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**ALIGN OR BALANCE AGAINST THE BRAZILIAN GROWING POWER?
ARGENTINE REACTIONS MEASURED BY A SURVEY EXPERIMENT**

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ALIGN OR BALANCE AGAINST THE BRAZILIAN GROWING POWER? ARGENTINE REACTIONS MEASURED BY A SURVEY EXPERIMENT

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Abstract: There is a longstanding debate in Political Science on the coherence and consistency that the public opinion has in relation to Foreign Policy. This paper subsidizes this discussion and brings a methodological contribution by comparing the results obtained from two different students' samples on a non-developed country – namely, Argentina. Through an experimental survey applied at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and at the Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda, we find that when stimulated with new information about Brazilian economic growth and military spending compared to Argentina, a) less informed and b) more nationalist people changed their preferences regarding Foreign Policy. In addition, we found a cleavage related to supporting or not Kirchnerismo. However, the effects vary considerably between samples. While students from the most prestigious Argentinean University maintain their preferences stable, students from a new and peripheral university change their opinions when stimulated with new information about Brazilian power.

Keywords: Public Opinion; Foreign Policy; Survey Experiment; Student Sampling.

Number of words: 7500

INTRODUCTION

Civil society has a growing influence in the shaping of Foreign Policy, therefore, theorists and policymakers are asking about the degree of coherence and consistency that public opinion has on this subject. There is an enduring debate within the literature between two main theoretical perspectives: a) those who believe that public opinion on issues of Foreign Policy is structured (Page & Shapiro, 1988; Wittkopf, 1990); b) others that think that, due to either lack of interest or time; the public is volatile regarding this specific subject (Lippmann, 1932; Almond, 1970).

We applied an experimental survey in Argentina on two dissimilar samples of students in attempts to gather new empirical evidence regarding this debate. The objective of our research was to observe whether new information regarding the growth and military spending in Brazil, the main ally and axis of the Argentinean Foreign Policy, changed the preferences of respondents about Foreign Policy.

First, we find that among students from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA), the oldest and most prestigious institution of the country, survey responses showed no sensitivity to the treatment. Except for those who think that Argentina has an important role on the international stage and mainly for those who said that they usually read about international affairs less than once a week; the preferences of the students of this university remained stable.

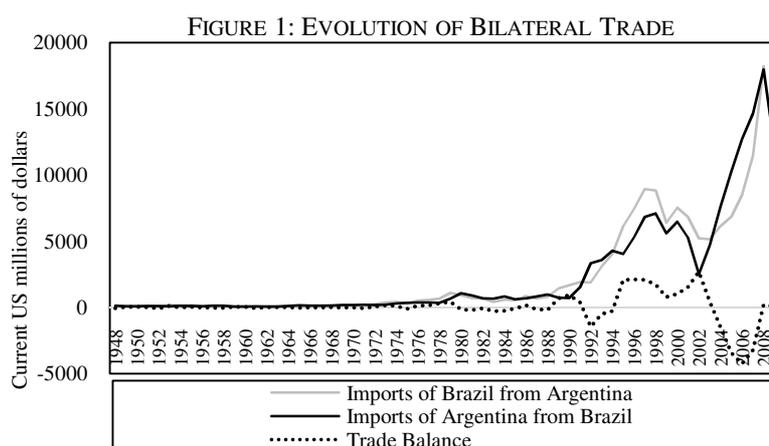
However, the same experiment was repeated at the Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda (UNdAv); an institution recently created and with a different population than the one from UBA, therefore yielding different results. Students who were stimulated with information regarding the Brazilian growth and military spending, compared to those of Argentina, changed their preferences about the strategy that the country should take on Foreign Policy. In turn, as in the UBA, the effect was greater among people who give greater importance to Argentina in the world and among those who are not as informed about international affairs. On the one hand, people that considered Argentina important in the international arena also tended to change their opinions when exposed to relative information. Finally, although investigations have shown that using samples of students can be a good proxy for public opinion, we note that not all students behave the same and therefore we must first ask what type of students we are using to build our samples.

Our paper is structured as follows: We first present a historical evolution of the relationship between Argentina and Brazil and classic public opinion polls that have tried to capture the perception of Argentines in relation to its neighbor. Then, we discuss the theoretical framework regarding the degree of coherence of public opinion on Foreign Policy and the methodology used. We then present the results of our research, first in general and then for each sample. Finally, we draw some conclusions.

