

# Measuring International Engagement: Systemic and Domestic Factors in Brazilian Foreign Policy from 1998 to 2014

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The literature on Latin American foreign policy analysis has long called for more empirical and theoretical rigor. Because foreign policy making is a multifaceted concept, there are a wide array of outcomes that scholars use interchangeably to proxy it, thus leading to unclear results on its main determinants. Using Brazil as a case study, we offer a methodological tool that, we believe, can contribute to further closing this gap. We developed an index that quantifies the level of foreign policy engagement, taking into account the decisions made by different governmental actors for 192 country dyads along sixteen years. We confirm that Brazil managed to expand its international relations with both the Global South and Global North and that domestic variables that the Workers' Party ideology played a major role in drove the shift toward giving preeminence to countries in the Global South. The results support the usefulness of our tool, which deepens our understanding of foreign policy making in Latin America, bringing new insights to the discussion.

## Introduction

The relative importance of domestic and systemic factors in the explanation of foreign policy of Latin American countries remains understood and a source of disagreement. Many scholars believe that theories formulated for the comprehen-

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sion of American and European realities are inadequate for the interpretation of policies in Latin America, and the lack of consensus on the appropriate levels of analysis and the variables by which foreign policy should be measured has led scholars to use “a variety of variables spanning the levels of analysis spectrum (individual, state, international, global)” (Below 2010, 12) in order to explain the behavior of Latin American states.

While there is no consensus on what the main determinants of foreign policy preferences actually are, a large portion of the literature has relied excessively on episodic evidence, sometimes taken from politicians’ declarations to the media and interviews to diplomats. This phenomenon, however, is not exclusive to Latin American countries, but rather a trend in the study of foreign policy worldwide (Hey 1997, 631; Fearon 1998; Hudson 2005, 2013). With regard to the Latin American region, some authors have raised concerns about the necessity of more theoretical rigor to better understand foreign policy making (Hey 1997; Giacalone 2012; Thies 2014) and claims for more empirical rigor (Hey 1997; Below 2010).

Departing from this gap in the literature, we aim to explore a broader literature on foreign policy analysis to shed light on empirical ways of measuring the elusive concept of foreign policy (Hermann and Hermann 1989; Fearon 1998; Young and Schafer 1998; Signorino and Ritter 1999; Jørgensen 2000; Hermann 2001; Giacalone 2012; Thies 2014) using Brazil as a case study. This paper pursues two main objectives. First, it aims to explain how we combine the policy outcomes of several governmental agencies to proxy the complex process of foreign policy making, as previously recommended (Drezner 2000; Halperin and Clapp 2007; Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Milani and Pinheiro 2016). We have compiled a wide range of data on the activities of embassies and governmental agencies and have applied the rationale to the Brazilian case—one of the countries with the most intertwined bureaucracy—to compose a reliable measure of foreign policy engagement with the world that we name Foreign Policy Index (FPI).

Second, after we evaluate the suitability of FPI vis-à-vis the existing literature on Brazilian foreign policy during three presidencies (1998–2014), and describe general patterns of the country’s foreign policy, we put the FPI to the test analyzing questions that—to the best of our knowledge—no one has yet answered: Did Brazil’s pivot toward the Global South imply a detachment from its links with the Global North? How much of the Brazilian shift toward the Global South was driven by domestic factors, and how much by systemic factors? And finally, to what extent was party ideology an important driver of foreign policy changes during the period 1998 to 2014?

We find compelling evidence to believe that FPI is a useful methodological tool to explore unanswered questions in Latin American foreign policy analysis (FPA). Our analysis indicates that Brazil expanded its links with the Global South when Lula da Silva assumed his first presidency, and did so without compromising the country’s engagement with the Global North. Furthermore, we confirm that the foreign policy shift initiated by the Workers’ Party toward the Global South was primarily determined by domestic variables. Rather than pragmatically accommodating a favorable international scenario (Gardini and Lambert 2011), we find evidence that there were ideological motivations inherent to the Workers’ Party, which shaped Brazil’s foreign policy, particularly during Lula da Silva’s second mandate and Dilma Rousseff’s first.

The paper is structured as follows. First, it reviews the general literature on FPA, which serves to identify gaps in Latin American scholarship to which we can contribute to. Second, we frame our objectives to the Brazilian case in the last three presidential terms, for which we provide a description of the foreign policy contours of each administration we cover. The subsequent sections describe in detail the components of the FPI and then proceed to define and test two empirical hypotheses derived from the literature.



## Literature Review

Departing from the FPA literature that addresses the question of foreign policy change, one particular aspect of our interest in this debate is the distinction between the levels of analysis by which scholars can study the behavior of states and political changes (Chaudoin, Milner, and Pang 2015). In this regard, the review of the general literature (not subject to a specific geographical region), the literature concerned about FPA in Latin America, and finally, the literature on Brazilian FPA are crucial to lay the basis of our arguments.

Creating theoretical frameworks to study foreign policy change over time has been a concern in the literature for many years. This is not a localized geographical issue but rather an omnipresent theme of the FPA literature. Among a variety of approaches, there are references to agency-structure dichotomies (Carlsnaes 1992), the role of leaders and bureaucracy in the policy-making process (Hermann and Hermann 1989; C. Hermann 1990; Hudson and Vore 1995), the role of ideas (Goldstein and Keohane 1993), international norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), and systemic incentives over outcomes of a country's foreign policy (Rose 1998), among others.

This wide range of explanatory approaches has given rise to a long debate about the importance of domestic and systemic factors in explaining foreign policy outcomes and changes (Fearon 1998; Chaudoin et al. 2015). By organizing some of the abovementioned explanatory perspectives, Gustavsson (1999) proposes to group the factors mobilized in the approaches into domestic (political and economic) and structural factors.<sup>1</sup> According to the author, factors located at the international level (structural) are those that refer to power relations between countries and cross-border economic transactions, as well the "institutional conditions governing such transactions" (1999, 83). On the other hand, domestic political factors are those that involve "the support needed from voters, political parties, and societal actors to uphold a certain foreign policy" (1999, 83).

Oppositions between systemic and domestic factors similar to Gustavsson's have become common in the literature. Moreover, there is a domestic interplay of actors involved in foreign policy making, adding complexity to the study of influential factors in foreign policy. In this sense, bureaucratic political models deserve a special note for the purposes of our article. This model, in brief, proposes that foreign policy is the result of a complex array of governmental actors bargaining with each other. Building on previous seminal research (Neustadt 1960, Allison 1971, Allison and Halperin (1972) first questioned the basic assumptions that were being made until that date on the decision-making process of foreign policy in United States, criticizing the analogy between governmental behavior and individual rational human beings. This reductionism of policymaking as the result of a unified rational actor contrasts with the idea of a complex bargaining in the intranational arena, in which organizations play a critical role. This process of "pulling and hauling" (1972, 43) is only captured when a multiple set of actors are considered as units of analysis, acting independently from each other. As the authors put it, the unit of analysis is the actions of a government, which sometimes all go in a similar direction (in terms of policy outputs) but sometimes pull in opposite directions.

