Drew University

College of Liberal Arts

From Reluctance to Leadership:

Brazil's Evolving Diplomatic Behavior in International Climate Conferences

1972-2025

A Thesis in International Relations

by

Luiza Vaskys Lima

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Bachelor in Arts

With Specialized Honors in International Relations

May 2025

Vaskys Lima

Abstract

Brazil's engagement in climate-related intergovernmental conferences has deepened over time, though it has faced turbulence in the past decade. The dominant explanations for this trend revolve around Brazil's democratization following the military dictatorship (1964–1985), the country's long-term economic development path, and the pursuit of soft power through a climate-friendly national identity. Previous research has focused on one of these factors in isolation rather than comparatively analyzing their relative influence. This thesis employs a mixed-methods approach to text analysis, examining diplomatic statements from the United Nations and UNFCCC digital archives qualitatively and quantitatively to identify the primary driver of changes in Brazil's diplomatic behavior between the variables mentioned above. While these factors are not mutually exclusive, findings suggest that the strength of Brazilian democracy has been a key determinant of its participation in climate conferences and commitment to their outcomes. In contrast, periods of democratic decline have coincided with setbacks in climate engagement and increased climate skepticism.

Key Words: Brazil, Climate, Diplomacy, United Nations, UNFCCC, Text Analysis, Democratization, Economic Development, Soft Power

Vaskys Lima

Acknowledgments

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Katia Vaskys and Paulos Sérgio de Lima. You were the first to teach me to protect our planet and fight for the justice of all beings. You have always supported me, even when it meant hopping on a flight to another hemisphere to follow my dreams. You never hesitated to help me when I felt lost along the way. *Eu amo muito vocês dois e espero que estejam orgulhosos de mim nesse momento tão especial da nossa vida*.

To my friends and family back home: You built the foundations of what I am today, and there is not one day when I do not sense the most profound gratitude for all you did for me. Today, I feel like I am walking the steps of a journey that started long before I was born. I am thankful for all the trust, caring, and indescribable love. May I share with you all I have learned?

To the family I have built here: I could never imagine feeling so embraced in a place I now call my own. You are my community and have held my hand whenever I thought I could not make it alone these past years. Guess what? I was never, ever alone. You taught me that it is possible to be happy and loved in every corner of the world, and for that, I thank you.

I would also like to express infinite gratitude to Drew University's Department of Political Science and International Relations, especially to my academic and thesis advisor, Professor Timothy Carter. Without your guidance since the beginning of my Freshman year, I would not have been able to explore global politics with so much dedication and curiosity. I will be eternally grateful for all the conversations, instructions, and revisions of my "concise" texts. I am also thankful to Professor Carlos Yordán for all the teachings and adventures in NYC and Professor Barker for guiding me through this process (and South Africa). You were essential.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every one of you who considers the planet Earth part of yourself. I could not be more proud of what you have done to preserve our home. This is the time to research, talk about, and fight for the climate like ever before. As a big community, we can accomplish anything.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

When analyzing the Brazilian position in international climate discussions, one can observe considerable changes over the past 50 years. Brazil's initial posture, hostile to climate change mitigation efforts, evolved through time, later transforming into a leadership role calling for the responsibilization of all nations for the cause. During the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985), together with the strengthening of a nationalistic cultural agenda, there was an evident concern for promoting economic development in addition to protecting territorial and resource sovereignty. In the global environmental field, the Brazilian diplomatic behavior in the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment exemplifies the state's stance of considering environmental protection an obstacle to development. By then, Brazil opposed initial binding targets for controlling greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Kiessling 2018; Riethof 2016).

Parallel to a long democratization process, during the early 1990s, the first directly-elected federal governments adopted a foreign climate agenda aligned with the G-77 and China's negotiation bloc (Johnson 2001). Based on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CDR) in fighting climate change established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992, Brazilian foreign behavior was apprehensive of international monitoring of pollutant emissions and deforestation by other countries and NGOs. The intention was to preserve the development agenda by putting the burden of climate change mitigation initiatives solely on developed countries through international law-making. By this period, it was possible to observe a higher engagement in international conferences, even if still not pledging for climate responsibility domestically.

This overall position would only be modified by the late 2000s. The 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP5) marked another shift in Brazilian foreign services behavior.

Diplomatic and environmental justice leaders under Lula (2003-2010) proposed a new model for developing countries' targets. In other words, Brazilian authorities signed up for more climate goals internally and held onto their diplomatic leadership status to push other nations to do the same. This Committed stance in negotiations regarding climate norms remained relatively stable until the Bolsonaro administration (2018-2022) dismantled the Brazilian environmental infrastructure following a tough power transition after Rousseff's 2016 impeachment.

Table 1. Brazil's Positions on Climate Change Discussions

1972-1992	1993-2002	2003-2015	2016-2022	2023-Present
Unparticipative	Uncommitted	Committed	Unparticipative	Committed

Given that there is no absolute agreement in the literature about the duration of each phase of Brazil's climate diplomacy or how they overlap, this paper organizes them into categories based on a critical analysis of various sources (Hochstetler & Milkoreit 2015, Viola 2010, Johnson 2001, Vieira 2013, Kasa 2013, Kiessling 2018, Riethof 2016, Sauer 2017). This analysis focuses on two main aspects: Brazil's Participation in climate discussions and its Commitment to the outcomes proposed by international conferences. Based on these dimensions, the country's behavior is classified into three categories: "Unparticipative," indicating low levels of both Participation and Commitment; "Uncommitted," characterized by high Participation but low Commitment; and "Committed," marked by high levels of both.

While Brazilian diplomatic behavior evolved gradually to a more engaged stance on climate negotiations, despite the setbacks that followed Rousseff's impeachment, there is no universally accepted reason for it. Considering different motivations for setting a country's foreign policy targets, this paper aims to answer the following question: What explains the shifting Brazilian diplomatic behavior in international climate change conferences?

This research's "Background" chapter explains the historical context of establishing and enforcing international climate norms. Then, the three most prominent Brazilian positions on climate change discussions will be discussed. Afterward, I will present three significant variables defended by international relations literature on why foreign politics evolve, specifically regarding the global issue of climate change. My three hypotheses consider Brazil's high levels of Democracy, Economic Development, and pursuit of Soft Power as the causes for engagement in climate conferences. Each section observes the broader literature on the topic and instances of the described processes in the Brazilian context.

This thesis later describes the methodology used in this study. I employed a mixed-method approach to discourse analysis based on diplomatic material from multiple intergovernmental conferences from 1972 to 2025. The "Data" section details the materials used for qualitative and quantitative analysis, including support data from online democracy levels and economic development observatories. Then, the results are presented following the timeline and diplomatic periods proposed for this thesis. Finally, I propose a discussion of the results and a brief conclusion.

2. Background

The whole structure of international environmental law must be considered to understand global climate agreements. Although the 1972 Stockholm Conference marked the starting point for global discussions on environmental collective action in organized intergovernmental organizations, it would take time until an international framework for this debate was established. In 1979, attended by representatives from around 50 countries, the First World Climate Conference was convened by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in the United States to create the first organized appeal for all nations to "foresee and prevent potential

man-made changes in climate that might be adverse to the well-being of humanity" (Zillman 2009). By the late 1980s, scientists and environmentalists started calling for creating international action plans to reverse the effects of man-made climate change discussed in the previous years (Johnson 2001). By 1988, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) set the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to produce technical and scientific material on climate change. This techno-scientific background works as the foundation for global summits organized by UNEP for countries to start developing climate laws.

By 1992, the UN Conference on Development and the Environment introduced debates on making effective international treaties for reducing GHG emissions based on IPCC reports. This event led to the creation of the yearly UN Conference of the Parties (COP), the worldwide forum for coordinating climate action between states. As the first COP is known, the Earth Summit (or Rio92/Eco92), was hosted by Brazil, which had a protagonist role in conducting the early discussions and managing the desires and priorities of both developed and developing countries since then. The Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was also formulated during the same event. This framework established the basis for today's global climate politics and represented the institutionalization of standard behavior and morals with the acceptance by many larger states (Vieira 2013). It required countries to stabilize GHG emissions while guaranteeing sustainable development in the food production sector and documenting and divulging their emission numbers with other states. Because of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol on GHG emissions and the Paris Climate Agreement were created with even more ambitious climate goals. Specifically, the latter urges the international community to limit the increase in global temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, preferably to 1.5°C. Also, GHG emissions must be reduced as much as possible and reach net zero by the middle of the 21st

century. The agreement includes commitments to provide climate financing to developing countries, reports on their actions, and the support they have provided and/or received.

In addition, the UNFCCC introduced the concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CDR) when dealing with climate change. This principle refers to the claim that wealthier nations owe an "ecological debt" (Parks and Roberts 2010, 156) to poorer nations because their material and energy products could only be created with environmental damage since industrialization. Further, in terms of common but differentiated responsibilities, it is explicitly stated by the UNFCCC that developed countries should reduce emissions first as they represent the vast majority of the world's total emissions and that developing nations should have their pollution tolerated as part of their development (Johnson 2001). In this context, Hochstetler and Milkoreit argue that climate change discussion is one of the first events where countries in the North are making burden-sharing demands for actors in the global South (2015), demonstrating how the participation of emerging economies is uniquely essential to the debate today. Nevertheless, until very recently, significant emitters such as India and China refused to establish enough climate goals to reach the targets observed by the agreement, signaling the valorization of their status as developing countries.

3. Literature Review

After this introduction to international climate norm-making, I propose an overview of the characteristics of Brazilian engagement in global climate conferences. The Participation and Commitment aspects of them will be the focus. These will be explained in detail following a time-bound review of the five key periods. Then, I will show perspectives on the international relations theories that explain the incentives for governments to shift their foreign policies.

Finally, I will base my hypotheses on Democratization, Economic Development, and Soft Power in Brazilian engagement at climate conferences on these theories studied.

3.1. Brazilian Changing Position on Climate Change Through the Years

Table 2. Variation in Participation and Commitment

Period	Participation in Climate Discussions	Commitment to Conference Outcomes
1972–1992	Low/High	Low
1993–2002	High	Low
2003–2015	High	High
2016–2022	High/Low	Low
2023–Present	High	High

This study employs Table 2 as a visual representation of Brazil's diplomatic shifts regarding Participation and Commitment. This overview is constructed using a combination of historical and political literature, mainly drawing on insights from authors who have studied the field and data from the official UNFCCC website (UNFCCC 2025, Hochstetler & Milkoreit 2015, Viola 2010, Johnson 2001, Vieira 2013, Kasa 2013, Kiessling 2018, Riethof 2016, Sauer 2017). Every foreign policy position will be observed to understand each period's diplomatic characteristics and the reasons for the “High” or “Low” categorization.

Two primary aspects of the position change are examined: "Participation in Climate Discussions" and "Commitment to Conferences Outcomes." The first aspect evaluates Brazil's engagement in international climate negotiations, independently of the country's contribution to the goals proposed. These include mentions of Brazilian leadership in diplomatic forums and technology transfer discussions, unique proposals made by Brazil for environmental targets, and the number of officials representing Brazil at each conference, assessed in terms of their political

background and experience. Additionally, Brazilian official behaviors are compared against one another to understand Brazil's foreign policy's most and least participative moments.

The second aspect, "Commitment to Outcomes," measures Brazil's dedication to climate action. This characteristic includes voluntary climate commitments made by Brazilian authorities during conferences and the actions taken to encourage developing countries to adopt similar commitments. This aspect emphasizes moments when Brazilian leaders were concerned not only about the nationalistic protection of natural resources and domestic security but also about the international preservation of a global ecosystem through diplomatic efforts. In other words, it is essential to highlight that for the “Uncommitted” period, Brazil was not committed to most of the outcomes proposed in the discussions as these were targeted to developed countries exclusively.

Table 3. Characteristics of Positions

Period	Period Description	Position	Characteristics
1972–1992	Early Climate Discussions/ Brazilian Military Regime Cold War	**Unparticipative/ Uncommitted**	Extreme-nationalism Denial of Climate Change
1993–2002	First COPs Brazilian Democratization End of Cold War	**Uncommitted**	Cautious Approach to Climate Agreements Concern about the Security of Developing Countries
2003–2015	4 Workers’ Party (PT) Administrations/ Creation of Formal Climate Change Agreements	**Committed**	Leadership within Developing Countries Policy Change
2016–2022	Temer Administration after Rousseff's Impeachment/ Bolsonaro's Right-Wing Populism and Extreme-Nationalism	**Uncommitted/ Unparticipative**	Dismantling of Environmental Entities Denial of Climate Change Diplomatic Isolation
2023–Present	Return to Diplomatic Multilateralism	**Committed**	Rebuild Diplomatic Presence Climate Concern

Considering the observed combinations of characteristics in Table 2, it is possible to identify the three positions countries can take in climate meetings, displayed in Table 3. First, "Unparticipative" has low Participation and Commitment values. "Uncommitted" has high Participation levels but low Commitment. Again, although Brazilian Commitment eventually rose, authorities were first aligned with the G77 + China developing country block in the COPs, seeking the responsibilization of developed countries while exempting developing economies from the climate burden. In other words, even though there has always been evidence of Brazilian leadership when Participative, the country did not seek to respect the highest targets as these are aimed only at Annex I states. These countries are industrialized, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and are subject to emissions caps. A "Committed" position is identified when both Participation and Commitment levels are high, representing the intention to implement climate-friendly strategies in the country's policies. I do not consider a combination of Unparticipative and Committed attributes, as this position has not been recorded in Brazil. Additionally, as early climate discussions were not necessarily open to all nations (only developed countries in the 1979 World First Climate Conference), there is an assumed ambiguity in the literature on early Brazilian engagement in climate conferences. Similarly, for the 2016-2022 period that followed Rousseff's impeachment, there was the continuation of her organized administration by opposition politicians, most of whom later supported the nationalistic, climate-denying project of Bolsonaro.

