Abstract

Climate change is one of the most challenging situations that the international community faces nowadays, since tackling the problem involves a transnational action coordinating policies between developed and developing countries. Within this framework, the present work will be focused on the role of Brazil and Mexico in negotiations during the Conferences of the Parties held in Kyoto and Copenhagen in 1997 and 2009, respectively. It will be argued that material explanations cannot fully address the behavior of the actors and, therefore, an ideational perspective is needed. It will be asserted that the international status, as a socially constructed position within the international system, is influencing the behavior of the states in multilateral negotiations.

In order to perform the present analysis, status will be considered as a twofold concept. On the one hand, the position of the actor vis-à-vis other actors would deal with the level of leadership of the country in global politics. In this regard, leading states are expected to have an active participation in negotiations. On the other, the position vis-à-vis environmental norms and values will determine the level of supportiveness to the adoption of legally binding commitments: environmentally concerned states would favor the emergence of stronger regimes.

Introduction

Global warming is one of the most relevant and complex problems that the international community currently faces: still far from being solved, its negative consequences have grown extraordinarily fast (IPCC, 2007). Moreover, it poses a global challenge in terms of collective action problems, due to its transnational nature. In this context, the importance of emerging powers in the discussion has increased, as it is becoming essential to reach a truly global solution. In fact, one of the main concerns relates to the problem of bringing the emerging countries on board (Rong, 2010; Never & Betz, 2014; Hallding, et al, 2011; Buys, et al, 2007). In this regard, the present work will seek to address the foreign policy of Mexico and Brazil in Climate Change negotiations in order to contribute to the achievement of a more complex and meaningful understanding on the topic.

In a context characterized by a global redistribution of power and the emergence of the developing world, Brazil and Mexico appear as the main Latin American aspirants to become leading players in international politics. In fact, both countries are often regarded as emerging powers, as their participation in relevant global forums evidences: both are members of the G-20 and the G-5, the five leading emerging economies invited to join the G-8. Thus, this research is structured as a comparative analysis and uses a Most Similar Systems Design. Both Mexico and Brazil present similar patterns not only in terms of material interests, but also regarding their historical and political problems. They are countries from the same region, with similar history, culture and political concerns. In addition, they present similar situations in terms of potential costs and vulnerabilities related to climate change. But despite similar, their behavior during the talks has differed. Brazil has played a highly relevant role in negotiations by actively participating since the very beginning of the process, while Mexico has shown a much more passive position. Moreover, they have also shown different positions
towards the adoption of commitments. It will be asserted that the international status, as a socially constructed position within the international system, is the independent variable that explains the variations of the emerging countries’ foreign policy within the negotiations.

For that purpose, the present work will be organized in four parts. First, a review on the literature will be presented as well as the main arguments supporting an ideational approach. Accordingly, a theoretical framework based on the concept of status will be proposed, in order to present a more complex addressing of the issue. Second, it will be performed an analysis on the status of the two cases at the most relevant moment of the negotiations: the third Conference of the Parties (COP), held in Kyoto in 1997, and the COP-15, held at Copenhagen in 2009. Third, the behavior of both countries in the two chosen moments will be addressed, in order to observe the relation between the independent and dependent variable. Finally, a set of general conclusions will be presented, with the intention of boosting up further research on the future.

The limits of rationalism

Addressing states’ behavior in environmental negotiations has been widely considered by International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis scholars. In this regard, Sprinz and Vaahtoranta (1994) is probably one of the most cited works. Their explanation is based on a costs and benefit logic, taking into account two domestic variables: the country’s ecological vulnerability, on the one hand; and the economic costs of abating pollution, on the other.

According to this, the authors present a four-fold typology for foreign policy regarding international regimes on the environment (Figure 1). States categorized as “pushers” are expected to struggle for strict norms in the international arena, since they are facing high vulnerability but low costs of abatement. In contrast, those actors with low vulnerabilities and high costs will act as “draggers” of negotiations by opposing the emergence of an international regulatory regime. In the middle, there are two mixed positions. On the one hand, “bystanders” show both low vulnerability and abatement costs: despite their little incentives, the low cost of compromise make them more supportive to international regulations than “draggers”. On the other hand, “intermediate” states face a tricky situation. In spite of their high ecological vulnerability, the high abatement costs appear as a major inconvenient for their participation. As a result, “intermediates” may support the emergence of international regulations but are not willing or cannot afford the costs.

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<tr>
<th>Abatement Costs</th>
<th>Ecological Vulnerability</th>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Bystanders</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Draggers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Pushers</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Intermediates</td>
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Figure 1. Foreign Policy according to costs and vulnerabilities
(Sprinz and Vaahtoranta, 1994)

Regarding the behavior of emerging countries, Rong (2010) uses this framework to perform his analysis on the G5 countries –Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa– in climate change negotiations. Nevertheless, applying a rationalist approach to the cases of Brazil and Mexico is problematic. Looking into the post-Copenhagen period, Rong observes that both countries present comparable levels in the five analyzed variables (2010, p. 4589).
Both countries show relatively high mitigation costs. In terms of GHG emissions, Brazil has presented higher numbers, particularly when Land-Use Change and Forestry (LUCF) is taken into account (Figure 2). Mexico showed a cleaner record in this regard, nevertheless its emissions has also been significant in regional terms.

In terms of fuel production, however, Mexico has been a more relevant oil producer than Brazil (Figure 3). Moreover, Brazil presents a rather clean energy production matrix since half of the energy that is consumed in the country comes from renewable resources, mainly hydroelectricity (EIA, 2012).