While this paradigm has been criticized from early years (see Krasner 1972, Art 1973), the ideas proposed by Allison have had an enormous impact on the study of bureaucracy and foreign policy and are of great value, once allow identify those competing agencies that are responsible for foreign policy. While over the decades this model has been improved and tested empirically through case studies, mostly in the American case (Rosati 1981, Bendor and Hammond 1992, Halperin and Clapp 2007), Latin American literature aggregate little to this debate.

<sup>1</sup> In this article, structural and systemic are considered synonyms.



In Latin America, scholars have historically avoided theoretically guided approaches to studying FPA, and studies of foreign policy based on this geographical region are particularly affected by a lack of consensus on what drives its shifts (Hey 1997; Giacalone 2012; Thies 2014). According to Giacalone (2012), the Latin American FPA field was highly influenced by developments in the American and European academies, which had emphasized the importance of systemic variables in explaining the behavior of the countries of the region. However, the systemic approach was frequently seen as insufficient for explaining foreign policy in Latin America, which led to the development of new theoretical insights and the development of regional social theories, such as dependency theory, prominent during the 1970s (Hey 1997; Giacalone 2012; Lopes, Faria, and Santos 2016).

Despite these limitations, Latin American studies have demonstrated a considerable expansion in terms of approaches used to explain foreign policy choices and changes since the 1990s (Below 2010). The US influence, poor economic resources, leaders and regime ideology and the global distribution of power and wealth, have all been used and continue to be commonly used as explanatory variables (Hey 1997, 631; Below 2010). Regularly, these variables are combined with pluralist approaches, which gained relevance in the regional literature in the 1990s (Giacalone 2012) and assess the central role of ideas, values and ideology influencing political decisions and strategies, including the way a country presents itself to the world (Thies 2014; Chatin 2016).

### Brazil's Foreign Policy in Three Periods

By the end of the 20th century, Brazil had experienced great change, not only in terms of its economy and the welfare of the population, but also in its politics. After two decades of dictatorship (1964–1985), the country's re-democratization at the end of the 1980s raised the possibility of partisan disputes in domestic politics. This scenario prompted significant changes in the conduct of Brazil's international affairs, inaugurating a new period of its foreign policy.

The literature has used a wide variety of proxies to analyze the changes and priorities of Brazilian foreign policy after the beginning of the democratization period. Among these proxies are: the behavior in the United Nations General Assembly (Amorim Neto 2011; Mourón and Urdinez 2014; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015; Jenne, Schenoni and Urdinez 2017), official international presidential trips (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007; Malamud 2011; Schenoni 2012; Visentini 2014), the cooperation programs conducted by the Brazilian government (Milani and Carvalho 2013; Pinheiro and Gaio 2014), the ideological proximity of governments (Burgess 2005; Cason and Power 2009; Mendonça Jr. and Faria 2015; Merke, Reynoso and Schenoni 2018), joint participation in coalitions and bilateral agreements (Cervo 2010; Oliveira, Onuki, and Mancuso 2011; Rios and Motta Veiga 2013; Seabra 2014) and participation in international trade (Galantucci 2014; Vieira 2014)<sup>2</sup> have all been used.

In seeking to interpret Brazilian foreign policy choices during the last decades, the abovementioned literature has addressed, among others, four topics of interest: (a) the changes in foreign policy brought about by Fernando Henrique Cardoso; (b) the efforts made during Lula's presidency to expand Brazil's international influence; (c) the perceived retraction in Brazil's international involvement since 2010 and (d) the determinants of foreign policy shifts, whether domestic or systemic. These topics summarize some of the most relevant general characterizations of Brazilian foreign policy and the FPA production about the country over the

<sup>2</sup> A summary of these different proxies can be found in the *Atlas of the Brazilian Foreign Policy*, proposed by Milani et al. (2014).



period, and are important references to the understanding of Brazil's international movements since the 1990's.

*Changes to Foreign Policy Brought About by Cardoso (1995 to 2003)*

The years of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso presidencies (1995–2002), a member of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party, are considered a crucial period in which Brazil expanded its international engagement in global affairs. The inauguration of a new age of Brazilian foreign policy came with a strategy of “autonomy through integration” (Lampreia 1998). This policy aimed at promoting national interests through participation in international regimes, as opposed to the former autonomy “through isolationism” of past decades, a change attributed to Cardoso. This alteration in foreign policy during Cardoso's years had the notable effect of creating momentum for the increased participation of Brazil in international affairs.

In the course of Cardoso's years as a president, the diversification of Brazil's foreign relations was part of this strategy of the government, which pursued the promotion of Brazilian interests without giving up the general principles that historically oriented the country's foreign policy—pacifism, respect for international law, defense of self-determination, the principle of non-intervention and pragmatism (Cardoso 2001; Vigevani, Oliveira, and Cintra 2003). Throughout this period, Brazil favored relations with the Global North, mainly European countries and the United States. At the time, the United States was at the top of the Brazilian foreign policy agenda due to the central role it played in Brazilian external affairs, mainly because of the influence of the Washington Consensus on Brazilian domestic politics, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations and the US position in important multilateral financial institutions, such as the IMF and the WTO. The United States was at that time Brazil's most important trading partner and the volume of economic relations between the countries had been increasing since the beginning of the process of opening up the Brazilian economy initiated in the 1990s (Carvalho et al. 1999, 16). The importance of the United States for Brazilian exports was a sensitive issue, and US protectionism toward Brazilian products was a constant concern (Carvalho et al. 1999).

To counterbalance the influence of more powerful countries, Brazil engaged proactively in different international forums. The country found a balance between maintaining good relations with the Global North and the autonomy needed to expand its capacity to influence multilateral agendas and promote itself as a global player (Vigevani et al. 2003, 44). South America, and Mercosur in particular, were important political grounds for the aforementioned strategy, as the country leveraged these to project itself as a consensual leader (Borges 2006).

*The Efforts Made During Lula's Presidency to Expand Brazil's International Influence*

In 2002, the Workers' Party won the presidential elections for the first time in Brazilian history. Lula da Silva (president from 2003 to 2010) is frequently cited as the most proactive Brazilian leader in foreign policy terms and is considered a milestone of a pro-left and pro-developing world agenda (Borges 2009). Throughout this period, Brazil increased its diplomatic presence by opening forty embassies worldwide, mostly in Africa; established cooperation partnerships in Latin American and African countries; engaged in South-South multilateral initiatives, such as the IBAS Dialogue Forum, the BRICs, the Summit of South American-Arab Countries, the Africa-South America Summit, and the Community of Portuguese-Language Countries (CPLP); promoted the creation of UNASUR; and built coalitions inside financial organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.