According to Vieira (2013), the observance of partial concessions for climate policy development and internal implementation did not signify a radical position shift until the start of the first Lula mandate in 2003. Riethof (2016) agrees with this perspective by stating that Brazil's position in global environmental governance was traditionally characterized by a strong

reluctance by other parties to monitor and manage climate-harming activities, and the protection of national sovereignty marked it. This scenario would only change in 2009, with the COP in Copenhagen, when most authors agree that Brazil became both participative in and committed to climate topics (Viola 2010, Kasa 2013, Hochstetler & Milkoreit 2015, Reithof 2016). Differently, Kasa (2013) has a less conservative approach to behavior shifts. He considers a less nationalistic approach and more presidential influence during the 1990s to result in more Brazilian Participation in the conferences. Similarly, Kiessiling (2018) puts the Brazilian authority as a leader on climate change issues, representing a high Participation level since 1992's FHC regime, also portrayed by the early support for financing sustainable development and the Clean Development Fund during the same decade. Thereafter, there are limited points of agreement between scholars. For the following sections, I have grouped the behaviors in the three positions mentioned above based on integrating the ideas proposed in these and other studies. Table 4 provides a summary of each administration since the end of the dictatorship in 1985:

Table 4. Brazilian Federal Administrations 1985–2024

President	Duration	Party
José **Sarney**	1985–1990	PMDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party)
Fernando **Collor** de Mello	1990–1992	PRN (National Reconstruction Party)
Itamar **Franco**	1992–1994	PMDB
Fernando Henrique Cardoso (**FHC**)	1995–2003	PSDB (Brazilian Social Democracy Party)
Luiz Inácio **Lula** da Silva	2003–2011	PT (Workers' Party)
Dilma **Rousseff**	2011–2016	PT
Michel **Temer**	2016–2018	PMDB
Jair **Bolsonaro**	2019–2023	PL (Liberal Party)
Luiz Inácio **Lula** da Silva	2023–present	PT

3.1.1. Unparticipative Position: Low Participation and Commitment (1972–1992)

In terms of both Participation in international conferences and Commitment to the decisions established in these, Brazil had an initial defensive position in environmental debates to protect its growing industry, agro-business, and public infrastructure during the "economic miracle" of the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964–1985) (Kasa 1995; Kiessling 2018; Vieira 2013). More specifically, during the 1980s, when the country began slowly democratizing its social and political structures, "Brazil tended to oppose binding targets for carbon emissions and resisted initiatives for international deforestation monitoring" (Riethof 2013, 103). Since then, pollution from forest degradation has been the most significant cause of Brazilian atmospheric CO2 emissions. When the first climate discussions arose, the Brazilian federal government and its foreign services, Itamaraty, did not recognize any initial commitment to this cause.

These stances can be explained by the solid nationalist values of the military government (Vieira 2013) in addition to the realist issue of resource and territorial security. First, the initial intention to preserve all governmental power despite international pressure demonstrates the extreme nationalist character of the military administration. Second, because environmental resources are shared globally and developing nations tend to possess today more preserved biomes than developed ones due to recent industrialization and different use of land through time, the first has been concerned about protecting their sovereignty from the latter through environmental security (Van Der Vyver 2009). In other words, the developing countries' common concerns with economic growth and national security, in a post-colonial, identity-focused sense (Burges 2005; Diniz 2013; Riethof 2016), and the apparent divide of North-South politics of the time conducted Itamaraty's overall protective posture to collective climate action.

Yet, it is essential to note that the country's alignment with American promotion of

capitalism and liberal values throughout the globe during the Cold War did not stop the diplomatic understanding that pushing for global sustainability was a Northern priority. Dependency theory, which arose during the 1960s, explains that developed and developing countries do not track the same path for development as was defended by modernization theory. According to this theory, global economic and political relations are affected by historical factors that generate inequality, such as colonialism and imperialism. In this context, Southern states are peripheral to core Northern nations, which fortified a pragmatic stance on climate concerns conducted by developed countries (Vieira 2013). In other words, while the Brazilian administration was aligned with American political values during the Cold War, it never stopped recognizing the country as a distinct type of state with distinguished concerns regarding foreign policy, even before a developing countries' block would defend this narrative in the COPs.

3.1.2. Uncommitted Position: High Participation and Low Commitment (1993–2002)

Vieira (2013) also characterizes the period of transition of the millennium as the Brazilian foreign policy shift from environmentally nationalistic and resistive to adept to partial concessions. This means having more meaningful Participation in climate conferences but still having little significant Commitment to environmental goals. More specifically, according to Kiessling (2018), after the Sarney presidential mandate (1986-1989), the Collor regime (1990–1992), the first directly elected president since the military regime, internalized climate change as a problem that needed to be addressed by Brazilian foreign policy under a globalized and multilateral (not nationalistic) point of view, which led to Itamaraty's gradual development of a leading position on the subject during the Cardoso (FHC) era (1995–2002). During the early 1990s, there was also a growth in presidential influence over foreign policy and the development of a more positive engagement with the North and global economic institutions (Kasa 2013).

This movement is possibly consequential in restoring an open, multilateral economy, which contrasts with the global isolationism of the military dictatorship.

During the making of the Kyoto Protocol on GHG emission reduction in 1997, Itamaraty's participation was marked by being a proponent of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), later developed as the Clean Development Fund, a sustainable development fund to the Global South by developed powers, to assist developing countries with mitigating and adapting to climate change effects (Riethof 2013). While green mechanisms are a debatable strategy for genuine sustainable development in Annex I states, it was a revolutionary type of agreement for the growth of sustainable practices in developing countries. Similarly, Itamaraty always pushed for calculating the historical impact of countries' emissions when establishing the environmental burden of each state under international law (Johnson 2001; Kiessling 2018). This posture demonstrates an ambition for ecological modernization, following developed nations' steps (Menezes and Barbosa 2021) and an almost contradictory approximation with G77 + China's de-responsibilization agenda for developing nations (Johnson 2001). Further, the value put on setting a precedent for future recognition of countries' historical emissions shows the necessity of participating in COPs to protect developing countries' rights to grow economically without being constrained by the same rules applied to developed states. An example of an Uncommitted behavior relies on disordered domestic forests' resource use frameworks and control regarding GHG emissions and controlled biodiversity preservation. According to Kiessling (2018), by the late 1990s, the internationalization of the Amazon was not as concerning as the loss of sovereign control over development decisions. On the other hand, most Brazilian environmental NGOs and traditional communities put pressure on government officials to support the inclusion of forest protection in the CDM (Vieira 2013, Kiessling 2018).

Finally, during Lula's first mandate (2003–2006), which followed FHC's positive engagement with Northern and global institutions (Kasa 1995), nationalism was revisited, but with a globalized intention for the promotion of sustainable development financed by the North, Annex I countries with similar clean development mechanisms (Van Der Vyver 2009). In other words, with more intense participation in climate discussions, Lula's foreign service wished to respect climate responsibility goals as long as developed nations were engaged in technology transfer and economic aid to developing countries facing dependence theory's chronic inequality and effects of climate change. Nevertheless, even though there was a structured introduction of sustainability politics at the federal level in the early Lula years, for the first time, environmental activists in governmental leadership positions, such as the returning Minister for the Environment Marina Silva, a known environmental activist, it was never compatible with agro-export-based developmentalism aimed by this government and followed by recent presidents (Diniz 2013). As mentioned, throughout Brazilian history and until today, artificial forest fires for agricultural purposes are the country's most significant cause of GHG emissions. No administration could promote climate sustainability without breaking the connection with significant agro-businesses, as these control most of the country's GDP.

3.1.3. Committed Position: High Participation and High Commitment (2003–2015)

By the early 2000s and more clearly since 2009, Brazilian diplomacy shifted its overall position again, exemplified by Itamaraty's actions at the Copenhagen Climate Conference. With the addition of GHG emissions from deforestation, an environmental factor the Brazilian government had been avoiding recognizing in former climate forums (Viola 2010), Brazil outspokenly stopped rejecting binding commitments from major developing countries and embraced accepting a higher level of responsibility as a developing country. The issues discussed

in the meetings directly involved the country's domestic environmental politics (Riethof 2016). After that, Brazilian officials became more involved in and devoted to the importance of climate discussions. Further, because different developing countries did not have cohesive agendas within the developing world bloc during this time (Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2015), it is understandable that Itamaraty would progressively take positions of both developed and developing countries while still recognizing common but differentiated responsibilities. The Minister of the Environment reiterated this North-South integrative position at the 2011 Durban and the 2012 Doha Climate Conferences. Welcoming the Minister for the Environment as a spokesperson at the conferences is unprecedented, as the discussions had been previously led by Itamaraty alone (Riethof 2016). Last, by then, Brazilian authorities had pushed other developing nations to follow Brazil's example and adhere to stricter political, economic, and environmental commitments.

3.1.4. Regression to Uncommitted and Unparticipative Positions (2016–2022)

Although it is possible to argue that Brazil developed a proactive position during the later years of Lula and Rousseff's administrations, her impeachment, followed by the election of President Bolsonaro (2018–2022), represented the most significant shift in Brazilian behavior on global environmental politics since 2009. Leaning towards an “anti-Workers’ Party” sentiment and intending to protect national security, Bolsonaro moved domestic and foreign policy closer to Western, liberal development values and intended a stronger diplomatic connection with the United States. Yet, nationalism was promoted in an isolationist stance, unlike the multilateral attitude cultivated in the previous decade. Casarões and Flames (2019) explain that the narrative used by Bolsonaro was that "the Brazilian Workers’Party (PT)’s South-South strategy was a global alliance between Brazil and murderous dictators, to whom the former presidents had

handed over the country's wealth.". Having a modus operandis similar to the populist president Donald Trump, Bolsonaro's policy claimed to please the domestic base first, which was formed mainly by the middle class. Global responsibilities for protecting forests are not a priority in the face of technology, infrastructure, trade, and agro-business development (Casarões & Flames 2019). It is important to note that, at this time, American President Donald Trump notoriously removed the country as a signatory of the Paris Climate Agreement, which was only reversed in 2021, to be again removed in the first week of his second administration in 2025.

Bolsonaro terminated most of the infrastructure of the Ministry of Environment and minimized environmental governance to the central Ministry for the Environment leaderships only in Brazil by curtailing social participation and delegitimizing the opposition, majorly social justice activists, indigenous populations, and environmentalists (Menezes and Barbosa 2021). Due to the intentional dismantling of the national environmental infrastructure, there was an apprehensive representation of Brazilian environmentalism abroad. Similarly, as not necessarily a synonym to nationalism, an anti-globalist attitude rose to protect the core values of his government: God, nation, and family. As climate change was called a "Marxist conspiracy" by Bolsonaro's Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo (VEJA), who was responsible for organizing the country's climate policy at the time, Brazil did not have meaningful Participation or Commitment in climate conferences during this period other than negating Brazilian responsibility in fighting climate change (Menezes and Barbosa 2021).

3.1.5. Committed Position Today (2023-Present)

"Or we participate, or the extreme right will come back strong. This is true not only in Brazil but also in many other countries. It means that you, beyond being claimant agents, must be formulating and participative agents. It is more than a vow. It is to engage. It is more than to

assert. Is to help to do" (Planalto 2023). Brazilian President Lula proffered this excerpt, which addressed 135 civil society members at COP28 in Dubai in 2023. This meeting highlights the democratized character of the administration at both domestic and international levels. So far, it is possible to observe a return to a more Participative and Committed Brazilian presence in COPs for the future of the Lula mandate.

Furthermore, there is a clear call for action for all actors to join the climatic fight. Yet, it is necessary to note that the same COP created disagreements between officers and activists. The dissent was the first COP where representatives of the major international oil industries were present. While some environmental representatives observed this as the first step for the end of the fossil fuel era as the climate agreements should be beneficial to the oil powers too, others argued that the Dubai's Resolution text is “utterly disappointing," “an injustice to communities on the frontline of the crisis,” vague, weak, and ambiguous (PBS 2023).

In this context of new actors getting involved in the discussions, Brazil's future presence in COPs will likely be characterized by a continuation of a more inclusive and globalized approach. Still, it will also grapple with conflicting interests and expectations from different groups. Baku's COP29 was similarly disappointing because it was the third year a petrostate hosted the discussions with the same lack of substantial criticism against the current usage of fossil fuels. Its significant outcome is a climate financing plan that must be finalized in COP30 in Belém, Brazil. In Lula's first year back in office, 2023, Brazil was formally elected to host 2025's Conference of the Party, with the announcement of Azerbaijan hosting the previous year.

That said, the Brazilian participation was not exhaustive as most of the negotiation should still take place in 2025, putting the Brazilian federal government on the spot to finalize the green financing plan that should be as important as previous climate agreements made in Copenhagen

and Kyoto. Belém, being in the heart of the Amazon forest, strengthens its leadership position and demonstrates that Brazil is not afraid of debating deforestation in the Amazon. The semiotics of this Brazilian hosting qualify the Brazilian national identity as much related to its forest, especially after years of Bolsonaro's climate negationism. Nevertheless, a recent statement by Petrobras, the Brazilian state-owned multinational petroleum company, in support of exploring oil in the outfall of the Amazon River has raised concerns. President Lula's criticism of Ibama, the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, has further heightened tensions. High-level leadership, including the current Minister for the Environment, Marina Silva, fears that Brazil's COP30 may face challenges similar to those of previous climate meetings. There is particular concern about the difficulty of addressing public and private financing goals without relying on environmentally harmful economic initiatives.

3.2. International Relations Theory

After an extensive literature review, I examine my three hypotheses' theoretical framework. This framework explores how democracy, economic development, and the pursuit of soft power influence a country's climate foreign policy.

3.2.1. Democracy

Democracy levels are a known political element that directs a country's foreign policy: Democratic institutions promote transparency, public participation, and accountability, influencing decision-making on international issues (Payne 1995). Furthermore, in democratic states, elected officials are responsive to domestic political pressures, which often push for initiatives at the global level. Last, as democratic governance tends to encourage adherence to international norms and agreements, higher levels of democracy are frequently correlated with

greater engagement in international climate agreements and more ambitious policies on the global stage (Neumayer 2002).

Regarding climate change mitigation international initiatives, democracies tend to exhibit higher levels of cooperation in addressing climate issues due to their institutional structures (Battig & Bernauer 2009). More specifically, some authors claim that freedom of press and speech allows citizens to stay informed about and express their interests regarding climate, in addition to the possibility of formal associations, which facilitate the organization and professionalization of environmental movements, and voting, leading to pressure on policy entrepreneurs which must respond to peoples' demands domestically and internationally (Neumayer 2002). In this context, besides individual rights and regime responsiveness, democracies observe more political learning, commitment to solving global issues via international cooperation, and the possibility of business development through open markets compared to non-democracies (Payne 1995). When considering climate change as a collective action problem that requires the development of innovative green technologies and politicians to be committed to environmentally friendly investment in the long term, the democratization level of a state could be related to a higher commitment in the realm of international discussions.