**Figure 2. GHG emissions in million tonnes of Equivalent Carbon Dioxide (1985-2012)**
*(World Resources Institute, 2014)*

**Figure 3. Daily oil production by thousands of barrels (1985-2012)**
*(BP, 2013)*

In terms of vulnerabilities, Rong proposes taking into account the potential reduction of agriculture outcomes, the rise of the sea level and the impact of natural disasters in both the population and public spending. In this regard, both countries present similar risks in terms of agricultural losses, the rise of the sea-level and the impact of natural disasters. In fact, Mexican numbers are slightly higher: the potential losses in agricultural outcomes by 2080 would represent 1.4 % and 1.0 % of the Mexican and Brazilian Gross Domestic Product, respectively. The damage caused by natural disasters was greater in Mexico as well. According to the International Disaster Database by the Centre for Research on the
Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED, 2013), the damage caused by climatological disasters in the last thirty years was considerably higher in Mexico than in Brazil (Figure 2).

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>24,908,34</td>
<td>3,253,60</td>
<td>8,634,74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>68,779,82</td>
<td>13,186,02</td>
<td>26,799,20</td>
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*Figure 4. Damage caused by climatological disasters in millions of US dollars (CRED, 2013)*

Despite facing similar situations in terms of costs and vulnerabilities, Brazil and Mexico have shown different levels of activity during the negotiations of climate change and stated different positions. From this point of view, rational-choice explanations are not enough to explain their differences. Moreover, changes in the position of the countries in time are also difficult to address from this perspective: the major impact of the creation of the BASIC group in the negotiations is a clear example in this regard. As part of its concerns on how to bring the emerging countries on board, the European Commission fostered the participation of the so-called BASIC group in the climate change talks, empowering the position of its members: China, India, South Africa and Brazil. These countries were considered relevant for the negotiations not only as a consequence of their level of GHG emissions, but also because of their political influence (BASIC, 2007a). Within this context, it should be highlighted that BASIC became a key player in Climate Change negotiations since the COP-15 in Copenhagen and its members’ participation increased mainly as a consequence of belonging to the group and not as a result of a change in terms of their material interests (Qi, 2011; Falkner, Stephan, & Vogler, 2010; Bodansky, 2010).

**Identity, norms and status**

In his article “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy”, Kalevi Holsti builds a theoretical framework based on the interaction between ‘role conception’, the idea of the state about itself and the environment, and ‘role prescriptions’, expectations on appropriate conduct, as main sources of the position or status of the state in the international system and, ultimately its behavior (1970). Despite the lack of unanimous definition, the author addresses the existence of a wide general consensus on ‘role’ and ‘status’ as clearly different concepts. The author observes that while role refers to behavior, status meant a certain position in a given system. Moreover, the role was the embodiment of a given position or status in the international system: as Linton put it, “a role represents the dynamic aspect of a status” (quoted in Holsti, 1970, p. 239).

The main advantage of his analytical framework is the inclusion of both domestic and international factors from an ideational perspective. In the present work it will be asserted that both national conceptions on the role and the prescriptions attached to the status are important to explain foreign policy. In this regard, Bengtsson and Elgström point out that “an actor’s foreign policy, while being to a large extent driven by internal ideas and processes, is also partly shaped in response to others’ expectations and reactions in an adaptive fashion and thus represents a socialization game displaying characteristics of a learning process” (2012, p. 94).
In this regard, the work of Eyre and Suchman on status and norms and the purchase of weapons is extremely helpful (1996). According to the authors, the actor’s behavior in terms of military expenditures is not explained by material and strategically needs, but on the very contrary by “the culturally constructed definition of the situation and of appropriate action within the situation” (1996, p. 87).

**Analytical framework**

In general terms, environmental negotiations have been historically characterized by a North-South cleavage where most of the developing world perceived environmental protection as opposed to development. In this regard, southern countries have been united by four main ideas guiding their behavior: the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR); the concept of sustainable development; funding for the developing world; and transfer of technology from the North (Williams, 2005). The present work will seek to address the question on why similar states—or even the same state in different moments—show different levels of attachment to the development approach to environmental protection. The main hypothesis is that the international status of the emerging actors shapes their position in international negotiations.

International status is an intersubjective construction, depending not only on the evoked identity by a state, but also on the norms and the recognition of the rest of the international actors. As Holsti points out, the interaction between the role conception and the role prescription is essential in order to identify the position and the actual behavior of the state (1970). Hence, the interplay of the two spheres will be tackled, taking into consideration that they cannot be differentiated since they mutually and simultaneously co-constitute each other. Consequently, the present work will concentrate on sources from both the national and the international level.

The role conception held by each state is deeply based on the interpretation of the world and the desired place within it. Jutta Weldes argues that “the meaning which objects, events and actions have for ‘states’ are necessarily the meanings they have for those individuals who act in the name of the state” and that they “need to engage in a process of interpretation in order to understand both what situation the state faces and how they should respond to it” (1996, pp. 280, 276-277). The author also states that policymakers use cultural and linguistic resources in order to socially construct a wide representation of the world, including an ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Role prescriptions, on the other hand, also influence the determination of the international status of the actors. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, a norm is “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (1998, p. 891). Besides, the authors also assert that intersubjectivity is central to the analysis of norms since “we only know what is appropriate by reference to the judgments of a community or a society” (1998, pp. 891-892). Regarding the question on how to identify norms in international politics, Finnemore and Sikkink observe that they “prompt justification for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors that we can study” (1998, p. 892). Policymakers’ explanations on their behavior are always pointing to recognized or emerging norms in international politics in order to legitimize their actions.