The shift in the orientation of Brazilian foreign policy during Lula's presidency, in a strategy conventionally referred to as “autonomy through diversification”



(Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007; Amorim 2010), left a deep mark on Brazilian foreign policy behavior in foreign affairs. As has been well documented by previous studies, the country sought to cooperate with, and focus on, the Global South, which became a pillar in the strategy of expansion of Brazilian influence in multilateral arenas (Borges 2005; Lima and Hirst 2006).

During the eight years of the Lula administrations, Brazil utilized development cooperation as an instrument of soft-power in Latin America and Africa (Hirst, Lima, and Pinheiro 2010; Milani and Carvalho 2013; Valença and Carvalho 2014), also gaining substantial benefits when markets were created for exports and investments for large Brazilian multinational enterprises (Souza 2012; Duarte 2014; Seabra 2014). The foreign policy of the Workers' Party had a strong ideological component that led to a detachment from the United States and the halting of the advancement of a post-Washington Consensus regionalist agenda (Tussie 2009; Ruggirozzi 2012). Regional politics expanded Mercosur's core to a broader group, UNASUR (Saraiva 2010), which aimed at improving ties among regional partners beyond the Southern Cone to counterbalance US and Mexican influence in the region and to co-opt Bolivarian initiatives headed by the former Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez (Valença and Carvalho 2014).

A large portion of the changes implemented by the Workers' Party government occurred during Lula's second mandate. In this regard, the institutionalization of the BRICS came to play a crucial role in Brazilian foreign policy, especially because of the country's increased capacity to influence multilateral governance institutions (Hopewell 2015). Furthermore, a partnership with South Africa and India established the IBSA Dialogue Forum in 2003. Together, the BRICS and IBSA rapidly became political instruments for Brazil to project itself as a regional and emerging power, allowing the country to strengthen its position as a voice for the developing world (Besharati and Esteves 2015).

During the Lula years, Brazil tried to push forward reforms in global financial organizations, the World Bank, the WTO and the IMF, and to make their decision-making more multilateral. The reform of these institutions was an old Brazilian desire dating back to the Cardoso government (Cardoso 2001). However, part of this long-standing demand had been modified during the Workers' Party's government. Brazilian diplomacy attempted to influence these organizations by supporting the creation of working groups—such as those inside WTO as the G20, NAMA-11, W52, among others. These were examples of active mobilization, joining countries in lobbying for fundamental changes inside the organizations that were considered beneficial to developing countries, and Brazil in particular (Badin and Morosini 2014; Hopewell 2015).

The upward trajectory of Brazil in international politics during the Lula administrations is particularly notable with regard to its role in multilateral arenas, a role that unveiled the possibility of a rising power. This was evident in its performance in the UN MINUSTAH mission in Haiti (Braga 2010) and the offer to mediate in the Iranian nuclear crisis of 2010 (Mesquita and Medeiros 2016).

#### *The Perceived Retraction in Brazil's International Involvement After 2010*

In 2010, Dilma Rousseff, Lula's former Chief of Staff, won the presidential elections by defeating José Serra of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party. With her victory, Africa and South America gained even more prominence and came to be decisive in shaping the new Brazilian role in the world, and the same was true for the BRICS countries. Overall, Lula left a legacy of an intense agenda of bilateral and multilateral initiatives to Dilma Rousseff.

However, unlike the previous four presidential terms, Rousseff's Brazil went through a downsizing of its foreign policy agenda (Cervo and Lessa 2014; Cornetet 2014; Jesus 2014; Saraiva 2014; Saraiva and Gomes 2016; Lehmann



2017). Scholars describing the 2011–2014 period agree that the main features of Lula's foreign policy—a South-South orientation, and a focus on regionalism and multilateralism—were continued by Rousseff. They diverge, however, on the reasons for the diminishing activity of Brazilian diplomacy.

Clearly, the global economic conditions faced by Dilma from the beginning of her mandate were worse than those faced by Lula. In this sense, the slowdown of China's growth changed the structural conditions that favored Brazilian engagement in the world in previous years (Saraiva and Gomes 2016, 83; Urdinez and Rodrigues 2017). The changes in the international economy combined with the reduction in Brazilian competitiveness were underscored by Cervo and Lessa as a reason for this downsizing (2014, 134). According to the authors, “the lack of clear strategies to foster Brazilian investments in innovation and competitiveness and a poor dialogue with business elites ruined the chances to overcome a decrease of commodities prices on which Brazil is highly dependent” (Cervo and Lessa 2014, 145). This idea is corroborated by Doctor (2017), for whom the combination of the progressive loss of influence by domestic private sectorial interest groups in the formulation of foreign policy since 2008, combined with the change in the economic matrix adopted by Rousseff and the politicization of the policy, made Brazilian foreign policy less responsive to interest groups. In the author's point of view, this combination of factors consequently damaged the international status of the country.

Dilma Rousseff's hesitation to participate actively in foreign policy was reflected in Brazilian diplomacy activities (Cornetet 2014; Saraiva and Gomes 2016). Moreover, the personal characteristics of the president were noted as a cause of the winding down of an intensive period of Brazilian foreign policy (Borges and Chagas Bastos 2017). The need to form coalitions in order to govern and the politicization of foreign affairs as an ideological instrument of the government are some of the domestic features that explain the decline (Cervo and Lessa 2014; Saraiva and Gomes 2016).

Because of these reasons, international affairs during the first mandate of Dilma Rousseff were tagged as a “benign multipolarity” (Jesus 2014), a “contention on the continuity” (Cornetet 2014), a “reactive” foreign policy (Saraiva 2014) and a “foreign policy fall” (Cervo and Lessa 2014).

### *The Need for Well-Defined Levels of Analysis*

Since the 2010s, the literature calling attention to the relative importance of domestic and systemic factors in explaining foreign policy has gained important advocates in Latin America. Lopes et al. (2016), for example, propose the adoption of approaches that address the specific constraints that countries are subject to, avoiding the so-called “systemic determinism” in the FPA of Latin American democracies. To do so, the authors advocate for an approach of foreign policy *cycles* by which domestic and international sources of foreign policy are identified and merged. This approach to the domestic and systemic factors influencing the behavior of Latin American countries is also found in the studies that are more closely related to the Brazilian case. For instance, Amorim Neto and Malamud (2015) find that both systemic and domestic factors play a role in explaining Brazilian foreign policy. In their view, it is not only domestic factors—such as the president's ideology and the party in power—but also the material capabilities of the country. They also find that trade surpluses and deficits within each country are important.