On this level, international institutions and coordination strategies reflect national democratic characteristics such as prioritizing public participation, accountability, and transparency. According to democratic legalism, democracies tend to comply more with diplomatic agreements than non-democratic states. Simmons (1998) explains that liberal democracies are built with an affinity with prevalent international legal processes and institutions and vice versa, being more willing to depend on the rule of law for global affairs. The similarity between the character of international organizations and liberal democracies generates a mutual

exchange of knowledge from the domestic groups that influence each of the state's politics (Payne 1995), continuing a cycle of democratic compliance with laws created by democracies for other democracies, in a process that Keohane (1998) named "enmeshment" of international commitments into domestic politics and political institutions.

Observing Brazil's 40-year-long democratization process after its first open elections in 1989, it is necessary to consider that the state did not transform into a strong democracy in the blink of an eye. There have been years of societal mutation with a gradual observance of people's rights and freedoms, as Neumayer (2002) studied. Specifically regarding the country's environmentalism, activists who became professionals in politics and NGOs after Rio92 have played a key role. As the first Conference of the Parties hosted in Brazil, Rio92 marked a turning point. Since then, these activists have consistently pushed to internationalize environmental discussions within the country. As freedom of expression, press, and association developed, internationalization and professionalization of activism emerged as democratic responses to Brazil's democratization. As an example, Brazilian environmental organizations such as SOS Atlantic Forest Foundation (SOS) and the Socio-Environmental Institute the (ISA) have been strongly influenced by international organizations such as Greenpeace and WWF (Alonso and Maciel 2010), promoting environmental causes domestically through a liberal institution model.

Moreover, some authors note that Indigenous communities and environmentalists demanded the strengthening of federal sustainability activities inside and outside of Brazil before popularizing the topic in the 1970s (Sauer 2017; Zhouri 2010) when the federal regime was authoritarian. These movements grew in the context of the everlasting marginalization of native populations and the lack of acknowledgment of their communities' destruction by the expansion of agro-business and mining initiatives since the colonial era. These groups support more

substantial participation by the Brazilian government in climate discussions abroad (Sauer 2017; Zhouri 2010) even during Lula's "ecological development," showing the democratic "globalization wish" even from populations systematically ignored by the liberal democratic institution (Sauer 2017). Therefore, the enhanced participation of non-governmental groups in foreign policy decisions could explain the shifts in engagement in global environmentalism as a collective action problem. Finally, although global environmental organizations could bridge the global North and South, some authors claim that they have yet to be granted seats in the international climate law arena to make meaningful contributions to the writing of international laws (Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2015; Parks and Roberts 2010).

However, it would be unfair to present democratization as a necessarily positive process to climate consciousness and commitment. In another perspective, some authors argue that democratic institutions might be incompatible with environmentalism. For instance, Neumayer (2002, 141) explains that democracies' emphasis on private property rights and individual liberties "[allow] individuals and businesses to make full use of their potential to expand production and consumption, which, if not sufficiently counteracted by environmental regulation, will increase pressure on the environment." In this sense, the correlation between democratic governments and economic development is due to their inherent characteristics, which prioritize market growth. It pushes the positive link between democracy and the environment back to Hardin's (1967) "Tragedy of the Commons." That said, when an institution does not manage access to natural resources in the name of freedom, there might be unexpected access restrictions to the populations dependent on these resources.

Finally, on top of recognizing the disagreement between scholars regarding the connection of liberal democracy's principles to climate politics, it is essential to emphasize that

there are a few strong links between democracies and positive climate outcomes (Neumayer 2002). It is not that non-democracies tend to have more robust initiatives regarding reversing climate change but that the alternative perspective on democratic institutions presented signals that liberal values tend to be considerably exploitative of natural resources. In this sense, democratic indicators are not necessarily correlated with promoting domestic climate-friendly practices. Yet, democracies have been the first to commit more to climate change agreements. Brazil's democratization can explain the fluctuating Participation and Commitment behavior in international climate discussions. In other words, my first hypothesis is:

H1. Higher levels of democracy lead to greater engagement in climate conferences.

3.2.2. Economic Development

Other scholars argue that economic growth and climate change are interdependent (Fankhauser & Tol 2005, Vieira 2013, Vieira & Alden 2011). In other words, while financial development contributes to climate change through increased GHG emissions and resource exploitation, the consequences of the same process disrupt economic stability by changing infrastructure, agriculture, health, and other economies. According to the same scholars, although most countries are reluctant to adopt sustainable development because of its long-term economic costs, transitioning to a low-carbon economy promotes future economic prosperity. Yet, although green technology has become more affordable over time, most developing countries do not have access to the intellectual capital or resources (or want) to move away from climate change-aggravating infrastructure. Therefore, as shown previously, as most of the states pushing for climate change mitigation policies at the international level are developed economies, the developing world has historically been less likely to propose the creation of a sustainable economy domestically (Johnson 2001; Kiessling 2018; Riethof 2016; Vieira 2013).

One of the most well-known explanations of the general development pattern was created by Simon Kuznets (1955). The economist initially suggested a hypothesis regarding the relationship between economic growth and income inequality, which an inverted U-shaped curve can illustrate. According to this idea, as a country's economy expands, inequality increases until it reaches a certain point, after which the trend reverses. This economic theory could also be applied to climate change issues, as the same inverted U-shaped image would appear after countries have reached an economic equilibrium when investing in climate-friendly infrastructure and technology is possible. Zambrano-Monseratte et al. (2016, 208) explain the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) as follows: "The EKC hypothesis states that as an economy grows, environmental degradation worsens (increases) until the economy reaches such a level of performance that its negative impact reduces, as a result of improved income inequality, especially in terms of developing regions that rely on direct resource exploitation." In the case of Brazil, the same authors claim that no evidence of the EKC can be observed in recent years (1971-2011) in a short-term observation. Nevertheless, the current development of climate-friendly technology matches the expected levels of environmental degradation for this phase of economic development in the country, making it possible to argue that Brazil will reach an ecological turning point in the long term.

While Zambrano-Monseratte et al. (2016) do not present a hypothetical date for this change, other authors, such as Maciel Ribeiro et al. (2022), suggest this theory does not apply to all Brazilian territories. Their research focused on Pará, an Amazonian state with skyrocketing polluting deforestation rates (Imazon 2022), resulting in U-shaped curves for less urbanized areas and a declining EKC image for urban centers. In the first case, the municipalities became more environmentally degrading with development, and in the second, there has been no

moment of environmental improvement in time. Again, although the leading research on the topic does not provide proof that Brazil has reached any EKC turning point, the fact that Brazilian authorities have recently started to sign up for high-commitment goals, positioning the timeline for the reversed U curve for the future, this theory cannot be disregarded.

On the other hand, in the context of domestic economic development strategies, Brazil has historically opposed the unequal economic power distribution between the North and South (Vieira & Alden 2011). Specifically, the Brazilian economy only reached its current position because of the development of an environmentally unsustainable economic model based on the exports and trade of natural and agricultural products since pre-democratic history. During the dictatorship, the idea of exploiting Amazonian resources despite the social and environmental harm was introduced, and even during the two first terms of Lula and Dilma's mandates, which had an unprecedented sensitivity to social issues, this economic model was not eliminated for the (promised) democratization of access to land. Moreover, expanding agricultural frontiers was encouraged to meet the international demand for commodities (Sauer 2019), which promoted deforestation and the unbalance of natural environments. This process began with the intention of securing the territory's sovereignty and resources from foreign companies (Riethof 2016) and led to impressive economic growth rates. This expansion increased the Brazilian share of global gross domestic product (Vieira & Alden 2011). However, it created a particularly harmful economy for native and traditional populations while allowing little room for sustainable development without eliminating climate-harmful practices.

As agro-business grew exponentially, making Brazil one of the biggest exporters of agricultural commodities, its relationships with the international trading community also evolved. By 2003, Brazil's GDP was 510 billion in current US dollars, which accelerated until

reaching more than 2 trillion US dollars in 2023 (World Bank, 2025). Since 2010, Brazil's most important trade partner has been China (OEC 2024, Jenkins 2012), primarily importing raw materials and grains, reaching 6.08 billion dollars from 2023 to 2024. As of 2022, soybeans represent almost 14% of the yearly 341 billion dollars Brazil's exports, and nearly a third of this goes directly to the Asian country (OEC 2024). As the extent of China's import needs influenced the primarization of Brazil's exports, the two countries were fortified as economic partners. A non-Western power's economic and trade approximation has also led Brazil toward a counter-Western perspective on global environmental issues during the shift from the Unparticipative to the Uncommitted position.

Having the United States as the second trade partner, not the first as before, demonstrates how much the relationship between Brazil and these great powers has developed since the dictatorship. In the past thirty years, Brazilian politics have progressed with South-South-aimed associations for economic growth. This is exemplified by the creation and strengthening of the BRICS-partnered politics in the context of protection of security and development strategies being significant goals for developing countries to build their independence from Western, developed economies (Burges 2005; Diniz 2013). Nevertheless, the approximation to other developing countries does not represent alignment with any sustainability dream or the impossibility of further changes in diplomatic behavior, as more Participative and Committed attitudes arose in a newly emerging states empowerment instance (Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014). Furthermore, even after Rousseff's controversial impeachment process, which represented a break with the South-South empowerment program to re-align Western priorities in politics, the economic relationships with developing countries in commodities trade were not eliminated. They remained relatively stable during the Bolsonaro mandate (Menezes and Barbosa 2021).

That said, Brazil's economic development has long been intertwined with its natural environment and environmental concerns. The country's reliance on resource-intensive sectors, particularly agriculture, mining, and oil, has often constrained its commitment to sustainable development. While theories like the Environmental Kuznets Curve suggest that economic growth can eventually lead to improved environmental outcomes, Brazil's trajectory has been complex, marked by significant regional disparities and inconsistent policy implementation. Moreover, the country's evolving trade relations have reinforced a commodity-based economic model, at times undermining a full commitment to global climate agreements. However, Brazil's diplomatic posture has not remained static. It reflects broader domestic and geopolitical shifts, including the diversification of economic partnerships and the growing influence of developing nations in global governance forums. As Brazil navigates the tension between economic growth and environmental responsibility, its climate diplomacy appears increasingly shaped by these structural and strategic transformations. In this context, an alternative explanation for Brazil's evolving diplomatic behavior emerges:

H2: Economic development leads to greater engagement in climate conferences.

3.2.3. Soft Power and Norms

Other than highlighting a country's democratization or economic development, some authors argue that norms are especially relevant in establishing a state's priorities in international relations. Before that, for instance, popular in the 1980s, Waltz's neorealism claimed that the interaction of sovereign states could be explained by the pressures exerted on them by the anarchic structure of the international system and its lack of rule reinforcement mechanisms, as there is no international police. After years of global power struggle during the Cold War, a global governance system comprising a web of rules and platforms for discussing how to address

global challenges jointly emerged in the 1990s (Baykurt et al. 2011). In the context of gradually strengthening the United Nations systems and its accords' credibility, there was an understanding that ideas and attraction could be more valuable than carrots and sticks in international relations. In this environment, the political scientist Robert Nye coined "soft power" as the "ability to affect others and obtain preferred outcomes by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment" (Nye 1990, 2). In the global sphere, the pursuit of soft power often emerges as a strategy to co-opt states to formulate policies and act in a way that benefits the first without coercion strategies, rather culture, political values, and foreign policy. In recent work, the author demonstrates how a country's soft power comes from its civil society (not its government) and that propaganda does not attract international liking as it is not credible (Nye 2011).

While soft power should not be considered normative but political, as said before, cultural and social norms (at the national and international levels) play an essential role in shaping the country's identity. In "National Interests in International Society," Finnemore explains the constructivist thesis that the global system as a whole can alter states' actions and administrative priorities through a generative process where new interests and values are mutually constructed by different actors, changing state's actions without constraints and violence, but through sharing ideas and social interactions (1996). Furthermore, in this context, international organizations and transnational-level actors present in them can be essential in norm-setting instead of observing states on their own. Finally, these norms, including formalized climate change agreements, are critical to international law: "These can only exist "when states share an understanding that compliance with some rule of behavior is necessary and appropriate" (Finnemore 1996, 25). Therefore, under constructivism, the Conference of the Parties and other

fora organized by the UNFCCC during the ebullition of globalization in the 1990s are mechanisms for norm generation across the globe.

In this sense, the existence of agents, connected to governmental institutions or not, present in previous climate-related events propels the continuation of these discussions. Then, informational campaigns related to climate change, organized by states or non-governmental organizations and groups, could reinforce the existing norms and promote a mutually assured relationship between countries engaged in international conferences as part of specific political blocs (Alló and Loureiro 2014). Moreover, in the context of popularizing climate change discussions, Riethof argues that an environmental foreign policy for developing countries "is not simply rooted in material interests and ecological vulnerability but also reflects the ambition to increase international recognition of an emerging country's power and status" (2016, 107). In other words, when observing a developing country's international politics, engaging in sustainable development and climate discussions benefits the state's political and economic relations due to an existing normative agreement on the positive quality of established climate politics and sustainable development.

In-depth, when observing the case of Brazil as a norm-building actor in the international arena as an emerging economy in climate negotiations, Hochstetler and Milkoreit claim that the country had coordinated participation with other BASIC states (Brazil, India, South Africa, and China) when conducting the developing world's discussions in the 1990s: The authors confirm a "held-back" and protective position towards climate accords until 2009 when agreeing to relatively costly voluntary commitments. It reflects the BASIC countries' understanding of themselves as emerging powers, not just developing (2014), and deserving of praise because of climate initiatives. Stunkel describes the exact process as a "cautious wait-and-see approach" to

the hegemonic power of the West in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War (130), which is reflected upon climate issues as these were historically Global North-led. This process would be rooted in the expectations of their administration leaders to not only defend their interests but also create an identity globally that would benefit their international relations by adhering to Northern priorities. Additionally, the late 2000s developing world shift to a "globalized" view on climate issues observed by Vieira and Alden could demonstrate both the Northern powers and multilateral institutions' desire for "[regional] key developing states to work as "managers" of their respective regional contexts" (2011, 525). Finally, these authors observed that fulfilling the North's expectations of local leadership could establish emerging economies as proper Southern interlocutors of the developed world. On top of pushing their development, the normative pressure of engaging positively in climate agreements grew collectively. Yet, there is to be a practical example of the outcomes of this process in the world.