FROM RIVALRY TO REGIONAL HEGEMONY

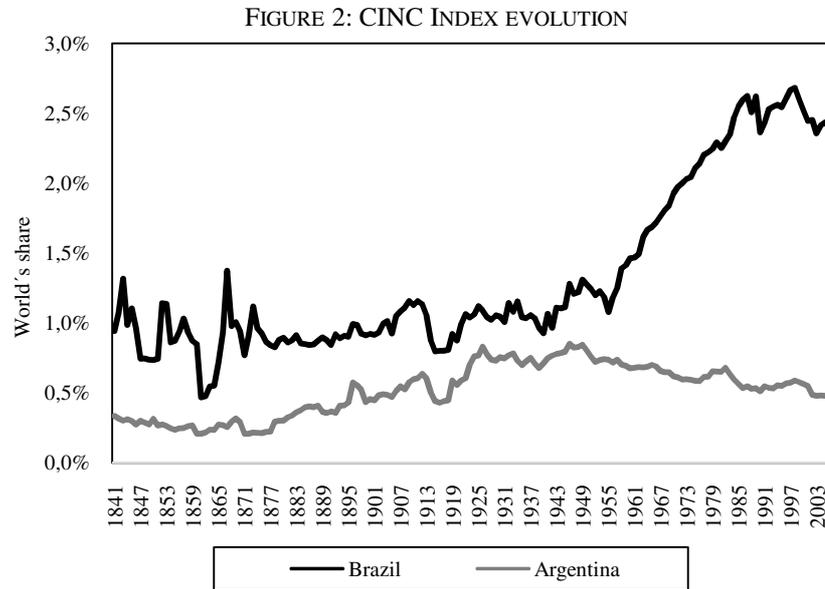
Nowadays, Brazil is the most important country in the definition of Argentinean Foreign Policy (Russel&Tokatlian, 2011). However, throughout its history, the two largest South American countries have gone through stages of rivalry and alliance, which only stabilized after 1985 with the approach of Alfonsín and Sarney in Foz do Iguacu. Since then, Brazil became Argentina’s main ally (Scenna, 1975; Selcher, 1985; Hirst, 1987; Bandeira, 1987; Rapoport& Madrid, 2011).

In economic matters, bilateral trade grew exponentially with the creation of Mercosur in 1991. As Figure 1 shows, Argentina enjoyed a trade surplus up until most of the 90s', reversing the trend after the deep crisis of 2001, when Brazil started to dominate the economic bilateral relationship broadly. In this sense, while 20% of Argentinean exports go to the Brazilian market, Argentina absorbs just 8% of its neighbor’s exports, which also have a higher added value and level of industrialization (Ferrer, 1996; Lavagna& Argentina, 1998; Bernal-Meza, 2008).



Source: United Nations Comtrade

On the other hand, analyzing the historical development of both countries using an Index of National Capabilities², we can see that the power gap between the two countries has widened since 1956, at the beginning of Kubitschek government (1956-1961) (Sikkink&Wolfson, 1993).



Drawing on the theoretical framework of the Realist school, middle regional countries have two options of Foreign Policy in relation to the hegemonic power: to align or to balance. While the first strategy consists on following the biggest power's politics, balancing can be performed in two different ways: (a) *externally*, by combining capabilities with those of other countries in their same situation; or (b) *internally*, mobilizing its own resources in order to more effectively resist the hegemonic State (Walt, 2005, p. 120).

Historically Argentina tried to balance Brazilian power through strategy (b). However, in the mid-80's Brazil reached a clear military superiority and since that moment Argentina went on to have only two options for Foreign Policy towards its neighbor: to align with Brazil to achieve greater participation in international affairs, or to align with other countries in the region to counterbalance Brazilian power.

THE IMPACT ON ARGENTINEAN PUBLIC OPINION

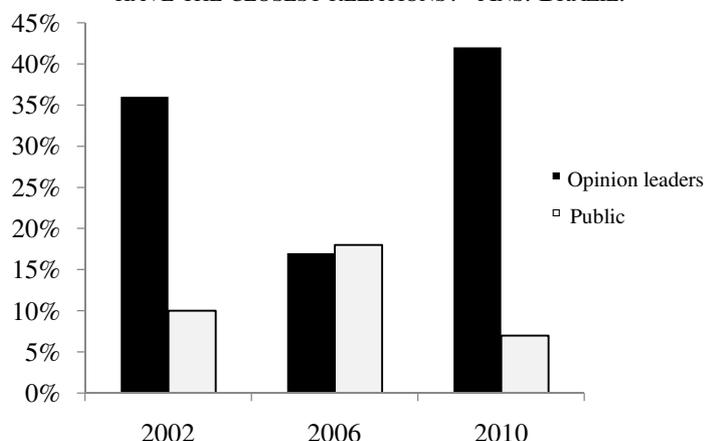
²Index composed by six indicators: (a)State Population; (b)Urban Population; (c)Production of Iron and Steel; (d)Energy Consumption; (e)Total Military Personnel; (f)Military spending (Singer, Bremer, & Stuckey, 1972)

What do Argentines think about Brazil as an emerging global power? Within the research that has systematically attempted to capture the Argentinean public opinion perceptions about Foreign Policy we highlight the survey project carried out by the Argentinean Council for International Relations (CARI) “La Opinión Pública Argentina sobre Política Exterior y Defensa”³.