Amorim and Malamud's argument about the complex blend of factors in Brazilian foreign policy choices is further explored by Doctor (2017), for whom the Brazilian democratization in the late 1980s opened an opportunity for a more diverse set of interest groups to influence foreign policy, weakening the autonomy of the governments in staking out policy positions (2017, 645). Domestic private and group



interests were, in Doctors' view, important aspects for shaping policy international decisions.

The question of how partisan ideology affects Brazilian international behavior is also frequently found in research made on the strategies and changes in Brazilian foreign policy. [Burgess and Chagas Bastos \(2017\)](#), for example, argue that the main changes in Brazilian foreign policy since the beginning of the 1990s have to do with decisions of the executive branch. The president, consequently, has important power in the definition of Brazilian foreign policy. The opinion of the authors is that individual leaders have decisive strength in the conduction of foreign policy and, therefore, that the drivers of FP change are domestic.

From Lula's government to the end of Dilma's first mandate, Brazilian foreign policy witnessed some advances and retreats from its engagement with the world. The sources of these changes are still in dispute in the literature, although new nuances have been emerged. To address these ambivalences, [Milani, Pinheiro, and Lima \(2017\)](#) explore the idea of *graduation dilemmas*, which addresses that during the period, the ability of Brazil to advance its interests was not homogeneous across all policy fields. In the view of these authors, Brazilian foreign policy positions and the strategies applied for pursuing national objectives in the international arena were constrained simultaneously by the domestic context and resources while also contained by factors from the international system.

Without agreement on how to describe foreign policy, which are the main actors involved in the policy-making process, the importance of worldviews and ideology, and the weight of domestic and systemic dimensions on policy change, scholars can reach to very different answers to the same questions (see [Chaudoin et al. 2015](#)). The literature on the Brazilian case is a good example of this wider issue, one that can be extended to other developing countries such as India and China, and in particular, other Latin American countries ([Hey 1997](#); [Hey and Mora 2003](#)).

### Hypotheses Definition

It is common among foreign policy analysts, both in academia and in the media, to ascribe the sources of the foreign policy mainly to a single agency. From the literature we have reviewed on the evolution of the Brazilian foreign policy since the end of the 1990s, we observe that for most authors the main responsibility for making foreign policy is generally attributed to either an individual (generally, the President, and in second place the Foreign Minister) or an institution (Itamaraty) ([Milani and Pinheiro 2016](#), 1). We, instead, depart from the central assumption that foreign policy is a public policy with special features and therefore subject to a bargaining process and power struggle ([Milani and Pinheiro 2013](#)). Because a public policy can be understood as a combination of actions, ideas and interests and a result of the social relations between individuals, institutions and—in the case of the foreign policy—countries, we consider a complex array of actors and actions of Brazilian international relations with the intention centered to formulate a comprehensive way to look to the foreign policy.

The FPI created by us describes the relations of a reference country—Brazil in our case—with respect to its international peers. The FPI index can be defined as a measure of political engagement with a certain country at a certain time, both in the multilateral and bilateral arena, expressing the relative degree of the interaction between a reference country and its peer compared to other peers in time *t*, and also to that peer in other years. Insofar, the pattern of interactions with a country “*x*” can be looked relatively to the interactions observed with other countries (i.e., “*y*,” “*z*”), and can be used in empirical research as a proxy of the foreign policy agenda-priorities of the reference country.

Since it is an inherently complex concept, which accounts for the overlapping of actions and internal competition among agencies, the empirical codification of the FPI is undeniably subject to reductionisms. Accepting the risks associated with



**Table 1.** Variables in the index

Variable	Description	Source
Annual Exports	Annual Brazilian exports (US\$) to each country	United Nations Comtrade.
Bilateral treaties	Quartile in which the number of bilateral agreements each year is. Values 0, 0.3, 0.6 and 1. 1998–2014.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.
Common markets	Participation as full member in MERCOSUR per year. Values 0 or 1. 1998–2014.	MERCOSUR and the Ministry of Development, Industry and Trade (MDIC) websites.
Convergence in International Financial Institutions	Measure for the support of Brazilian representation on the executive boards of the IMF and World Bank and co-participation in coalitions to which Brazil belongs within the WTO. It ranges from 0 to 1. 1998–2014.	Official webpages of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.
Cooperation programs	If the country is host of a cooperation mission or a bilateral cooperation project in a given year. Values 0 or 1. 1998–2014.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Brazilian Cooperation Agency
Embassies	Embassies in existence in a given year. Values 0 or 1. 1998–2014.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and official journal.
International trips	Official visit of the president of the Brazilian Republic. Values 0 or 1. 1998–2014.	Presidency website.
Inter-regional arrangements	Quartile in which the number of coparticipation in the interregional mechanisms each year is (BRICS, CPLP, IBAS, Africa-South America Summit, Summit of South American-Arab Countries). It ranges from 0 to 1. 1998–2014.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Official websites of the organizations.
Programs led by the Foreign Affairs Ministry	Quartile in which the monetary value of cooperation programs led by the Foreign Affairs Ministry each year is. Values 0, 0.3, 0.6 and 1. 1998–2014.	Transparency Portal (Brazilian Government).
Regional integration initiatives	Quartile in which the number of coparticipation in forums and regional integration organizations each year is (UNASUR, CELAC, ACTO, LAIA). It ranges from 0 to 1. 1998–2014.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Official websites of Unasur, ACTO, LAIA, and ECLAC.
UNGA votes	Similarity in the pattern of votes, ranging from 0 to 1. 1998–2014.	Voeten, Strezhnev, and Bailey v.16 (2016).

*Source:* Elaborated by the authors.

the construction of a composite index, we are convinced that an effort for more empirical rigor is needed in the field of FPA, particularly as it is currently carried out in Latin American countries (Giacalone 2012; Medeiros et al. 2016). However, we are not the first to present such an idea. The use of composite indexes that express political distance between countries has been common in Political Science and International Relations, Economics, Management and Law (Ghemawat 2001; Berry, Guillén, and Zhou 2010; Newman 2012) and common to every index lies the problem of the justification of the choice of indicators that compose it and the methodological procedures to build it.

To proceed to the construction of the FPI, we organized and systematized data available since 1998. Table 1 summarizes the measures and sources of the variables composing the index.



As the index ranges from 0 to 1, the larger the value, the larger the priority Brazil gives to a certain country. Factorial analysis was employed as the statistical methodology used to combine all the indicators into single variable (Jackman 2008).<sup>3</sup> The results are available for 192 countries for each of the years between 1998 and 2014, totaling 3264 observations.

A further step was followed to improve the explanatory capacity of FPI inspired in the reviewed literature in the previous section. Based on the criteria formulated by Gustavsson (1999), we classified each of the variables as either (a) *systemic* if the weight of power-relations between states are determinant to the variable definition and its value hardly changes due to unilateral decisions from Brazil from one year to another, or (b) *domestic* if the variable is highly dependent on the bargaining between social actors within the State and could be instantly modified through an internal process (see Table 2).