Integrating the natural environment into Brazilian identity benefits its foreign policy, as soft power is interpreted differently in Brazil than in the West. First, it is essential to clarify that identity issues in world politics are critical parts of constructivist research. Identities are described as necessary in all levels of administration to ensure some predictability and order and imply a state's preferences and consequent actions (Hopf 1998). Thereafter, given the country's interest in Brazil's official identity before Bolsonaro, according to Stuenkel (2011. 136), “the country's soft power was, above all, based on its vibrant democracy, multiethnic society, and cultural diversity.” While these characteristics do not translate directly to national identity, they form an ideal image that creates a country and foreign practices towards it, combined with cultural and social practices. In this sense, Brazil has a national identity linked to its natural

environment despite having astonishing numbers of yearly deforestation and not many initiatives to protect native communities and defenders of the environment.

Nevertheless, the identitarian connection to environmental protection, including climate-related international goals, fits the global image of the political popularity of the green holder of the Amazon. Furthermore, "its large size, developing-country status, and ambiguous role vis-à-vis the West allowed Brazilian diplomats to build rapport with or attempt to speak for a remarkable number of different groups" (Stuenkel 2011, 136). In other words, the Brazilian image could fit the country comfortably in a room with the G20, the G77, the BRICS, and even the OECD.

More specifically, participating in the Conferences of the Parties and other climate summits would protect Brazilian sovereignty and increase its diplomatic popularity by creating an image of a strong, wealthy, environmentally concerned nation that can financially afford sustainable development (Kiessling 2018) as Brazil provided financial and technological assistance to other developing countries to follow the same attitude since 2011 (Hochstetler and Milkoreit 2014). Thereafter, the ambition to respect climate norms to diplomatically benefit the Brazilian image abroad for economic and social development can also be argued as one factor that promoted two significant shifts in Brazilian politics: The collective observance of commitment to climate discussions and norms as something positive globally not only made the Brazilian government more participative through time but also willing to take higher burdens for climate stability. A similar interpretation can be made regarding Brazilian investment in humanitarian aid, especially to the Middle East and Haiti during the first and second Lula administrations. While most countries do so because of security issues, Brazil did so because it identified providing humanitarian assistance as a means to develop its soft power (Stuenkel

2011). In this sense, Brazil is naturally popular, and identifying climate issues as beneficial for soft power, a gradual move to a more Participatory and Committed behavior is consequential.

Nevertheless, when considering Bolsonaro's environmental backlash, the respect of these norms for international popularity was ignored to promote economic development under ultra-liberal strategies (Menezes and Barbosa 2021) while also repressing public participation of minority groups such as indigenous populations mentioned before. Another counterpoint is that there has been very little unity between the climate politics of Brazil and other Latin American countries (similar to South Africa and other neighboring countries), which weakens the idea that being the West's "regional leader" for an environmental cause might benefit their international relations, as presented by Vieria and Alden (2011). Nevertheless, because of the importance of norms in international law and organizations, the international community's recognition of positive engagement in climate discussions has made the Brazilian government more involved and willing to take on higher burdens for climate stability over time. In other words, the following hypothesis regarding the Brazilian change in positions cannot be ignored:

H3: The pursuit of soft power leads to greater engagement in climate conferences.

4. Methodology

This thesis employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze Brazil's evolving diplomatic climate position to understand what caused these policy shifts. Qualitative discourse analysis of official diplomatic statements was combined with quantitative insights from Voyant's employment as a text analysis tool to track language and policy emphasis shifts in the diplomatic discourse. Information on the levels of liberal democracy and economic growth in the country will also be implemented to distinguish the strength of the three key hypotheses for this paper presented above (Democratization, Economic Development, and Soft Power), which will guide

the research. The Brazilian diplomatic mechanisms serve as a longitudinal comparative case study as I observe diplomatic discourse evolution in climate conferences from 1972 to 2025, with special analytical attention to the 2016–2025 decade in which Voyant was implemented.

More specifically, this thesis observes the years in which major climate conferences that preceded the Conference of the Parties for the UNFCCC took place and all the COPs since 1995. These were chosen and grouped into four periods based on the political science literature discussed earlier, combined with analysis from recent news and scientific reports. For grouping these distinct categories, I considered the Participation and Commitment standards proposed earlier in each meeting and how they are reflected in the diplomatic discourse. For each, I shall present the evolution of the Brazilian presence in the two types of international meetings by highlighting specific years as examples of the observed positions in the periods. This method controls for alternative explanations for the change in climate diplomacy, as it allows signals of all hypotheses to be observed in the same test.

5. Data

The data selected for this research comprises official policy documents and official high-level public statements from Brazilian authorities at UNFCCC-organized Conferences of the Parties, UN-assembled summaries of the events, and presidential speeches at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). I used the ChatGPT 3.5 translation feature from November 2024 to February 2025 to obtain the transcription of some of these speeches in English. In this case, artificial intelligence removes my researcher bias when translating, unconditioned by any assumptions based on my hypotheses. Additionally, I consider as support texts the systematic list of participant countries and their delegations in each UN event, as well as the description of the high-level representatives for Brazil throughout the years, the determinate head of the delegation,

and the number of individuals in each delegation and some official policy documents resulting from the COPs. These were collected from the official UN Library and UNFCCC archives, publicly available online, and the Brazilian federal government's official online portals. The only non-UN information originated from recent news articles, environmental NGO reports, selected published interviews of political leaders and activists at the same Conferences, and science reviews.

As an additional source for observing the hypotheses, V-Dem's official website contains significant information on democracy levels. V-Dem, or "Varieties of Democracy," provides a disaggregated dataset on five principles of democracy: electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian, and collects data to measure these principles. This assessment will analyze Brazilian democratization over time and evaluate H1. The 2024 Liberal Democracy Index, which observes electoral and liberal indicators, will be the basis for all the analysis regarding my Democratization Hypothesis, H1, from the end of the military regime in 1985 until their latest dataset for 2024.

Similarly, essential data on trade associations is available on the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution website and will be used to observe Brazil's economic movement internally and regarding its trade partners. This objective will be helpful, especially for contextualizing H2, the Economic Development Hypothesis. Lastly, the main financing projects can be found in the virtual archives of the Green Climate Fund, the most significant environmental fund for developing countries fighting climate change and created during the making of the Paris Agreement on global emissions, and the Global Environment Facility, a financial mechanism for environmental conventions. Unfortunately, there is no similar data-related measurement for H3.

5.1. Data Processing

The statements and speech data were first analyzed without any text analysis software to identify the three hypotheses' validity, respecting the timeline of the Conferences. I must reiterate that the language signals sought by this research are slight and detail-based. These are complemented by information on democratization and economic development from V-Dem and the World Bank. After, as a qualitative resource, the same UNFCCC and UNGA documents were analyzed using the text analysis software Voyant Tools for the last ten years, when significant discourse change was more easily observed.

I have analyzed each speech's official transcript individually in Voyant Tools using the "Terms," "Context," and "Reader" functions. The first allows me to see the most mentioned terms and their count. The second tool shows which words precede and succeed the term selected. This function lets the researcher confirm which topic was chosen from the previous function in which the word was immersed. The last tool used is a text reader that automatically highlights the word or words selected from "Terms" and presents a graph for easier visualization of where these appear the most in the document. An example of what this tool looks like can be found in Annex 1. With this more objective analysis, I aim to provide quantitative evidence of the language changes I observed in carefully observing each speech.

Suppose H1, the Democratization hypothesis, holds. In that case, it is possible to expect (1) the expansion of different voices representing and represented by the country in the conferences, including populations from marginalized backgrounds, (2) the development of civil society engagement in the cause during the periods of a Committed position and the contrary for an Unparticipative one. In other words, it will be possible to see actors from non-diplomatic backgrounds but environmentalists and representatives of the Ministry for the Environment

taking the lead participation in COPs. Similarly, matters of Brazil's domestic politics, such as the democratized access to resources and services, should appear in the speeches as the administration's priorities.

Alternatively, suppose the Economic Development-focused hypothesis (H2) is correct. In that case, there should be mentions of (1) strategies for development through trade relations and favorable results regarding these when there are shifts in participation and commitment levels. (2) Calls for technology transfer to the Global South from the North should appear during the Uncommitted period. Differently, (3) comments about green technology development internally. During the observation, the presence of officials representing economic growth or financial institutions and ministries will be taken into account, as was done during the analysis of H1. The influence of economic development strategies might appear positive or negative in strengthening Brazilian climate commitments. However, it would still mean

As a third hypothesis related to Soft Power (H3), increased Participation and Commitment to outcomes can be anticipated alongside the rise of Brazil's leadership in climate sustainability. This influence is particularly notable in Brazil’s interactions with various economic and political partners during both the Uncommitted and Committed eras. Brazil has positioned itself as a pivotal player on the global stage. Furthermore, Brazil's proactive calls for developing and developed countries to emulate its sustainability efforts underscore the significance of cultivating a solid leadership image in terms of the participative aspect. By promoting itself as a model for climate action, Brazil not only enhances its diplomatic standing but also encourages other nations to reconsider their positions.

This research recognizes the importance of text analysis for understanding the political processes that molded the overall diplomatic Brazilian positions in these meetings. As diplomacy

resides in communication details, the text described above was reviewed meticulously. Furthermore, this project's text analysis is bounded by Barbara Johnstone's (2001) definitions and specifications. This method relies on pieces of text treated as wholes on their own. As observed in her book "Discourse Analysis," to attest that there is no writer's bias on the results gathered, "systematic attention is paid to all the possible reasons for a text's having the form and function it does, it is useful to refer to an analytical heuristic: a set of broad questions to ask about the texts with which we work" (Johnstone 2001). Specifically, this research shall observe (1) the political, historical, and occasion context where and when the discourse was transmitted, (2) who communicated it (and who described it, if necessary), (3) what political discourse preceded it, and (4) what was its purpose.

From a linguistic perspective, adjustments in language over time and variations in how different stakeholders or projects are discussed as federal government priorities, if dominant in the discourse, should highlight primary shifts in position. These shall be observed comparatively, considering the context in which they were proffered to understand the reasons behind them. Additionally, the participation of different stakeholders as critical representatives of the country or in leadership positions will be contemplated in terms of their status and political role. Lastly, the hypotheses presented in this thesis are not mutually exclusive. As with the vast majority of political science research, rather than looking for absolute truths, I shall analyze the influence of each of the hypotheses proposed in Brazilian foreign policy in the past year and observe which provides more insights into the current changes in international climate relations.

6. Results

As explained, my results are organized in four periods that are significant in understanding the evolution of Brazil's climate positions based on the observed literature,

organized in the following subsections: The First Climate Conferences (1972–1992), The First Participative Position (1992-2003), The First Committed Position (2004-2015), and Recent Changes in Position (2016-2024), where the most volatility is seen. Table 5 below provides an easier understanding of the contexts and characteristics of the periods observed in this section.

Table 5. Detailed Characteristics of Positions

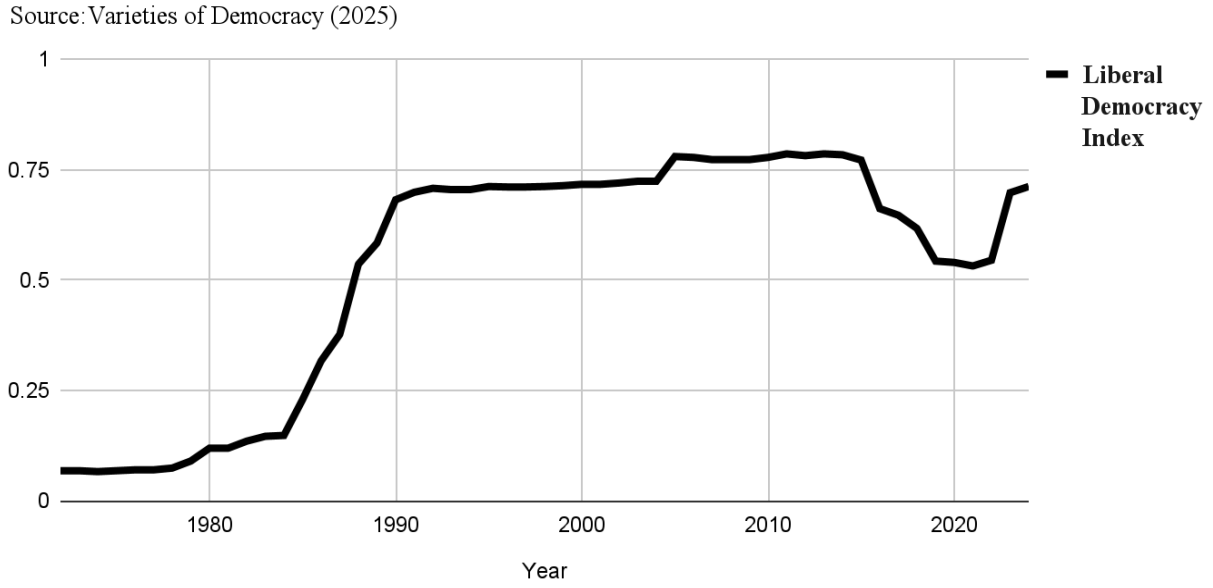
Section	Period	Period Description	Characteristics
First Climate Conferences	1972–1992	• Early Climate Discussions • Brazilian Military Regime • Cold War	• Extreme-nationalism • Developmentism • Denial of Climate Change
First Participative Position	1993–2002	• First COPs • Brazilian Democratization • End of Cold War	• Climate Skepticism • Security of Developing Countries
First Committed Position	2003–2015	• 4 Worker's Party (PT) Administrations/ • Creation of Formal Climate Change Agreements	• Leader of Developing Countries • Policy Change
Recent Changes in Position	2016–2025	• Rousseff's Impeachment • Temer Administration • Bolsonaro's Populism • Multilateralism	• Dismantling of Environmental Entities • Denial of Climate Change • Diplomatic Isolation • Rebuild Diplomatic Presence • Climate Concern • Recent political ambiguities

6.1. Democracy Results

This subsection qualifies the claim that Brazilian democracy has evolved in recent decades. This is essential for arguing that democracy levels are responsible for positively altering the country's foreign policy. For instance, Chart 1 presents the Liberal Democracy Index for Brazil over time, based on V-Dem data. Varieties of Democracy conducts extensive political research that characterizes liberal democracy by considering protecting individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and the majority. The numbers are attained by measures on civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and adequate checks and balances that

limit executive power (V-Dem). To make this a qualifier of Liberal Democracy, the index also considers the level of electoral democracy. The Y-axis represents the index value (ranging from 0 to 1), while the X-axis shows the years from 1972 to 2024, encompassing the 1972 Stockholm Climate Conference until today.

