al., 2009; Kriner and Shen, 2014).

We can talk about four “consistencies”: (a) within a questionnaire; (b) between domestic and foreign issues; (c) over time; and (d) how perceptions react toward new stimuli. The empirical contributions presented in the chapters “*Framing Effects on Foreign Policy: Experimental Evidence from Emerging Countries and the Argentine-Brazilian Rivalry*” and “*Brazil’s Business First, Domestic Cost of a Troubled Foreign Aid Donor*” will discuss the last interpretation, namely, how sensitive is public opinion toward framing effects on foreign policy issues.

3. Thesis “Map”

As stated in subsections 2.1 and 2.2, two principal research questions will guide this thesis: (a) what determines whether a person will know more or less about foreign affairs issues; and (b) how consistent are those perceptions when stimulated with different pieces of information.

It is first useful to return to the roots of the area of public opinion analysis. Quoting Lazarsfeld’s classic paper “*Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition*”, the former

president of the American Association of Public Opinion Research affirmed 60 years ago that a good poll should consider the social and demographic characteristics of the respondents, taking great care to distinguish between people who are informed and concerned with the problem and those who are not (1957: 43). Next, from *“Explaining International Political Knowledge in Latin America: An Individual and Contextual Level Approach”*, we will seek to determine which variables better predict that a person will possess higher international political knowledge. To achieve this objective, we will reference the answers collected by the project *“The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy”* project in its 2014/2015 edition. In addition, and following Lazarsfeld’s advice, we will consider both individual and contextual clues as independent variables.

Two approaches will be used to evaluate how sensitive public opinion is towards framing effects. The chapter *“Framing Effects on Foreign Policy: Experimental Evidence from Emerging Countries and the Argentine-Brazilian Rivalry”* will guide a more general perspective. We will seek to analyse public opinion preferences regarding foreign policy on a broader way, namely, which strategy a country should adopt in relation to its main partner. To achieve this objective, a survey experiment applied to a 1530-students sample at the *Universidad de Buenos Aires* and the *Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda* will be used to determine whether Argentinean perceptions regarding their neighbour are affected when stimulated with information about Brazil’s economic and military growth. In addition, we will distinguish between respondents’ individual characteristics to analyse whether these affect preferences’ consistencies.

A more specific approach will come from the chapter “*Brazil’s Business First, Domestic Costs of a Troubled Foreign Aid Donor.*” Contrary to the survey experiment applied in Argentina, after applying an online survey experiment to a national representative sample, we will examine how sensitive Brazilians’ preferences are regarding a particular issue of the country’s foreign policy: its foreign aid programme. Participants will be presented with information regarding how much money has been spent on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for a decade, as well as how that sum could have been used in the domestic realm. Moreover, again we will consider that respondent’s personal characteristics might affect their sensitiveness to these stimuli.

Finally, even when each chapter presents its own conclusions, general conclusions will be developed in the section, titled “*Public Opinion on Foreign Policy: Conclusions from Latin America.*”

Explaining International Political Knowledge in Latin America: An Individual and Contextual Level Approach[♦]

Abstract: Recent literature has tried to identify which factors determine international political knowledge. This chapter, using data collected by “*The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*” project in its 2014/2015 edition, attempts to better answer this question by incorporating new evidence from Latin America. As the literature predicts, we show that traditional micro-level variables such as education, gender, and income, explain differences in international political knowledge. In addition, we find that including a macro-level variable into the analysis — city size— makes the model more accurate and better predicts a person’s international political knowledge while considering the context in which he/she is inserted.

Keywords: International political knowledge, Public opinion, Latin America, Micro level variables, Macro level variables.

[♦] This chapter was previously presented at the 68th WAPOR Annual Conference (2015) and submitted at the journal *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. In that opportunity, reviewers suggested the chapter should be either re-submitted on a research note format or try to approach Latin American readers. Therefore, we decided to send the chapter to the *Revista SAAP (Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político)*, which has accepted it for publication on January 2018.

1. Introduction

Although previously considered immune to public pressure, foreign policy in democratic regimes has been increasingly influenced by public opinion (Holsti, 1992; Sobel, 2001). Earlier research has shown that in consolidated democracies, the population influences foreign policy formulation through accountability mechanisms that directly affect leaders (Foyle, 2004). Furthermore, previous work has shown that in the case of emerging democracies — especially within Latin America — rulers consider public opinion when planning this type of policy (Echegaray, 2001).

Given this context, while most of the previous research in the area has tried to analyze the stability and consistency of public opinion⁵, a growing body of literature is gradually addressing the factors that constitute a population's international political knowledge (Curran et al., 2009; Iyengar et al., 2009), a key component in the formation of the public's foreign policy views.

Despite these advances, this line of research still suffers from some limitations. Previous studies' data is limited to developed countries, generally from the United States and members of the European Union. On a contextual level, these works have been limited to simply comparing variations between countries' international political knowledge. As such, they do not take into account that differences between nations can be relevant and often of great significance.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of how Realism and Liberalism, the two main schools in International Relations, conceptualize the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, see Morales et al. (2015).

We use the answers from the 2014-2015 version of “*The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*” project for Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, to bring new evidence from developing countries on how micro-level variables and contextual variables interact to explain gaps in international political knowledge. We first corroborate traditional hypotheses at the micro-level. Socioeconomic characteristics such as education, gender, and income have a statistically significant effect at the respondent level in the five countries, results that are consistent with the literature on political knowledge. Secondly, we focus strictly on Brazilian answers and analyze data from seventy Brazilian cities. Keeping the effects of the individual variables constant, we find that international political knowledge is greater the more inhabitants there are in a city. This can be explained due to the so-called “socialization process” and the effect the size of the city has on people besides their personal characteristics. In other words, when comparing similar people across Brazil we find that those living in more heavily populated municipalities will tend to know more about international issues, as they live in an environment where international political discussion is more likely and relevant to day-to-day life.

Our first chapter is structured as follows. In the next section, we present a brief theoretical framework on the determinants of political knowledge, analyzing the few international political knowledge studies that precede ours together with our hypotheses. Then we describe the details of “*The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*” project, while we explain how we constructed our database and the statistical models we used to analyze our data. Afterwards, we present the results obtained for the five

countries at the individual level and include the effects of municipal characteristics for the Brazilian case. Lastly, we discuss our findings and discuss relevant literature.

2. Political Knowledge, a Broad Area of Study

Identifying the determinants of one's political knowledge is an oft-discussed topic in the political science field (Carpini and Keeter, 1993). Given that differences in the levels of political awareness are thought to be a powerful predictor of one's acceptance of democratic principles, political participation, among others (Galston, 2001: 217), scholars have continuously tried to identify what factors determine public opinion knowledge for domestic issues. Among these studies we can identify two main groups: (a) those focusing on individual micro-level characteristics; and (b) those emphasizing contextual factors.

2.1 Determinants at the Individual Level

Among potential determinants of political knowledge, the literature unanimously highlights the importance of one's education level.

Higher levels of education have been proven to influence political knowledge *directly*, as they help individuals to process information more thoroughly and effectively (Tichenor et al., 1970). Those who have completed more years of formal education have the skills to at least understand the information they receive, which helps them to develop a valid response and also facilitates the response process (Cannell et al., 1981). Furthermore, higher educated people have the ability to better understand abstract political concepts, such as "left" and "right" (Lambert et al., 1988), which explains why they are able to better

perform complex tasks when compared to those with little-to-no formal education (Narayan and Krosnick, 1996).

In addition, education has been shown to influence political knowledge *indirectly* through political engagement and structural factors, such as income and occupation (Carpini and Keeter, 1996: 188). Higher educated people tend to have contact with peers who have also been stimulated with information on politics, creating an enabling environment for political discussion. In addition, people with higher levels of education tend to work in jobs that encourage them to seek information and follow events in public affairs. Hence, these spillover effects also matter while explaining political knowledge gaps between higher- and lesser- educated people.

Therefore, we assume that *the more years of formal education a person has, the more he/she will know about international issues* (H1).

Some seminal works also identify income as another important variable that can explain differences in political awareness (Tichenor et al, 1970; Neuman, 1986). As previously mentioned, people with good economic conditions are able to afford higher levels of education, generating a reciprocal effect between both variables. Nevertheless, having a high economic status generates an effect in itself. In general, wealthier people are more politically and socially active than the average person, as they believe that acquiring relevant political information is useful given the possibility of influencing the political situation (Fiske and Kinder, 1981).

Accordingly, we expect that *the wealthier a person is, the more he/she will know about international issues* (H2).

Finally, the existence of persistent gender gaps across time and countries (Verba et al., 1997; Dow, 2009; Dolan, 2011) has been explained by the systemic inequalities to which women have been historically subjected (Ridgeway, 1997). For the countries analyzed in our dataset, data provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean show that all five of them continue to show significant gender inequalities (Milosavljevic, 2007). Women, despite holding equal or better qualifications, do not enjoy the same opportunities as men, a reality that hinders their immediate social environment. For an example, a recent article has shown that women have significantly lower promotion rates than men across all ranks of the corporate hierarchy, even after controlling for a range of individual characteristics such as age, education, tenure, and experience (Kunze and Miller, 2014). Because they are potentially more likely to work in lesser-politicized, and lesser-impactful environments, we believe that *women will know less than men regarding international affairs* (H3).

2.2 Context Effects Between and Within Countries

Media exposure has been considered the most influential contextual variable (Jerit et al., 2006: 266) amongst research that studies the determinants of international political knowledge, often focusing on media effects. Greater media exposure and growing opportunities for media choice have been related to greater levels of political knowledge (Wei and Lo, 2008; Clark, 2013; Hopmann et al., 2016), although some recent studies have

demonstrated that the relationship should not be considered so straightforward (Barabas and Jerit, 2009; Fraile and Iyengar, 2014). Iyengar et al. (2009) suggest that differences in public awareness may be attributable to discrepancies in the supply of international news, due to the lack of homogeneous effects within general political knowledge. Disparities in international political knowledge across countries may be explained by differences in the type of media (Curran et al, 2009: 17), while a higher rate of publication of international affairs should also diminish the knowledge gaps between the advantaged and disadvantaged of the same country (Curran et al., 2009: 5).

We differ from previous research in that we will not look for variations in international political knowledge between countries. Researchers working on developed nations have overlooked disparities within borders, as most of the cases they examine were reasonably equal. However, in developing countries, and in Latin America⁶ in particular, this is not the case. Accordingly, we used Brazil as a case study in order to test if there are differences in international political knowledge within the country itself.

With an area of 8,515,767 square kilometers, Brazil is more than two times the size of Western Europe and the fifth-largest country in the world. While only 5% of Brazilians cities have more than 100,000 inhabitants, the country as a whole has 204 million residents distributed over 5,570 municipalities. Due to these disparities, we believe that considering

⁶ Although inequality levels have been reduced in the last decade, according to international institutions like IMF, World Bank and the United Nations, Latin America continues to be the most unequal region in the world, both at the individual level and when comparing between regions.

Brazil a homogeneous nation makes little sense. Furthermore, we expect that the size of the city may influence its inhabitants' level of international political knowledge.

Our reasoning is based on the assumption that one's knowledge is strongly influenced by the socialization processes (Mondak and Anderson, 2004). Foreign policy and international issues are usually part of the political debate in capital cities and cosmopolitan urban centers. To the contrary, domestic issues prevail in less populous cities. As a consequence, people in larger cities live in an environment where international affairs matter more than in smaller towns, which encourages a greater level of international affairs information besides a person's education, income, or gender. Therefore, we expect that the "socialization effects" of international affairs information will be stronger in more populous cities; thus *citizens in more heavily-populated cities will know more about international affairs than those living in less populous ones* (H4).

3. The Data

Every four years, the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE-Mexico) coordinates a comparative public opinion survey called "*The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*". The main objective of the project is to analyze how Latin Americans perceive foreign policy issues across the region and over time. In the 2014-2015 edition, from where we collected the data for our individual-level dependent and independent variables, the organizers applied surveys in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador,

Mexico and Peru in partnership with certain academic institutions⁷. For the five countries, national representative samples⁸ were built and respondents were interviewed face-to-face over a period of 6 months.

International Political Knowledge

In a recent article, Barabas et al. (2014: 4) demonstrate that two characteristics influence how and to what extent a particular fact is learned: (a) its temporal dimension, that is, how recently the fact came into being (static or changing); and (b) its topical dimension, i.e. whether the question has to do with public policy concerns or the institution and the people of government. For an example, a static question requests information about an issue that has remained the same along time (Ex: a country's type of government), while a changing one inquiries about an issue that periodically fluctuates (Ex: a country's president). In turn, a policy question asks about a specific public policy (Ex: the amount of money a government spends on education), while a general one examines institutions more broadly (for example, what "IMF" stands for). For our dependent variable we considered the answers for three open-ended questions that could be qualified as static or general.

Respondents were presented with the acronyms for the United Nations (ONU in Spanish and Portuguese), the Organization of American States (OEA in Spanish and

⁷ These were the Institute of International Relations at the University of São Paulo (Brazil), the University of the Andes (Colombia), the Latin American School of Social Sciences (Ecuador), the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) and the Institute of Public Opinion, School of Government and Public Policy at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (Peru).

⁸ 1,881 respondents were interviewed in Brazil; 1,500 in Colombia; 1,800 in Ecuador; 2,400 in Mexico and 1,200 in Peru.

Portuguese) and the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE in Spanish and Portuguese).

Afterwards they were required to answer what these acronyms meant.

At the same time, we created a dummy variable for each acronym that could take on two values: 0 or 1. This dichotomous variable was codified as 0 if the respondent answered the question incorrectly or if he or she did not know the answer; and 1 if the answer was correct. The “Did not answer” cases were codified as missing data, given that we cannot infer from this answer if the person knew these acronyms or not⁹.

Table 1. International Political Knowledge Across Countries

ONU (%)						
	Brazil	Colombia	Ecuador	México	Peru	Mean
Correct	30.73	62.07	55.72	54.87	60.13	51.82
Incorrect	69.11	36.60	43.17	44.13	37.53	47.10
Missing Value	0.16	1.33	1.11	1.00	2.34	1.08
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

MRE (%)						
	Brazil	Colombia	Ecuador	México	Peru	Mean
Correct	1.54	35.33	9.72	32.63	12.51	18.99
Incorrect	98.41	63.27	86.39	66.21	82.90	79.02
Missing Value	0.05	1.40	3.89	1.17	4.59	1.99
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

⁹ Fortunately, we did not have many “Did not answer” replies in the database, as Table 1 shows. If we had had many cases of “Did not answer”, this would inflate the number of missing values, which in turn would have created an unbalanced cross-section table.

OEA (%)						
	Brazil	Colombia	Ecuador	México	Peru	Mean
Correct	9.09	56.73	45.89	16.71	52.21	32.74
Incorrect	90.43	41.80	52.67	78.50	45.12	64.93
Missing Value	0.48	1.47	1.44	4.79	2.67	2.32
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table elaborated by the authors. Source: *The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy 2014/2015*

Table 1 shows how respondents from each country are distributed according to the international political knowledge of the three acronyms analyzed (ONU, MRE and OEA). On average, 47% of those interviewed did not know the ONU acronym, with Brazilians being the ones who knew it the least (69%). Moving to the MRE acronym, it is again Brazilians who are the ones with the least knowledge about their foreign affairs ministry, as only 1.54% of the interviewees knew what this acronym stands for. Finally, if we analyze the OEA acronym, on average 33% of the respondents answered the question correctly; a figure that is bolstered by the correct responses of Colombians, Ecuadorians and Peruvians. In a general sense, we can conclude that Brazilians are the least knowledgeable and the Colombians the most knowledgeable in our dataset¹⁰.