Discerning variables as domestic or systemic allowed us to created two sub-indexes, one for international and one for domestic variables, both standardized to have the same scale. After calculating the annual change toward each country, we transformed the results into shares of the sum of the two, which can be interpreted as the percentage of yearly variation explained by each dimension.

In a way, FPI makes a contribution to gaps in the research of Latin American foreign policy making that have been pointed out by other authors (Hey 1997; Giacalone 2012; Thies 2014; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015; Lopes et al. 2016; Doctor 2017). Through the description of the main trends shown by FPI we derive testable hypotheses that fill gaps in the literature. Figure 1 plots the average FPI of Brazilian foreign policy during the period from 1998 and 2014 for the 192 countries. Among the ideas we can draw from the figure, we observe that within the entire period, Lula's second mandate was the most engaged in world affairs and that the slope is positive since 1999. This verified trend is largely consistent with what is argued by the literature. Between 1998 and 2014, Brazil enlarged and diversified its foreign policies by 50 percent, from 0.1 to 0.15 units of the index, which can be confirmed by consulting table A in the appendix.

This trajectory of Brazil's integration into the international scene can be traced back to Fernando Henrique Cardoso's second mandate. As we discussed in more detail in the previous section, the literature attributes to Cardoso changes in foreign policy orientation, at least toward a wider set of partners, and an active participation in international arenas that were later capitalized by Lula (Cason and Power 2009).

As seen, Brazil presented an increasing tendency toward international political engagement in the evaluated period. In section 2(b), we discussed how Brazil's turn to the Global South following Lula's first mandate has received quite substantial academic attention (Milani and Carvalho 2013; Badin and Morosini 2014; Besharati and Esteves 2015; Hopewell 2015). Through an extensive analysis of this literature, we observe that, although much has been said about Brazil's turn to the Global South, an unanswered question remains intriguing: in explaining the Brazilian foreign policy shift, what was the interplay between the Workers' Party's political views of the world and the changes that occurred in the structure of the international system? Was there a factor that prevailed?

If one follows the statement of former foreign affairs minister Celso Amorim, who once declared "South-South cooperation is a diplomatic strategy [...] that originates from an authentic desire to exercise solidarity toward poorer countries. At the same time, it helps expand Brazil's participation in world affairs" (Dauvergne and Farias 2012, 909), we are led to believe that Brazil's approach was mostly pragmatic. However, the literature seems to have two viewpoints: those who speak about

<sup>3</sup>The step-by-step transformation of the variables and the in-depth description of the method for the construction of the indicator is offered in the online appendix. An interactive map of the index is offered at <https://tinyurl.com/yd22opdw>.

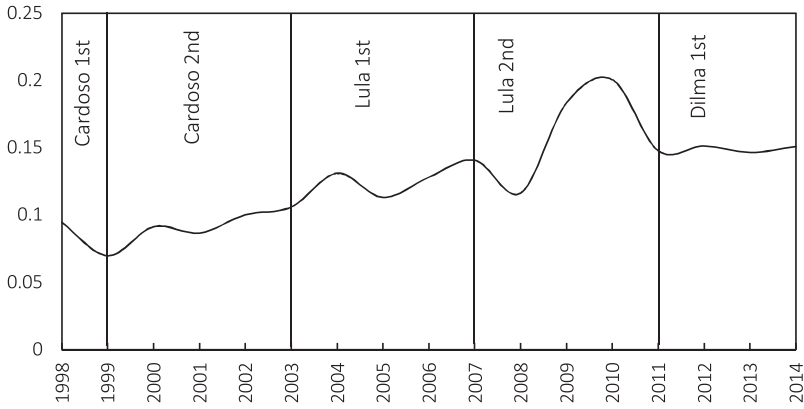


**Table 2.** International-domestic classification

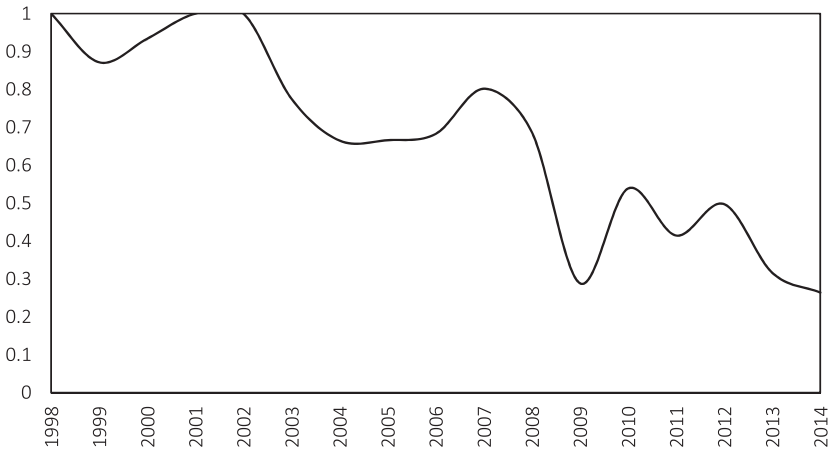
Variable	Class	Explanation
Annual exports	Systemic	Brazilian exports are strongly affected by international commodity prices, and these are determined exogenously. How much and at what price a country buys from Brazil is not something that the government has much control over, and export promotion initiatives such as those promoted by APEX are only worthy when international prices and demand are high enough.
Bilateral treaties	Domestic	While treaties are affected by international politics (which is why they are <i>bi</i> -lateral), the final decision for signing or terminating them relies on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the president, and congressional decisions.
Common markets	Systemic	Common markets are not easily terminated, nor are they created on a yearly basis, and they depend on long-term political negotiations among its country members. They assume the free movement of production factors, so they are also affected by the activities of multinational corporations and diasporas.
Convergence in international financial institutions	Systemic	This variable includes WB, IMF, and WTO coalitions, which are the result of long years of negotiations and voting together, defending the interests of (in the case of Brazil) the least developed countries with a strong dependence on commodity prices and low access to international credits.
Cooperation programs	Domestic	Strongly dependent on budgetary decisions, these programs allocate resources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and need congressional support. Very often, they are terminated when presidents change or when crises hit the economy.
Embassies	Domestic	Relies mostly on a decision taken at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, backed by presidential and congressional support. It is affected by budgetary policies.
International trips	Domestic	Relies highly on the president's decision and the ultimate decision on whether or not to visit a certain country is taken domestically, even though the invitation can be made by a foreign country.
Interregional arrangements	Systemic	The least institutionalized of the three interregional initiatives we considered, these emerged as international arrangements aimed at building international bargaining power (think of BRICS or IBSA) to counterbalance Western influence.
Programs led by the Foreign Affairs Ministry	Domestic	Strongly dependent on budgetary decisions, these programs allocate resources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and need congressional support. Very often, they are terminated when presidents change or when crises hit the economy.
Regional integration initiatives	Systemic	While they do not suppose the free movement of production factors and are institutionally much weaker than common markets, they are also not easily terminated nor created on a yearly basis and depend on long-term political negotiations among country members.
UNGA votes	Systemic	Its outcome is dyadic, as the common share votes Brazil has with other countries also depend on what other countries vote (yes, no, abstain). The delegations representing each country are based in New York and vote in blocks or coalitions, which are quite stable. This variable changes very slowly on a yearly basis.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.