As stated before, status is mainly linked to the socially constructed position of an actor within a system and in relation to others, including states, institutions and norms. In this regard, the present analysis focuses on two aspects of the international status of the actors. The first dimension refers to the positioning of the state towards other actors. In this regard, state identity is defined by Banchoff “as self-placement with respect to other states, international
institutions and the historical past” (1999, p. 271). The position vis-à-vis other actors is deeply linked to the expected level of leading status to be achieved (Eyre & Suchman, 1996). The hypothesis in this first variable is that higher levels of leadership would tend to more active foreign policies, while lower levels would produce more passive behavior.

Secondly, the position of the state towards environmental norms and values would determine the content of its foreign policy. In the present case, the political awareness on environmental protection and its presence in the political discourse will be the focus of the analysis. It should be highlighted that political concern on the topic is not equal to environmental performance, despite their mutual relation. In this regard, it could be expected that little environmental concerns are associated to a strong defense of the aforementioned principles attached to national development, while high awareness on the topic to a more flexible approach. Besides, it should be observed that states insecure about their international status are more prone to embrace international norms: non-leading actors should show a less harsh defense of the abovementioned principles (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Considering the two proposed variables, four ideal types of behavior can be identified (Figure 5). Those countries in leading positions and showing high environmental concern would present a rather flexible approach to the aforesaid set of norms attached to development and a proactive behavior within negotiations. In case of the non-leading actors, they will support the engagement of developing countries. On the contrary, those states in leading positions whose elites are close to a development-focused paradigm would try to avoid international commitments. Those countries on non-leading positions, or not seeking them, would adopt similar positions but with very little participation in the negotiations.

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<tr>
<th>Position on environmental norms</th>
<th>Leading</th>
<th>Non-leading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>Supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-concerned</td>
<td>Draggers</td>
<td>Bystanders</td>
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Figure 5. Foreign Policy according to Status

It is of utmost importance to highlight that, in order to avoid endogeneity, both variables are going to be defined as the previous conception adopted by domestic actors and the international community on the status of the state within the system. Thereby, the measurement of the independent and the dependent variables will be performed in two analytically differentiated moments. Besides, status-related positioning as independent variables will be addressed in terms of general patterns, while the dependent variable is focused on the concrete behavior of the state in the specific field of climate change regime negotiations.

Accordingly, the analysis of legal frameworks and official documents previously stating the position of the country is essential. In the case of Mexico, for example, the National Plan of Development (PND) and its department programs are key documents establishing the main priorities of the country in terms of public policies. Furthermore, articles by ministers or official communications are also strong evidence on the vision of political elites on the world and the country. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil (MRE) publishes twice a year the Review on Brazilian Foreign Policy, including all the statements, articles and key press releases made by the President, the Ministry of External Relations or high-level officials.
As an intersubjective construction, status depends on external perceptions. Considering the strong power on shaping perceptions of the major players in the system, their main documents and statements will be analyzed. In the case of the United States of America (USA), for example, we can mention the National Security Strategy (NSS) or key speeches of the President or the Secretary of State. In addition, speeches by chief of governments at the Opening Debate of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) often offer valuable insights of several countries on the expected position of themselves and other states in the international system.

In terms of the dependent variable, the behavior of the states in climate change negotiations, the work will be performed mainly by the analysis of statements made in the forum and of reports and transcriptions on the negotiations held in the COPs. In this regard, we should mention the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB), the Assessment Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and specialized documents and reports.

The case of Mexico

Leadership

Mexican foreign policy has been traditionally influenced by the bilateral relationship with the USA and the possible levels of autonomy from his powerful neighbor (González González, 2008; Domínguez & Fernández de Castro, 2009). Historically, the relation was mainly characterized as a “bargained negligence”, a framework where Mexico could dissent in most of the areas, as long as it cooperated, at least tacitly, with the American vital interests. Within this frame, Mexican foreign policy counterbalanced the USA by a strong attachment to international law, including non-interventionism and self-determination and an orthodox approach to the question of sovereignty. It should be also highlighted that despite a defensive position at the beginning, the Mexican diplomacy positioned itself as a leader of the developing world in the seventies, mainly through a high profile action in multilateral forums, including the Non-Aligned Movement, and proposals such as the reform of the economic world order (González González, 2008).

However, systemic changes in the early nineties due to the end of the Cold War impacted on the country’s foreign policy and its attitude towards Washington. Even though the administration of Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) progressively accommodated the external position of the country to the new international situation, Mexico showed different conducts regarding economics and politics (González González, 2008). On the one hand, Salinas boosted an open economy, including closer relations with the USA and the North American Free Trade Agreement, trade liberalization, foreign investment promotion and the incorporation of the country to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). On the other hand, Mexico rejected any kind of foreign interference in domestic politics, refused the adoption of mechanisms of democracy and human rights promotion and even precluded the presence of international observers in the 1994 presidential election. The following administration, headed by President Zedillo (1994-2000), reasserted this approach, at least in the first years of government. In fact, even when recognizing the emergence of new debates, such as drug-trafficking, terrorism, pollution and democracy promotion, Mexico highlighted the importance of avoiding them to be used as “pretext to justify interference in our internal affairs” (Presidencia de la República de México, 1995, p. 14).

This two-speed opening has three main consequences on the position of the country in the international arena. First, Mexican diplomacy was deeply focused on trade and investment-related issues. External perceptions confirmed this point as well: even the 1996 and 1997
National Security Strategies of the USA (NSS) were focused on the role of the country as trade partner and the problems originated by the 1994 financial crisis instead of other security issues (US Presidency, 1997; US Presidency, 1996). Secondly, its shift towards the USA and becoming an OECD member seriously damaged its position in Latin America as a regional leader (González González, 2008). Thereby, previously a leader of the Southern world, Mexico aimed to become a “meeting point” for the developed and the developing countries (Zedillo, 1994). Thirdly, Mexico’s reluctance to embrace democracy and human rights as international values and its own poor democratic record negatively affected its participation in multilateral discussions (González González, 2008).