In the 2002⁴, 2006⁵ and 2010⁶ editions, it was asked with which country Argentina had to establish the closest relations. Brazil fluctuates significantly on time (See Figure 3). On the one hand, the perception of the public remained stable, with a peak of positive opinion in 2006 of 18%. On the other, it was always surpassed by other options, in the 2002 and 2006 editions by Europe (24% and 27% respectively) and in the 2010 edition by the United States (47%).

Opinion leaders answered in 2002 and 2006 that Brazil was the second country with which Argentina should establish its closest relations, always behind the United States. However, this proportion was reversed sharply in the 2010 edition, becoming Brazil the first option with 42%, and now followed far behind by China with 18%.

FIGURE 3: "WITH WHICH COUNTRY ARGENTINA SHOULD HAVE THE CLOSEST RELATIONS?" ANS: BRAZIL.



Source: Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales (2002, 2006, 2010)

Even when some authors claim that Argentinean public opinion perceptions about Foreign Policy have not changed substantially over the past years (Ava &Merke,

³ Together with Latinobarometro research (<http://www.latinobarometro.org/>), this is the only project that applies systematically traditional surveys in order to measure Argentinean perceptions respect to a large number of international issues.

⁴ It interviewed 2408 general people and 192 opinion leaders between November 15 and December 15, 2001.

⁵ It interviewed 1616 general people and 175 opinion leaders interviewed between October 23 and October 23, 2006.

⁶ It interviewed 1606 general people and 170 opinion leaders interviewed between November 17 and November 28, 2010.

2011), data from three traditional surveys and a descriptive comparison between them are not sufficient information to make this statement. In order to answer if public opinion has a structured and coherent perception about Foreign Policy, we present the theoretical framework of our work.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: INTERACTION BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND FOREIGN POLICY

Although some authors claim that public opinion does not exist (Bourdieu, 1979) and that it is nothing more than an “illusion perpetrated by soundings” (Bishop, 2004), we consider the classical work of Converse (1962) to argue that public opinion is a *configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence*. Consequently, we assume the existence of a public opinion in the sense of being the product of individual opinions converging with other factors, which can be measured by opinion polls (Arribas, 1987).

In democratic regimes, public opinion has a specific weight in Public Policy formulation, either as a reference prior to their elaboration, or in the process of accountability and legitimacy that rulers are constantly subject to. Although Foreign Policy cannot be considered a traditional Public Policy (Lentner, 2006) the perception of public opinion on this subject has become a concern of academics and policymakers (Pimenta de Faria, 2008) repeatedly turning on electoral agenda (Holsti, 1992). As the process of economic liberalization and global governance are increasingly including civil society in discussions on international policy issues, it becomes even more necessary to study how public opinion is structured regarding to this kind of issue (Holsti, 2009). As such, it should be noted that within the literature there is an old debate about the degree of coherence that the public has in relation to Foreign Policy.

Some authors suggest that the level of interest that most of the population would have on this issue is very low (Mueller, 2002). The average citizen does not possess enough time to devote to politics in general, much less to external issues (Lippmann, 1932), which would explain the absence of a coherent set of perceptions about Foreign Policy (Almond, 1970). Therefore, given the absence of consistent and stable representations on this matter for society in general (Sousa, 2009), it would be pointless to study what public believes about these issues, particularly because public opinion turn little influence in the Foreign Policy (Jacobs & Page, 2005).

From the another perspective it is argued that the public has consistent attitudes toward Foreign Policy and sensitive issues, such as tolerance to casualties in military operations, which can affect election results (Aldrich et al., 2006, p. 478) and constrain policy choices in critical moments (Foyle, 2004).

Several authors have tried to demonstrate, using traditional quantitative studies, the existence of stability and consistency in public attitudes about Foreign Policy. For example, through a time-series approach and based on 6000 responses from 425 questions applied between 1935-1982 regarding Foreign Policy, Shapiro & Page (1988) and Page & Shapiro (1992) found that 51% of responses did not vary over time⁷ and from the remaining 49%, 22% did by less than 10%, always preceded by sudden changes in the international arena. Through a temporal analysis of surveys applied in the United States during the 70s, Wittkopf (1990) concluded that there is stability and consistency in public attitudes regarding a crucial issue in the United States' Foreign Policy, as is the dichotomy between two opposite alternatives of international insertion: internationalism or isolationism. Finally, Isernia et al (2002) analyze the evolution of the German, French and Italian public opinion between 1954 and 1990 and compare them with the American –by par the most widely studied—on issues of Foreign Policy showing the formers are slightly more volatile than the latter.

However, while the classic quantitative studies excel in the area, new methodological approaches have gained ground in recent years. Deliberative polls⁸ were conducted face-to-face and online during January 2003 to analyze how preferences would be if American citizens previously had been discussing external affairs (Luskin et al., 2006). The results of this research show that people who discussed this kind of subject varied significantly their preferences. Both, those for who did it online as well as those who discussed face-to-face, showed different responses than people who were not exposed to any discussion, which led the authors to conclude that there is a strong deliberative effect for Foreign Policy issues (Luskin et al., 2006, p.18).