Education

¹⁰ One sees how there are significant differences between countries, which can probably be attributed to contextual effects mentioned in the previous theoretical discussion. Nevertheless, our main objective is not to analyze differences between countries, but to explore the determinants of international political knowledge at the individual level and within a particular country, namely Brazil.

Educational systems across Latin American countries are quite different. Some systems, like Brazil's and Ecuador's, are divided into three main levels: Primary, Secondary and University. Others, such as the Colombian, the Mexican and the Peruvian systems, are separated into four stages, where the primary period is shorter, the secondary is divided between Basic and Baccalaureate, before ending at the University stage.

Closed questions asking about educational levels were not applied homogeneously across the five countries. For the Peruvian case, respondents received just three options to answer how many years they spent at school. In the Brazilian case eight options were available to distinguish between education levels and the whether the stage was completed or incomplete. Due to these differences, we decided to codify education according to the number of years the respondent spent at school. Consequently, this variable can range between 0 and 5 and respondents were grouped by how many years they spent in formal education¹¹.

Income

Latin American countries have different currencies, costs of living, and minimum wages, all of which contributes to various levels of purchasing power between countries. Moreover, there is no consensus on defining parameters for establishing a line of poverty, as governments normally make them lower in order to disguise higher levels of poverty. Therefore, simply asking how many minimum salaries each family member earns on

¹¹ 0 = No formal education; 1= From 1 to 4 years of education; 2= From 5 to 8 years of education; 3= From 9 to 11 years of education; 4= From 12 to 16 years of education; 5= More than 16 years of education.

average, as many other studies do, would not be a reliable measure. For this reason, we chose to use the answers for a perception-of-self question that was applied in all five countries. Respondents had to say whether their income was: (a) not enough, with great difficulties; (b) not enough, with difficulties; (c) fair, without facing major difficulties; and (d) good enough in order to save money. We should clarify that for the Mexican case, self-perception of income was treated as a dichotomous variable ('it is not enough' or 'it is enough').

Gender (Female)

Although there is a controversy over treating gender as a dichotomous variable (see Billey et al., 2014), in *The Americas and the World Project* gender could only assume one of two values. Instead of asking the interviewee's gender, the interviewer picked the answers according to his or her own perception – coding 1 for female and 0 for male.

Population

Data for municipal populations were gathered from the 2013 census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in July of the same year. For this version, individuals in more than 67 million homes were interviewed, taking all 5,570 municipalities into account. The population variable was coded into three categories: small

cities (under 100,000 citizens), medium-size cities (between 100,000 and 800,000), and big cities (above 800,000 citizens)¹².

4. Methodology

Given that our dependent variables have only two possible outcomes — 0 if the person did not respond correctly to the acronym question (ONU, MRE and OEA) and 1 if the answer was correct — we used a logit model¹³ in order to analyze our data. After choosing the statistical model that fits our dependent variable, we separated the data for two analyses: (a) a micro-level analysis with data at the individual level for all five countries; and (b) a macro-level model using the Brazilian data, which adds city population size to the model.

Before applying our models, we ran tests to understand our dataset and verify if there was multicollinearity between our independent variables. The results from the correlation test showed that our models do not suffer from multicollinearity¹⁴.

The interpretation of coefficients in a logit model is not a straightforward process, as it is in an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. For an OLS regression, the relation is

¹² The distribution of this categorical variable is as follows: 51.30% were from respondents in small cities, 22.54% were from respondents in midsize cities, and 26.16% were from respondents in big cities.

¹³ We could not use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, since this method assumes that the dependent variable is continuous. In our case, if we used OLS, we would have presumed that the interval between 0 and 1 had possible outcomes. In reality, a person could only have had a correct or incorrect answer and not a semi-correct answer.

¹⁴ Additionally, we ran a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) using the *collin* command (written by Philip B. Ender at UCLA) to verify if the data had a multicollinearity problem. Both the variables in the macro-level analysis and the variables in the micro-analysis did not have a VIF greater than 2.5 (a more restricted rule of thumb) nor a condition number greater than 15 (a commonly given rule of thumb). Hence, we can rule out the multicollinearity issue as a problem our models.

linear, so for a change in one unit of the independent variable, the dependent variable will change according to the magnitude and direction of the coefficient. However, in a logit model this relation is logged, hence the impact of the independent variable is in terms of log odd chances. To make the interpretation of the logit coefficient simpler, we use the odds ratio of the coefficient. This simply refers to the odds exponential value. As such, the range of the odds ratio is between 0 and positive infinity. In this sense, we can interpret the odds ratio as follows: values between 0 and 1 indicate that an increase in the independent variable decreases the probability of the dependent variable being equal to 1; on the contrary, an odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that an increase in the independent variable increases the probability of the dependent variable being equal to 1.

Furthermore, one of the first challenges of using dichotomous outcomes comes with assessing model fit. This occurs as the fitted values predicted by the model range between 0 and 1, while the dependent variable can only assume two values, 0 or 1. The usual threshold to assess how the model fits is 0.5. However, we choose a more restricted value for our model, reducing the possible cases of false positives, as we discuss in the next section. Therefore, as the threshold for considering if a person knew an acronym, we choose 0.6. Predicted values above this threshold are coded as 1 and values below 0.6 are coded as 0.

5. Results

The results obtained for the micro-level logit models in the five countries confirm our three first hypotheses. *Education* (H1), *Income* (H2), and *Gender* (H3) all affect the level of

international political knowledge. Additionally, the results from the macro-level logit model in the Brazilian case provide support for our fourth hypothesis, since population size also affects the level of international political knowledge when keeping the individual level variables constant, especially in the ONU and MRE cases¹⁵.

The results from the micro-level analysis are consistent with most of the literature, revealing that education continues to be the most powerful predictor of international political knowledge. In our case, the more years a person spent at school, the more likely he or she was able to correctly identify the acronyms of international bodies. Therefore, compared to other variables, *Education* has the strongest effects, as it is related to a higher probability of the person knowing the acronyms.

Secondly, regarding the *Income* variable, the wealthier the person is, the more likely he or she will know what ONU, OEA and MRE stand for. Thus, moving from a lower to a higher category of *Income* increases the likelihood of a person being more knowledgeable about international issues. Nonetheless, this effect does not follow a smooth linear growth, as the threshold jumps from insufficient income (“It is not enough and you have great, or ‘minimal’, difficulties” to a level of stability (“It is fair and you do not face major difficulties”). The highest income category (“It is good and you can save”) explains less than that of stability (“It is fair and you do not face major difficulties”) about the changes in international political knowledge. This outcome is interesting, as it reinforces the finding

¹⁵ The results for the OEA were not statistically significant.

that the most important explanatory variable in the model is *Education*, since *Income* improves international political knowledge, but only up to a certain level.

Next, we confirm the existence of a steady gender gap for the five cases. The variable *Female* is the only variable that has coefficients between 0 and 1 for all the countries, indicating that women are less knowledgeable than men when thinking about international issues. In spite of negatively affecting this relationship, *Female* is a constraint variable in all the results obtained. Therefore, being a woman reduces the probability of knowing more about international issues.

One way to show how our model predicts the relationship between the three independent variables (*Education*, *Income* and *Female*) and the dependent variable, besides the regression table, is by using figures. Figure 1 presents the predicted values for the Brazilian model on ONU knowledge, varying by years of education and income, while holding all other variables at the mean.¹⁶ It is interesting to point out that income has different impacts on the predicted value depending on the level of education. For those in the two extremes of the education variable, income does not have a significant effect on the probability that a person knows the three acronyms. Nonetheless, for those in the middle of the education spectrum (over 90% of the respondents) the variable income shows a positive effect.

¹⁶ Given that the explanatory variables in the model are categorical variables, we around the mean to the closest real number category. For example, the mean value for International News in the Brazilian dataset is 1.74, which was rounded to the nearest category: 2 (“A few”). In each graphic, there is a footnote stating which independent variable values were hold constant.

Figure1. Predicted values for the Micro-Level Brazilian model (ONU)¹⁷

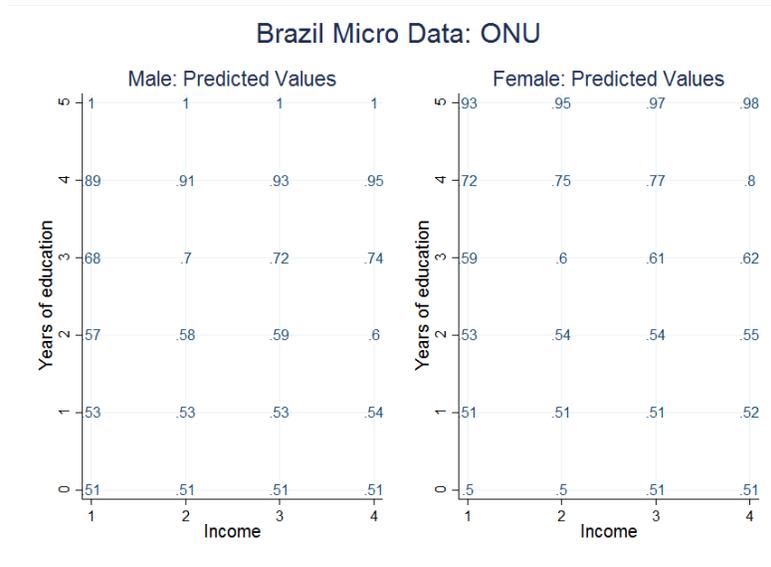


Figure elaborated by the authors. Source: *The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy 2014/2015*

Figure 1 shows a positive relation between *Education/Income* and the predicted probability for the dependent variable (ONU). The gender gap is also on display given that the biggest differences between the female and male predicted probability are between the third (from 9 to 11 years of education) and fourth (from 12 to 16 years of education) levels of *Education*. This shows that men who completed high school or went to college

¹⁷ To create this graphic, the value for the following variables (*Age, International_news, Country_news*) were held constant on their mode values: ages between 30-39 years; respondents with little interest in international news and with any interest in domestic news.

demonstrate levels of international political knowledge, 10% and 20% points higher than women, for all types of income. As a consequence, we are able to confirm that the gender gap occurs across the education and income graphs in each of the five countries analyzed.

With regards to the control variables capturing respondents' interest in international news (*Country_news* and *International_news*), our models indicate that in all the models (ONU, MRE, and OEA), the coefficients of the *International_news* variable are greater than those of *Country_news*. These results indicate that the dependent variable, international knowledge, is better explained by a citizen's greater interest in international news than the domestic news of his or her country.

Finally, the results of the micro-level analyses show that *Age* has a positive effect. In other words, the older a person is, the more likely he or she is to follow international affairs. This finding is intuitive, since over time the likelihood of the individual acquiring international political knowledge directly or indirectly is increased. This also is related to the question type in the interview, such as whether it was a static or general type.

Moving to the contextual effects (macro-level), our results for the Brazilian case sustain all the micro-level findings and show that the population size affects the probability of acronym knowledge. Thus, given that the coefficients are statistically different from zero, our fourth hypothesis is not rejected. What is more striking in the macro-level, compared to the micro-level model, is its propensity to correctly predict the outcome. We use the separation plot (Greenhill et al, 2011) to verify which model better predicts the dependent variable.

The separation plot has a great advantage over the ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristic) curve. The ROC curve has “*the advantage of providing a visual description of the predictive power of the model over possible thresholds. [...] However, the value of ROC curves is limited by the fact that the particular shape of the curve tells us little about the model’s fit*” (Greenhill et al, 2011: 992). However, the separation plot allows us to assess the fit of a logit regression model.

To construct the separation plot, the predicted values are arranged in ascending order, from left to right. Orange and light gray are assigned to the actual non-event (not knowing the acronym), while the actual event (knowing the acronym) is represented with blue or black¹⁸. Consequently, a perfect model would perfectly separate the two cases, non-event and event¹⁹. The red line across the graph represents the predicted probability (\hat{p}) for each case, given that the vertical axis varies between 0 and 1.

¹⁸ The difference in color depends on if this paper is accessed on a screen or in a black and white paper copy.

¹⁹ It is important to mention that, for a separation plot, it is not the size of a cluster that is important for an event or non-event, but rather how well the events are separated in the graph from non-events.

Figure2. Separation plot comparing micro and macro analysis – ONU, MRE and OEA

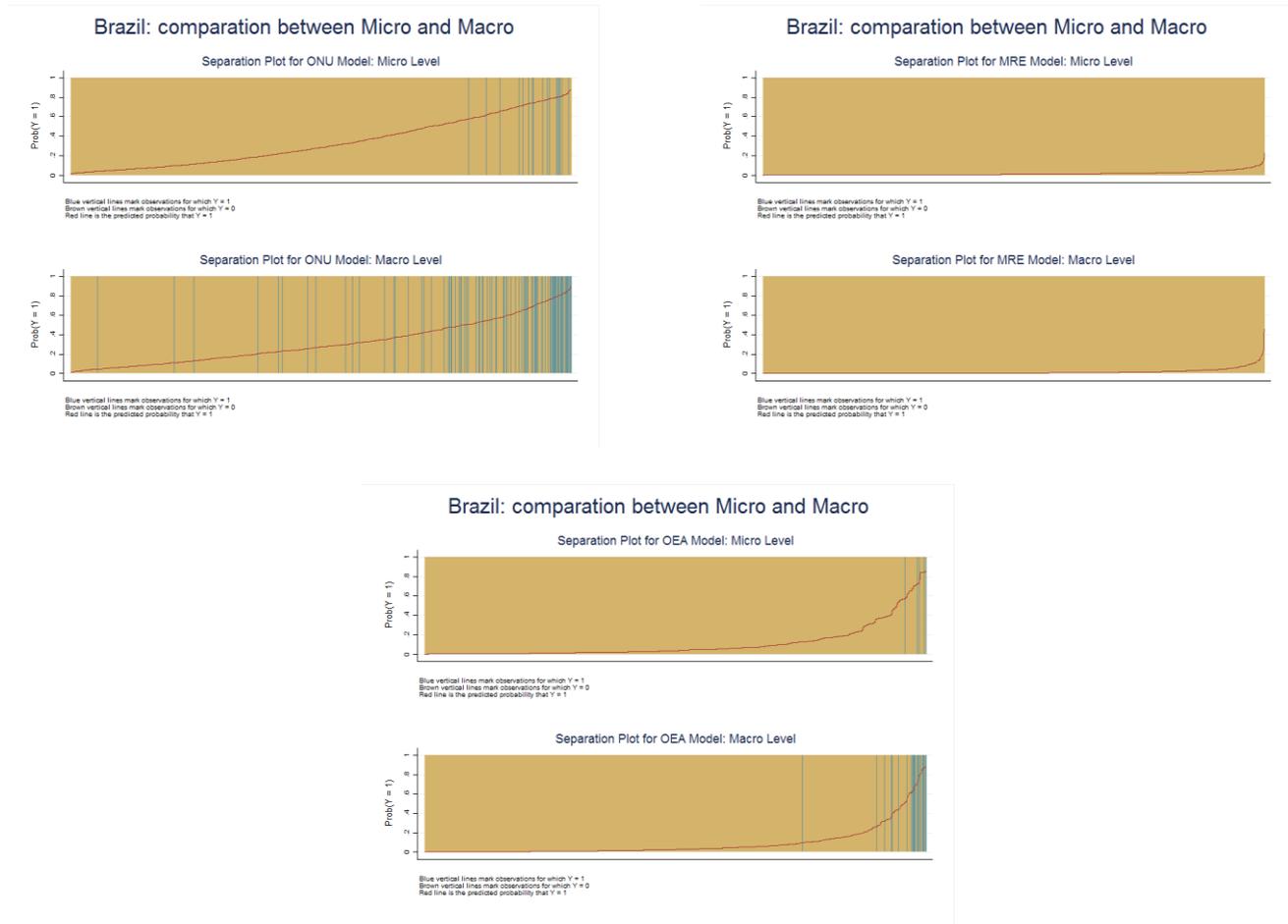


Figure elaborated by the authors. Source: *The Americas and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*

2015

The separation plots above (Figure 2) show that the macro-level analysis is much better at correctly predicting the outcome than the micro-level analysis. Moreover, establishing

$\hat{p}=0.6$ as the threshold, we can see that our models mostly predicted the event $Y=1$ ²⁰, a finding that cannot be implied from the regression table alone. Therefore, just by adding a macro-level variable (*population*), the predictive power of the model yields much better fit. We advocate for this type of analysis in future research instead of the more common micro-level approach.