The result was a low profile foreign policy, particularly in political discussions. In spite of the assertion of the need of an “active foreign policy to consolidate the presence of Mexico in the world and defend our position in international relations and in multilateral forums”, the PND 1995-2000 presented no Foreign Policy Sector Program, but only working plans on trade and exports (Presidencia de la República de México, 1995, pp. 8, 140).

President Fox (2001-2006) attempted to change the general approach on foreign policy. Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Castañeda, proposed a high-profile strategy, arguing that “the international community expects that Mexico adopt a leading role in global affairs” (2001). For that purpose, the government decided to quit the historical strong attachment to non-interventionism, it sought further participation in multilateral forums and committed with human rights and democracy as global values (Domínguez & Fernández de Castro, 2009). In 2007, President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) included a “responsible foreign policy” as one of the main guidelines of his development plan. In this regard, he pointed to the importance of “Mexico in the construction of the world order” and the need to “resume its international leadership” in order to “extend the validity of the values and principles of democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights, as well as sustainable development” (CEFP, 2007, pp. 57-58). The Foreign Policy Program established as one of its main goals to put “Mexico in its rightful place on the international arena”, since its position did not reflect “its economic and commercial scale, the richness of its natural resources, its privileged location on the continent or its demographic and cultural importance” (SRE, 2007, p. 21). Some positive results include its membership in G-5 and G-20 or hosting relevant multilateral conferences, as the UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002 or the COP-16 in Cancún in 2010.

However, the policy pursued by Mexico had many drawbacks too. First, it collided many times with the American interests, as the denial to support the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Secondly, the position of Mexico as an intermediate country between the developed and the developing world damaged its leadership and its representativeness of the global South. Thirdly, external perceptions on the leadership of the country were not unanimous. Despite a growing relevance of the country, it was not always observed as a major player or rule-maker. As an example, could be mentioned the fact that the G-5 has clearly declined its importance vis-à-vis the BRICS countries, which Mexico is not a member of, as representatives of the emerging world.

Environmental awareness

The first institutional arrangements on the environment were highly characterized by a passive position to deal with the problem, mainly focused on avoiding pollution and preserving the health of the population, as the 1971 Federal Law to Prevent and Control Environmental Pollution shows (Pérez Calderón, 2010). In the early eighties, a more
comprehensive and proactive approach was adopted, primarily as a consequence of the 1982 enactment of the Federal Law of Environmental Protection and the creation of the Secretary of Urban Development and Ecology. Likewise, the promulgation of the 1988 General Law on Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection embodied the new ideas and is still one of the cornerstones of the current environmental legal infrastructure. The Rio Conference and the consolidation of the sustainable development paradigm in environmental politics were reflected in the creation of the former Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries in 1994, currently Secretary on Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).

However, environmental norms have not always been a priority to the country. At the time of the Kyoto negotiations, the level of concern regarding environmental issues in general and climate change in particular was relatively low. Despite the existence of governmental institutions dealing with the topic, both their capacities and scope were rather limited (Pérez Calderón, 2010). Besides, despite institutional changes implemented in the early nineties, the PNDs and the main official documents showed almost no significant environmental concerns.

Moreover, regulating frameworks in key issues such as forest or water management were only enacted almost a decade later: the law on Sustainable Forest Development was passed in 2003; on National Waters in 2004; and on Wildlife and Biosecurity in 2005. President Calderón (2007-2012) sought to boost the environmental agenda in the country and, as a result, the concept of sustainable development was set as a main guideline in the PND, which included stopping deforestation, reducing GHG emissions and taking adaptation measures to reduce global warming effects among other measures to achieve its goals (CEFP, 2007). In terms of climate change, Mexico also began to further develop its own legal and political framework. In 2009, the SEMARNAT and the Secretary of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP) published a study entitled The Economics of Climate Change in Mexico, becoming one of the most relevant documents for national decision-makers; the General Law on Climate Change was passed in 2012 (SEMARNAT, 2013; SHCP & SEMARNAT, 2009).

Despite a latecomer to the topic, Calderón emphasized its meaning: the incorporation of environmental concerns in the PND in 2007 or the fostering of legal arrangements on the issue, as well as the importance of climate change and environment in foreign affairs were clear evidence of the weight assigned to the issue by the presidency. Calderón also highlighted the importance of facing climate change in most of his international speeches, as for example his statement at the opening of the UNGA in 2008, when he proposed the creation of the so-called Green Climate Fund to assist developing countries (Calderón, 2008).

The case of Brazil

Leadership

Traditionally, Brazilian foreign policy has been attached to three main guidelines (Lechini & Giaccaglia, 2007; Lafer, 2002; Soares de Lima & Hirst, 2007; Hurrell, 2008). First, it has looked for an autonomous foreign policy that boosts its economic development. In this regard, Brazil has identified itself as a Southern developing country. Second, the country has consistently shown a flexible and pragmatic respect to international law. According to former Foreign Minister and scholar Celso Lafer, the country positioned itself “between unrealistic radical legalism” and “pure power politics” (2002, p. 59). Third, its foreign behavior has been deeply guided by the idea that Brazil has to be a significant player in the international arena. Besides, the country has also shown a very active participation in multilateral forums: clear examples are the Brazilian long-standing claim for a permanent seat at the UNSC and the fact
that it has been the non-permanent member along with Japan that has participated most years in the body.