On the other hand, the most used methodology in recent times to assess the degree of consistency of public opinion on Foreign Policy issues has been experimental surveys because they can isolate the observable variable from unobservable effects.

⁷ Variation of less than 6%

⁸ Surveys where small groups of people are brought together to discuss certain topics and afterwards their responses are compared before and after the debate and with the group who was not exposed to these activities. For more information see Fishkin (1988)

Experimental surveys on war and the impact of deaths in battle (Gartner, 2008) have shown that when combat losses are presented in relative terms in relation to enemy casualties, the negative effect of the latter information is enlivened and support towards war increases (Boettcher & Cobb, 2006, p. 849).

Recently other framing effects related to this topic were tested but with different results. Americans are concerned not only about the proportion of casualties but also by their distribution across social groups (Kriner & Shen, 2013) and these ones are more tolerated if people believe in a future victory (Gelpi et al., 2009). Therefore, we can say that the effects of framing are not homogeneous and may be influenced by both individual and situational factors (Boettcher & Cobb, 2009, p. 692).

From what literature says so far we can conclude that: (a) the question of the degree of coherence of public opinion about Foreign Policy issues remains open; (b) there are studies that have addressed specific issues of Foreign Policy, but few of them have inquired about countries' international insertion; (c) most—if not all—of the existing literature, has focused on public opinion from developed countries, mainly the United States.

This work attempts to contribute to the mentioned research agenda by providing evidence of how public opinion from a developing country, Argentina, reacts to information regarding the growth and military spending from its main ally, Brazil. Our objective is to see if these stimuli cause the respondents' answers to vary, which would show that public opinion is sensitive to new information on Foreign Policy and therefore that perceptions about this issue are not structured.

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The use of experimental methodology has boomed in the area of Social Sciences and recently in the International Relations field (Hyde, 2010). In this sense, although there is a significant history of experimental work in Political Science (Morton & Williams, 2010), the discipline as a whole saw the rebirth of this methodology in recent years, now becoming a widely accepted and influential approach (Druckman et al., 2006, p. 634).

Our data comes from a survey applied at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), between April 7 and April 11, 2014⁹, to a convenience sample of 893 students from Law School (33.52%) and Social Sciences (66.48%)¹⁰. The choice of this sample is justified by the fact that, despite some limitations (Dasgupta and Hunsinger, 2008), students demonstrated to behave in the same way as the general population (Druckman and Kam, 2009). Moreover, given the convenience of recruiting student participants, this type of sample often provides an efficient way to test initial hypotheses before attempting to generalize one's theory to broader samples (Dasgupta&Hunsinger, 2008, p. 94).

To gain in external validity and contribute to a methodological discussion, we decided to replicate our experiment at the University of Avellaneda (UNdAv) on a sample of 624 students of Nursery (17.32%), Engineering (30.56%), Bachelor of Environmental Studies (12.58%), Physical Education (11.93%), Arts (3.27%), Journalism (16.18%) and Social Sciences (8.17%) between May 26 and May 30, 2014¹¹. While UBA is the oldest and most prestigious Argentinean University, UNdAv has been recently created and most of its students are first-generation students. We consider that checking the results between two different universities can bring an interesting methodological contribution, as authors have compared the results obtained from samples of students in relation to the general public, but still no one has questioned what *kind* of students are making up these samples.

In both cases, with help of the academic staff of the two universities, we first entered in contact with the professors of Law and Social Sciences from UBA and from all the courses from UNdAv. After their approval, we arranged a time in which we could interrupt their lessons and apply the experiment but without letting know the participants in advance. Students were just informed that they were part of a public opinion pool and as stimulus for being part of the research we offered a \$1,000 voucher prize in books. As suggested by McDermott (2014) the participants information was collected in a different piece of paper in order to maintain anonymity.

⁹ A pilot test was applied in early December 2013 to ensure that the questions were clear for all participants. 100 students answered the questionnaire and the question that tried to capture the political affinity in relation to the actual government had to be modified, since in its original format generated rejection by more than 10% of respondents.

¹⁰We applied 900 surveys but 7 of them rejected to participate and were excluded from the sample.

¹¹We applied 630 surveys but 6 of them rejected to participate and we excluded from the sample.

After answering five general questions on Argentina and its relevance on the international arena, participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental treatments, or to a control group. The two treatments¹² gave real information regarding the growth of the Brazilian GDP in the last ten years, and the amount of money spent by Brasilia on military budget. The only difference between them is that one gave information in an absolute way (See Appendix I), while the other compared these figures with Argentina (See Appendix II). As suggested by Boettcher & Cobb (2009, p. 684), one third of our sample did not receive any stimulus, thus remaining in the control group in order to estimate the unique impact of exposure to each type of framing. In order to allocate subjects to treatment and control groups, the following procedure was used: absolute treatment was coded 1, relative treatment coded 2 and control group was coded 0. Then, we randomized that 3 number distribution for 900 cases at UBA and 630 for UNdAv, and mixed the questionnaires according to that randomized distribution.