Chart 1. V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Levels in Brazil (1972–2024)



By observing Chart 1, it is possible to note the authoritarian character of the military regime that preceded the current Brazilian Republic. Before 1985, when the first indirect democratic elections happened, the Brazilian democracy levels were much below 0.25. It is also possible to observe that for most of Brazil's recent history, the country's democracy has been reasonably stable, with a high average of 0.75 in these metrics, especially between 2005 and 2015, during the Workers' Party regimes of Lula and Dilma. However, a decline begins after 2015, coinciding with Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, increased political polarization, and democratic backsliding during Bolsonaro's presidency (2019–2022). A slight recovery appears in 2023 and persists to 2024, aligning with Lula's return to office. This pattern suggests that

Brazil's uneven democratization has influenced the country's engagement in climate negotiations.

6.2. Economic Development Results

This subsection qualifies the claim that the Brazilian economy has faced some crises in the past decades but has been growing. This qualification is essential for arguing for (and against) H2 on Economic Development and engagement with climate change negotiations.

Chart 2. GDP for Brazil (1972-2023) in Trillions of current US$

Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators (2025)

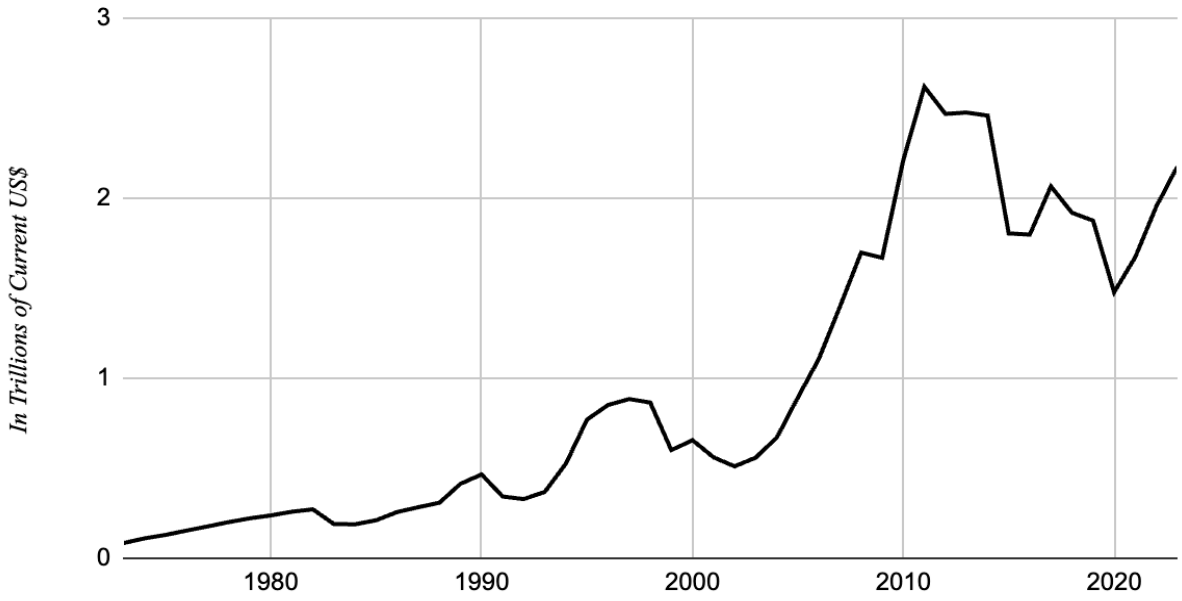
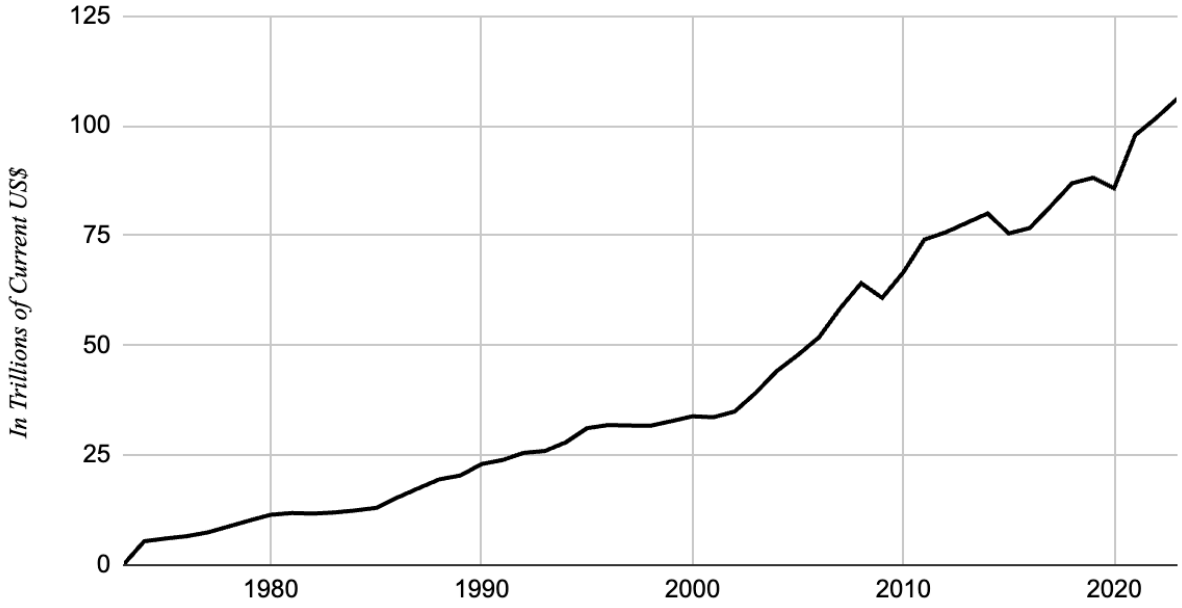


Chart 2. presents the country's economic performance over time using a line to depict GDP growth based on the World Bank's World Development Indicators database. The x-axis represents the years from 1972 to 2023, while the y-axis measures GDP in trillions of US dollars. Brazil's GDP during the military dictatorship (1964-1985) started at less than one trillion and gradually increased with minor fluctuations until the early 2000s. Around 2003, the GDP rose sharply, reaching a peak of $3 trillion between 2010 and 2013, corresponding to a period of

economic expansion driven by high commodity prices and strong global demand. After this peak, the graph shows a decline, reflecting Brazil's economic recession and political crises. There are further fluctuations from 2015 onward, with a notable drop around 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a recent upward trend, suggesting an economic recovery. This instability explains the lack of an Environmental Kuznets Curve observed in the literature for Brazil. In other words, because GDP growth has not been linear, the Brazilian government has not accumulated enough capital to invest in sustainability.

Chart 3. GDP for the World (1972-2023) in Trillions of US$

Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators (2025)

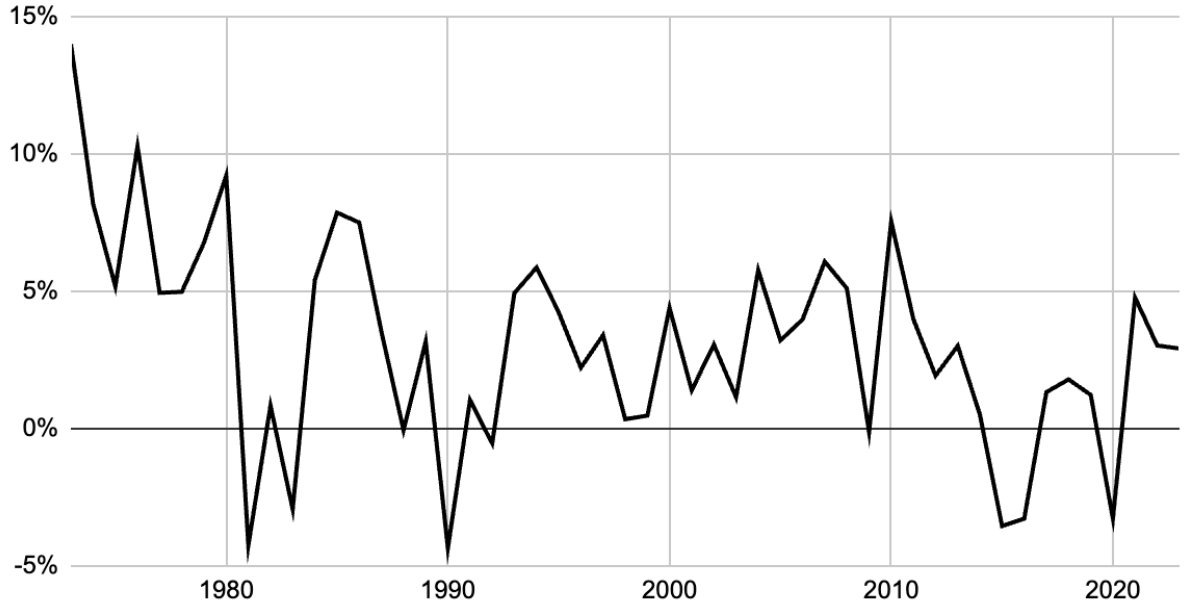


In addition, Chart 3 provides insights into the world's GDP growth during the same period, which is also depicted on a scale of trillions of US dollars. By comparing the information on Brazilian development to the same at global levels, the peaks of development and crises are more easily understood as outstanding rather than following a greater pattern. The impeachment of President Rousseff, combined with foreign shifts in commodity prices, disrupted regular

economic activity in 2015, causing one of the perceptible abrupt falls in Chart 2. This period was characterized by economic recession, declining investor confidence, and austerity measures implemented under President Michel Temer. The second central contradiction is explained by Bolsonaro's mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis, which exacerbated economic instability. While the economy experienced downturns worldwide, recent trends indicate a recovery under the third Lula administration.

Chart 4. GDP Growth for Brazil (1972-2023) in %

Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators (2025)



From another perspective, Chart 4 shows how volatile Brazil's annual GDP growth rate has been from 1972 to 2023, reflecting periods of economic expansion, crises, and recovery. It is easy to observe an incredibly high growth rate in the 1970s during the dictatorship's "Economic Miracle." This rate was generated from strong developmentist policies that eventually led to a shrinkage during the end of the regime in the early 1980s. The late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by instability. The mid-1990s saw more stable growth, driven by the Real Plan and

economic reforms. However, the late 1990s and early 2000s were volatile, with the 1999 currency crisis and global economic downturns affecting growth. The mid-2000s experienced substantial expansion, peaking in 2010 with a 7.5% growth rate due to the commodity boom and favorable global conditions. However, post-2011, Brazil's growth slowed due to structural economic weaknesses, political instability, and declining commodity prices, culminating in a deep recession in 2015-2016. The recovery from 2017 onward was weak and disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which caused a contraction of over 3%. The economy rebounded in 2021 with a 4.76% growth rate but faced slower expansion in subsequent years. Brazil's economic trajectory reflects external shocks, domestic policy shifts, and structural challenges that have influenced its long-term growth trends.

Compared to global GDP trends, Brazil's economic performance highlights its integration into international economic cycles and the unique domestic political factors that have influenced its trajectory. In other words, by comparatively observing Charts 2 and 3, while the Brazilian economy distinctively boomed with the liberalization that followed the democratization, the 2015 economic crisis that preceded Dilma's Impeachment can also be easily identified. This understanding is crucial in assessing how economic development has shaped Brazil's engagement in international climate negotiations, particularly in times of economic strength versus periods of crisis. That said, if the Economic Development Hypothesis is correct, it should be able to identify more Committed behavior in Brazilian climate foreign policies when the economy grows and less when the country faces an economic crisis.

6.3. Climate Conferences Results

With knowledge of Brazilian democracy and economic development, this thesis shall guide the reader through the diplomatic discourse used throughout time. With these, it will be

possible to connect the objective data presented above and the language signals that should describe what pushed the Brazilian evolving diplomatic position.

6.3.1. First Climate Conferences (1972–1992)

First, as noted before, the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on Human Environment is the foundation for this comparative study. Some signals from the first Conference's official minute records confirm Kiessling's (2018) and Riethof's (2016) concern that climate-related global environmentalism represented an obstacle to development in Brazil. During the making of UNEP and the beginning of the international conversations about international reinforcement mechanisms, the Brazilian government, represented by José Costa Cavalcanti, the then-current Minister of State for the Interior, requested adding the following statement as an Amendment to the Stockholm Declaration: “No State is obliged to supply information under conditions that, in its founded judgment, may jeopardize its national security, economic development or its national efforts to improve the environment” (UNFCCC 1972, 66). This statement, combined with the knowledge of the isolationist nationalism present in the military government policies at the time, demonstrates that the Brazilian state was not conforming with the idea of having its GHG emissions and environmental practices monitored under global parameters or committing to more significant responsibilities for climate sustainability. By then, the Brazilian delegation counted 17 official representatives, which was relatively small compared to developed countries.

By 1979, the First World Climate Conference (FWCC) was held in Geneva, sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Council for Science (ICSSU), UNESCO, and other United Nations entities. Chaired by American diplomat Robert M. White, the conference occurred amid Cold War tensions that influenced U.S. foreign policy, as the country was already one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters. Described as "a

conference of experts on climate and mankind," it brought together approximately 350 scientists, researchers, and facilitators from 53 countries to establish three key goals: maximizing the use of existing climate knowledge, significantly improving that knowledge, and anticipating and preventing human-induced climate changes that could be harmful to humanity (WMO 1979, 2). The World Climate Program was established during the conference, marking a significant step in global climate governance.

Although there are historical records of delegations from the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and other developed European nations, no official record of any Brazilian or developing country presence is available publicly online. Yet, in an exhaustive 800-page “Proceedings of the World Climate Conference,” there are several mentions of how Brazil has been affected by climate change. The most discussed topic regarding the South American state is how coffee bean production in the Southeast had been severely affected by a freezing winter in 1975 (WTO 1979). It also mentions the country when explaining climate vulnerability using the example of extensive hydroelectric power plants in the Rio Grande and strategies used by developing countries for the production of soybeans and other essential crops. That said, the lack of participation of Brazilian entities in this case can be rooted back to the exclusion of developing countries as parties of the discussion. The same would happen at the ICSU 1985 Villach Conference on Ozone layer depletion and the 1988 Toronto Conference. Furthermore, in the case of the examples in Brazil observed by this conference, the concern was much more economic-related than any type of environmental or humanitarian. Similarly, there is no mention of “climate,” “nature,” or (the natural) “environment” in the UN General Assembly opening speeches by Brazil this decade.

The Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change meetings starting in February 1991 with the United States as host was different: there was some participation of Brazilian officials in these. A Brazilian delegation was present at the UNGA-managed meeting with a Chair or Vice-Chair from each continent, demonstrating the United Nations' intention of integrating South parties in the discussion. Brazilian authorities were not voted to lead any working groups on specific issues or Chair the discussions and did not have notable participation as members. Yet, the country still had a considerably sized delegation with an average of six distinct high officials for foreign affairs and a few representatives of the Ministries of Environment or Science and Technology (UNFCCC 1992).

Later in the same year, in June 1992, at the Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) in Rio de Janeiro, state officials, early environmentalists, and diplomats across the globe established 27 principles for "establishing a new and equitable goal partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people" (United Nations 1992, 2). Although there is no public material on expressive Brazilian participation in the making of the conference's report, the second Resolution of Rio92 was an "Expression of thanks to the people and Government of Brazil" for hosting the Conference and for the "outstanding contributions" of Brazilian President Fernando Collor (United Nations, 1993). These facts demonstrate a higher prioritization of diplomatic goals than climatic ones with this series of meetings. At the opening of the UNGA in the same year, the representative of the country, Celso Lafer, Brazil's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasized considerably sustainable development strategies and the same diplomacy when talking about Rio92. He states:

> "The Rio Conference, therefore, fostered an awareness of the fact that development must be sustainable. (...). That and all the other achievements of the

> Conference were made possible thanks only to the unprecedented engagement of the community of nations at the highest level, allowing for considering problems of universal interest through the equal participation of all countries. Let me stress this point: The Rio Conference was exemplary in that it brought to a higher level the practice of democracy in international relations, thus strengthening multilateral diplomacy." (Lafer 1992, 19)

Considering that Rio92 was the biggest United Nations conference organized by then (ONU Brasil, 2011), the highlight in the diplomatic aspect of it is evident. Being able to manage such a conference was beneficial for Itamaraty. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how there was no mention of climate change in this speech, even though the whole conference objective was to discuss how development can be achieved without affecting the environment to the point of disharmony. In other words, global warming and other climate-change-related issues were interestingly disconnected from human-made harm to natural environments.

In a brief commentary on this first section, the first two decades of international climate conferences highlight Brazil's complex balancing act between carefully engaging in global climate discussions in the context of the Cold War and safeguarding its national sovereignty and development priorities of the military regime. This would later be transformed into a push for "sustainable development," a diplomatic valorization of democracy during the early democratic period. From the 1972 Stockholm Conference to the 1992 Earth Summit, Brazil's climate diplomacy focused more on maintaining diplomatic autonomy, asserting its role in global negotiations, and protecting its economic interests than on leading efforts to address climate change. Despite this, there was an emerging recognition of the country's vulnerability to climate change, which would lay the groundwork for a more active role in subsequent discussions.

That said, it is possible to observe that the climate conferences that preceded the COPs, the prominent representatives for the Brazilian government, were from ministries that promoted economic development as its primary goal, not sustainability. These had no intention of hiding

their developmentist agenda to the detriment of the natural environment. Furthermore, while the circle of developed countries initially ignored Brazil, the world was concerned about the economic consequences of climate change, especially the production of coffee beans in the country. These facts pose evidence for the Economic Development hypothesis, which argues that the government can only truly engage in climate issues once it is economically secure. Furthermore, even considering the exclusion of developing countries in initial meetings, with Brazil not being voted to lead any Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change committee despite hosting Rio92, there are few indicators for the hypothesis related to soft power. Finally, most notably for this research concerning H1, it is noticeable that there is the inexistence of popular participation in these discussions and no inclusion of environmentalist experts as representatives of Brazil in the events that preceded the COPs. While it is impossible to make a solid judgment because of the significant lack of public information during this period, these characteristics are the starting point for analyzing the Brazilian change in foreign policy behavior.

6.3.2. First Participative Position (1992-2002)

Now, I will examine materials from some of the first COPs and the transcription of speeches for the respective UNGA opening ceremonies. First, let's observe the 1995 COP1 to understand how Brazilian climate diplomacy evolved until it became more Participatory in the context of the Conferences of the Parties. Being led by the Minister of Science and Technology, José Israel Vargas, who would also lead the Brazilian delegation in the following 3 COPs, the general Brazilian behavior towards the first Conference protected national development and the mechanisms for making a first climate protocol. This attitude is aimed at being multilateral and having concrete procedures for all states to be accountable for their future actions. As seen

previously, Brazil aligned with the G-77 + China, a coalition of developing countries with significant emissions for claiming common but differentiated responsibilities (Moreira 2009).

In his opening speech, Vargas repeatedly highlights the intention to be “pragmatic” and “non-confrontational” when making the UNFCCC and Brazilian wish for fair “sustainable development” as adopted by the federal government (UNFCCC 1995). He mentions that “nine Amazon states have made a public declaration in favor of environmentally sound development,” placing the Amazonian context far from today's protectionism against deforestation and usage of Indigenous land. This problem only emerged because of thxis previous Amazon development initiative. The rights of developing countries are defended through the defense of common but differentiated responsibilities, technology transfer, and equity-based global partnerships. Last, “the anthropogenic enhancement of the greenhouse effect” is considered a diplomatic global issue for the first time.

The only objective mention of Brazil in the official Report of the COP is the defense that the fulfillment of emissions mitigation targets by Annex I Parties, the industrialized and developed powers, should be the priority of the Convention in the making and that JI's (Joint Implementations of mitigation targets: One flexibility mechanism posteriorly implemented in the Kyoto Protocol for investing in any other Annex I country in alternative to reducing domestic emissions) (United Nations 1995). According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Vargas said Brazil did not want to exchange “smoke for trees.” Furthermore, in the same bulletin, Brazil claims that credit for cooperation risks destroying the concept that countries are responsible for their national emissions and that “developing countries’ right to development should not be compromised, and that trying to enroll developing countries in a hasty manner or by making linkages with JIs would not solve any problem” (IISD 1995).

While all other Latin American countries favored this mechanism, it is clear that for Brazilian leadership, development could only be protected with individual national emission reduction goals. In that year's UNGA opening speech, the high leadership discuss the environment in terms of sustainable development, diplomacy, and reforms:

> "The United Nations should be able to ensure implementation of the commitments reached at the highest level at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, for much needs to be done to fulfill the promises that were made in Rio de Janeiro regarding international cooperation for sustainable development. The same kind of follow-up should apply to the commitments reached at subsequent international conferences on global issues. These are the main goals to be achieved by a reform of the United Nations institutions that directly or indirectly deal with the issue of sustainable development. We firmly believe that a broad vision of reform of the United Nations institutions will lead to an improved, more efficient, and revitalized Organization." (Palmeira Lampreia 1995, 6)

That year, there were still no more mentions of natural environment-related topics or "climate." Interestingly, the UNGA opening speeches of 1997 and 1998, both also performed by President FHC (Brazilian Social Democracy Party) and preceded and succeeded the signing of the Kyoto Protocol in COP3, have no mention whatsoever of the third "Conference of the Parties," "Kyoto," "climate change," or any related topic despite "sustainable development." The main word observances were related to national security, peace initiatives, and development, according to an analysis of the speeches with Voyant (Palmeira Lampreia 1997, 1998).

In 2000, at COP6, during the second mandate of FHC, Minister of Science and Technology Stardenberg, the head of the Brazilian delegation, already named "Global Climate Change" without any euphemisms at the ceremony's opening. Unlike in previous years, climate change has become the biggest challenge that Brazil and the rest of the globe should face. Also different, Stardenberg states that the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol must be respected and that "one of the higher priorities of the Brazilian Government is the sustainable

management of our forests and the conservation of our biological diversity" (UNFCCC 2000, 6), and that "adequate resources" are transferred to developing countries for the conservation of forests. Forestry is extremely important to this period of climate discussions from the Brazilian perspective as it has historically been the country's highest cause of GHG emissions. Unlike previous positions that rejected burden-sharing mechanisms, Brazil now actively participates in climate governance. The government volunteered for the Clean Development Mechanism Board and advocated strict compliance rules, ensuring land-use policies aligned with Kyoto's goals. This approach aims to achieve the same climate impact as Annex I Parties' 5% emissions reduction while preventing social and environmental harm.

While participation in climate discussions has been seen as a strategy for guaranteeing the security of Brazilian resources and policies, the willingness to discuss forestry openly might signify the desire to combat emissions. In this case, it is likely for international popularity (a Soft Power strategy) rather than any voluntary contribution from an environmental miracle. A similar behavior can be observed in the positioning of the representatives of the first Lula mandate (2003-2006). Nevertheless, while the securitization of climate politics remained to preserve natural resource sovereignty, Lula's government had always been focused on eradicating poverty and addressing the main issues for the most marginalized populations in the country, as observed in the UNGA opening speeches for 2003 and 2004. In this sense, it is expected that foreign politics would, for the first time, represent more people who had never been "the face of Brazil." As mentioned, the Workers' Party's intention was not to spread democracy internationally but to promote political participation and democracy domestically.

The indication of public interests through state-level considerations in a federative system, including input from relatively isolated regions in the Amazon, since COP1 in high-level

presentations demonstrates a gradual embrace of democratic principles within Brazilian society. This shift is reflected in the country's foreign policy and supports the Democratization hypothesis. However, although sustainable forestry was part of the discourse in earlier years, it was only during Lula's administration that the demands of marginalized groups, particularly those most affected by environmental policies, were meaningfully addressed. In contrast, when analyzing Brazil's narrative of climate leadership, economic development consistently emerges as the primary motivator for engagement. It reinforces the Economic Development hypothesis, as statements often prioritize national economic growth and the protection of Brazil's sovereignty as a developing nation over environmentally friendly initiatives. The implication is that environmental progress is contingent on prior economic advancement. Finally, while diplomatic engagement with other countries is a consistent feature of Brazil's participation in the COPs, there is limited evidence to suggest that Soft Power considerations were a driving force behind more active involvement in the early conferences. Thus, the Soft Power hypothesis appears to have weaker explanatory power in this early period of Brazil's climate diplomacy.

6.3.3. First Committed Position (2003-2015)

As seen previously, 2009 marks the first "Committed" position in the COPs by Brazilian authorities. Distinctively from previous engagement strategies by Brazil, pushing for strong climate commitments as a developing nation poses a disruptive behavior in this context. For instance, the country would reduce the emissions of GHGs from 36.11 to 30.8% by 2020, with an investment of up to 16 billion dollars per year to do so (UNFCCC 2009). With confident language in his statement during COP 15, President Lula highlights that "many want to bargain [their climate goals]. (...) Brazil did not come to bargain." Furthermore, he states that Brazil does not need foreign aid and that it will "do it" with its resources, even though the country is in

development and is willing to take a step further if it is resolved that developing countries can keep developing as something related to efforts for the preservation of the planet. Last, he mentions the most important topic of this administration, the continuous fight against hunger and malnutrition, and the goal of reducing deforestation in the Amazon by 80% by 2020 as part of the recognition that it is one of the most pressing environmental issues.

In Lula's second mandate (2007–2010), Brazil was in a leadership position in the developing world, considering its economic development context. Furthermore, the defense of the global South and multilateralism continues now with an integration with developed countries concerns. In the same year, in his UNGA opening speech, he restated his commitment to a leadership position in the cause. He criticized the lack of action by developed power, with a sense of urgency that matched a similar energy in his return to the presidency in 2023. Nevertheless, with the transition to the first Rousseff government (2010-2016), the administration backtracked this confident, Committed leadership position. Lula's Minister for the Environment and important environmentalism, Marina Silva, signed a petition with many environmental NGOs accusing Rousseff of contradicting promises made during the electoral campaign, especially regarding forgiving actors engaged in deforestation for development. In 2012, in an interview, Marina Silva stated that “Brazil walked 20 years to arrive where it was in 1992 when development and the environment were separated” (Gazeta, 2012).

Yet, it was during the Rousseff government that Brazil signed the critical Paris Agreement for the international control of global emissions. In COP21 in 2015, the president emphasized the need for a legally binding agreement observing emissions in a cumulative format. It should “provide the conditions that will ensure that all developing countries can walk the path of the low-carbon economy while overcoming extreme poverty and reducing

inequalities" and that "will progressively bring together the obligations of all countries" (UNFCCC 2015). In that year and the following, the president mentioned the need for climate agreements and incentives for sustainable development on a global scale.

The fact that the presidents with the first Workers'Party administrations, who were objectively committed to bettering the lives of marginalized Brazilians, were the ones that were the most Committed to climate change goals in COPs and transparent about it in their statements supported the Democratization hypothesis. Then, it is possible to argue that the consolidation of democracy allowed for a more pluralistic and accountable approach to climate policy, reflected in Lula's assertive commitment to emissions reductions and his administration's engagement with international environmental norms. Even considering that Lula's presidency is a testament to democratization in the country (as he was formerly an industrial union leader without an advanced degree), H1 can be fortified. Yet, the willingness to invest billions into emission reduction strategies publicly without foreign aid might indicate that the Economic Development hypothesis is stronger: Economic growth during this period provided the financial capacity and confidence to adopt ambitious climate policies independently. The weakening of deforestation policies during Rousseff's administration because of economic pushes also justifies it. Lastly, Brazil's evolving diplomatic strategy, balancing leadership among developing nations with cooperation with industrialized countries, exemplifies how soft power influenced its climate stance, strengthening the Soft Power hypothesis. Lula and Rousseff's administrations worked vocally as a bridge between developed and developing countries.

6.3.4. Recent Changes in Position (2016-2025)

Unlike previous periods, the Brazilian climate diplomatic strategy has fluctuated the most in the past decade. In this more detailed section of my data analysis, I shall observe the Brazilian

presence in the United Nations General Assembly and Conferences of the Parties during the temporary Temer administration (2016-2017), Bolsonaro's presidency (2018-2021), which was considerably unpreoccupied with climate, and the current return of Lula (2022-present), with an internationalist and committed position on climate issues I analyzed UNGA data quantitatively before continuing my resource analysis research. Intending to gather objective discourse data from the recent UNGA opening speeches by the Brazilian highest authorities, I have analyzed each speech's (from 2013 to 2024) official transcript individually in Voyant Tools using the "Terms," "Context," and "Reader" functions. The first allows me to see the most mentioned terms and their count to observe the language change in the past years in detail. The second tool shows which words precede and succeed the term selected. This function lets the researcher confirm which topic was chosen from the previous function in which the word was immersed. The last tool used is a text reader that automatically highlights the word or words chosen from "Terms" and presents a graph for easier visualization of where these appear the most in the document. With this more objective analysis, I aim to provide objective evidence of the language changes I observed in carefully observing each speech.