During the Cardoso presidency (1994-2002), Brazil focused its external behavior in accommodating itself to liberal globalization. This approach was mainly characterized by a strong emphasis on economic and trade affairs but also by the acceptance of many international norms, regulations and values, such as “democracy, economic freedom and social justice” (MRE, 2008a, p. 183). Likewise, Minister Lampreia observed that Brazil was “in tune with the two main forces that are shaping the world today: political and economic freedom on the one hand, and cooperation through integration and trade on the other” (MRE, 2008d, p. 84). Even though the Cardoso administration sought to reduce frictions with the USA, it maintained most of the traditional positions in terms of foreign policy, including its North–South agenda: the inclusion of social justice as one of the guiding values of the nineties is not part of the Washington Consensus but a long-standing position of Brazil in domestic and international politics. Within the Non-Aligned Movement, Vice-President Marco Maciel highlighted the validity of the principles that had inspired the creation of the forum (MRE, 2008a, p. 191). Furthermore, Lampreia observed in August of 1995 the importance of strengthening partnerships with countries like Russia, China, India and South Africa, considering their “many natural resources and great international projection in their respective regions” and “common interests in the international agenda” (MRE, 2008b, p. 290).

Moreover, the country continued looking for a systemic relevance in international politics: Minister Lampreia wrote in January of 1996 that “Brazil’s foreign policy faces the challenge of expanding and consolidating its presence (…), in line with the dimensions of the country, its economic capacity and its peaceful tradition” (MRE, 2008c, p. 287). At the Brazilian Congress, he pointed out that “it is not enough to be relatively large and important, it is necessary to act accordingly” and highlighted the importance of a “significant presence in the five continents” (MRE, 2008c, pp. 167, 169).

Both Lula Da Silva’s (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff’s (2011-2014) administrations sought to deepen its traditional guidelines in foreign policy and reasserted its self-perception as a Global South leader. In this regard, Minister Amorim claimed in 2008 for a “fairer and more balanced” international order, stressing that “it is necessary to start rearranging the world in the direction that the overwhelming majority of the mankind expect and need” (MRE, 2008a, p. 211). In an academic lecture, Amorim also pointed out that “Brazil is ready to assume its responsibilities” in order to build “new governance, more open and participatory” (MRE, 2008a, p. 100). Nonetheless, Brazil was not aiming to achieve radical modifications of the system, but to change the global order in a non-confrontational way: President Lula stated at the UNGA that “countries are moving beyond old conformist alignments with traditional centers” but without “taking a stance of confrontation” (Da Silva, 2008).

Furthermore, Brazilian diplomacy has reinforced its presence in multilateral forums and its role as a norm-builder. Besides, it showed a growing participation in new multilateralism, by playing a leading role in financial global governance organizations, such as the G5 or the G20, and political initiatives, like BRICS –with Russia, India, China and South Africa– and IBSA –with India and South Africa.

The consolidation of its regional leadership was also essential to achieve its goals. Not only Brazil boosted the creation of the Union of South American Nations, but also showed a revitalized position in other issues, including its leading role at the UN Mission in Haiti or the strengthening of mechanisms of South-South cooperation. The country also sought to improve
its relations and presence beyond the area, including Central America and the Caribbean and Western Africa (Hurrell, 2008; Soares de Lima & Hirst, 2007).

It should be highlighted that external perceptions often supported the self-conception of Brazilian elites. In 1993, American diplomat and scholar George Kennan identified Brazil as a “monster country”, along with the USA, Russia, China and India (Lafer, 2002). The 2006 NSS of the USA highlighted the importance of working “with other nations that serve as regional and global engines of growth – such as India, China, the Republic of Korea, Brazil, and Russia – on reforms to open markets and ensure financial stability” (US Presidency, 2006, p. 26). Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, stated at the Council on Foreign Relations in 2009, that Washington should “put special emphasis on encouraging major and emerging global powers – China, India, Russia and Brazil, as well as Turkey, Indonesia, and South Africa – to be full partners in tackling the global agenda” (Rodham Clinton, 2009). The same year, French President Nicolas Sarkozy supported Brazil during the debate on the UNSC reform and identified the country as a “great power” in South America (Sarkozy, 2009).

Environmental awareness

Brazilian record on environmental politics has been usually criticized by both non-governmental organizations and other states. Traditionally, political elites have framed the environmental protection in opposition to economic development and subordinated to the latter. Largely dependent on the exploitation of primary resources, this was the main approach to their management, including the Amazonia, the largest rainforest in the world, sixty percent of which is located in Brazil. In terms of foreign policy, a clear indicator of the impact of this view can be observed at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 where Brazil heavily opposed the recognition of the environmental problematic as a global issue (Rodrigues Chaves, 2001).

In terms of institutional framework, a Special Secretary on Environment was created in 1973, while the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment was founded in 1985. The creation of the Ministry was in fact the starting point for a set of measures to improve the country’s record and image regarding the topic. The extent to which an actual change took place has been largely debated by politicians and scholars (Johnston, 2001; Rodrigues Chaves, 2001; Barbosa, 1993; Schwansee Romano, 1999). While some academics asserted that democratization and the influence of international institutions had positively impacted the policy-making on the environment; others affirmed that environmental concerns were still secondary vis-à-vis other goals such as economic growth or security. Nevertheless, as part of the new set of policies regarding the environment, Brazilian diplomacy sought a high-profile leadership and these efforts culminated in the hosting of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Despite a rising awareness, Brazilian elites were still struggling with the conflict between environment and development. In this regard, Minister Lampreia observed in 1996 that the problem was increasingly complex, since the coexistence of “growing pressures to exploit natural resources” and “growing domestic and international pressure for preserving the environmental heritage” (MRE, 2008d, p. 114).