Immediately after the treatments, respondents were asked which should be the best Foreign Policy strategy for Argentina: (a) Align Brazil or (b) Find new regional partners to counterbalance Brazilian power. Participants also were asked about what they considered were the three most important countries on the international stage, which countries would be the most relevant in the next ten years, if Brazil was a leader in South America, and if Argentina should emulate its behavior. Such questions not only sought to analyze whether the treatment was changing participants' preferences on Foreign Policy, but also to see if the perception that they had in relation to world affairs did also change.

Finally, socio-economic and political questions such as age, sex, gender, income, how frequently they get informed about foreign affairs, the relevance they give to Argentina in the international arena¹³, their perception of the current government¹⁴ and political ideology were made to participants in order to observe whether treatments had greater effect among a specific groups of people.

¹² Treatments were deployed in class by 3 research assistants whom were supervised by one of the authors. We would like to emphasize that they controlled that each person would receive only the treatment for which they had been assigned and, due to that, there were no problems of contagion.

¹³ Participants had to allocate Argentina in a 1-10 scale, being 1 few relevant in the international arena and 10 very relevant. As in both samples this variable presents a normal distribution, we codified it as a dummy, dividing the sample in 1,2,3,4,5 as "non-nationalist" and 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 as "nationalist".

¹⁴ Participants had to punctuate Cristina Kirchner's government in a 1-10 scale, being 1 very bad and 10 very good. As in both samples this variable presents a normal distribution, we codified it as a dummy, dividing the sample in 1,2,3,4,5 as "non-kirchnerista" and 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 as "kirchnerista".

ALIGN WITH A FUTURE GLOBAL POWER?

In this section, we present the results of the survey applied at UBA and at UNdAv, without considering the effects of treatments and observing whether there are differences between various subgroups of our sample.

As we can see in Table 1, over 80% of UBA respondents and 73.97% of UNdAv students think that Argentina should align with Brazil and not seek new regional partners to counterbalance its neighbor power. Although we may consider that stimulus given before could have changed some answers, with those figures we can affirm that there is a broad consensus within Argentinean society regarding this issue.

TABLE 1: ALIGN OR BALANCE TO THE BRAZILIAN GROWING POWER?

	UBA		UNdAv	
	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>
Align	693	80.12	449	74.09
Balance	172	19.88	157	25.91
<i>Total</i>	865	100	606	100

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Secondly, nowadays Argentines believe that there are only two major powers in the world. When asked which are the three most important countries in the international arena (See Table 2), United States and China arise with 94.4% and 77% of the valid responses at UBA and with 86.5% and 65.92% of the answers at UNdAv respectively. Meanwhile, with 36.6% of the answers, Russia was the third most selected country at UBA, result we believe that can be explained due to the proximity of the application of the survey with the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation¹⁵. Meanwhile, only 21% of the participants at this university mentioned Brazil as a current power, standing in fifth place behind Japan (31%) and with the same percentage as England. As a counterpart, UNdAv students chose Brazil as the third most relevant country nowadays.

¹⁵ Crimea was annexed to the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014, two weeks before the survey was applied.

TABLE 2: CURRENT POWERS

	<i>UBA</i>	<i>UNdAv</i>
Argentina	1.9%	12.7%
Brazil	21.0%	29.6%
China	77.0%	66.2%
United States	94.4%	86.5%
France	5.3%	4.0%
India	4.0%	5.3%
United Kingdom	21.1%	22.0%
Japan	30.8%	34.8%
Russia	36.6%	28.2%
Other	6.4%	6.7%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

When asked which will be the three most powerful countries in the following ten years, the answers are more distributed in both samples (See Table 3). China maintains almost the same percentage as in Table 2 at UBA (72.5%), but now as the main option, above the United States. In the case of UNdAv, the trend also reverses and China appears with 51.4% and the U.S. with 50.1% of the valid answers. Brazil reaches 50.3% of the preferences at UBA, almost similar to UNdAv's rate (43.8%) and in both cases becoming the third most selected country.