**Figure 1.** Average engagement of foreign policy through the years in the FPI.  
*Source.* Elaborated by the authors.



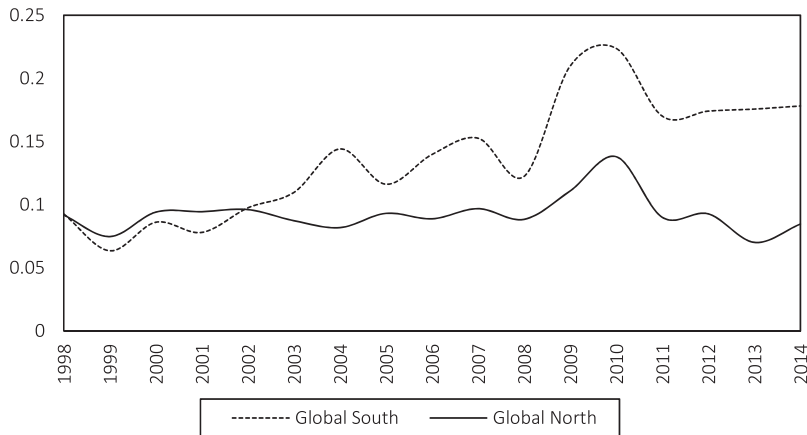
**Figure 2.** Foreign policy engagement with the United States in the FPI.  
*Source.* Elaborated by the authors.

a strong ideological component within the development of the Workers' Party foreign policy (Cason and Power 2009) and others who, while recognizing this ideology, think this decision was mostly a pragmatic one that followed from Geisel's responsible pragmatism during the military period (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007; Gardini 2011).

Despite these divergences, most scholars agree that a shift to the South was made clear during Lula's first mandate. One example of this is the pattern of relations between Brazil and the United States. From a strong engagement with the United States at the height of Washington Consensus to a break that materialized at Mar del Plata's summit to negotiate the FTAA, Brazil made it clear to the world that there had been a change in the way it related to the United States. As depicted in figure 2, we observe how Brazil lost interest in the United States, going from the highest score among the 192 countries in 1998 to scoring very low in 2014.

The dynamic of bilateral relations between Brazil and the United States is a particular case within a broader process. Figure 3 compares the engagement with





**Figure 3.** Engagement with the Global South versus the Global North in the FPI.  
*Source:* Elaborated by the authors.

countries from the Global South to countries from the Global North.<sup>4</sup> When Lula's first mandate started, Brazil registered a shift in its engagement with the two groups, which only widened with time, making South-South relations a priority. The gap between the two groups of countries expanded with time, which shows that the South-South cooperation strategy deepened over the years, particularly since 2008.

Although the figure corroborates the claim of Brazil's turn to the South, we can use the data to test if this movement came at the expense of their relations with the Global North. Our first hypothesis is

**Hypothesis 1:** *Brazil managed to expand its links with the Global South without compromising its foreign policy toward the central economies.*

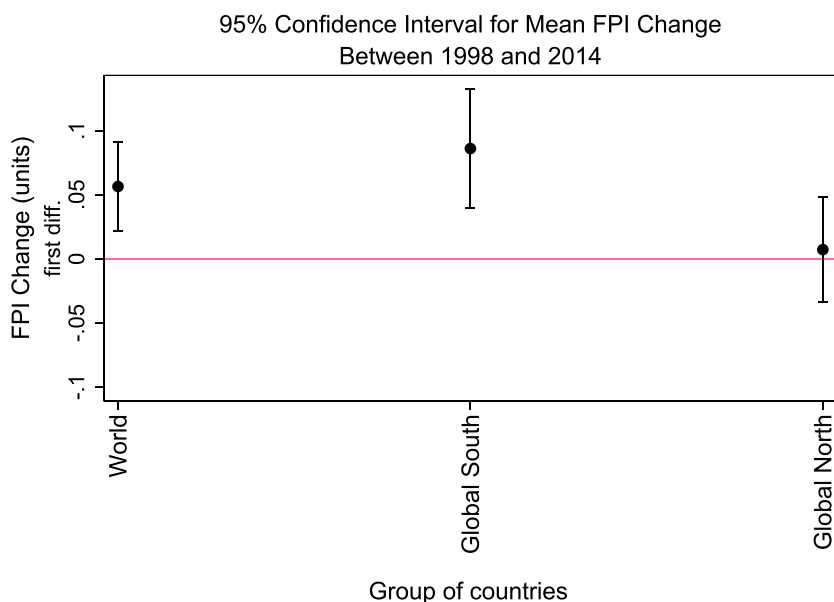
Since the description of this period gives us clues about the dynamics of Brazilian relations with the Global North and the Global South, we can use FPI to explore the sources of the changes of foreign policy for each group of countries and to shed light on the role of ideology during the Workers' Party period. We have mentioned that the interest in understanding domestic, systemic, international, and individual factors as drivers of policy shifts instigated a fruitful debate (Hermann 1990; Carlsnaes 1992; Fearon 1998; Gustavsson 1999, among others), which later influenced academic work on the transformation of Brazilian foreign policy (i.e., Oliveira, Onuki, and Oliveira 2006; Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007; Cason and Power 2009; Gardini 2011; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015).

Most recently, Amorim Neto and Malamud (2015) evaluate whether systemic or domestic factors are more influential in shaping foreign policy in Latin America. The result for the Brazilian case is that—differently from Argentina and Mexico—its foreign policy is influenced by a blend of domestic and systemic factors, the latter being most important. However, if we disaggregate the analysis per country with which Brazil engages, we can test if

**Hypothesis 2a:** *During the period of analysis (1998–2014), domestic politics were more determinant at explaining foreign policy engagement toward Global South than toward Global North countries. If confirmed, this would explain the shift observed in figure 3. In this regard, we can also explore the role of ideology in shaping the shift in foreign policy led by the Workers' Party, which has been a matter of discussion among authors (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007; Cason and Power 2009; Gardini 2011; Dauvergne and Farias*

<sup>4</sup>The criterion used to divide both groups is the Brandt Line, first proposed in 1980 in the Brandt Report.