During the presidency of Lula, the Brazilian government set the course towards building a greener image for the country. Regarding climate change, its diplomacy insisted systematically on two issues: on the one hand, developed countries should maintain the lead on the adoption of mitigation commitments; on the other, Brazil was already taking measures in order to tackle the problem. Minister Amorim affirmed to be “concerned about the
resistance of the developed countries to shoulder their part”, while asserting that “Brazil is doing its part”, by foreseeing an 80% reduction of deforestation in the Amazonia and the drop of CO₂ emissions in 4.8 billion tons for 2020 (MRE, 2009, pp. 103-104; Comitê Interministerial sobre Mudança do Clima, 2008). Moreover, he highlighted the fact that Brazil presented a rather clean energy production since 45% of the consumption in the country was renewable, while the world average was only 12%. President Lula presented the same arguments at the UNGA, underlying that no OECD country had a rate higher than 5% in terms of renewable energy production. Moreover, he highlighted that Brazil would “reduce CO₂ emissions by 4.8 billion tons, more than the sum-total of all developed country commitments” (Da Silva, 2009).

The Kyoto Protocol

Despite the existence of previous studies on the topic, climate change definitely reached the political agenda by the end of the eighties. In 1988, the IPCC was created in order to address the problem from a scientific point of view. In the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed, with the objective of providing the needed framework to agree on commitments on GHG reduction. The principle of CBDR was also included in the agreement, meaning that developed countries, which were identified in the Annex I, have greater responsibility in terms of both historical and current emissions. After entering into force, the first COP took place in Berlin, in 1995. The Berlin Mandate set down the basis for further negotiations on a protocol to establish targets on GHG reductions to Annex I countries. In 1997, COP-3 at Kyoto was the beginning of the first commitment period: the parties achieved an agreement on quantitative targets and schedules for emission reductions for developed and the former Soviet countries.

International status of the actors

In terms of leadership there were clear differences between the two analyzed countries. Brazil had achieved a strong position in the system as a consequence of three reasons. First, Brazilian foreign policy had historically been guided by search of leadership. Second, it had proved an active participation in multilateral forums and rule-making processes. In fact, since the late eighties and early nineties, Brazilian governments deliberately sought to acquire a more significant position in environmental discussions: the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio is a clear indicator in this sense. Third, external perceptions seem to positively respond to Brazilian aspirations, since both scholars and politicians had increasingly regarded the country as an important actor, with a growing role to play in world politics.

While Brazil had traditionally sought a leadership position in international politics, Mexico had showed a much more inconsistent attitude towards its international status, ranging between isolationism and the quest for regional leadership. Furthermore, its identity transition from a third world country to a member of the OECD had diminished its influence in the emerging world. Besides, foreign policy was not at the center of the preoccupations of the government, as it was addressed before.

In terms of environmental concerns, both countries showed low levels of political awareness at the time of the Kyoto negotiations. First, it was observed that environmental issues were not at the top of the political agendas. In fact, the presence of the topic in the public discourse was extremely low. Second, although more pronounced in the case of Brazil, the perception of environmental protection as conflicting with development was widespread in Latin American countries (Williams, 2005). Third, external perceptions were often suspicious about the real extent of the changes adopted by the developing countries. In sum, both states exhibited
relatively low levels of preoccupation towards the environment, even when Mexico showed a slightly better performance in terms of institutional framework.

Thus, according to the analyzed variables and the proposed model, in the Kyoto negotiations Brazil should be qualified as a ‘dragger’, an active player but reticent to adopt measures; whereas Mexico was a ‘bystander’, trying to avoid any significant participation (see Figure 6).

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<tr>
<th>Position on other actors</th>
<th>Leading</th>
<th>Non-leading</th>
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<td>Concerned</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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Figure 6. Status and foreign policies in COP-3, Kyoto

The negotiations

Brazil showed a very active position since the very beginning of the negotiations, mainly focusing on defending the position of third world countries. During the 7th Session of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM-7), the Brazilian diplomacy had an active participation and submitted a proposal to address the measurement of the GHG emission reductions. Based on both CBDR and “polluter pays” principles, Brazil argued that the base for calculations on the commitments should not be the country’s current emissions, but their historical contribution to temperature change, since “the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gas has originated in the developed countries” (UNFCCC, 1997). The Brazilian proposal had two main political implications: first, it would delay the adoption of commitments by developing countries; second, the responsibilities of the developed world would increase (Johnson, 2001).

During the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, discussions on the potential commitments to be assumed by the developing world arose on December 5th. Developed countries, including the EU, the USA and Japan proposed a “double conditionality”, meaning that Annex I countries need an early agreement of non-Annex I parties on future commitments. This “progressive engagement” was firmly opposed by the G77 and China, who stressed the low level of per capita emissions of the developing world as well as the priorities of social and economic development. In this context, Brazil accused developed states to imply that "if you don't deliver, we won't deliver", replying that "until you deliver, we don't discuss" (ENBa, 1997). Meanwhile, Mexico showed almost no participation in the discussion. Despite the fact that, at the end of the conference, Mexican officials stated that the country was “taking on responsibilities and will continue to do so regardless of the outcome in Kyoto”, the country showed no active position and did not present any specific proposal regarding voluntary commitments for the developing world (ENBb, 1997).