TABLE 3: FUTURE POWERS

	<i>UBA</i>	<i>UNdAv</i>
Argentina	8,7%	23,3%
Brazil	50,3%	43,8%
China	72,5%	51,4%
United States	61,4%	50,1%
France	2,7%	3,6%
India	22,6%	12,8%
United Kingdom	8,7%	13,1%
Japan	28,7%	29,4%
Russia	28,7%	20,0%
Other	9,6%	11,2%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Continuing with the questions that attempted to capture the perception of Argentineans regarding international issues, we note that there is a marked consensus among UBA respondents that Brazil is the South American leader (71.9%). On the other hand UNdAv's respondents divided into two big groups, those who think that Brazil leads regionally (54.9%) and those who think it does not (45.1%) (See Table 4)

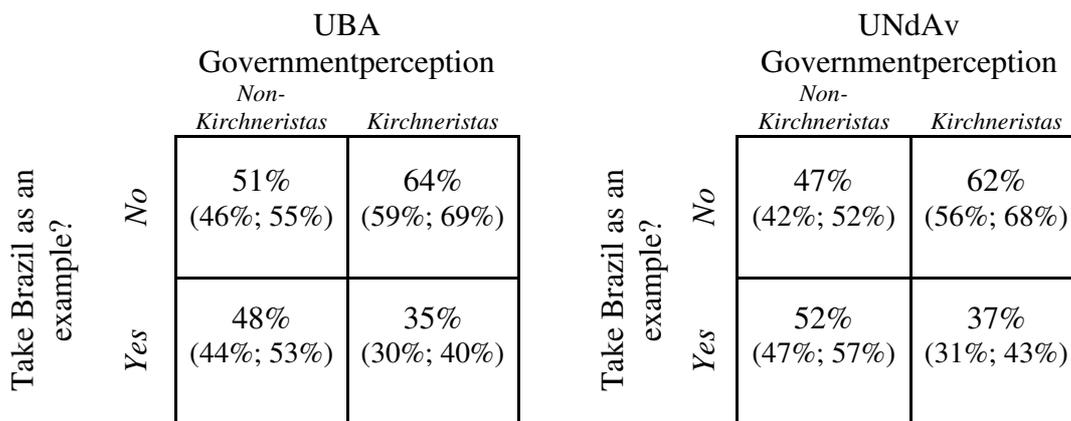
TABLE 4: IS BRAZIL A LEADER IN SOUTH AMERICA?

	UBA		UNdAv	
	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>
Brazil is not a regional leader	247	27.9%	276	45.1%
Brazil is a regional leader	637	71.9%	336	54.9%
<i>Total</i>	885	100%	612	100%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Finally, 44% of UBA respondents and 45.7% of UNdAv students answered that Argentina should take Brazil as an example, although the variation of responses among different subgroups for this question has been considerable. Within UBA's sample, those people who have a negative view of the Kirchner's government credited by more than 13 percentage points that Argentina should take the example of Brazil compared to those that assume to be Kirchneristas. Moreover, considering UNdAv's sample we can also see that the difference between Kirchneristas and Non-Kirchneristas regarding Argentina taking Brazil as an example is of 15 percentage points (See Figure 4). This is probably one of the most important findings of this part, as confirms Russel&Tokatlian's hypothesis that suggests that Brazilian image is used as an "inverted mirror" in the Argentine domestic debate, presenting Brazil as a rising power and Argentina as a decadent country among those who oppose to the government (Russel&Tokatlian, 2011, p. 258).

FIGURE 4: PREDICTED PROBIT COEFFICIENTS (95% CONFIDENCE INTERVALS)



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

STABLE PREFERENCES BUT ON A SPECIALIZED SAMPLE?

What each sample has to say regarding the treatments? Firstly we present the results of the survey experiment applied at the University of Buenos Aires to 893 students from Law (33.52%) and Social Sciences (66.48%). With 308 thousand students¹⁶, UBA is the oldest and most prestigious Argentinean University¹⁷. This is in part because before entering to their undergraduate course, students must pass a common course that lasts at least one year and where the dropout rate is 40%. In turn, professors and the system as a whole are very exigent compared to other universities, principally for students that have to work or have economic difficulties. Thus, only 23% of the people that enters to UBA obtain a degree, which means that we are working with a specialized audience and probably above the population mean.

Clarified this, we can see that the two groups that received some type of treatment, even with a variation of 5% and 6% compared to the control group, present no significant differences in their responses as to which strategy Argentina should take in relation to Brazil (See Table 5). Considering the whole sample, this implies that even when exposed to new information, respondents have not changed their preferences on Foreign Policy.

TABLE 5: MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

	Control	<i>Framings</i>	
		Absolute	Relative
Mean	0.16	0.21	0.22
Observations	272	323	270

Note: Two tailed T- test * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Observing the effect of the treatment on subgroups we find that the relative treatment has a statistical and significant effect between people that believe that Argentina is important in the globally (14%) and between people that usually do not get informed about international issues (29%) (See Appendix III).

When asked if Brazil is a leader in South America, if Argentina should imitate Brazilian actions, and about the current and future role of Brazil in the international arena, the answers were also similar to those participants that received no treatment (See

¹⁶ Census applied in 2011 <http://www.uba.ar/institucional/censos/Estudiantes2011/estudiantes%202011.pdf>

¹⁷ If we just consider the QS ranking indicators “Academic reputation” and “Reputation between employers”, UBA would be the best Latin American university.

Table 6). Therefore, for this sample we can conclude that respondents present stable preferences on Foreign Policy and also coherent perceptions about the international scene.