6. Discussion

This study sought to shed light on the individual-level determinants that explain international political knowledge for five Latin American countries. We tried to show that discrepancies within countries also account for knowledge gaps between populations regarding international issues. In order to do this, we carried out a complementary analysis at the municipal level for the Brazilian case, where we considered contextual variables.

Our results indicate that the first of our individual variables, education, is the most powerful predictor of international political knowledge. However, we are conscious that the way in which the study organizers posed questions about acronyms could be influencing our results. As they eliminate the possibility of guessing, open-ended questions require more effort to be answered (Luskin and Bullock, 2011), what in turn has previously shown to be related to an increase in the effect of political knowledge predictors such as education and political interest (Robison, 2015: 5). As such, we advocate for future research that

²⁰ In relation to the MRE model, we cannot establish the difference between the micro level and the macro level because there are only 29 cases of events. Therefore, the difference is not statically different between the two models.

rephrases the questions in order to analyze if education is truly as predictive as it appears in our study.

As expected, income is also a significant predictor of international political knowledge. If we consider that a higher income and increased years of education have the greatest effect in pulling people towards the top category of the dependent variable — with miniscule levels in absolute quantities for the five countries²¹ — then we can conclude that knowledge of complex international issues is a quality reserved for only the elite. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown the existence of foreign policy gaps between citizens and leaders (Page and Barabas, 2000). If the same result occurs with public opinion in general, policymakers should realize that not all international issues are pertinent in the general public opinion domain.

Next, gender gaps were found in the five countries analyzed, especially for the OEA case. This is a finding consistent with the literature on gender inequality. Independent of these findings, previous research has also shown that men are more likely to guess in the event they do not know an answer than women, which could drive artificial results. In other words, perhaps men do not actually know more than women, but demonstrate better performance because they have an increased probability of giving a correct answer given their tendency to guess. Hence, it is by chance that they supply more correct answers (Mondak and Anderson, 2004: 496). To better understand if this gender gap occurred through men's guessing, we ran all the models considering the "Did not know" cases as

²¹ On average, just 14% of Latin Americans know the three acronyms.

missing data. The results of these models give some support to the findings of Mondak and Anderson (2004), given that the Female coefficient loses statistical significance in some cases. Moreover, when the models are statistically significant, they are closer to 1 than the models we ran that considered “Did not know” cases as incorrect answers²². Nonetheless, we temper these findings, particularly because the number of observations is lower. Given our smaller data set, a higher standard error is to be expected, and the variables would have to have a bigger impact to be statistically significant.

Finally, for probably our most important contribution, we demonstrate that contextual variables also matter when trying to explain differences in international political knowledge within a country, paying special attention to city size as a powerful predictor.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, we believe that this study makes an important contribution to the growing literature on international political knowledge by introducing new evidence from Latin American countries and including a new level of analysis. Nonetheless, it is important to mention the limitations of our research.

First, we limited our data to answers coming from just one type of question, open-ended and static/general. As such, future researchers should test whether the effects of individual variables remain significant even when changing how information is asked of respondents. Second, to analyze the influence of contextual variables, we only observed the Brazilian

²² In a logit regression model with an odds ratio, the coefficient being equal to 1 indicates that the probability of knowing the answer is equal independent of the respondent’s gender.

case. Therefore, we cannot generalize our findings about other countries, particularly those with different characteristics, such as those that are smaller and have lesser inequality.

Despite these limitations, we believe that this study has shown that traditional micro-level variables repeatedly testing for general political knowledge also apply for international issues. Moreover, we demonstrate that differences *within* countries should also be considered at the moment of explaining discrepancies regarding different levels of international political knowledge. This finding is confirmed by how well the macro-level model correctly predicted the outcome. Therefore, our findings suggest that future research on knowledge evaluation should consider the macro level in their analyses.

Framing Effects on Foreign Policy. Experimental Evidence from Emerging Countries and the Argentine-Brazilian rivalry[♦]

Abstract: Civil society plays an increasingly important role in the formulation of foreign policy in emerging countries. This chapter investigates whether public opinion is sensitive to framing effects regarding foreign policy. Through a survey experiment, applied to a 1530 students' sample at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and the Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda, we find that participants are sensitive to framing effects on foreign affairs. The interviewees changed their preferences when stimulated with information regarding Brazilian economic growth and military expenditure in comparison with Argentina. In turn, this effect was more pronounced among a) people that tend to stay less informed regarding foreign affairs and b) more nationalistic individuals.

Keywords: Framing Effects; Survey Experiment; Foreign Policy; Argentina; Brazil.

1. Introduction

[♦] This chapter was previously presented at the ISA-FLACSO Joint General Conference (2014), the IX Summit from the Brazilian Political Science Association (2014) and the 2014 GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology. Afterwards, was published at the journal *Opinião Pública*.

In democratic regimes, public opinion increasingly influences public policy formulation (Howlett, 2000), due to newer means of consultation and to the process of accountability and legitimacy to which rulers are constantly subjected (Echegaray, 2001). Thus, even though foreign policy cannot be considered a "traditional" public policy (Lentner, 2006), the perception that the public has regarding this subject has become the concern of academics and policymakers (Faria, 2008).

Historically, it was thought that due to the lack of interest of the average citizen in international affairs (Lippmann, 1932; Mueller, 2002), public opinion had little influence over foreign policy formulation (Jacobs and Page, 2005). Nevertheless, over time some more sensitive issues, such as the number of deaths in military operations (Aaldrich et al, 2006: 478), have captured the attention of the public and repeatedly risen to importance on the electoral agenda (Holsti, 1992). As a consequence, this has increased the influence of public opinion on foreign policy formulation in developed countries (Foyle, 2004).

With regard to emerging countries, processes such as economic liberalization have meant that civil society is increasingly taken into account in foreign policy discussions. A clear example is the Brazilian case, where after the end of the military dictatorship and the subsequent democratization of the public sphere, foreign policy formulation has become increasingly complex, now including civil society actors such as trade unions, NGOs, business associations and academics (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013). In this regard, it has been noted that the average Brazilian voter has begun to associate his/her economic welfare with

the results achieved by the government in foreign affairs (Lopes and Faria, 2014), which has led to the creation of a public opinion agenda on foreign policy (Lopes, 2011).

Our second chapter aims to contribute to the literature on public opinion perceptions in emerging countries on foreign policy issues and, in particular, look at whether these perceptions are sensitive to framing effects. The main objective of this chapter is, therefore, to understand Argentine public opinion sensitivity to framing regarding the growth of Brazilian power. To this end, we applied an experimental survey in Argentina to a convenience sample composed of 1530 students belonging to the *Universidad de Buenos Aires* (59% of the sample) and the *Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda* (41%). Subsequently, we looked at whether new information about Brazilian economic growth and military spending changed respondents' opinions on the best strategy that Argentina might adopt in relation to Brazil: whether to align to its neighbor or to seek new regional partners to counterbalance Brazilian power.

The objective of the chapter is also based on the literature that analyzes (a) the historical rivalry between the two countries (Selcher, 1985; Russell and Tokatlian, 2011; Merke, 2015), (b) the leadership role that Brazil has assumed recently (Malamud, 2011; Schenoni, 2012; Mouron and Onuki, 2015) and (c) the possible reactions of middle powers towards the regional hegemon's growth (Kaufman, 1992; Schroeder, 1994; Waltz, 2000).

Our findings show that when respondents receive information on Brazil with no point of comparison with Argentina (see Appendix I), the impact on their opinions is null. However, when Brazil's level of growth and military spending are contrasted with

Argentina's (see Appendix II), the interviewees prove to be sensitive to framing effects, leaning towards thinking that Argentina should seek new partners to counterbalance Brazilian power. In turn, this effect is even greater among people who reported that they did not keep regularly informed about international affairs and among those who believed that Argentina has a greater role in the international arena. As a consequence, this finding shows that survey experiments can generate effects that are only observable among particular subgroups of our samples (Barabas and Jerit, 2010, p. 226).

Our chapter is structured as follows. First, we contextualize our research problem, presenting a historical evolution of the relationship between Argentina and Brazil and covering classical public opinion research, which tried to capture Argentine perceptions in relation to its neighboring country. Then we move to the theoretical framework, addressing the debate about framing effects, together with some survey experiments on foreign policy issues applied in the United States. Afterwards the methodology is explained, while survey results are presented without considering the different treatments of framing. Subsequently we discuss the results of our experimental research, and present our conclusions and suggest a future agenda.

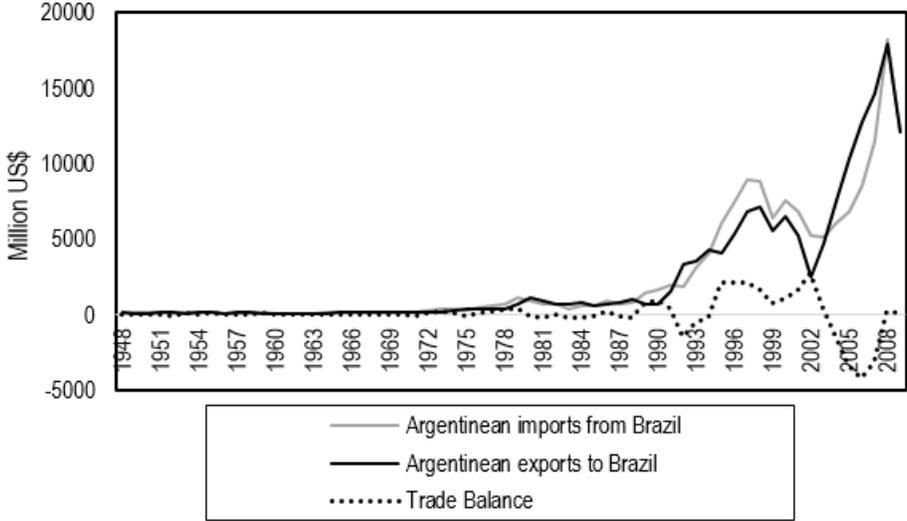
2. From Rivalry to Regional Hegemony

Brazil is the most important country in Argentina's contemporary foreign policy (Russell and Tokatlian, 2011). However, throughout their history, the two largest South American countries have gone through stages of rivalries and alliances, which only stabilized in 1985 with the rapprochement between Alfonsín and Sarney in Foz de Iguazu.

Since then, Brazil has been seen as Argentina’s main ally and vice-versa (Selcher, 1985; Hirst, 1987; Moniz Bandeira, 1987).

In economic terms, bilateral trade grew exponentially between the two with the creation of Mercosur in 1991. As Figure 1 shows, Argentina had enjoyed a trade boom during the 90’s, the trend reversing after the deep crisis of 2001, when Brazil started to set the pace of the business relationship. Today, even though 20% of Argentine exports go to the Brazilian market, Argentina absorbs only 8% of its neighbor exports; these latter items have greater added value and a higher level of industrialization (Leipziger et al, 1997; Bernal-Meza, 2008).

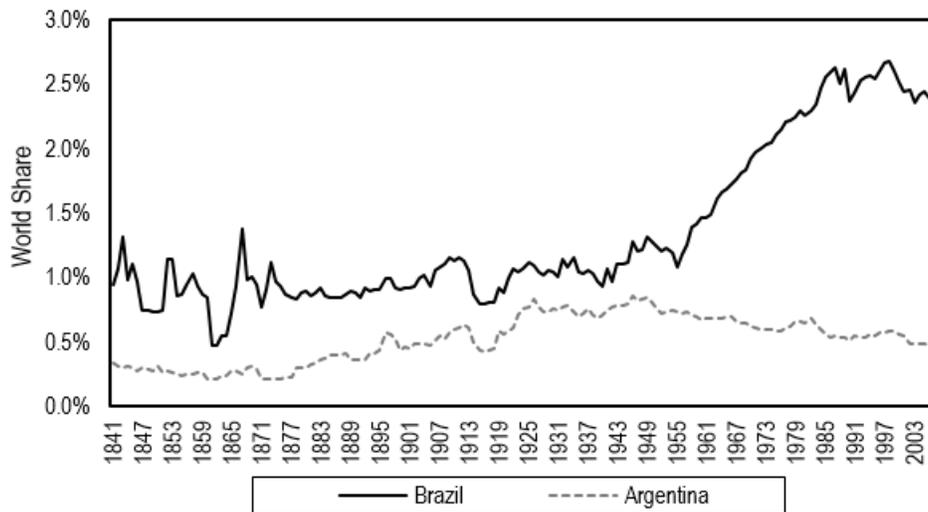
Figure 1: Evolution of Bilateral Trade



Source: Elaborated by the authors with data from UN Comtrade.

On the other hand, analyzing the historical evolution of both countries using the National Material Capabilities Index²³, we can see that the power gap between the two has grown steadily since 1956, at the beginning of Kubitschek's administration (1956-1961) (Sikkink and Wolfson, 1993) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Share of Global Power (%)



Source: Elaborated by the authors using data from Correlates of War.

Taking as a reference the theoretical framework of Realism, regional middle powers like Argentina have two foreign policy choices in relation to the regional hegemon: align to it or counterbalance its power. While the first strategy means following the regional hegemon's policies, counterbalancing can be accomplished in two ways: (a) *externally*, combining material capabilities with countries in the same situation; or (b) *internally*, mobilizing its own resources to more effectively resist the hegemonic country.

²³Index composed of six variables: (a) Population, (b) Urban population, (c) Iron and Steel production, (d) Energy consumption, (e) Number of soldiers, (f) Military budget, (Singer et al, 1972)

Historically, Argentina tried to balance Brazilian power through strategy (b). Nevertheless, by the mid 1980's, when Brazil reached a clear military superiority, Argentina was left with only two foreign policy options in relation to its neighbor: align with Brazil to achieve greater relevance in the international arena, or align to other regional countries in order to counterbalance Brazilian power.

Among the research that has systematically tried to capture Argentine public opinion regarding foreign policy, the efforts made by the Argentine Council for International Relations through the project "*La Opinión Pública Argentina sobre Política Exterior y Defensa*" should be noted ²⁴. In the 2002²⁵, 2006²⁶, 2010²⁷ and 2015²⁸ editions, one of the questions applied asked with which country Argentina should establish the closest relations. If we focus only on "Brazil" as an answer (see Figure 3), we can see that public opinion has remained generally stable over time, reaching a peak of 18% of the positive responses in 2006 and 2015, but remaining behind options such as "Europe" in 2002 and 2006 (24% and 27% respectively) and the "United States" in 2010 and 2015 (47% and 21% respectively). Meanwhile, policy-makers put Brazil as the second most chosen option in the 2002 and 2006 editions, both times behind the United States. However, this ratio was reversed in 2010, when Brazil reached a peak of 42% of the valid

²⁴ Along with Latinobarometer research (<http://www.latinobarometro.org/>) and the work focused on elites carried out by the NUPRI-USP (Albuquerque, 2000; Albuquerque, 2001), this is the only initiative that consistently applies traditional surveys in order to capture Argentine perceptions regarding international affairs.