Brazil also played a significant role in the negotiations in terms of technology transfer and funding. The Kyoto Protocol foresaw the implementation of three mechanisms of flexibility in order to help countries to comply with their binding GHG emissions targets: International Emissions Trading, Joint Implementation and the Clean Development Mechanism. Being a Brazilian proposal, the latter consisted of the possibility for the developed countries that could not fulfill their commitments to pay a penalty to a fund, which would be used to finance
emission mitigation projects in the developing world. Once more, both the principles of CBDR and “polluter pays” were supporting this approach.

The extremely active position of Brazil regarding forestry and land-use changes should also be highlighted. In this regard, its policy sought to use forests in the calculation of carbon sinks, on the one hand; and avoid using forest-conservation in the calculation of emissions reductions, on the other (Johnson, 2001). The first point stressed the argument that responsibilities should be calculated based on net emissions, that is, the carbon emitted minus the carbon absorbed. Since the Amazon forest absorbed more CO$_2$ than deforestation-related emissions, Brazil was clearly expecting to obtain credit in this regard. Apparently contradictory, the second goal was supported by three arguments: first, forest preservation itself did not contribute to mitigate climate change; second, the extremely difficult enforcement of this point did not assure avoiding deforestation; third, maintaining the control of the Amazon was perceived as a key security goal by political elites (Johnson, 2001).

In sum, Brazil showed an extraordinary active behavior and positioned itself as a leader of the G-77 group, representing the perspective of the emerging world. In this regard, the role of the country was crucial in order to avoid commitments for developing countries and to achieve mechanisms of funding and technology transfer. Even though the Brazilian foreign policy on forestry and land-use change can be analyzed in material terms, it could also be addressed within the present framework. The extremely active role and the arguments offered on the issue are consequences of the aimed leading position of the country in international politics, as well as its long-standing perception of environmental issues as subordinated to economics and security concerns.

On the other hand, Mexico clearly played a less significant part in the negotiations. According to the present theoretical framework, three status-related arguments explain the country’s foreign policy. First, Mexico had not systematically sought a leading status. Second, its incorporation to the OECD in 1994 prevented the country to position itself as a developing country or as a developed one. Third, the lack of strong environmental awareness did not allow Mexico to act in a more supportive way to the emergence of international norms.

**The Copenhagen Accord**

Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was an extremely complicated process: the opposition of the American Congress left an implicit veto power to Russia and Japan, the second and third GHG biggest emitters in the world. Within this context, the EU played a key role not only as an agenda setter, but also to push other actors to accept commitments (Schreurs & Tiberghien, 2007). Nevertheless, negotiations for the second period of commitments were characterized by two main changes. Firstly, emerging countries progressively became more important due to their growing significance in economic terms and GHG emissions. Secondly, a shift in the US position regarding climate change is observed in 2009, since the Obama administration announced the return of the country to the talks.

In this context, the 2009 COP-15 in Copenhagen raised major expectations since all the relevant actors were actively retaking the negotiations. Besides, the Bali Road Map had established 2009 as the deadline for an agreement on the new period of commitments. However, expectations were not fulfilled since a legally binding treaty was not signed but only a declaration. Regardless of the adoption of national reduction plans to tackle the problem, there was no international agreement to coordinate them all. In this regard, technical reports pointed out that the aggregation of the individual actions of each of the parties were
not enough to achieve the agreed limit of 2 degree increase in the global temperature (OECD/IEA, 2010).

*International status of the actors*

In a context of rising importance of the emerging countries, both Mexico and Brazil sought to increase their leading status. Despite both countries improving their role in this regard, it should be highlighted that Brazil achieved a more relevant position than Mexico.

In terms of leadership, two sets of evidence should be observed. In the first place, the Brazilian diplomacy was extremely successful in reasserting its identity and legitimacy as a Global South leader. In this regard, the participation in influential multilateral forums of the emerging world, such as IBSA or especially the BRICS, reaffirmed its position both in the domestic and international spheres. In the second place, the others’ perceptions on the country confirmed the expectations of the Brazilian elites: as it was stated before, the majority of the most powerful countries in the world recognized the importance of the South American country in global governance schemes. Even though Mexico also improved its positioning in terms of leadership by participating in relevant forums such as the G-20 or the G-5, the country did not achieve a position comparable to that of Brazil: both the less coherent behavior regarding its leadership aspirations and the intermediate position between the South and the North limited its projection.

Both countries also sought to improve their positions regarding environmental norms. In the case of Brazil, a highly clean energy matrix production, active policies to stop the Amazônia deforestation and a “greener” discourse were the main foundations for a renewed image of the country. Otherwise, Mexico included environmental protection in the political discourse as well. The identification of sustainable development as a main guideline of the 2007 PND and the inclusion of the topic in international addresses by both the President and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, were clear examples in this regard. Besides, both countries improved their performance in terms of protection of the environment (Vihma, 2010).

Despite presenting significant obstacles in terms of environmental sustainability, it should be highlighted that important concrete measures were taken. Moreover, the inclusion of the issue in the political debate is a key feature to observe the changes in terms of political concern on the environment. According to this picture, both countries should present a rather flexible attitude towards the emerging countries principles, as well as a proactive position in the case of Brazil (Figure 7).

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<th>Position on environmental norms</th>
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*Figure 7. Status and foreign policies in COP-15, Copenhagen*

**The negotiations**
Changes in status were also reflected in the groups that the countries formed to negotiate. Considering its position as an OECD country, Mexico decided to join Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Monaco and South Korea and create the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG) in 2000. The IEG did not occupy a central spot at the negotiations since its emergence responded to almost a “residual” logic more than a common-interest approach. Moreover, the group was often led by Switzerland, as transcriptions of the negotiations clearly show (ENB, 2009).