TABLE 6: PROBIT REGRESSION RESULTS

<i>Dependent Variable:</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Brazil is a Leader in South America	Brazil as a Regional Model	Brazil is a World Leader	Brazil will be a World Leader
<i>Independent Variables:</i>				
AbsoluteFraming	-0.068 (-0.60)	0.131 (1.22)	-0.181 (-1.56)	-0.029 (-0.28)
RelativeFraming	0.005 (0.05)	0.114 (1.01)	-0.203 (-1.67)	-0.007 (-0.07)
<i>Controls:</i>				
VisitedBrazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PerceptionaboutGovernment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Degree of Nationalism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Degree of Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PoliticalIdeology	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	865	851	873	873

Note: T statistics in parentheses * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Elaborated by the authors

NOT ALL THE STUDENTS BEHAVE THE SAME: REPLICATING THE EXPERIMENT

While the preferences of respondents in the UBA remained stable, this could be because students of Social Sciences and Law from this university may behave as a “specialized audience”, that is, people that pay more attention and has a higher knowledge than the mean population. Therefore, we decided to replicate our experiment at UNdAv on 624 students from Nursery (17.32%), Engineering (30.56%), Bachelor of Environmental Studies (12.58%), Physical Education (11.93%), Arts (3.27%), Journalism (16.18%) and Social Sciences (8.17%).

Located in Avellaneda, periphery of the city of Buenos Aires, UNdAv was recently created in 2011. With 8000 students, mostly from first generation¹⁸ and without graduates yet, the university seeks to fulfill the role of social support and be a tool to reintegrate young people who had been excluded from the university system. In this sense, the courses offered are quite diversified in order to respond to a social atmosphere different from UBA’s. For example, if we compare the average income level in both samples, the level of government approval, and the percentage of students in

¹⁸ They are the first in their families to attend to university

each case that have visited Brazil (See Table 7), we see that these are different audiences, being UNdAv students much poorer.

TABLE 7: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO SAMPLES

	VisitedBrazil	Members per family	FamilyIncome	Age	Kirchneristas
<i>UBA</i>	55%	4.15	\$18000	23.8	39%
<i>UNDAV</i>	28%	4.23	\$12500	25.5	47%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

That said, we can see that respondents who received information from Brazilian growth and military spending, compared to the one from Argentina, changed their preferences in 11% (See Table 8).

TABLE 8: MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

	Control	<i>Framings</i>	
		Absolute	Relative
Mean	0.21	0.24	0.32*
N	205	202	200

Two tailed test * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Elaborated by the authors

When looking for the effect on subgroups we see that the relative treatment had more effect on people who commonly do not get informed about international themes and primarily among those that assign greater importance to Argentina on the international stage (See Appendix IV). Meanwhile, people who received the relative treatment gave greater importance to Brazil in the following 10 years, their perception of the world changed (See Table 9).

TABLE 9: PROBIT REGRESSION RESULTS

<i>Dependent Variable:</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Brazil is a Leader in South America	Brazil as a Regional Model	Brazil is a World Leader	Brazil will be a World Leader
<i>Independent Variables:</i>				
AbsoluteFraming	0.195 (1.51)	0.205 (1.57)	-0.0616 (-0.46)	0.265* (2.08)
RelativeFraming	0.200 (1.55)	0.105 (0.81)	-0.138 (-1.03)	0.0974 (0.77)
VisitedBrazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PerceptionaboutGovernment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Degree of Nationalism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Degree of Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political Ideology	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	588	578	595	595

Note: t statistics in parentheses* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Finally, when consulted whether Brazil is the leader in South America and if Argentina should take Brazilian actions as an example, responses also appeared similar to those of participants who did not receive any treatment.

CONCLUSIONS AND A RESEARCH AGENDA THAT REMAINS OPEN

Is public opinion consistent regarding Foreign Policy? It depends. Through an experimental survey we present some new findings that contribute to the long-term discussion previously presented. First of all, as Barabas and Jerit recognize (2010, p. 226), survey experiments generate effects that are observable among particular subgroups and not necessarily in the entire population.

We found empirical evidence to assert that the frequency people get informed about Foreign Policy is a determinant factor, as its effects were perceived in both samples. In this sense, the more a person gets informed, the more structured the opinion it has about this issue. Being so, we should ask ourselves from where individuals are getting information about international affairs. The classic literature in the area establishes that big media has the role of gatekeeping in foreign policy (Hill, 2003, p. 275), because they are the main channel from which most of the population receives information (Puglisi & Snyder, 2011) and because is an issue for which we do not have personal contact (Soroka, 2003, p.28). However, new media and ways of communication have appeared in the last years and with the increasing use of social networks this monopoly of information from traditional media maybe is being disputed.