²⁵ 2408 people and 192 opinion leaders interviewed between November the 15th and December the 15th, 2001.

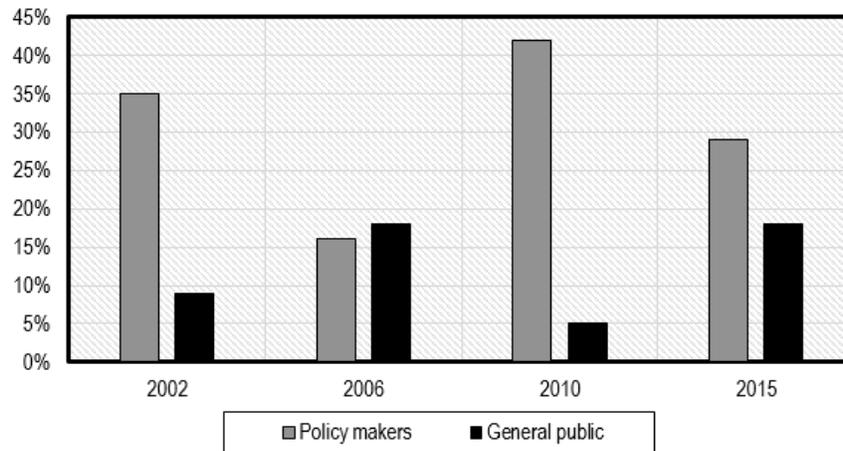
²⁶ 1616 people and 175 opinion leaders interviewed between October the 8th and October the 23rd, 2006.

²⁷ 1606 people and 170 opinion leaders interviewed between November the 17th and November the 28th, 2010.

²⁸ 1600 people and 100 opinion leaders interviewed between July and August, 2015.

responses, a figure that decreased to 29% in 2015 but that still remained as the most chosen response.

Figure 3: Perception about Brazilian relevance (%)



Source: Elaborated by the authors using data from the Argentine Council for International Relations (2015).

This being so, having arrived at this point we can ask ourselves: How sensitive to framing effects are Argentine public opinion perceptions on foreign policy? Based on the classic literature on framing effects, in the next section we present our theoretical framework, together with some experiments applied in the United States that focus their attention on specific foreign policy issues.

3. Theoretical Framework: Framing Effects and Foreign Policy

Research on framing effects can be found throughout all the Social Sciences, as well as in various sub-areas within the Political Science field (Druckman, 2001: 226). In fact, the high interest in the topic has often been accompanied by a lack of clarity in the

definition of what exactly *are* framing effects and how they influence public opinion (Nelson et al, 1997). To account for this conceptual vagueness, in this chapter we assume that framing effects can be defined as "small changes in the presentation of an event or topic, but which have large effects on the perception that the public has regarding these issues" (Chong and Druckman, 2007:104).

Since its inception, the specialized literature has shown that the way in which a question is worded has the ability to influence the participants' answers (Rugg and Cantril, 1942; Rugg, 1944; Payne, 1951; Schuman and Presser, 1977; Schuman and Presser, 1996). However, over the years and due to advances in the area, framing effects have been classified into two main groups: (a) those stimuli that, while presenting the same data (but in a different way), alter the interviewee's preferences; (b) those stimuli that focus their attention on certain topics and cause the interviewees to focus on particular issues at the moment of forming their opinions²⁹ (Druckman, 2001: 228-230). Our chapter can be included in the first type of research that tries to analyze how the same piece of information, presented differently, can affect an interviewee's opinions.

Among the classic works that use this approach, the foundational article by Tversky and Kahneman (1981) should be first emphasized. Through an experiment applied to 307 students from the University of British Columbia, the authors show that when deaths from a

²⁹ A classic example of this type of research, that also takes into account the question order effect, is the work carried out by Hyman and Sheatsley (1950). Through an experiment applied in 1948 the authors show that when first exposed to the possibility that the USSR allowed American journalists to enter the Soviet Union, the interviewees showed themselves to be more receptive to the belief that the United States should do the same with their communists counterparts. On the contrary, those ones that first were requested to give their opinion about the possibility of Soviet journalists working in the US presented lower acceptance rates when compared to the other group.

possible health program were presented relative to the number of patients, respondents were more likely to support the initiative than when they were stimulated simply by the information in absolute terms. On the contrary, when the given information focused on the lives that could be saved, the framing effect reversed and the students showed themselves to be more supportive in relation to the program than when they were stimulated with absolute information. Taking this research as reference, since then a great number of studies have tried to analyze how framing effects can affect public opinion perceptions on foreign policy issues³⁰.

Undoubtedly the topic that has been most discussed among foreign policy issues, mainly from the American literature, has been the war and the impact of casualties on public opinion perceptions (Gartner, 2008). Boettcher and Cobb found that when combat casualties are presented relative to enemy casualties, the negative effect of the latter information is activated and support for the war increases (Boettcher and Cobb, 2006: 849). However, other recent investigations on framing effects related to this topic have presented different results. Americans are concerned not only by the proportion of casualties but also by their distribution across society (Kriner and Shen, 2013). In turn, these casualties are tolerated more if a future victory is perceived as likely (Gelpi et al., 2009). Thus, we can affirm that framing effects are not homogeneous and may be influenced by individual as well as situational factors (Boettcher and Cobb, 2009: 692).

³⁰ For a summary of all the articles that until 2003 had addressed the issue of framing effects on US foreign policy, see Mintz and Redd (2003).

On the other hand, other authors have focused their attention on issues such as international trade and the propensity of citizens to support economic integration processes. Hiscox (2006) observed for the American case that those people stimulated with framing that included the possible loss of jobs were less likely to support trade with other countries than those who underwent the same question but with no prior framing of job losses. In turn, he also found that less educated people are more sensitive to framing effects, demonstrating again that these effects are not homogeneous and that is always important to note effects in different subgroups of the population (Hiscox, 2006). In related work, after reapplying the experimental survey of Hiscox (2006) in Argentina, Ardanaz et al. (2013) found that the material conditions of individuals are relevant in explaining their perceptions on trade policy and, therefore, their sensitivity to framing effects.

From what we have analyzed so far, we can conclude that: (a) the question regarding the degree of sensitivity of public opinion in relation to framing effects on foreign policy issues continues to be discussed; (b) there are studies that have addressed specific foreign policy issues, but few of them have investigated what happens with the international insertion of a country; (c) almost all of the existing literature has focused its attention on developed countries public opinion, mainly the United States.

Therefore, this work contributes to this research agenda by providing evidence from an emerging country, Argentina, on how public opinion reacts to information regarding the growth and military spending of its main ally, Brazil. Ultimately our goal is to see if these

stimuli affect interviewee perceptions, which if so would show the sensitivity of public opinion for the purposes of framing on foreign policy.

4. Methodological Design

The use of experimental methods has recently expanded into the area of Political Science and International Relations (Hyde, 2010: 73). In this regard, although there is a significant history of experimental work in this field of study (Morton; Williams, 2010, p 9), this methodology has gained strength in recent years, becoming a widely accepted approach (Druckman et al, 2006, p. 634). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Turgeon and Rennó, this type of methodology is still under-used in Brazil and Latin America (2010: 147).

To summarize, the great advantage of experimental research is that it allows us to manipulate our independent variable, while controlling for the remaining factors that could influence our dependent variable (Babbie, 2013: 238; Neuman and Robson, 2014: 205). Thus, in contrast to observational research such as cross-sectional and panel surveys (Gaines et al, 2007: 1-2), experimental studies allow us to isolate the effect of the variable we want to analyze and, therefore, they are more suitable for answering some specific research questions, particularly those involving causal mechanisms (Morton and Williams, 2010: 12).

Our experimental data comes from a survey applied at the *Universidad de Buenos Aires* (UBA) and the *Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda* (UNdAv), between April 7th and

May 30th, 2014³¹, to a convenience sample composed of 1530 students³². We have chosen this type of sample because, despite having some limitations, they have been shown to behave in the same way as general population samples (Druckman and Kam, 2009). In turn, as it is easier to recruit students, and using this type of sample offers an efficient way of testing initial hypotheses before generalizing them to public opinion in the population as a whole (Dasgupta and Hunsinger, 2008: 94).

With 308,000 students³³, UBA is the oldest and most prestigious university in Argentina³⁴. Before entering the university, students must pass a common course that lasts at least one year and has a 40% dropout rate. In turn, professors and the system as a whole are very demanding when compared to other universities, mainly for those students who need to work or have financial difficulties. Thus, only 23% of UBA students graduate.

In return, located in Avellaneda, on the outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires, UNDAv was created in 2011 and had its first graduates in 2015. With 9,311 students, most of them from first-generation college attendees³⁵, this university seeks to fulfill a social role, working as a tool to reintegrate young people that were excluded from the university system and also to integrate them into the labor market. In this sense, the courses offered are quite diversified in order to respond to a different social environment of those traditional universities such as the UBA (see Table 1).

³¹ A pre-test was applied in early December 2013 to ensure that the questions were clear enough for all participants. 100 students answered the questionnaire and the question that tried to capture political affinity in relation to the government had to be modified, since in its original format it generated a rejection superior to 10%.

³² Of those 1530 respondents, 13 were excluded from the final sample because they chose not to submit the questionnaire.

³³ Census applied in 2011 <http://www.uba.ar/institucional/censos/Estudiantes2011/estudiantes%202011.pdf>

³⁴ If we only consider the indicators "academic reputation" and "reputation among employers" from the QS ranking, UBA would be the best-positioned university in Latin America.

³⁵ They are the first in their families to attend college.

With the aim of obtaining a truer representation of the Argentine society, we considered that our sample should include students from both universities, and not just from an elite institution (UBA) or a public university with its own specific profile, such as the UNdAv students.

Table 1: Comparison between universities

	Observations	Visited Brazil (%)	Family members	Monthly Family income (AR\$)	Average age	Born in Buenos Aires (%)
UBA	893	55	4,15	18000	23,8	82
UNDAV	623	28	4,23	12500	25,5	91

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

To apply the questionnaires, with help of the academic staff we came into contact with professors of both universities. After their approval, we organized a time at which we could interrupt their lessons and apply the survey, avoiding that participants would know in advance about the research, in order to prevent them becoming informed about international affairs previous to the survey. Students were notified of their participation in a public opinion poll and as encouragement we offered two vouchers for books to the value of AR\$1,000. As suggested by McDermott (2014), to maintain anonymity, participants' personal information was collected on a sheet of paper separate from the answers.

After answering five questions about foreign policy, Argentina, and its relevance in the international arena, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental

treatments or to the control group³⁶. Both treatments provided real information about Brazilian GDP growth in the last ten years and the sum of money spent by Brasilia on military expenditures and the number of troops the country has. The only difference was that one of texts presented the information in an absolute way (see Appendix I), while the other did so relative to Argentina (see Appendix II). In turn, as suggested by Boettcher and Cobb (2009: 684), a third of our sample did not receive any stimulus, thus remaining as a control group in order to estimate the exact impact of each type of framing. The following procedure was used to assign participants to the three different groups: the absolute treatment was coded as 1, the relative as 2 and the control group as 0. Then we randomized the distribution of 3 numbers to 900 (UBA) and 650 (UNdAv) cases and mixed the questionnaires according to this random distribution.

Immediately after these stimuli, respondents were questioned about which strategy would be more suitable for Argentina: (a) align with Brazil or (b) seek new regional partners to counterbalance Brazilian power. Also, to capture more broadly Argentinian public opinion perceptions regarding international issues, participants had to tell us which were for them the three most relevant countries in the international arena, which would be the most important in the next ten years, and if Brazil was a leader in South America, and if Argentina should imitate its behavior.

³⁶ Questionnaires were applied by three research assistants supervised by one of the authors. We would like to emphasize that their role was to make sure that each person would receive the treatment to which he/she was assigned, and therefore avoid any problem of contagion.

Moreover, we applied a number of questions in order to control for political variables: (a) political ideology³⁷; (b) government approval³⁸; (c) Argentinian relevance in the international arena as proxy of nationalism³⁹; and (d) the frequency they inform themselves about foreign affairs⁴⁰. Finally, classical socioeconomic questions such as those relating to age, sex, gender, and income were also applied. To compare the subsamples, we used simple tests of hypotheses. To incorporate the controls, we used Probit logistic regressions.

5. General Results: Align with a Future Global Power and a Regional Leader

As follows we present the results of the survey without considering the treatment effects. As we can see in Table 2, more than 77% of those interviewed believe that Argentina should align with Brazil and not seek regional partners in order to counterbalance its power.

Table 2: ¿Should Argentina align or counterbalance to Brazil?

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Align	1141	77,7%
Counterbalance	329	22,3%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the second place, we can see that Argentinians consider that nowadays there are only two major global powers. When consulted on which are the three most relevant

³⁷ Respondents placed themselves on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was extreme left and 10 extreme right.

³⁸ Respondents placed themselves on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 meant that they totally disagreed with the government's policies and 10 meant that they totally agreed.

³⁹ Respondents placed Argentina on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of its relevance in the international arena, with 1 being of little relevance and 10 being very relevant.

⁴⁰ Respondents had to answer how often they informed themselves about international affairs, having the options: daily; 2 to 3 times a week; once a week; not usually.

countries in the international arena⁴¹ (see Table 3), the United States and China stand out well above the others, with 92% and 73% of the responses respectively. It is noteworthy that Russia was the third most selected country with 33%, a result which we believe can be explained due to the proximity of the implementation of the survey with events happening in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation⁴². Finally, only 24% of respondents mentioned Brazil as a current global power, standing in fifth place behind Japan.

Table 3: Current powers (%)

Country	Percentage
USA	92.3
China	73.4
Russia	33.4
Japan	32.7
Brazil	24.7
UK	21.6
Other	6.4
Argentina	6.4
France	4.6
India	4.4

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

When consulted on which will be the three most powerful countries in the next ten years⁴³, the answers appear to be more evenly distributed (see Table 4). China retains almost the same percentage (68%) but now is the most chosen country, slightly above the

⁴¹ This was applied as a closed question, with ten options presented in alphabetical order. Participants had to choose three of them.

⁴² Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014, two weeks before the survey was applied.

⁴³ It was applied as a closed question, with ten options presented in alphabetical order. Participants had to choose three of them.

United States, which falls to 61%. For its part, Brazil attains 51% of the preferences, more than double the rate of answers pertaining to the present, and makes Brazil the third most selected country on the list. This reflects Argentinians’ optimism about the future of its neighbor.

Table 4: Future powers (%)

Country	Percentage
China	68.3
USA	60.9
Brazil	51.3
Japan	31.2
Russia	26.8
India	19.7
Argentina	16.2
UK	11.4
Other	11.0
France	3.2

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Moving forward with questions that tried to capture Argentine perceptions on international affairs, we note again that there is a strong consensus about Brazil being the most important South American country. Generally, almost 65% of respondents believed that Brasilia leads regionally (Table 5), although this perception is inversely proportional to the one about Argentina’s relevance in the international arena (see Figure 4).