On the contrary, Brazil positioned itself as a member of one of the leading groups within the negotiations. In 2005 the European Commission chose four leading emerging countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China – and created the BASIC project, which aimed to address their institutional capacities and interests to improve the negotiations’ outcomes (Qi, 2011; Yamin, 2007). Towards 2007, the chosen countries agreed on “The Sao Paulo Proposal for an Agreement on Future Climate Policy” (BASIC, 2007b). The importance of the group was progressively growing since then: the 2007 Bali Road Map included many of the points defended by BASIC, as the reaffirmation of CBDR.

The incorporation of Brazil to BASIC was the decisive factor to definitely consolidate the country as a developing world leader. In terms of the climate change regime, in its 2003-2010 Balance of Foreign Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted that “Brazil has strengthened its role in international negotiations on the matter, assuming the coordination of developing nations: the country was ahead of negotiations on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and the implementation of the UN Convention on Climate Change” (MRE, 2010, p. 46). External perceptions clearly confirmed the leading role of the country. In fact, the dynamics of the negotiations showed a major change since COP-15: whereas previously the European Union (EU) acted as a leader and pushed both reticent developed countries and the developing world; in 2009, negotiations were held directly between the USA and the BASIC group (Qi, 2011; Falkner, Stephan, & Vogler, 2010; Bodansky, 2010).

Moreover, a change in the position vis-à-vis the norms in environmental negotiations can be identified. Regarding fund transfer, President Lula stated on December 17th that his country was “willing to put money to help other countries”, since Brazilian goals “do not need outside money” (MRE, 2009, p. 217). Likewise, Mexico proposed in 2008 the creation of the Green Climate Fund, in order to improve funding resources for developing countries (Calderón, 2008). The initiative was finally adopted at the COP-16 in Cancún, where as the host of the meeting, Mexican diplomacy managed to achieve the necessary support for the proposal. In terms of voluntary commitments, both countries have ratified their association to the Copenhagen Accord and submitted reduction actions by 2020: in the case of Brazil, between 36,1% and 38,9% of the Business As Usual (BAU), meaning the most plausible projection of emissions; in the case of Mexico, 30% of BAU (USCAN, 2013). These actions are clear evidence of a much more flexible approach to the principles defended by emerging countries in environmental negotiations.

Summary of findings and conclusions

In the cases of Brazil and Mexico, the countries presented similar structures of interests but different and changing foreign policies regarding climate change negotiations. Therefore, material explanations are not enough to fully address the behavior of the states in the aforementioned international regime. In order to explain those differences, the concept of status has proven useful to solve the problem.
According to the performed empirical work and analysis, one of the most evident points is that, from Kyoto to Copenhagen, Brazil and Mexico attempted to improve their status both in terms of leadership and environmental awareness. In the case of Brazil, the full incorporation of the environment as a political concern in its domestic and external discourse has been decisive to improve its international status on the issue. Moreover, the consolidation of its leading condition also encouraged its role during the Copenhagen negotiations. Within this framework, Brazilian foreign policy appeared to be highly consistent and systematic.

Mexico, on the other hand, presents a more puzzling position. The country showed mixed attitudes toward the achievement of a leading status in international politics and a less consistent foreign policy than Brazil. Moreover, being a member of the OECD left the country with less possibilities of action: its incorporation to the IEG in climate change negotiations is a clear indicator in this regard.

The analysis also suggests that the role of external perceptions has to be addressed too. The present work was based on the hypothesis that both the national self-conception of the state and the prescriptions of the international system shape the status of each country and, ultimately, affects their decisions on foreign policy affairs. While most of the relevant actors in the system openly recognized Brazil as a leading country in world politics, the case of Mexico was less clear. Thus, different external perceptions on the positions of the countries influenced their statuses and their behavior in international negotiations.

The different status adopted by each of the countries echoed in their foreign policies and performances during the negotiations. The evidence suggests that countries in leading positions are more active in multilateral forums. Brazil was a key player both in Kyoto and Copenhagen, while Mexico occupied a secondary role at both times. In fact, the latter increased its participation in the negotiations in Copenhagen, as a consequence of its intended improvement in terms of leadership and despite not achieving a clear leading role. In this regard, a drawback of the model can be observed: using dichotomous variables does not allow to fully grasp the nuances of discourse and foreign policy strategies.

The analysis of different positions vis-à-vis environmental norms and values also offered interesting results. The present work suggests that an increasing importance of environmental issues in the political discourse is linked with a flexible approach towards the historical views on the topic, deeply associated to development and security-centered perspectives. In this regard, the position of both countries in Copenhagen clearly differs from Kyoto since both accept voluntary commitments and even offer funding contributions.

The position of Mexico in Kyoto negotiations presents an interesting puzzle. Despite a rather low presence of the environment in the political discourse, the country suggested that would be willing to accept some kind of incipient voluntary commitments. Within the present framework, the lack of leading status did not allow the country to express strong disagreements. Moreover, according with the hypothesis of Finnemore and Sikkink, states feeling insecure about their status are more prone to embrace international norms (1998). In this regard, the middle-ground situation of the country between the developed and the developing world could also explain an ambiguous position.

In general terms, it could be asserted that using an ideational perspective to address foreign policies in multilateral negotiations is necessary in order to better understand the phenomenon. In this sense, it should be highlighted that both material and ideational explanations are needed to obtain more detailed explanations. The main aim of this research was to address the behavior of Brazil and Mexico in climate change negotiations, as well as to provide further evidence suggesting that constructivist approaches can contribute to
understanding the social world. In this regard, the present work suggests that the proposed theoretical approach, based on a status-focused perspective, can contribute to a more complex and meaningful insight of foreign policy in international politics.

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