**Figure 4.** Mean differences in the engagement toward North versus South.  
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

**Table 3.** Comparison of foreign policy among government terms

	Δ Global North	T-test	Δ Global South	T-test
Cardoso (2nd term) vs. Lula and Rousseff	-5.6%	0.55	-85%	9.27***
Cardoso (2nd term) vs. Lula (two terms)	-4.4%	0.36	-69%	7.17***
Cardoso (2nd term) vs. Lula (first term)	2.2%	0.14	-52%	4.74***
Rousseff vs. Lula (two terms) and Cardoso (2nd term)	-12.7%	1.21	25.5%	4.61***
Rousseff vs. Lula (two terms)	16.3%	1.63	9.4%	1.49
Rousseff vs. Lula (last term)	-33%	3.08**	-9.14%	1.13

Note: statistical significance expressed as \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

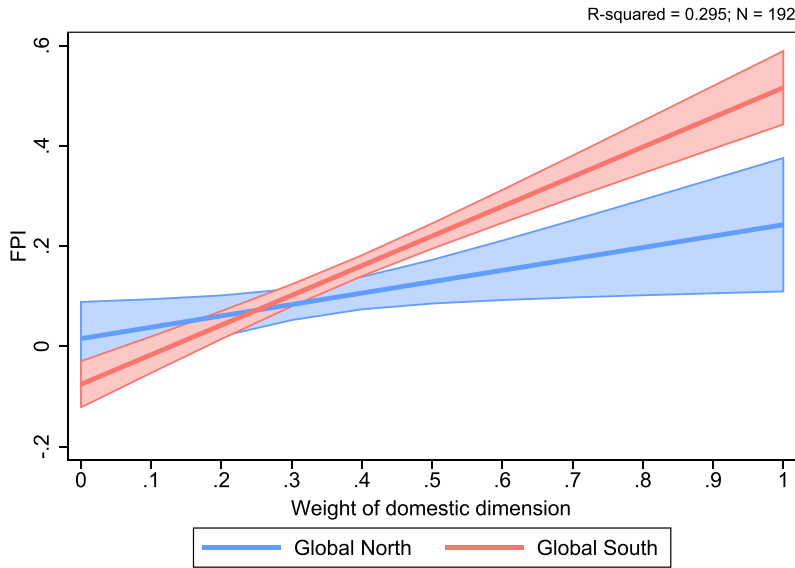
2012; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015). Then, a hypothesis 2b holds that: during the period, partisan ideology had a major impact in the foreign policy making of Brazil.

### Empirical Findings

To address hypothesis 1, we test whether the different priorities given to the two groups of countries constituted a zero-sum game—in the sense that Brazil switched affinities and replaced one group for the other—or not. To do so, we first compare mean changes between 1998 and 2014 with a simple T-test. The result is shown in figure 4, confirming that relations with the Global South grew stronger without a significant retraction from the Global North, which supports the idea that there was no zero-sum logic, but rather, Brazil increased its engagement with the entire world, allocating more resources to its relations with the South without compromising its engagement with the North.

Table 3 summarizes our findings in comparing terms. The changes in the relationships with countries of the Global South were between 59 percent and 86 percent smaller during Cardoso's governments, compared to different periods of the





**Figure 5.** Estimated marginal effects of the domestic dimension's weight on the overall foreign policy engagement.

*Source:* Elaborated by the authors.

Workers' Party governments. The Workers' Party did not increase Brazilian interactions with the Global North compared to Cardoso, and Rousseff's term witnessed a reduction both in interactions with the North and the South when compared to the second mandate of Lula da Silva, although only the retraction from the Global North is statistically significant. Overall, the table shows that when changes in Global South were positive, they were not at the expense of relations with the Global North.

Moving to our second hypothesis, we define two linear regression models to explore the role of domestic politics and ideology in explaining Brazilian foreign policy engagement with the countries of the Global South and North. The first model tests hypothesis 2a by utilizing as the dependent variable the FPI average of the country in the period of study in order to investigate: (a) the weight of domestic matters in the index toward that country, and (b) if the fact that the country belongs to the Global South affects the average score of the index. The model can be defined as

$$\text{FPI average}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Domestic weight}_i + \beta_2 \text{global south}_i + \beta_3 \text{Domestic weight} \times \text{global south}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

The results of the model are expressed as margins of the fitted model (see figure 5). The findings show that the larger the weight of the domestic variables in the definition of the foreign policy toward a certain country, the larger the overall FPI index, and this is even more accentuated for countries of the Global South.

As we have confirmed that engagement with the countries of the Global South was not at the expense of links with the Global North, and that the shift toward the former was driven by domestic variables in the index, we now explore the role of the partisan ideology of the Workers' Party in explaining this shift. To do so, we retrieved information on the partisan ideology of each of the 192 countries in the data from the Database of Political Institutions, compiled by the Inter-American Development Bank (Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2016) and created a dummy variable that proxies for partisan ideology convergence, which assumes the value of "1"



**Table 4.** The effect of partisan ideology on foreign policy engagement

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Lula's first term	0.0293*** (4.92)	0.0292*** (4.90)	0.0322*** (5.30)	0.0272*** (3.48)	0.0266*** (3.44)
Lula's second term	0.0635*** (8.45)	0.0635*** (8.42)	0.0667*** (8.56)	0.0971*** (8.42)	0.0968*** (8.28)
Dilma Rousseff's first term	0.0517*** (5.26)	0.0517*** (5.25)	0.0517*** (4.71)	0.0497*** (3.97)	0.0497*** (3.95)
Shared Ideology	0.00594 (0.45)	0.00308 (0.23)	0.00419 (0.30)	0.00414 (0.30)	0.00390 (0.28)
Lula da Silva's first term × shared ideology	0.00839 (0.69)	0.00842 (0.69)	0.00930 (0.74)	0.00846 (0.67)	0.00804 (0.63)
Lula da Silva's second term × shared ideology	0.0345* (2.32)	0.0346* (2.32)	0.0350* (2.26)	0.0318* (2.03)	0.0316* (2.00)
Dilma Rousseff's × shared ideology	0.0477* (2.24)	0.0477* (2.24)	0.0476* (2.18)	0.0458* (2.09)	0.0454* (2.08)
Domestic weight		0.489*** (9.99)	0.494*** (9.56)	0.498*** (9.77)	0.357*** (9.82)
Global South		0.0340* (1.97)	0.0393* (2.42)	0.0246 (1.55)	0.0299 (1.68)
Political alignment with the US			0.0211 (0.96)	-0.0338 (-0.93)	-0.0377 (-1.19)
Constant	0.0869*** (8.49)	-0.112*** (-4.68)	-0.123*** (-5.25)	-0.0893*** (-3.58)	-0.0877*** (-3.01)
Yearly fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
Regional fixed effects	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	3245	3245	3088	3088	3088
R-Squared	0.055	0.305	0.303	0.311	0.454

Note: T statistics in parentheses; statistical significance: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

if a country's governing party shares a **common ideology** with the Brazilian government with respect to economic policy in a certain year.