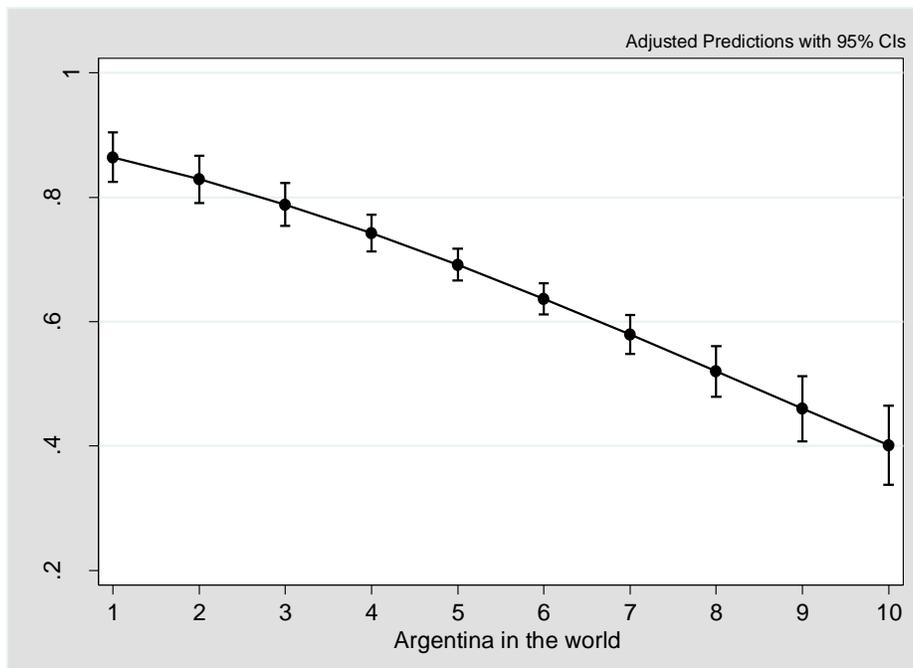
Table 5: Do you think that Brazil is a regional leader?

	Frequency	Percentage
No	523	35%
Yes	973	65%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

To calculate this last probability, we take the marginal probabilities of a logistic regression and plotted them to facilitate its interpretation (see Figure 4). Thus, we see that the probability of Brazil being considered a regional leader falls from 80% to 40% as we move from an individual who believes that Argentina's relevance in the international arena is zero, to one who thinks it is the highest (value 10).

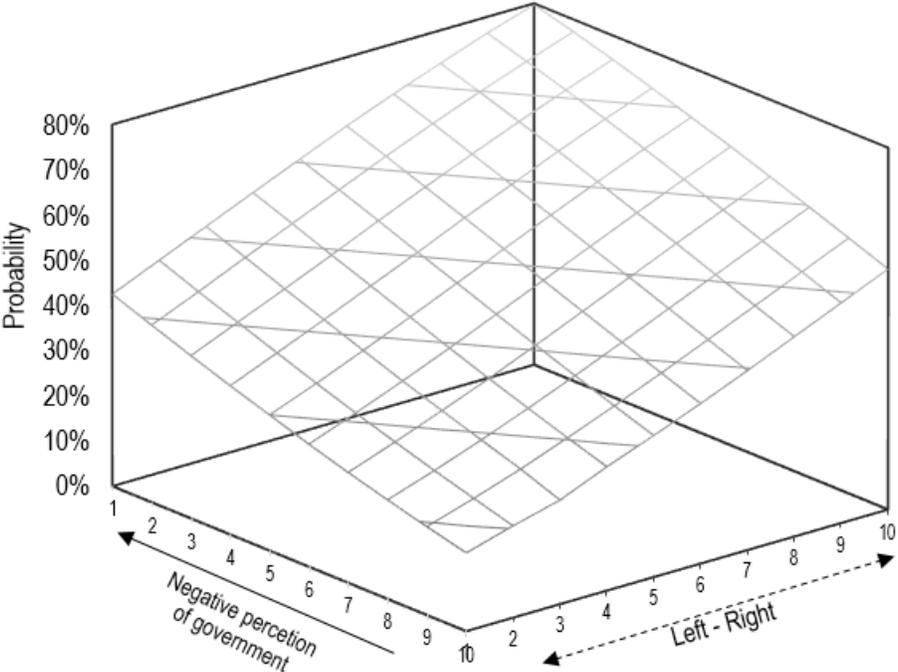
Figure 4: Plotted probability of Brazil be seen as a regional leader



Source: Elaborated by the authors using Clarify (Tomz et al., 2003)

Finally, 44% of the respondents appeared to believe that Argentina should hold Brazil up as a model, although for this question the variation of responses among different subgroups was considerable. Those participants who had located themselves at the left of the ideological spectrum tended to believe to a lesser extent that the Argentinian government should follow the Brazilian example when compared to those on the right of the spectrum (see Figure 5). In turn, those with a negative view of the Kirchner administrations tended to believe more strongly that Argentina should imitate its neighbor when compared to those who had declared support for Kirchner's policies. As in Figure 4, Figure 5 is the visual way of seeing the marginal probabilities calculated using logistic regression.

Figure 5: Plotted probability of considering Brazil as a good example



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

This is probably one of the most important findings of this section, as it confirms Russel and Tokatlian's hypothesis, which suggest that the Brazilian image has been historically used in Argentinian domestic debates as an "inverted mirror", featuring Brazil as a rising power and Argentina as a country in decline (Russell and Tokatlian, 2011: 258). This does not necessarily mean that people who used to support Kirchner's administrations had a negative view about Brazil, but that those ones who were opponents used Brazilian success as a counterexample for criticizing the then government.

6. Framing Effects

Analyzing the results of the survey, but now considering the differences between each treatment group and the control group, we can see that framing effects changed participants' perceptions, although in a heterogeneous way.

Argentineans who received absolute information regarding Brazilian growth, its military spending and its number of soldiers shown to have similar perceptions as those who received no stimulus (control group). Meanwhile, those who received information compared to Argentina tended to react towards the idea that their country should seek new regional partners to counterbalance Brazilian power (26% vs. 18%) (see Table 6). These findings support the theory that in order to fully grasp what large numbers mean, it is necessary to have a reference point closer to our reality (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981).

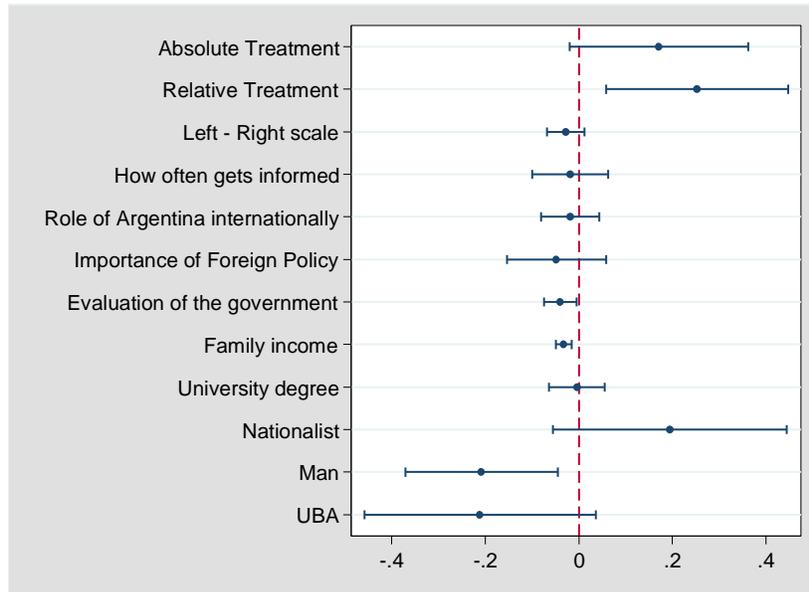
Table 6: Difference between treatments and control groups

		Argentina should counterbalance Brazil	
Treatment:	Control	Absolute	Relative
Average	0.18	0.22	0.26**
Observations	476	524	470

Note: Two tailed T Test. Statistical significance: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

As a robustness measure, we compared the treatments including controls with individual characteristics through a logistic regression. As we can see in Figure 6, the previous findings hold even after including controls. These variables are: the ideology of the person (a categorical variable ranging from 1 to 10, 10 being extreme right), how often the person stays informed about foreign affairs (ordinal variable, ranging from 0 to 3), a variable about the person’s opinion on Argentina’s role in the world (categorical variable ranging from 1 to 10, 10 being “very important”), opinion about the current government (categorical variable ranging from 1 to 10, 10 being “very favorable”), family income (ordinal variable), university degree (fixed effects for careers), the person being nationalist or not (dummy variable based on self-declared perception), gender (dummy, being 1 “man”), and a dummy for university (UBA or UNDAV).

Figure 6: Treatments effects with control variables



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

A second empirical strategy consisted of analyzing if the treatment effect was more or less significant for certain subgroups of our sample. What we observe is that among people who usually get little information about international affairs, the relative treatment was 64% more effective than the one we observed previously. That is, among uninformed people, 46% of them chose to counterbalance Brazilian power after receiving the comparative treatment. In turn, among nationalists this effect was subtly higher than the one for the general population, being 4.6% higher than the 26% of the general sample (see Table 7).

Thus, this finding reinforces the idea that while some framing can have no effect on public opinion perceptions, others can, but conditioned and amplified depending on

respondents' characteristics (Knoll et al., 2011). In this regard, and as a way of an example, Donovan and Jalleh (1999) have suggested that the degree of involvement of individuals with regard to the issue addressed may alter their sensitivity towards framing. To summarize the authors' argument, while negative framing would be more effective than positive framing among people with a high degree of involvement, the relationship reverses when respondents' interest is low, making positive framings more effective.

Table 7: Treatments effects by sub-samples

	Degree of nationalism		Political ideology		Degree of information		Supports Kirchners	
	Nationalist	Non-nationalist	Left	Right	Very	Little	No	Yes
Absolute Treatment	0.252	0.121	0.176	0.206	0.203	0.172	0.14	0.271
	(1.83)	(0.86)	(1.63)	(0.88)	(1.57)	(1.13)	(1.11)	(1.74)
Relative Treatment	0.272*	0.275	0.257*	0.26	0.134	0.467**	0.249	0.277
	(1.99)	(1.88)	(2.32)	(1.12)	(1.04)	(2.98)	(1.92)	(1.78)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	650	632	1039	243	761	521	753	529

Note: T test between parentheses. Jackknife Standard Errors. Statistical significance: * p<0,05; ** p<0,01; *** p<0,001

7. Conclusions

Is public opinion sensitive to framing effects on foreign policy issues? It depends. Through a survey experiment we provide some findings that contribute to the discussion of longer term previously presented, while we also bring empirical evidence from emerging countries, which up to now have been little studied.

In turn, as has been pointed out by other authors (Flachair and Hollard, 2008; Barabas; Jerit, 2010: 226), survey experiments generate effects that are observable only among particular subgroups of our samples and, due to this, cannot be extrapolated to the entire population.

Thus, our findings show that the frequency through which people stay informed about international issues is a determining factor in explaining how sensitive they are to framing effects on foreign affairs. In this sense, the more a person declares that they stay informed, the less sensitive to framing effects on foreign policy issues he/she is. With this in mind, we might ask ourselves from which source individuals are receiving information about international affairs. The classic literature suggests that large media plays a gatekeeping role regarding foreign policy issues (Hill, 2003: 275), since it is the main channel through which most of the population receives information on these themes (Puglisi and Snyder, 2011) for which we do not have a personal, daily contact (Soroka, 2003: 28). However, in recent years new media and alternative forms of communication have gained space and with the increasing use of social networks, the monopoly of traditional media may be in dispute.

On the other hand, we also find that the more relevance a person gives to his country in the international arena, the more susceptible he/she is to information that shows its weakness compared to other countries. This finding is interesting if we think from Putnam's two-level games logic (1988). Politicians might try to influence the electorate and take advantage in the domestic debate using a nationalist discourse. Taking this idea as reference, we also corroborate Russel and Tokatlian's hypothesis, who suggest that the Argentinian opposition had used the Brazilian image as an "inverted mirror", presenting it as an emerging power and Argentina as a country in decline in order to criticize the previous government (2011: 258).

Finally, as we have shown previously, most studies that have tried to analyze framing effects on foreign policy issues have used as reference data collected in developed countries, mainly the United States. Given this reality, we believe that by applying our experiment in a developing country we are contributing with a new case study to a longstanding discussion. However, we also know that cultural differences and specific characteristics of each country may affect how sensitive people are regarding external affairs (Hermann and Ozkececi-Taner, 2011). For these reasons, in order to draw general conclusions on "Public Opinion", we should replicate this research in countries with different characteristics, in order to isolate each country's specific effects.

APPENDIX I – ABSOLUTE TREATMENT

“De acuerdo a estadísticas del Banco Mundial, el Producto Bruto Interno de Brasil alcanzó en 2013 la suma de U\$S 2.253 mil millones de dólares, habiendo crecido un 340% en los últimos 10 años. A su vez, las Fuerzas Armadas brasileras están compuestas por 327 mil tropas activas y su presupuesto alcanzó en 2013 la suma de U\$S 30,3 mil millones.”

According to World Bank statistics, the Brazilian Gross Domestic Product in 2013 reached the sum of US \$2.253 billion dollars, having grown 340% over the last 10 years. In turn, the Brazilian Armed Forces are composed of 327,000 active troops and its budget reached the amount of US \$30.3 billion in 2013.

APPENDIX II – RELATIVE TREATMENT

“De acuerdo a estadísticas del Banco Mundial, el Producto Bruto Interno de Brasil alcanzó en 2013 la suma de U\$S 2.253 mil millones de dólares, habiendo crecido un 340% en los últimos 10 años y haciendo con que la economía brasilera sea 5,5 veces más grande que la argentina. A su vez, las Fuerzas Armadas brasileras están compuestas por 327.000 tropas activas y su presupuesto alcanzó en 2013 la suma de U\$S 30,3 mil millones. Por su parte, el número de tropas activas en la Argentina es de 86.000 y el presupuesto militar es de U\$S 5,2 mil millones, tan solo 15% del brasilero.”

According to World Bank statistics, the gross domestic product of Brazil in 2013 reached the sum of US \$2.253 billion dollars, having grown 340% over the past 10 years and meaning that the Brazilian economy is 5.5 times larger than Argentina. In turn, the Brazilian Armed Forces are composed of 327,000 active troops and its budget reached the amount of US \$30.3 billion in 2013. Meanwhile, the number of active troops in Argentina is 86,000 and the military budget is US \$5.2 billion, only 15% of the Brazilian budget.

Brazil's Business First: Domestic Costs of a Troubled Foreign Aid Donor[♦]

Abstract

This chapter contributes to the discussion about the domestic costs of Brazil having an active foreign aid policy. Our findings suggest that the majority of Brazilians believe the country should reduce or completely eliminate foreign aid spending. Moreover, support decreased even more when participants were presented with information on how that money could have been used in the domestic realm.

Keywords: Brazilian Foreign Policy; Foreign Aid; Public Opinion; Survey Experiment

[♦] This chapter was previously presented at the *Universidad de San Andres* (2016) and submitted at the *Journal of Politics in Latin America*. In that opportunity, reviewers suggested the chapter should be submitted either to a Public Opinion or Brazilian journal. Therefore, we decided to send it to the *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional (RBPI)*, journal that decided to analyze the chapter, which currently it is under review.