On the other hand, we also find in both samples that the more relevance a person gives to his or her country in the international arena, the more susceptible to new information that shows its weakness compared to other countries. This finding is interesting if we think of Putnam's two-level games logic (1988). Through a nationalist discourse politicians could influence the electorate and take advantage in the domestic debate. Taking this idea as a reference we also corroborate

Russel&Tokatlian's hypothesis, who suggest that Brazilian image is used as an "inverted mirror" in the Argentine domestic debate, presenting Brazil as a rising power and Argentina as a decadent country in order to criticize the actual government (2011, p.258)

Thirdly, we bring an important methodological contribution by showing that not all students behave the same so a researcher has to know which type of participants we are using when we construct convenience samples. A priori we could say that UBA's sample is closer to a specialists' one, while people interviewed at UNDAV are more representative to the Argentinean general population. However, to corroborate this hypothesis we should apply a population-based experiment (Mutz, 2011), something we expect to be done in future research.

Finally, we may recognize that one of the strengths of our paper is one of its weaknesses. As we previously showed, most of the studies that have tried to analyze the level of consistency of public opinion about Foreign Policy use as reference information collected in developed countries –mainly the United States—and, because of that, by carrying on our experiment in a developing country we are contributing with a new case in the literature. However, there might be cultural differences as well as specific characteristics of each country that may affect the degree of consistency of public opinion regarding Foreign Affairs (Hermann and Ozkececi-Taner, 2011). Hence, in order to and draw general conclusions about “Public Opinion” we should reply this type of research in countries with different characteristics, in order to isolate specific effects.

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APPENDIX I – ABSOLUTETREATMENT

“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 Gross Domestic Product of Brazil reached in 2013 US\$ 2253 billion dollars, having grown 340% in the last 10 years. In addition, the Brazilian Armed Forces are currently composed of 327,000 active troops and their budget in 2013 reached the sum of US\$ 30.3 billion.”

APPENDIX II – RELATIVETREATMENT

“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 brasileras 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 brasileros.”

“According to World Bank statistics, the Gross Domestic Product of Brazil reached in 2013 US\$ 2253 billion dollars, having grown 340% in the last 10 years. This is 5.5 times larger than Argentina’s. In addition, the Brazilian Armed Forces are composed of 327,000 active troops and their budget in 2013 was of US\$ 30.3 billion. The number of active troops in Argentina is currently of 86,000 active troops and the military budget is US\$ 5.2 billion, 15% of the Brazilian budget.”

APPENDIX III: STRATEGY TOWARDS BRAZIL RISE (UBA)

	Government approval		Degree of nationalism		Degree of information		Visited Brazil		Ideology	
	Kirchneristas	Non-Kirchneristas	Nacionalistas	Non-Nationalists	Non Informed	Informed	Yes	No	Left	Right
Absolute Framing	0.199 (1.03)	0.175 (1.14)	0.186 (1.15)	0.167 (0.92)	0.191 (0.98)	0.178 (1.17)	0.251 (1.45)	0.113 (0.66)	0.158 (1.17)	0.28 (1.06)
Relative Framing	0.169 (0.85)	0.258 (1.61)	0.393* (2.35)	-0.000 (-0.00)	0.414* (2.05)	0.105 (0.66)	0.179 (1.00)	0.25 (1.42)	0.217 (1.58)	0.246 (0.81)
Constant	-1.017*** (-7.02)	-0.967*** (-8.26)	-1.091*** (-9.00)	-0.842*** (-6.04)	-1.056*** (-7.18)	0.943** (-8.12)	0.848** (-6.51)	1.107** (-8.57)	0.980** (-9.70)	1.020** (-4.83)
N	342	522	493	371	330	534	382	473	697	167

Note: t statistics in parentheses | * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX IV: STRATEGY TOWARDS BRAZIL RISE (UNDAV)

	Government approval		Degree of nationalism		Degree of information		Visited Brazil		Ideology	
	Non-Kirchneristas	Kirchneristas	Non-Nationalists	Nacionalistas	Non Informed	Informed	No	Yes	Left	Right
Absolute Framing	0.183 (0.87)	0.0768 (0.42)	-0.0387 (-0.17)	0.2 (1.16)	0.0758 (0.38)	0.164 (0.85)	0.259 (1.61)	-0.239 (-0.86)	0.224 (1.37)	-0.141 (-0.54)
Relative Framing	0.376 (1.83)	0.31 (1.72)	0.0679 (0.3)	0.467** (2.77)	0.443* (2.22)	0.242 (1.31)	0.561*** (3.5)	-0.225 (-0.85)	0.360* (2.21)	0.288 (1.18)
Constant	-0.866*** (-5.64)	-0.758*** (-5.86)	-0.833*** (-5.19)	-0.786*** (-6.25)	-0.863*** (-6.09)	0.746*** (-5.40)	0.856*** (-7.26)	0.689*** (-3.67)	0.857*** (-7.14)	0.687*** (-3.93)
N	270	336	224	382	291	315	435	165	433	173

Note: t statistics in parentheses | * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001