To explore the role of partisan ideology during the Workers' Party time in government (hypothesis 2b), we define the following model:

$$\begin{aligned}
 FPI_{i,t} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Shared ideology}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{Lula da Silva's 1st term}_{i,t} \\
 & + \beta_3 \text{Lula da Silva's 2nd term}_{i,t} + \beta_4 \text{Dilma Rousseff's 1st term}_{i,t} \\
 & + \beta_5 \text{Shared ideology} \times \text{Lula da Silva's 1st term}_{i,t} \\
 & + \beta_6 \text{Shared ideology} \times \text{Lula da Silva's 2nd term}_{i,t} \\
 & + \beta_7 \text{Shared ideology} \times \text{Dilma Rousseff's 1st term}_{i,t} + \beta_8 \text{global South}_i \\
 & + \beta_9 \text{Domestic weight}_i + \beta_{10} \text{Political alignment with USA}_{i,t} \\
 & + \beta_{11...18} \text{Regional fixed effects}_r + \beta_{19...36} \text{Yearly fixed effects}_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

Table 4 shows the results of the model specification (2) using a random-effects panel OLS with robust standard errors and defines five different versions of the model, which gradually incorporate controls and fixed effects, which serve as robustness checks<sup>5</sup>. The dependent variable is the FPI score of each country each year. We are interested in the interactive terms between each presidential term and our variable measuring shared partisan ideology.

<sup>5</sup>To choose between fixed and random effects, we used a Hausman test and also controlled for multicollinearity in our right-hand side variables.



The model uses Cardoso's mandate as a reference (constant term) and shows robust findings confirming that during Lula da Silva's second mandate and Dilma Rousseff's first, the FPI was larger in countries with a shared partisan ideology, even after controlling for countries of the Global South and yearly and regional fixed effects. The fact that this effect is not found for Lula da Silva's first mandate and that the magnitude of the effect is almost twice as large during Dilma's term compared to Lula's second presidency suggests an incremental process by which partisan ideology became increasingly influential in shaping foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, versions 4 and 5 of this model include a variable for the yearly convergence of each country with the United States in the UNGA, what we term "Political alignment with the US." The objective of including this variable is to control for structural shifts in the international arena and to aim at ruling out the possibility that Brazilian foreign policy kept the pragmatic strategy that followed from Geisel's responsible pragmatism during the military period (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007), contrary to our suspicion that there was a strong ideological component within the development of the Workers' Party foreign policy that prevailed (Cason and Power 2009).

Our findings put into question the assertion that Brazilian Foreign Policy remained pragmatic in the last two decades. For instance, Gardini argues that

evidence suggests that a country whose aim is to gain greater respectability and prominence within an established club will tend to adopt more pragmatic positions, essentially designed to please or appeal to the members of the club, while emphasizing its own agenda within it. Such is the case, for example, of the rise of Brazil to a Global power status. Brazilian foreign policy has consistently sought a more prominent role for the country in both regional and global arenas, and hence the purpose has not been to radically change those arenas or their principles, but rather to gain status within them in order to advance the Brazilian agenda. (2011, 18)

We find evidence to believe that Brazil's Foreign Policy, far from being purely pragmatic, was strongly embedded in ideology during the Workers' Party's years.

## Conclusions

The literature on FPA is starting to acknowledge that only focusing on the president's actions, and/or those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is not enough to understand this multifaceted policy, which is subject to bureaucratic overlaps, international constraints, and domestic power struggles. Studying the new dynamics of Brazilian foreign policy in a world in transformation requires new paths of investigation (Milani and Pinheiro 2016, 2). To be fair, this is not a phenomenon exclusive to Brazil but one that can be extended to other countries, in particular those of Latin America. Authors seeking more empirical rigor in Latin American FPA could benefit from replicating FPI methodology on other countries. As part of a common effort to assimilate new dynamics and propose new paths for conducting research, we question the way the literature addresses the proxies used to raise questions, support arguments, and draw conclusions about general aspects of Brazilian international affairs.

The FPI captures the engagement of Brazil with its foreign counterparts in a detailed manner. Brazil's trajectory of opening to the world is seen here in an innovative way. Although this is a well-studied theme in the literature, we offer new insights about the country's international behavior. The Brazilian shift to the Global South has been given special attention. In agreement with the literature, empirical tests using the FPI provide evidence that, in fact, Brazil increased the intensity of its relations to southern countries. Nonetheless, our results indicate that the turn to the South did not occur to the detriment of established links with the Global North. In fact, in spite of the relatively superior growth in engagement with countries of the



South, there was no zero-sum-game logic present. This means that Brazil managed its relationships with countries in each of the groups in different ways, managing to strike a good balance between the two.

When analyzing whether domestic or systemic variables are more important in explaining Brazilian international behavior, we provide important insights into the various sources of the country's foreign policy choices. In a comprehensive way, the FPI allows us to measure how many of the changes in foreign policy are driven by domestic or systemic factors in each of the two groups and to draw conclusions about the determinants of foreign policy outcomes. Furthermore, we claim that the country's movement toward the Global South can be understood as a result of a strategy in which domestic factors are more important than systemic factors. They are, however, counterbalanced by the weight of systemic variables when the country deals with the developed world. The challenge now is to understand which circumstances are decisive for triggering each dimension.

We address questions related to changes in foreign policy. Proposing a division of our group of variables between domestic and systemic factors, we suggest diverse uses for the FPI, which may provide clues about the main drivers of the changes in Brazilian foreign policy. Our work addresses important questions about the effects of systemic constraints and domestic concerns on the definition of foreign policy in developing countries, and as we look to collaborate in the efforts of analysts seeking to understand the determinants of foreign policy, we see opportunities for our proposed method to be used in cases other than Brazil. Accordingly, our research agenda will look to replicate studies for other countries at the same time that we endorse initiatives that contribute to the development of the debate, such as the extension of the index. Consequently, we believe that it can be used to advance the debate on how noncentral countries develop their foreign policies, susceptible as they are to both domestic and systemic factors.

Finally, we give empirical evidence for a statement that has caused much discussion in the literature: the extent to which the Workers' Party exerted an ideology-driven foreign policy. We give support to those authors arguing that, breaking with a tradition of technocratic isolation in foreign policy making, ideology played a major role in defining an agenda to deepen the linkages with those countries ideologically closer to Brazil (Cason and Power 2009; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015), which is coherent with Workers' Party efforts to promote Brazil as a legitimate voice in the Global-South's multilateral agenda.

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