1. Introduction

For the first time, other global powers have recently begun to recognize Brazil as an influential actor in the international arena (Schirm 2012). Despite its lack of military capabilities, the country has achieved unprecedented international status due to the role it plays in multilateral forums and its active participation in international cooperation initiatives (Cervo 2010). In this regard, previous authors have analyzed how Brazil's increasing influence in international affairs can be explained by the focus given to cooperation strategies, as well as the country's prioritization of South-South relations (Dauvergne and Farias 2012; Inoue and Vaz 2012; Christensen 2013: 272). Nevertheless, most of the aforementioned studies have only analyzed the effects of Brazil's foreign aid policy on the country's international standing, but without considering its domestic implications. Therefore, our aim in this study is to examine the domestic costs of Brazilian foreign aid policy as an example of how public opinion on foreign policy is sensitive to framing.

Considering the role that public opinion plays in Brazilian foreign policy formulation (Lopes 2011), this chapter first analyzes Brazilians' support for the country's foreign aid policy. Traditional public opinion surveys have provided some information relevant to this issue, assuming that Brazilians who voice support for helping other developing countries automatically agree with the country's foreign aid policy (de Azevedo, dos Santos, and Ribeiro 2009). However, given methodological considerations, we argue that these conclusions are misleading.

Second, taking into account that foreign policy issues can be used to gain advantage in the domestic realm (Aldrich et al. 2006), this chapter also examines how Brazilians react to the major criticisms consistently used by the opposition to undermine the former administration's foreign aid policy. Briefly, these critiques have focused on (a) the large amounts directed to foreign aid and (b) how that funding could have been used domestically. To this end, we conducted an online survey experiment on a national representative sample composed of 2276 people. The experimental design aimed to determine whether the way a particular foreign aid policy, namely, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti⁴⁴ (MINUSTAH), was framed would change the respondents' perceptions of whether Brazil ought to increase, maintain, reduce or eliminate investment in foreign aid.

Our findings show that at least 70 percent of Brazilians believe the country should reduce or completely eliminate spending on foreign aid. Contrary to our expectations, support for foreign aid increased by 8.76 percent when the participants received information on Brazil's spending on MINUSTAH from 2004-2014. However, when the same information was contrasted with how this money could have been used domestically, support for foreign aid decreased, and 78.97 percent of the respondents declared that the country should reduce or completely eliminate funding for foreign aid.

This chapter is structured as follows. In the next section we contextualize our research, explain how Brazilian cooperative initiatives have evolved during the last decade

⁴⁴ MINUSTAH is a peace mission established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on 30 April 2004 and that is military lead by Brazilian troops. It aimed to restore security and institutional normality in the country following the repeated episodes of political turmoil and violence that led to the exit of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Minustah 2016).

and assess how previous public opinion surveys have addressed this issue. Next, we present a theoretical discussion on how public opinion influences foreign policy formulation and how foreign policy issues can be used to gain advantage in the domestic realm, together with our hypotheses. We then describe our survey experiment and present our results. Finally, we discuss our findings and present several conclusions.

2. A New Path in Brazilian Foreign Policy

Brazilian foreign aid initiatives, conducted in the context of South-South Cooperation (SSC), became increasingly dynamic as part of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's (2003-2010) foreign policy (de Renzio and Seifert 2014: 1866). Although not an innovation of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), under the Lula and Dilma administrations, South-South relations climbed to the top of Brazilian foreign policy priorities, with a significant increase in the number of cooperation agreements signed with developing countries (Mendonça and de Faria)⁴⁵. Simultaneously, over the last decade Brazil has shifted in status from a receiver to a significant donor of foreign aid⁴⁶, while its integration strategy has been reinforced by the promotion of alliances and agreements with southern partners (Puente 2010; de Oliveira and Onuki 2012).

During this period, Brazilian cooperation has ranged from technical assistance and debt relief for poorer countries, to a commitment to help countries affected by natural

⁴⁵ According to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), 30 cooperation projects were initiated in 2004, 66 in 2005, 147 in 2006, 175 in 2007, 263 in 2008, 386 in 2009 and 472 in 2010.

⁴⁶ According to a study conducted by Le Monde Diplomatique Brazil in 2011, the Brazilian government provided more international aid than it received from other countries and multilateral agencies between 2005 and 2009.

disasters or internal conflicts by means of international humanitarian assistance. It is notable that the Brazilian government has tried to distance itself from the concept of foreign aid used by developed countries, calling its foreign aid policy Brazilian International Development Cooperation (COBRADI). Brazil's official discourse states that the International Development Cooperation (IDC) policy should be based on ideals of solidarity and exchange of common experiences, having no links with commercial interests or foreign direct investment. In official terms, Brazilian cooperation differs from the traditional cooperation implemented by developed countries to the extent that it is not guided by material interests. As an example of this interpretation, Brazil has strongly rejected the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) terminology⁴⁷, instead using the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD's) definition of cooperation⁴⁸.

Under this umbrella, Brazil considers peacekeeping operations part of its international development cooperation policy (Ipea 2016). Hence, Brazilian participation in MINUSTAH cannot be understood solely as a military operation in Haiti. In addition to troops, other personnel such as engineers, doctors and nurses perform important social tasks in the country, including implementing policies for Haiti's socioeconomic development. In this regard, the Brazilian government supported quick-impact programs in the social arena, including building schools, hospitals, roads and public buildings, in addition to other projects to reduce violence in communities. Furthermore, the Brazilian military promoted

⁴⁷ See the glossary of OECD statistical terms: <<http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6043>>.

⁴⁸ Instead of employing the terms "donor" and "receiver", Brazil refers to countries involved in development cooperation as "partners."

sociocultural activities to support the neediest communities, such as outdoor film screenings, distribution of clean water and school supplies, and lectures on personal hygiene and disease prevention. In summary, MINUSTAH can be considered one of the largest Brazilian efforts in terms of foreign aid (Ipea 2016).

As Brazil increased its foreign aid initiatives, scholars began to assess public opinion on this issue. Between 2006 and 2008, the Observatory of the Metropolises, in partnership with other national and international organizations, conducted a comparative survey to understand the exercise of citizenship in seven countries (Brazil, Canada, France, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and the United States). Respondents were asked about the importance of “helping people around the world who live in precarious situations”, and, taking those answers as a reference, the authors created an indicator that ranged from zero to seven (zero = Not at all important; seven = Very important). Despite living in the least developed country in the sample, Brazilians, with an average of 6.23, most enthusiastically supported helping people in precarious situations (de Azevedo et al. 2009: 353). This finding prompted some scholars to conclude that there is strong internal support for what they referred to as a “humanistic” and “solidarity-based” foreign policy (de Faria and Paradis 2013).

Notably, during the same years, significant domestic debate began to focus on the question of whether Brazil should play an active role as a foreign donor. These policies and projects were justified under the Lula and Dilma administrations by the notion that Southern countries shared common values and interests as well as by a sense of duty and moral obligation to assist other developing nations. However, despite the existence of this

“solidarity” discourse, critical voices were raised against the country’s foreign aid policy during the same period. These critics, together with some methodological considerations, made us wonder whether the conclusions about Brazilians supporting a solidarity foreign policy were correct. Therefore, we ask whether Brazilians are truly so supportive of the country’s foreign aid policy, and how critical discourses impact public opinion on this issue.

3. Brazilian Public Opinion Revisited

3.1 Are Brazilians Exceptionally “Nice” People?

The public, through its approval or disapproval, influences policy-maker actions (Burstein 2003). Members of the Executive and Legislative branches are aware that they are accountable, and therefore they try to respond to – or anticipate – public opinion to remain in power or win elections (Holsti 1992; Milner and Tingley 2010, 2013: 390). With respect to foreign aid initiatives, previous studies in developed countries have shown that taxpayer opinion helps determine the quantity and quality of the aid disbursed (Mosley 1985). In other words, countries with higher levels of public support for aid tend to spend more on helping developing nations (Stern, United Nations Development Programme, and Office of Development Studies 1998).

de Azevedo et al. (2009) concluded that Brazilians agreed with the country following a solidarity-based foreign aid policy. However, this study’s optimistic conclusions are not consistent with the results of others conducted worldwide. For example, a survey carried out in 2014 in 28 European countries showed that at least 51 percent of

respondents did not think that addressing poverty in other countries should be one of their governments' priorities⁴⁹. Additionally, a survey conducted in the United States by the Pew Research Center demonstrated that American public opinion on this issue was divided, with 48 percent of those interviewed believing that foreign aid should be cut and 49 percent thinking that it should be increased or at least maintained⁵⁰. Given these contrasting results, is there some feature that distinguishes the Brazilian case from others?

It is possible that Brazil is an exception. However, due to methodological considerations and the particular characteristics of foreign aid, we argue that previous evidence is not a reliable indicator of the Brazilian public's perceptions of the country's foreign aid policy. Briefly, the main deficiency of the aforementioned study was its lack of methodological precision. What was measured was not Brazilians' support for the country's foreign aid policy itself but rather participants' endorsement of an abstract idea, such as "the importance of helping less developed countries". People's answers to questions that include moral considerations are always influenced by what extensive literature has referred to as "social desirability bias." Respondents tend to hide their real preferences if they believe that their beliefs are not compatible with what society expects (Krumpal 2013), behavior that is reinforced when surveys are conducted face-to-face (Holbrook, Green, and Krosnick 2003) and use self-reported values (Fisher and Katz 2000, as was the case in the aforementioned study.

⁴⁹ See the Eurobarometer survey: The European Year for Development - Citizen's views on development, cooperation and aid. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_439_420_en.htm.

⁵⁰ For more information, see <http://www.people-press.org/2013/02/22/as-sequester-deadline-looms-little-support-for-cutting-most-programs/>.

Therefore, we expect that if participants are asked to give an opinion about Brazilian foreign aid policy itself, instead of a personal statement on whether they agree with helping others, support for spending money on foreign aid will be lower (*H1*).

3.2 A Tool Used in the Domestic Debate

It is widely understood that domestic and foreign policy are intrinsically related. Since Putnam (1988) showed that national leaders think about both national and international outcomes while ratifying an international agreement, many studies have sought to analyze the interaction between the two spheres. In general, both incumbents and opposition candidates appear to spend time and effort campaigning on foreign and defense policies when they believe this can bring them electoral benefits (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989). For ruling parties, as Snyder et al. exemplify with the American invasion of Iraq, foreign policy issues can be used to emphasize looming foreign threats, overshadowing domestic class divisions and attracting votes to incumbent candidates (Snyder, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon 2009: 170). For the opposition, foreign policy mistakes have been used to criticize the current administration (Campbell 2004) or take advantage of the fact that public opinion is contrary to ongoing foreign policy processes (Kriesi 2007).

Considering the various ways in which foreign policy issues can be used to gain advantage in the domestic realm, we ask whether Brazilian perceptions of foreign aid are sensitive to framing effects. Succinctly, framing effects theory assumes that public opinion can change according to where the public debate is directed (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007), while “small changes in the presentation of an event or topic can have large effects on the perception that the public has regarding these

issues” (Chong and Druckman 2007: 104). Taking this theoretical framework into account, we test how Brazilians react to the two main arguments given against the country’s foreign aid policy.

On the one hand, since the beginning of the Workers Party PT administrations, the prevailing discourse among opposition legislators has been that too much money has been spent on helping less-developed countries. For example, in 2004, deputy Antonio Carlos Mendes Thame, from the opposition Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), presented Bill 4128/2004, which required the executive branch to obtain specific and express permission from Congress to relieve the debts of other countries, a proposal that generated intense debate within the legislative arena. These discussions focused on controversial aspects of financial cooperation initiatives for the relief of some countries’ debts, especially African ones. Also, in 2004 the executive branch submitted Bill 205/2004, which asked for permission to send troops to Haiti. Voting on this proposal again divided the legislators, with 118 votes against, 266 in favor, and one abstention. Those in favor of the bill mainly included the governing coalition led by the Workers Party, while those opposed included the opposition base, composed of the Liberal Front Party (PFL) and the PSDB (Feliú and Miranda 2011). Essentially, the argument used by the latter was that the bill required the country to spend too much on foreign aid. If this discourse had any effect, we expect that when given real information about how much Brazil spends on a particular foreign aid initiative, public support for this type of policy will tend to decrease (*H2*).

On the other hand, as the economic crisis began to take shape, the question of whether Brazil should be an active foreign donor also began to appear in presidential

debates. In general, opposition candidates used the issue to attack the incumbent candidates, claiming that taxpayer money was being wasted on other countries instead of being used to improve the living conditions of Brazilian citizens. According to this point of view, the problem was not just wasteful spending of public funds but also the fact that this money should be devoted to solving the problems of a local population that, since the beginning of the crisis, had been experiencing serious hardship. For example, in the 2014 presidential debates, right-wing opposition politicians such as Pastor Everaldo from the Christian Social Party (PSC) and Levy Fidelix from the Brazilian Labour Renewal Party (PRTB) continually accused the federal government of spending money on foreign aid that should be spent domestically. During the debates, it was common to hear comments from those candidates such as the following: *“Your government favors the Cuban dictatorship that does not respect human rights. It is fair to do it with the money, the sweat and the blood of the Brazilian workers?”* and *“In my government, the money of the Brazilian worker will stay in Brazil”*⁵¹. Given this argument, we expect that Brazilian support for cooperation initiatives will diminish when the participants are given information on how money currently used for foreign aid could be otherwise applied to domestic social policies (H3).

⁵¹ Some Brazilian presidential debates are available at the following links: <http://www.jb.com.br/eleicoes-2014/noticias/2014/08/26/candidatos-a-presidente-da-republica-participam-de-primeiro-debate-na-tv/> and <http://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2014/noticia/2014/10/leia-e-veja-integra-do-debate-na-globo.html>.

3.3 *Analyzing Public Opinion in Detail*

Finally, previous studies that addressed the question of Brazilian support for foreign aid dismissed the fact that support for foreign aid is not homogeneous but rather influenced by political and socioeconomic variables. From a political perspective, people with a leftist political orientation (Lumsdaine 1993; Tingley 2010; Paxton and Knack 2011; Bechtel, Hainmueller, and Margalit 2014) who are more satisfied with their government (Chong and Gradstein 2008) and more interested in politics (Paxton and Knack 2011) have been shown to be more supportive of foreign aid policies. Similarly, from a socioeconomic perspective, richer (Chong and Gradstein 2008; Paxton and Knack 2011; Bechtel et al. 2014), more educated (Bechtel et al. 2014) and younger (Paxton and Knack 2011) respondents have appeared to support foreign aid initiatives more. Taking these studies into account, we analyze whether these socioeconomic and political variables affect Brazilians' perceptions of foreign aid.

4. **Methodology**

Our data come from an online survey experiment conducted between 28 July and 10 August 2016, on a Brazilian national representative sample. To guarantee the sample's representativeness, with the help of the company *Netquest*⁵², we invited 2276 people to answer a 7-minute survey based on three criteria: gender, class and region⁵³ (Appendix I).

⁵² The company constructs a closed panel available by invitation and through multiple sources, a strategy that avoids fake respondents and guarantees equal representativeness in the sample. For more information, see <http://www.panelwithiso.com/>.

⁵³ To ensure that the sample was representative of Brazilian society, we used as a reference the results of the 2010 Census carried out by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE).

Moreover, to avoid any “device effect” (Callegaro 2010) and to guarantee that our results were comparable, respondents were blocked if they tried to complete the survey with a device other than a personal computer.

After answering five socioeconomic and political questions, the participants were randomly assigned to a control group or one of two treatment groups (Appendix II). Those assigned to the first treatment group received information about how much money Brazil spent on MINUSTAH between 2004 and 2014⁵⁴ (Appendix III). Those assigned to the other treatment group were provided with the same figures, but which were presented in comparison with how that money could have been spent domestically on the construction of hospitals⁵⁵ (Appendix IV).