More specifically, I looked for mentions of climate- and natural environment-related issues and policies to confirm if sustainable politics was a goal of that year's administration. This is found in Table 6. Through careful reading of the texts, I observed that these could be grouped into categories: three global issues and eight domestic ones. The categorization of climate or natural environment topics for each of the years was performed using "Context" and "Reader" and is found in Table 7. Each "X" represents one or more mentions of terms related to the category. Examples of the terms that were classified in each category can be found in Table 8.

Table 6. Main Issues in the UNGA Brazil Opening Speech (2013–2024)

YEAR	ADMINISTRATION	Climate mentioned?	Natural environment mentioned?	Main issue 1*	Main issue 2	Main issue 3
2013	Rousseff	No	Yes	Sustainability and Sustainable Development	Diplomacy and multilateralism	Peace and Security
2014	Rousseff	Yes	Yes	Fight Against Hunger and Poverty	Sustainability and Sustainable Development	Education
2015	Rousseff	Yes	Yes	Economic Development	Energy and infrastructure	Sustainability and Sustainable Development
2016	Rousseff/Temer	Yes	Yes	Peace and Security	Nuclear Issues	Economic Development
2017	Temer	Yes	Yes	Nuclear Issues	Economic Development	Peace and Security/ Human and Civil Rights**
2018	Temer	No	Yes	Diplomacy and multilateralism	Peace and Security	Economic Development
2019	Bolsonaro	Barely	Yes	Freedom	Indigenous Peoples	Human and Civil RIghts
2020	Bolsonaro	No	Yes	Peace and Security	Economic Development	Sustainability and Sustainable Development
2021	Bolsonaro	Yes	Yes	Freedom	Economic development	The Amazon
2022	Bolsonaro	No	Yes	Peace and Security	Energy and Infrastructure	Human and Civil RIghts
2023	Lula	No	Yes	Fight Against Hunger and Poverty	Sustainability and Sustainable Development	The Amazon
2024	Lula	Yes	Yes	Fight Against Hunger and Poverty	Climate Change	Sustainability and Sustainable Development

*Although “Main Issues” 1, 2, and 3 are listed as the topics with the most prominent keywords in the text, the three have similar relevance to the research.

**In this section, “Peace and Security” and “Human and Civil Rights” topics had the same numbered appearance, lower than the first two. They were grouped so both could be observed. In other cases of issues having the same number of appearances, they are listed in alphabetical order.

Table 7. Climate- and Environment-related Issues in the UNGA Brazil Opening Speeches (2013–2024)

	YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	ADMINISTRATION	Rousseff	Rousseff	Rousseff	Rousseff/Temer	Temer	Temer	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Lula	Lula
GLOBAL	Challenges on Climate Change		X										x
	Climate Change Agreements		X	X	X	X							X
	Sustainable Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
DOMESTIC	Environmental Justice	X								X			
	Environmental Protection	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Deforestation in the Amazon			X		X					X		X
	Clean Energy			X	X	X					X	X	X
	Indigenous Peoples							X			X	X	
	Biodiversity				X					X	X		
	Land Use								X				
	Disinformation on Environmental Issues							X	X				

Table 8. Examples of topics for each Climate- and Environmental-related Issues in the UNGA Brazil Opening Speeches (2013–2024)

GLOBAL	Challenges to Climate Change	Climate crisis, global warming, greenhouse gases, climate resilience, climate impacts, and similar
	Climate Change Agreements	Paris Agreement, COP negotiations, international cooperation, climate financing, climate targets, and similar
	Sustainable Development	SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), green economy, sustainable growth, renewable resources, circular economy, and similar
DOMESTIC	Environmental Justice	Ecological equity, social and environmental rights, climate justice, Indigenous rights, pollution justice, and similar
	Environmental Protection	Natural resource conservation, pollution control, ecosystem preservation, eco-friendly policies, and similar
	Deforestation in the Amazon	Amazon rainforest protection, illegal logging, deforestation rates, sustainable land management, and similar
	Clean Energy	Renewable energy, solar power, wind energy, energy transition, clean technologies, and similar
	Indigenous Peoples	Land rights, Indigenous land protection, traditional knowledge, cultural preservation, climate adaptation, and similar
	Biodiversity	Species conservation, ecosystem balance, habitat protection, biodiversity loss, endangered species, and similar
	Land Use	Sustainable agriculture, land degradation, land restoration, deforestation prevention, land tenure rights, and similar
	Disinformation on Environmental Issues	Fake news on climate change, misinformation on deforestation, environmental propaganda, truth in science, and similar

In a brief analysis of Table 6, it is possible to observe that the only administrations with “Sustainability and Sustainable Development" as the main issues of their governments were Worker's Party's Lula and Rousseff. These could be related to these leaders' high level of democratization efforts. Interestingly, Bolsonaro was the only president to articulate speeches on “Indigenous Peoples” and “Human and Civil Rights” even though his administration has been the most harmful to Brazilian diplomatic climate efforts. It is important to note that in 2019, his commentary on Indigenous communities defended that Brazil would not extend its Indigenous lands because “they want and deserve to enjoy the same rights as all of us” (Bolsonaro 2019). Similarly, Bolsonaro brought “the Amazon” to the discussion, but it did not have a necessarily protective intention as Lula did in his third mandate. It is possible to argue that Bolsonaro's intention to bring up “green topics” was to improve his international popularity by supporting a cause that is acclaimed globally. In this case, the Soft Power hypothesis would not be enough to explain actual Committed behavior in COPs. Still, it supports the “greenwashing” of the speeches of non-environmental-focused presidents. That said, having Temer and Bolsonaro not bring up “Sustainability and Sustainable Development” as priorities of their government as they were administering an economic crisis fortifies the Economic Development Hypothesis.

Looking at Table 7, it is understood that, aside from Rousseff's first mandate, Bolsonaro was the only president to address one or no “Global” issue in this UNGA speech, it never being “Challenges on Climate Change” or "Climate Change Agreements.” He was also the only president to claim multiple times that the media tried to promote disinformation on environmental issues in 2019 and 2020. In sum, considering Bolsonaro's disregard for marginalized populations and democratic institutions, as seen in the literature review, his disregard for climate change strengthens the Democratization Hypothesis. Another defense is

that only Lula and Rousseff discussed the three global challenges in a single speech, including climate change issues. That said, in terms of "Domestic" environmental issues, most administrations mentioned "Environmental Protection" and "Clean Energy," a sustainable development topic that Brazilian officials value. The other domestic issues are spread across the administrations and do not bring any objective conclusion from their appearances in the speeches. In summary, regarding environmental issues, the decline of "climate topics" during Bolsonaro and its resurgence during Lula 3 are arguments for the three hypotheses proposed.

I also looked for the main topics of each discourse, as seen in Table 6. As a deep analysis of each of these goes beyond the scope of this paper, the information below is presented solely to promote transparency in my research process and provide more resources for interested readers. Sixteen topics appeared to be the most discussed issues in the speeches. To find the main issues addressed in each text, I observed the words with the highest count in Voyant's "Terms," with a minimum of 4 appearances in the text, and looked for each appearance through "Context" and "Reader." I carefully analyzed it, considering that highly mentioned words did not have significant meaning for my research. For instance, words like country names and United Nations organs were repeated during meeting procedures. Also, terms such as "people," "years," and "million" worked as highly repeated subjects or objects for the sentences, but their presence in the text was ambiguous. Differently, mentions of "human rights," "civil rights," "civil liberties," "freedom (of)," and "constitutional rights" could easily be identified in the Main Issue "Human and Civil Rights," considering their value as a topic of speech, not just a filler. Yet, highly repeated words like "development" and "climate" had to have each of their mentions carefully reviewed. For instance, having an adjective placed before the first as "sustainable development" and "economic development" would put the count in a different category. For instance, if both

“sustainable” and “development” appeared more than 4 times in the text, one mention of them together as the term “sustainable development” was counted as one appearance of the topic “Sustainability and Sustainable Development.” Also, for example, “political climate” and “business climate” do not identify a climate- and natural environment-related discussion. Finally, each supporting term for a category per year is counted and numbered in Table 8. Also, examples of terms for each category can be found in Table 9.

Table 9. All Main Issues in the UNGA Brazil Opening Speech (2013–2024)

YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
ADMINISTRATION	Rousseff	Rousseff	Rousseff	Rousseff/Temer	Temer	Temer	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Bolsonaro	Lula	Lula
Economic Development	1	7	**12**	**9**	**7**	**8**	7	**7**	**4**	6		
Sustainability and Sustainable Development	5	**8**	**9**	3	3	7		**6**	3	7	**7**	**4**
Fight Against Hunger and Poverty, and Inequality	3	**9**	8	1				1			**19**	**10**
Human and Civil Rights	**8**	5	5	6	**6**	5	**9**			**8**		
Education		**8**										
Energy and infrastructure			**10**							**8**		
Peace and Security	**7**	7	7	**14**	**6**	**10**		**8**		**21**	4	
National Sovereignity	5										1	
Diplomacy and Multilateralism	**7**			5		**13**				1	4	
Freedom							**10**	4	**5**	5		
Climate Change		4	5								6	**8**
Data and Information	4	1					4	1				
Nuclear Issues				**10**	9							
Democracy	5		6									
Indigenous Peoples							**10**					
The Amazon							7		**4**		**7**	

Table 10. Examples of terms for each Main Issue in the UNGA Brazil Opening Speech (2013–2024)

Main Issue	Terms
Economic Development	“Economic development,” “trade,” “economic policies,” “economic stimulus,” “economic growth,” “World Trade Organization,” “private,” “private investment,” and similar
Sustainability and Sustainable Development	“Sustainable development,” “SDG,” “post-2015 development agenda,” “millennium agenda,” “low-carbon economy,” "sustainability,” “environmental preservation,” and similar
Fight Against Hunger, Poverty, and inequality	“Hunger,” “poverty,” “social inequality,” “income inequality,” “food security,” “human development,” “food distribution,” and similar
Human and Civil Rights	“Human rights,” “civil rights,” “civil liberties,” “constitutional rights” and similar
Education	“Education,” “student(s),” “access to education,” “literacy,” and similar
Energy and infrastructure	“Energy,” “clean energy,” “green energy,” “hydropower,” “windpower,” and similar
Peace and Security	“Peace,” “security,” “weapons,” “war,” “conflict,” “sovereignty,” and similar
Diplomacy and Multilateralism	“Diplomacy,” “multilateralism,” “multilateral,” “solidarity,” “international partnership,” and similar
Freedom	“Freedom” and similar
Climate Change	“Climate change,” “global warming,” “climate crisis,” and similar
Data and information	"Information,” “public information,” “media,” “(personal/individual) data,” and similar
Nuclear	“Nuclear weapon,” “nuclear energy,” “nuclear power,” and similar
Democracy	“Democracy,” “democratical values,” “democratization,” and similar
Indigenous	“Indigenous peoples/populations,” “Native people,” and similar
Amazon	“The Amazon,” “Amazonian,” “Amazonian fires,” and similar

6.3.5. Qualitative Text Analysis on Recent Changes in Position (2016-2025)

This observance of objective text data extracted with Voyant described above gave me expectations for the qualitative text analysis of the most turbulent period in Brazilian political history since re-democratization. It is essential to reiterate that in 2016, Brazil continued its leadership position in climate debates, which started in 2009. Then, it backtracked in 2018 with Bolsonaro and will return to the same state by 2022.

In-depth, after months of deliberation that followed COP21, the United Nations Secretary-General opened in April of 2016, the official year term for countries to sign the Paris Agreement to control GHG emissions to maintain an average global temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Brazilian administration could only sign this agreement after resolving the nationwide discontentment with President Dilma's economic strategies and tax policies. It led to a year-long impeachment process that took her out of the presidency in August of the same year. Her vice president, Michel Temer, is a politician from the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), a “big tent” party.

In the 2016 COP22, the Brazilian delegation was represented by the Minister for the Environment, José Sarney Filho, Green Party (PV). Sarney was the first high representative for the Ministry for the Environment during FHC's administration (1999-2002) as a member of the Liberal Front Party (PFL), a center-right initiative. The participation was based on supporting the decisions made in Paris the previous year and finding ways to promote paths for sustainable climate financing, as this COP served as a forum for countries to debate their concerns and for signatories of the Paris Agreement to push other parties to do the same. In the opening of the UN General Assembly that year, Temer's speech focuses on economic development, the promotion of security and human rights worldwide, the threat of nuclear weapons, and highlights of Brazilian

diplomacy, as seen in Tables 6 and 7. In a brief commentary on sustainable development and the promotion of the SDGs, he states that “economic growth should be socially balanced and environmentally friendly (...) under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities”. He says he shall formally deposit Brazil's instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement the next day (Temer 2016). More interestingly, he states, “As the world’s most biodiverse country, and with one of the world’s cleanest energy mixes, Brazil is an environmental powerhouse with an uncompromising commitment to the environment” (Temer 2016, 8). Knowing that Brazil is an exception in terms of GHG emissions and that these come primarily from deforestation for the agro-business, the primary source of the country's desired economic development, mentioning Brazilian biodiversity is nothing but contradictory when highlighting Brazilian energetic sustainability that precedes the climate change discussion on energy sources. Regarding democratization, whether a contradictory impeachment process is a factor for or against democracy can be debated**.** Last, his section of the opening speech indicates a “soft power” initiative for putting Brazilian popularity in its natural environment.

Very differently, the following year, during his main statement at COP 23, Sarney had deforestation control as the main topic (see Table 6), following the Committed trends that started in 2009. He mentions the newly decided Brazilian first NDC for the Paris Agreement. He states, "We are the only major developing country with absolute emissions reduction targets for the economy as a whole: 37% by 2025 and 43% by 2030” (MMA 2017). While recognizing Brazil as a developing country and its related responsibilities within the climate accord, Sarney reiterates his previous announcement that Brazil offered to host COP 25 in 2019, as a Latin American or Caribbean country should do it to preserve a long history of support for international climate discussions in the region. Regarding the soft power implications of this

statement section, it is essential to observe that Brazilian commitments are at the same level as those of developed countries. That said, having a Minister for the Environment state this goal with pride puts Brazil on the radar of developed countries with distinguished climate politics and invites developing nations to join. Because of their history and influence in international agreements, these can be interpreted as critical actors for climate agreements.