Next, all respondents were asked how they thought Brazil should modify its foreign aid policy: (a) increase foreign aid, (b) maintain current levels, (c) reduce it, or (d) completely eliminate spending on it (Appendix V). Because the dependent variable had four categories, we transformed it into a dichotomous variable. In this regard, given that Brazil’s growth rate has contracted over the last five years⁵⁶, we considered the preference to maintain the current foreign aid policy to indicate a positive attitude toward the program. Therefore, we grouped the “Completely eliminate” with the “Reduce” answers and the “Maintain” with the “Increase” answers. The aim of this procedure was to differentiate

⁵⁴ Information required by the “*Lei de Acesso a Informação*”.

⁵⁵ We used as a reference the cost of the construction of an 8,500-square-meter hospital with all the necessary facilities and equipment to serve a population of 40,000.

⁵⁶ According to the World Bank, between 2011 and 2015, Brazilian GDP fell from US\$ 2.6 trillion to US\$ 1.8 trillion. For more information, see:

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2015&locations=BR&start=2010&view=chart>.

between negative and positive perceptions of Brazilian foreign aid policy as well as to facilitate interpretation.⁵⁷

Additionally, before and after the treatment questions, we included a series of questions to control for political variables. The questions prior to the treatments requested information about (a) Brazilian relevance in the international arena, (b) how Brazil is perceived internationally, and (c) the frequency with which the respondents informed themselves about international issues. The questions that followed the treatments examined participants' (d) party identification and (e) political ideology (Appendix VI). We also included classic socioeconomic questions regarding gender, age, class⁵⁸ and region of residence.

Finally, to capture the average treatment effect, we carried out a cross-tab analysis. To analyze how political and socioeconomic variables affected public opinion on foreign aid, we ran logistic regression models with and without control variables.

5. Results

First, it is important to understand Brazilians' perceptions of foreign aid without taking any framing effect into consideration⁵⁹. The results from the control group show that Brazilians predominantly want to reduce (51.4 percent) or eliminate (19 percent) spending on foreign aid, in contrast to 23.8 percent who prefer to maintain current spending levels

⁵⁷ Although we could have used an ordered logistic model to analyze these four categories, this strategy could have resulted in the loss of important information. Thus, we decided to group the categories into pairs to compare positive versus negative perceptions.

⁵⁸ Instead of asking respondents their income, we used several questions and divided our sample into classes, a strategy adopted by IBGE. This measure guarantees compliance with ISO norms.

⁵⁹ For more information on descriptive statistics see Table 3 – Appendix I.

and 5.8 percent who support an increased budget. Therefore, independent of stimulation with information on how much Brazil has spent on foreign aid during the last decade, our results show that Brazilians' perceptions of this policy are not as positive as assumed by previous research.

In addition, prior to considering treatment effects, we ran a logistic model for the control group to analyze how various socioeconomic and political variables influence Brazilian public opinion on foreign aid (Table 1). First, holding other variables constant, our results suggest that younger people are more inclined to support foreign aid. Second, again holding other variables constant, compared to residents of the Southern region, those living in the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest are more inclined to support foreign aid.

Table 1: Foreign aid support without treatment effects

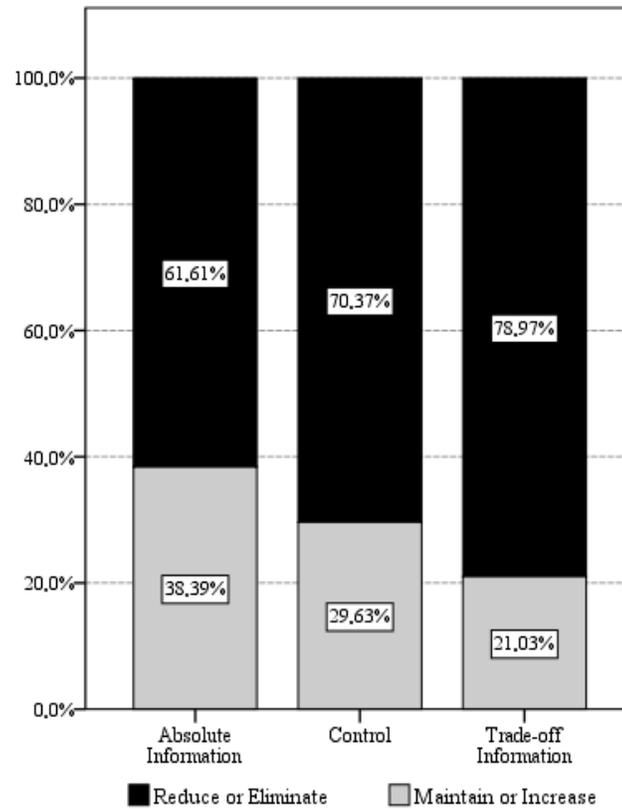
Foreign aid perception	Logit
Gender	-0.119 (0.190)
Age	-0.0361*** (0.00843)
Social class	-0.0456 (0.0897)
Brazil's relevance	0.0454 (0.132)
Brazil's image	0.385*** (0.0936)
Information	0.0446 (0.0719)
Employed	-0.302 (0.192)
Education	0.183 (0.119)
PT	0.334 (0.210)
PSDB	0.0193 (0.227)
Ideology	-0.159 (0.126)
North	0.602 (0.429)
Northeast	1.071** (0.331)
Southeast	0.944** (0.324)
Midwest	1.109** (0.415)
_cons	-1.886 -1.022
N	702

Standard errors are given in parentheses; * indicates $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$.

Regarding the effects of framing, the results of the cross-tab analysis showed that the treatment groups, control group and dependent variable are associated (Table 4 - Appendix VII), and the results are statistically significant ⁶⁰. However, it is important to note that the direction of the effect differed depending on the type of information with which the respondent was stimulated. If the framing was in absolute terms, the effect relative to the control group was positive. In this situation, the respondent was more likely to answer that he/she preferred to “Maintain” or “Increase” the policy. In contrast, when the respondent was given the “trade-off” information, the effect became negative, and the person was more likely to answer that the country should “Reduce” or “Eliminate” foreign aid. Figure 1 illustrates the effects of framing on Brazilian public opinion on foreign aid.

⁶⁰ The cross-tabulation analysis was made comparing the four groups and shows a difference between the behavior of participants depending in each group there were assigned. These differences of behavior were statistically tested by a chi-square test of the cross-tabulation (Table 5 – Appendix VII), which indicates that there is enough evidence to suggest that these differences are statically significant.

Figure 1: Difference between control and treatment groups



As a robustness check, we ran logistic models including the control variables (Table 2)

These results confirmed the cross-tab findings (Table 4 – Appendix VII) and provided new information. The results of models 3 and 4 indicated that the act of assigning a participant to a treatment or the control group affected the person’s perceptions on this issue, even when controlling for socioeconomic and political variables. Additionally, the variables that were statistically significant in explaining public support for foreign aid, when including treatments effects, are as follows: (a) the respondent’s perceptions of Brazil’s relevance, (b) the respondent’s perceptions of Brazil’s image abroad, (c) the

respondent's age, (d) all other regions besides the South, (e) whether the respondent voted for the Workers' Party, and (f) the respondent's ideology⁶¹.

Table 2: Framing effects with control variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Trade-off treatment	-0.458***		-0.487***		-0.485***
	-0.122		-0.127		-0.127
Absolute treatment		0.392***		0.451***	0.452***
		-0.11		-0.116	-0.116
Gender			-0.0311	0.079	0.0721
			-0.138	-0.124	-0.105
Age			-0.0278***	-0.0316***	-0.0282***
			-0.00604	-0.00544	-0.00462
Social class			-0.0461	0.06	0.0333
			-0.0646	-0.0561	-0.0482
Brazil's relevance			0.259**	0.216*	0.286***
			-0.0969	-0.0856	-0.0738
Brazil's image			0.426***	0.397***	0.421***
			-0.0689	-0.0627	-0.0534
Information			0.023	0.0113	0.00588
			-0.0525	-0.0475	-0.0404
Employed			-0.183	-0.167	-0.136
			-0.14	-0.126	-0.107
Education			0.0971	0.14	0.103
			-0.0815	-0.0746	-0.062
PT			0.247	0.421**	0.334**
			-0.151	-0.141	-0.118
PSDB			0.073	0.0324	0.0586
			-0.166	-0.144	-0.125
Ideology			-0.246**	-0.0954	-0.167*
			-0.0921	-0.0829	-0.0706
North			0.623*	0.418	0.459*
			-0.3	-0.242	-0.209
Northeast			0.901***	0.470*	0.538**

⁶¹ Although the results for Brazil's image and its relevance were significant, we do not discuss them in the next section. These two questions occurred prior to the treatments and discussing their answers is beyond the scope of this chapter.

			-0.237	-0.194	-0.168
Southeast			0.662**	0.33	0.328*
			-0.232	-0.185	-0.161
Midwest			0.769*	0.719**	0.643**
			-0.301	-0.243	-0.211
_Constant	-0.865***	-0.865***	-2.294**	-2.711***	-2.689***
	-0.0827	-0.0827	-0.73	-0.642	-0.548
N	1458	1520	1458	1520	2276

Standard errors are given in parentheses; * indicates $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$.

6. Discussion

Contrary to previous studies (de Azevedo et al. 2009; de Faria and Paradis 2013), our findings suggest that Brazilians are reluctant to continue paying the costs of an active foreign aid policy. As stated in our theoretical discussion, methodological discrepancies in how questions were asked in previous studies can explain the differences between our results and those of earlier studies. Compared to citizens of developed countries, Brazilians have declared themselves to be more supportive of helping others, which makes sense given that historically they have been on the receiving end of foreign aid. Nevertheless, when carefully asked what Brazil's foreign aid policy should be, the respondents mostly answered that spending on other countries should be reduced or even completely eliminated. This finding probably results from a more appropriate way of measuring Brazilians' support for their country's foreign aid policy, as well as the current political and economic situation. Brazilians can be "nice" people and individually empathize with others who suffer; however, when asked what they think of their country's foreign aid strategy, they do not prioritize spending scarce money on others.

Additionally, support for foreign aid is not homogeneous among Brazilian society. First, young Brazilians and leftists tend to support foreign aid initiatives more, a finding that can be explained by the fact that as a person grows older, he/she becomes less altruistic (Paxton and Knack 2011). Second, people living in the most developed region of the country (South) were the least supportive of foreign aid. Following an individual-level analysis, we would expect exactly the opposite, as those with higher incomes have the flexibility to take risks and are more likely to have trusting and altruistic behaviors of all types (Paxton and Knack 2011: 6). Nevertheless, this was not the case, which makes us conclude that there are contextual effects at the regional level that affect perceptions toward foreign aid. In the Brazilian case, we believe this feature can be explained by the fact that during recent elections, the prevailing discourse has suggested that the South and Southeast regions are “maintaining” less-developed regions⁶². This perception may make residents of these regions feel less supportive of aid in general, including foreign aid. Third, the results show that Workers’ Party voters tend to have a supportive attitude regarding foreign aid, indicating that the former government was conducting a policy that pleased its electorate.

Regarding how the participants reacted to different ways of framing the issue, when the respondents were given information on how much money Brazil spent on Haiti between 2004 and 2014, support for foreign aid increased. This finding is contrary to what we expected, and we offer two alternative explanations for it. First, foreign aid is an abstract concept, and by providing a concrete example through the Haitian case, it is possible that we too were not properly addressing the desirability bias problem. Additionally, the topic

⁶² For example, see <http://www.brasil247.com/pt/247/brasil/159859/IBGE-explica-raiva-de-Sul-e-Sudeste-contra-o-Nordeste.htm>.

of MINUSTAH has been repeatedly highlighted in the media (Mesquita and Medeiros 2016), and Brazil has received more than 96 thousand Haitian migrants since 2010, which might have increased public awareness of and sensitivity to this issue. Ultimately, when stimulated with this type of framing, people put a face to foreign aid recipients, making it more difficult to claim that the country should cut foreign aid due to moral constraints. Second, even if people may know how much money Brazil spends on a specific foreign aid policy, it is possible that the average citizen does not have a clear notion of the precise meaning of that figure. This possibility is relevant to our analysis of how the second treatment affected public opinion.

Although information on how much money Brazil has spent on Haiti during the last decade increased the likelihood that the respondents would support foreign aid, when these figures were contrasted with how those funds could have been used in the Brazilian domestic realm, the effect drastically reversed. This strong trade-off effect when presenting the same information in a relative way could be explained in two ways. First, as anticipated, it is possible that people only understand large figures when they are presented in a familiar frame of reference (Tversky and Kahneman 1985). Thus, while the sum of R\$ 1.3 billion may seem abstract, explaining that Brazil could have built 43 hospitals with this amount may have clarified the concrete cost of helping others. Second, Brazil is still a developing country, and, as other authors have noted, it is difficult to convince local audiences that the country should invest money abroad when it still faces severe domestic problems (Malamud 2011: 5). In particular, considering the current economic and political crisis, it is

reasonable to assume that Brazilians would prefer to cut funding for foreign aid when domestic social programs are threatened.

7. Conclusions

Over the last decade, Brazil has pursued an ambitious foreign policy with the goal of finally reaching the historically coveted status of a global power. To achieve this objective, the country increased its number of embassies, pursued an assertive diplomatic strategy in multilateral organizations, and expanded its cooperation initiatives to ultimately become a foreign aid donor. However, now that the country is enduring a severe economic and political crisis, the feasibility of this assertive foreign policy is being questioned (Cervo and Lessa 2014; Malamud, 2017).

At this turning point in Brazilian foreign policy, we aimed to examine Brazilian domestic politics surrounding foreign aid and analyze whether Brazilian citizens truly support the current foreign aid strategy. Our results suggest that most Brazilians support the idea of reducing or completely eliminating spending on foreign aid, an attitude that is reinforced when people are given information on how these funds could be spent in the domestic realm. Then, given these findings, we draw three major conclusions.

First, our chapter poses some concerns in the Brazilian case. In contrast to the PT governments, which followed an assertive foreign policy, the provisory administration seems to be pursuing a less ambitious strategy. Over the last year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closed its Hunger Relief Department and commissioned a study to analyze the

consequences of closing embassies in Africa and Central America⁶³. Similarly, the Ministry of Planning has delayed payments to more than 120 international organizations and is evaluating the possibility of abandoning 34 of them⁶⁴. Then, as the current administration decides whether to follow a less ambitious foreign policy and reduce its investments in foreign aid, it seems probable that Brazilians would support this type of measure. Not only does the average citizen believe that the country should reduce or completely eliminate its foreign aid expenditure, but when given information on how that money could be invested in their own country, the support for cuts increased by almost 9 percent, such that four out of five Brazilians supported reducing foreign aid. Moreover, our findings suggest that subgroups of the Brazilian population, such as older people and those living in the South, tend to have a more negative view of foreign aid. These results could be exploited by candidates able to address the concerns of these specific groups.

Second, our chapter provides insight into emerging countries' cooperation initiatives. Although each case has its own particularities, Brazil is one of a group of developing countries that have expanded their foreign aid policies in recent years (de Renzio and Seifert 2014). One commonality among these nations is the fact that they strengthened their foreign aid policies as their economies were growing and it was projected that their progress toward development would not suffer major setbacks. However, this situation has radically changed for many countries in the last few years.

⁶³ For more information, see <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2016/05/1771982-serra-pede-estudo-de-custo-de-embaixadas-na-afrika-e-no-caribe.shtml>.

⁶⁴For more information, see <http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/politica/2016-06-16/brasil-estuda-deixar-34-organizacoes-internacionais-para-reduzir-custos.html> and <http://economia.ig.com.br/2016-04-15/brasil-deve-r-32-bilhoes-a-120-orgaos-internacionais-como-onu-e-oms.html>.

Given the European crisis and the Chinese economic slowdown, most of these developing countries are now going through economic crises that necessarily impact their ability to pursue an active foreign aid policy. Hence, our results can be extrapolated to other developing countries, especially those democracies in which public opinion constrains foreign policy formulation.

Finally, and from a more general perspective, our results may be relevant to scholars who are interested in how foreign issues can be used by politicians to gain advantage at the national level. It is common for opposition candidates to use foreign policy topics to criticize incumbent candidates. For example, British politicians who supported “Brexit” successfully framed the money paid to the European Union by contrasting how that funding could be used in the public health service⁶⁵. Our findings suggest that, if skillfully deployed, criticisms regarding the amount of money spent on foreign aid can be utilized to gain votes from a significant portion of the electorate.

⁶⁵ For more information, see <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36450749>.

Appendix I

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Control			Absolute treatment			Trade-off treatment		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Obs
Foreign aid perception	0.30	0.46	702	0.38	0.49	818	0.21	0.41	756
Gender	0.51	0.50	702	0.51	0.50	818	0.51	0.50	756
Age	34.41	12.40	702	34.07	12.77	818	34.30	12.64	756
Social class	3.56	1.09	702	3.45	1.18	818	3.48	1.14	756
Brazil's relevance	2.98	0.72	702	3.01	0.74	818	3.00	0.75	756
Brazil's foreign image	2.59	0.97	702	2.53	0.93	818	2.55	0.94	756
Information	3.46	1.28	702	3.55	1.28	818	3.54	1.30	756
Employed	0.69	0.46	702	0.67	0.47	818	0.69	0.46	756
Education	4.39	0.83	702	4.41	0.86	818	4.46	0.91	756
PT	0.27	0.44	702	0.25	0.43	818	0.26	0.44	756
PSDB	0.26	0.44	702	0.32	0.46	818	0.26	0.44	756
Ideology	2.00	0.73	702	2.02	0.73	818	1.99	0.72	756
North	0.08	0.27	702	0.11	0.31	818	0.09	0.28	756
Northeast	0.28	0.45	702	0.27	0.44	818	0.28	0.45	756
Southeast	0.42	0.49	702	0.38	0.48	818	0.41	0.49	756
Midwest	0.08	0.27	702	0.10	0.29	818	0.08	0.27	756
South	0.14	0.35	702	0.16	0.36	818	0.15	0.35	756

Appendix II

```
clear
```

```
set obs 3000
```

```
set seed 12345
```

```
gen id = _n
```

```
generate rand_num = uniform ()
```

```
egen treat = cut(rand_num), group (2)
```

Appendix III

“Entre 2004 e 2014 o Brasil destinou R\$ 1,3 bilhões em ajuda externa ao Haiti”

Between 2004 and 2014, Brazil spent R\$1.3 billion on foreign aid in Haiti.

Appendix IV

“Entre 2004 e 2014 o Brasil destinou R\$ 1,3 bilhões em ajuda externa ao Haiti, dinheiro que poderia ter financiado, no mesmo período, a construção de 43 hospitais no Brasil”

Between 2004 and 2014, Brazil spent R\$1.3 billion on foreign aid in Haiti, money that could have financed, during the same period, the construction of 43 hospitals in Brazil.

Appendix V

“De acordo com a sua percepção sobre ajuda externa, o Brasil deveria”

According to your perception on foreign aid, Brazil should:

Aumentar o dinheiro destinado em ajuda externa - Increase spending on foreign aid

Manter o dinheiro destinado em ajuda externa - Maintain spending on foreign aid

Diminuir o dinheiro destinado em ajuda externa - Reduce spending on foreign aid

Cortar totalmente o dinheiro destinado em ajuda externa - Completely eliminate spending on foreign aid

Appendix VI

a) Brazilian relevance in the international arena

“Indique, na sua opinião, qual é a relevância que o Brasil tem no cenário internacional”

Indicate, in your opinion, Brazil’s relevance in the international arena:

Muito Importante - Very Important

Importante - Important

Pouco Importante - A Little Important

Nada Importante - Not At All Important

b) Opinion on how Brazil is perceived abroad

“Indique, na sua opinião, qual é a visão que se tem do Brasil no exterior”

Indicate, in your opinion, what the image of Brazil abroad is:

Muito positiva - Very Positive

Positiva - Positive

Neutra - Neutral

Negativa - Negative

Muito Negativa - Very Negative

c) Frequency with which the respondent informs him/herself on international issues

“Indique com que frequência você se informa a respeito de assuntos de política internacional. Considere somente o tempo utilizado para se informar em rádios, jornais (eletrônicos ou impressos), revistas, podcasts, programas de televisão e sites de notícias”

Indicate how often you inform yourself about international policy issues. Consider only the time used to obtain information from radio, newspapers (electronic or printed), magazines, podcasts, television shows and websites:

Diariamente - Daily

De quatro a seis vezes por semana - Between four and six times a week

De uma a três vezes por semana - Between one and three times a week

Esporadicamente - Sporadically

Nunca - Never

d) Party identification

“Abaixo você vê uma lista dos partidos políticos que participaram da última eleição presidencial. Marque qual deles recebeu seu voto no primeiro turno”

Below, you will see a list of the political parties that participated in the last presidential election. Indicate which of them received your vote in the first round:

The list included all the political parties that received at least 0.5% of the votes, together with the options “Other”, “I did not vote” and “I do not remember”.

e) Political ideology

“Pensando na sua orientação política, onde você se aloca na seguinte escala, na qual 0 significa “politicamente de esquerda” e 10 “politicamente de direita”?”

Thinking about your political orientation, where do you place yourself on the following scale, with 0 meaning “politically left” and 10 “politically right”?

A scale with the options 0 to 10 was presented.

Appendix VII

Table 4: Cross-tab analysis

P4		Control	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Total
Completely eliminate the money destined to foreign aid.	Count	133	131	192	456
	% within P4	29.2%	28.7%	42.1%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-.9	-3.6	4.5	
Reduce the money destined to foreign aid.	Count	361	373	405	1139
	% within P4	31.7%	32.7%	35.6%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	.9	-3.2	2.4	
Maintain the money destined to foreign aid.	Count	167	278	138	583
	% within P4	28.6%	47.7%	23.7%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.3	6.9	-5.7	
Increase the money destined to foreign aid.	Count	41	36	21	98
	% within P4	41.8%	36.7%	21.4%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	2.4	.2	-2.5	
Total	Count	702	818	756	2276
	% within P4	30.8%	35.9%	33.2%	100.0%

Table 5: Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	70.475 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	70.099	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.751	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	2276		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30.23.

“Public Opinion on Foreign Policy: Conclusions from Latin America.”

1. End of Trip

Things either have changed significantly or have had almost no change almost 100 years after the publication of Lippman’s seminal work, depending on where we focus our attention. Undoubtedly, societies are quite different from what they used to be at the beginning of the twentieth century. The creation and mass structure alone of the Internet allows us to affirm that the world is very dissimilar from when communication was still based on written paper. Furthermore, accumulative research and advances in research techniques have allowed scholars to make huge advances regarding our knowledge on how public opinion generally shapes its preferences, particularly regarding what concerns relate to foreign affairs.

Nevertheless, and despite all of these changes, several of the research questions that have mobilized academics during this century have endured. Among these questions, the two that have guided this thesis stand out: (a) what is public opinion knowledge on foreign affairs, and (b) how sensitive are public opinion perceptions to framing effects regarding foreign policy. Through the three chapters previously presented, using data from a traditional and two survey experiments, we attempted to contribute to this debate by bringing new evidence from Latin America. The remaining steps are to sum up our findings, how they fit into the preceding literature, and how they contribute to research and drive new questions.

2. A Small Contribution

As Castillo et al. (2015) previously illustrated⁶⁶, first from “*Explaining International Political Knowledge in Latin America: An Individual and Contextual Level Approach*”, we can conclude that Latin Americans in general seem to be unknowledgeable regarding foreign affairs. Although differences between the five countries analysed should be considered, on average, at least 40% of those interviewed did not know what the ONU, MRE or OEA acronyms mean. Moreover, approximately only 35% were able to recognize two of those acronyms, decreasing this figure to less than 10% to those who knew the three acronyms.

In this vein, data from an unpublished online survey experiment performed in Argentina and Brazil follows the same trend⁶⁷. In this case, and to analyse another type of knowledge beyond static and general knowledge, participants were asked for three pieces of information: (a) to identify Angela Merkel’s picture; (b) to choose, among four options, how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is typically known; and (c) among four options, who is the name of the president of their neighbouring country. Results showed that on average, only 50% of respondents were able to answer correctly question (a), only 45% could answer question (b), and only 50% could answer question (c). Thus, even when these figures could seem at first sight e more “optimistic” than those from the *The Americas and the World* project, if we consider that it is easier to answer a closed-ended question because

⁶⁶ By way of clarification, our figures are different from theirs, due to the fact that they considered the acronym FIFA, and divided respondents into different categories depending on the number of right answers.

⁶⁷ Coordinated by the *Center of International Negotiations Studies* (CAENI-USP) and the *Universidad de San Andres*, the online survey experiment entitled “*Brazil and Argentina: Public Opinion and Trade Preferences*” was performed during December 2017 with two national representative samples in Argentina and Brazil.

it provides a reference, as opposed to an open-ended question, these results also reinforce the idea of a general lack of knowledge in Latin America regarding foreign affairs.

Second, following Lazarsfeld's advice, we can agree that it would be more appropriate not to speak about a homogeneous public opinion knowledge regarding foreign issues. In contrast, individual and contextual variables explain important differences on what a person will know about foreign affairs. Traditional variables, such as education, income and gender, are all relevant, as shown by the preceding literature. Moreover, differences within countries also matter. In this regard, due to the so-called "socialization process", people living in more crowded cities present a higher probability of knowing about international issues compared to individuals with the same individual characteristics but who live in smaller cities.

The findings of this chapter thus seem to reinforce two classical ideas. Although we cannot affirm that public opinion pays little attention to foreign policy issues, by following the Almond-Lippmann consensus, we may state that generally, public opinion is uninformed regarding foreign policy issues. Our results also suggest that there are important discrepancies between what elites and the general public know about international affairs (Isaacs, 1998). These discrepancies can be shown through the fact that only 10% of our sample demonstrated to be 100% knowledgeable. Education, primarily, and income, to a lesser extent, were the two most powerful predictors of international political knowledge.

Nevertheless, and as stated in the chapter itself, our research has several limitations. A series of issues arise, beyond the aforementioned fact that answers to open-ended

questions might be different from those to closed-ended ones. First, knowledge has been analysed homogeneously, but it is possible that the effects of individual and contextual variables vary depending on the type of information requested (static or changing and general or specific). Moreover, another limitation is observed because city size was the only contextual variable that was considered. Why should it not be expected that other contextual variables will affect public knowledge regarding foreign affairs? It is possible that economic factors, the percentage of immigrants, or proximity to an international border might mitigate the city size effect. Finally, if we previously noted that preceding articles focused only on differences between countries and not between them, this does not mean that the first concern should be abandoned. Therefore, although our findings apply for Brazilians, we are not 100% confident that they are externally valid.

Thus, we interpret our first chapter not as revolutionary but as a small contribution to an area of studies experiencing constant evolution and growth. In this regard, it is clear that a broad research agenda remains open regarding public opinion knowledge on foreign affairs.

3. Sensitivity from a Broad and Specific Perspective

While we attempted in our first chapter to analyse what the average citizen knows about international politics—particularly why a person will know more or less about this issue—it was time to study the analysis on how public perceptions are formed. Longstanding literature has demonstrated that public opinion is influenced by diverse factors. Media (Bennett and Paletz, 1994; Soroka, 2003), elites (Foyle, 1997) and official

discourses (Matsubayashi, 2013) occasionally reinforce opinions, while other media and official sources may compete against public opinion (Entman and Rojecki, 1993; Althaus et al., 1996). These influencers have all been highlighted as important sources from which public opinion draws on foreign policy issues. However, our research question focuses on a preceding step: how sensitive is public opinion to these influences?

The common objective of the chapters *“Framing Effects on Foreign Policy: Experimental Evidence from Emerging Countries and the Argentine-Brazilian Rivalry”* and *“Brazil’s Business First, Domestic Costs of a Troubled Foreign Aid Donor”* was to distinguish whether public opinion is sensitive to framing effects. Moreover, we also performed analyses within samples, as we were aware that there could be differences between respondents’ sensitivity, depending on their previous beliefs and socioeconomic characteristics.

Survey experiments were conducted in Argentina and Brazil to achieve these objectives, although there were two main differences among them. While the Argentinean survey was performed face-to-face with students, the Brazilian survey was performed online with a national representative sample⁶⁸. Although the first attempted to capture public opinion perceptions on foreign policy from a general perspective, the latter did it through a more specific approach and inquired about a specific programme of Brazilian foreign policy.

⁶⁸ Differences in how the two experiments were applied can be explained because at the beginning of the PhD, the project lacked the necessary funding in order to pursue such ambitious goals such as applying a survey experiment to a national representative sample.

Both chapters' results present important points in common despite these differences. First, we find positive framing effects in the first two cases, enabling us to conclude that certain people's perceptions are not consistent on foreign policy issues, regardless of whether the issues are general or specific. This finding does not mean that all citizens have volatile opinions, but that part of the population is susceptible to change what it thinks about foreign policy issues if these are framed in different ways. Second, subgroups of both samples have shown to be particularly sensitive toward new pieces of information. In the Argentinean case, more nationalists and less informed participants appeared to overreact toward Brazilian growth. For the Brazilian case, variables such as age, place of living, political identification, political ideology and country's perception abroad, all affected respondents' support toward Brazil's foreign aid programme when contrasted with how that money could have been used locally.

Next, if framed properly, it is not premature to affirm that part of the population can be manipulated in regards to foreign policy issues. As a consequence, these findings concur with current literature that suggests that foreign policy issues can be used as an electoral tool in order to take advantage in the domestic realm. Sagarzazu and Mouron (2017) have shown that, for the Argentinean case, relations with Venezuela and Chavez have been a topic constantly used by the opposition to criticize the Kirchners' former administrations. In this vein, a working paper also has shown that *Chavism* has been used as a wedge issue by right-wing opposition parties throughout Latin America to break leftist administrations coalitions (Mouron and Sagarzazu, 2016). Thus, we can conclude that international affairs

are increasingly becoming ground for electoral battles due to their susceptibility to framing effects.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that both papers also present several limitations. Framing effects were analysed in an abstract way, but we do not know whether people's sensitivity is affected by how information is mobilized and which vehicle is used to deliver it. We could expect that people would be more open to information that is provided by media that they usually consume or by politicians for whom individuals have a positive image. In contrast, we could wait for a non-effect, or even a negative one, if individuals are stimulated with discourses of people they distrust. Nevertheless, these possibilities are simply speculation, and further research is needed to test these partial hypotheses.

Otherwise, both stimuli were presented on a negative way, namely, a foreign threat and the costs of foreign aid when contrasted with how aid could be used domestically. We are not sure if positive framings will have the same effect. In turn, and probably relevant to any survey experiment, we still do not know how persistent framing effects are, which can oscillate between real, underlying attitude change or simply can induce a temporary increase in subjects' probability of choosing one response over another (Coppock, 2016).

In the end, rather than discouraging a continuation of this research line, all limitations are a clear example of the promise and potential of the field of public opinion's effect on international issues.

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