The intentionally reiterated placement of Brazil as a developing nation is fortified when discussing the Amazon forest, one of the critical topics of the COPs for at least 15 years. The Minister of the Environment described the 2008 Amazon Fund under REDD+ as having received essential contributions from Norway and Germany, developed democracies obligated by the Paris Agreement to fund climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world. Similarly, he mentions BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) as an organization pushing to defend the terms established in Paris. It is essential to notice how these investments are part of UNFCCC mechanisms for Annex I countries to reach their climate goals by helping other nations do the same, a strategy previously questioned by Brazilian authorities. Together with neighboring developing countries such as Uruguay and Argentina, these nations are committed to climate change mitigation and consider their position as developing ones.

Additionally, if considering the denomination of Brazil as an “emerging” nation during Lula's first and second administrations, which were followed by a dramatic fall in the national GDP during 2015 preceding the impeachment (from 2.616 trillion USD in 2010 to around 1.800 trillion USD in 2016) (see Chart 2), it is arguable that a more conservative attitude towards taking climate commitments is related to the current state of economy of the country in a macro perspective. In other words, as the politics and economics of a nation are mutually influenceable, it could serve as an example under the Economic Devlopment hypothesis.

Finally, it is essential to mention that, since then, the Minister of the Environment replaced the Minister of Development and Technology figure as the country's primary representative in the COP. Under a shallow interpretation, this could mean environmentalists like Sarney democratizing access to climate conferences during the Temer mandate. Yet, because Temer did not have a solid domestic environmental agenda and did not introduce any revolutionary environmental initiative internationally, climate politics was not among his main goals. Despite this behavior during COP 23, in 2017's opening of the UN General Assembly, the president asserted that "Brazil's commitment to sustainable development is our top priority" (Temer 2017, 7). In the 2018 COP24, the last under Temer's administration, the head of the delegation was the Minister for the Environment, Edson Gonçalves Duarte, who replaced Sarney and recognized the Amazon deforestation increase during the year while reiterating the importance of REDD+. Whether his submission of instruments for ratifying the Paris Agreement was a continuation of the previous political structure or an intentional matter is up to interpretation, as the climate discourse abruptly changed in one year.

This less Committed but positive attitude towards climate change would drastically change during Bolsonaro's administration (2019-2022). Elected by the Liberal Party (PL), Bolsonaro's government was based on populism, conservative policies, and a strong emphasis on nationalistic rhetoric in Brazil. As seen in Table 1, the liberal democracy index for Brazil only got worse during Bolsonaro's administration. The deterioration of Brazilian climate diplomacy is politically and symbolically represented by the cancellation of the previous commitment to host COP 25 the following year. Ernesto Araújo, the Foreign Relations Minister for Bolsonaro, had shown skepticism about international climate negotiations and climate change overall, mirroring the general environmental behavior of Bolsonarism (WWF 2018). Bolsonaro himself is

described as a "climate skeptic" by the Guardian, and this decision contradicts "the consensus of Brazilian society on the importance and the urgency of actions that contribute to the fight against climate change" that motivated this commitment in the previous year (Watts 2018). Finally, because of the domestic implications of hosting such an important conference, juggling people's environmental expectations signalizes the dismissal of democratic values in Bolsonarism.

In 2019, the High-Level Statement provided by the Bolsonaro leadership focused mainly on the Brazilian production of clean energy, which this thesis has already signalized is misleading considering this administration's support of deforestation for agro-business development (UNFCCC 2019). It is important to note that at the domestic environmental politics level, in April of 2020, during a highly lethal COVID-19 crisis in Brazil, the current Minister for the Environment, Ricardo Salles, hoped to "push the cattle through and changing all the rules and simplifying norms" while "the media only talks about COVID-19" (G1 2020). In other words, the central leaders who should be conducting environmental protection and development were mainly concerned with harmful development strategies.

A similar process happened in 2021 in COP 26 (after a hiatus during the peak of the COVID pandemic) with the mention of the "National Green Growth Program." Bolsonaro presents this economic incentive-based federal project for the development of "green jobs" and "green technologies" to "consolidate Brazil as the largest green economy in the world" (UNFCCC 2021, 2). As observed, although the outcomes did not match the discourse because this project did not provide any significant development, the soft power initiative for global popularity through sustainability is also present. In 2021, the Minister for the Environment, Joaquim Leite, who replaced Salles after the "cattle controversy," presented New Climate Goals for the country. These are summarized by strategies to cut the country's GHG emissions by 50%

by 2030, replacing the previous goal of 43% for the same period. This target would only be updated in Baku in 2024, with 59%-67% net GHG emissions by 2035.

Interestingly enough, Bolsonaro was one of the Brazilian presidents who most talked about the Amazon and Indigenous communities during his administration, as observed in Tables 6 and 7. In his UNGA opening speech in 2019, Bolsonaro developed a narrative that Indigenous populations were content with his policies and did not want more governmental preserved areas to expand their activities. Similarly, he argued that most of the fire focuses in the Amazon were detained during his government, in contrast to the "sensationalist attacks" the international media has made against his government (Bolsonaro 2019). The same critiques of the press were present in his 2020 UNGA speech.

In 2023, Lula reversed the game. With his known "Brazil is back" speech at the opening of the General , the diplomatic message received by the world was that the lack of cohesiveness and ultra-liberal isolationism of the Bolsonaro regime would be completely reversed. He said:

> "If today I return in the honorable capacity of president of Brazil, it is thanks to the victory won by democracy in my country. Democracy ensured that we overcame hate, misinformation, and oppression. Hope, once again, has won over fear. Our mission is to unite Brazil and rebuild a sovereign, fair, sustainable, supportive, generous, and joyful country. Brazil is finding itself again within itself, with our region, with the world, and with multilateralism. As I never tire of repeating, Brazil is back. Our country is back to make its due contribution in facing the major global challenges. We have reclaimed our foreign policy's universalism, marked by respectful dialogue with everyone." (Lula da Silva 2023)

With a clear diplomatic intention, Lula could revert many international partnerships once destroyed by Bolsonaro. In COP28, he emphasized that Global South countries cannot implement their NDCs because they must choose between "fighting climate change and fighting poverty" (UNFCCC 2023) while still doing both. At the same conference, he was already proudly speaking about COP30 and that by then, "we will need to redouble our efforts to

implement the NDCs we have assumed." With Brazil announcing a new federal goal by the following year, which disappointed many Brazilian activists (ClimaInfo 2024), the expectations for COP30 could not be higher to resolve an updated financing mechanism.

In 2024, in the third COP in a roll hosted by an oil power, Vice-President Alkimin (PSDB) clearly announced that "[Brazil is] determined to be a protagonist in the new global economy with renewable energy, a commitment to combating inequality, and a dedication to sustainable development" (CanalGov 2024). While the success of COP30 is contingent on the progress made in Baku that year, especially regarding the new climate financing goal, the Brazilian leadership has been focused on mowing the lawn for a diplomatically successful COP30 in Brazil in 2025.

That said, recent years exemplify the significant influence of domestic political shifts on Brazil's international climate positioning. Despite the political turmoil, the Temer administration maintained a relatively stable commitment to climate agreements and a more conservative and economically driven approach, signaling consistent support for the Democratization and Economic Development hypotheses. However, Bolsonaro's presidency marked a stark departure from previous commitments. The Democratization hypothesis persists when considering that the democratic backsliding came together with undermining climate diplomacy and populist nationalism (see Chart 1). His administration's identifiable rhetoric of framing environmental regulations as obstacles to economic growth and sovereignty contrasted sharply with Brazil's prior leadership in climate negotiations. Yet, maybe for the first time, the Economic Development hypothesis is contradicted as Bolsonaro's Brazil did not follow what was supposed to be a gradual reach to green development after reaching a turning point in economic growth.

Meanwhile, the resurgence of Lula's internationalist stance in 2023 highlights how a return to democratic governance and multilateralism can swiftly re-establish Brazil's soft power on the global stage, specifically in terms of climate policy. Nevertheless, it still does not provide enough information to firmly claim favor of the Soft Power hypothesis, which argues that Brazilian soft power strategies could influence climate foreign policy. Moreover, the interplay seen previously between economic conditions and climate commitments is evident in Lula's emphasis on balancing environmental goals with economic and social development, especially for the Global South.

Considering Brazil's critical climatic context in 2025, where extreme weather patterns are becoming increasingly frequent and destructive, and the imminence of COP30 in Belém, in the heart of the Amazon, the country's expectations for future climate foreign policy positions are high. While Brazil walks towards a leadership position in the climate arena, domestic instability and recent contradictions related to oil exploration are obstacles to the late development and refinement of actual and reliable financing and emission mitigation updated agreements through the UNFCCC.

7. Discussion

After an extensive review of qualitative and quantitative information, it is possible to observe how Brazil's engagement with climate change negotiations evolved, shaped by shifts in democracy, economic conditions, and international political incentives. Concerning the Democratization hypothesis, the analysis confirms that higher levels of democracy, as measured by V-Dem indicators in Chart 1, correlate with greater engagement in climate issues. This connection reinforces the literature's theoretical assumption that governments that adhered more

strongly to liberal democratic values were more likely to prioritize environmental concerns as a signal of a commitment to international (environmental) cooperation.

For instance, highly liberal-democratic administrations like FHC (1995–2002), Lula (2003–2010, 2023–present), and Rousseff (2011–2016) consistently incorporated climate rhetoric into their international discourse, reinforcing Brazil's position as a key player in global environmental governance. The liberal democratic values these administrations hold were present in their COPs and UNGA opening speeches. These also increased the participation of environmental leaders in international governance structures, which the leadership of Marina Silva can exemplify in multiple turns of the Ministry for the Environment. Furthermore, during these administrations, the respect for the media and civil society allowed for greater public scrutiny of environmental policies. This behavior objectively distinguishes liberal-democratic administrations from Bolsonaro's tenure, which was marked by hostility toward the press and climate activists (see Table 6), using a securitization-focused, isolationist discourse.

The analysis of UNGA speeches also provides insights that could support the idea that democratic governance correlates with greater climate engagement. However, the results presented in Table 6 are ambiguous. While Rousseff's administration was the only one to prioritize "Sustainability and Sustainable Development" as its central issue at the General Assembly in 2013, Bolsonaro also ranked this topic as his third most important issue in 2020. Additionally, Bolsonaro was the only president to highlight both "Indigenous Peoples" and "The Amazon" as main topics during his administration that year. Nevertheless, many of Bolsonaro's public statements regarding Brazil's natural environments and Indigenous populations focused on discrediting the media, which criticized his regime. As shown in Table 7, these statements

often included accusations of misinformation and rejections of further governmental initiatives aimed at environmental and Indigenous protection.

Moreover, although they vary, under democratic-leaning and internationally engaged administrations through multilateralism (Rousseff and Lula), global topics on climate and environmentalism using terms related to the climate crisis, climate agreements, and sustainable development appear much more frequently than under Temer or Bolsonaro also in Table 7. A quasi-trend is observable when noticing the diminishment of mentioning of global climate issues after Rousseff's impeachment, only to be completed again in Lula's 2024 UNGA speech. Yet, more importantly, in terms of democratization, it is possible to perceive a stronger emphasis on multilateralism, sustainable development, and Indigenous rights during the Workers'Party administrations. This allows for linking environmental commitments to democracy and human rights. In other words, the decline in climate discourse (or positive environmental discourse) under Bolsonaro and its resurgence under Lula supports the Democratization hypothesis.

On the Economic Development hypothesis: While economic theory, including the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC), suggests that wealthier nations should show greater environmental responsibility after reaching a turning point, Brazil's trajectory does not follow a stable rising path. A possible refinement to the Economic Development hypothesis could be that economic stability, rather than economic growth alone, might be a more relevant factor in shaping engagement with climate diplomacy. I present this as the literature observed earlier in this thesis did not necessarily provide constructive proof that Brazil is en route to reaching an environmental turning point in the future. Not to mention that, despite all administrations mentioning different strategies for economic growth in their official statements throughout the years (see Tables 6 and 7), the mid-2010s economic crisis, which played a role in Dilma

Rousseff's impeachment, highlights how instability disrupted environmental priorities in Brazil, according to EKC theorizers, should be in a stable path to valorization in the future. In other words, if Brazil was in a position in the EKC's reversed-U curve for "investing green" depending on a certain level of economic development, the country should not have its environmental and climate politics so quickly unstabilized.

Another example of the claim for the weakness of the Economic Development hypothesis would be evidence against the EKC. Bolsonaro's administration did not transition toward stronger environmental policies despite reaching economic growth after 2020. Even considering the context of global chaos during the COVID-19 pandemic, his government continued to dismantle environmental protections, cut funding for enforcement agencies, and disregard international climate commitments. Nevertheless, as disconfirming evidence, Temer's government did not significantly backtrack on environmental commitments despite inheriting an economic crisis from the Rousseff administration. Yet, considering that the EKC observes a short-term and a long-term timeline for reaching environment-related engagement because of economic development, I understand that the discussion of the validity of this theory in the case of Brazilian climate foreign policy is beyond the scope of this paper. Thus, from what is possible to observe from the data, I reiterate my claim that while economic growth might create conditions for stronger climate policies, political will and economic stability appear to be crucial variables in determining a country's actual engagement in climate change conferences.

Specifically, regarding the information collected through Voyant, except for Lula, all administrations had economic development as one of the most important issues presented to the United Nations (see Table 6). Similarly, Temer was the only president who did not prioritize "Sustainability and Sustainable Development" topics in his speech. This leaves a center-left

Rousseff administration and a far-right Bolsonaro administration with the same “Main Issues” context. Lula was the only president who did not have “Economic Development” as the main issue noticeable in their text under the methodology implemented in this study (see Table 9). A weak claim that this lack of mention disqualifies the Economic Development hypothesis as Lula's recent climate foreign policies have been objectively committed to the cause could be made. Yet, recognizing that this methodology allows for some topics to be unrealized because Voyant cannot identify synonyms as signals for the same value, I shall now defend this position.

Another insight is that, almost naturally following the economic development assumptions explored previously, Brazil is more committed when sustainability aligns with growth. Still, when financial pressures mount, climate policies take a backseat. Charts 3 and 4 will confirm this statement's objectivity when observing World Bank data. Nevertheless, as observed in prior literature, it is evident that during and following Rousseff's impeachment process, an intense economic crisis hit the Brazilian economy, which could justify the diminishing attention to global climate- and environment-related issues in UNGA opening speeches perceivable in Table 7.

Lastly, considering the Soft Power hypothesis, finding direct evidence that the desire for international political influence shaped Brazilian environmental foreign policy in the past few years remains tricky in climate diplomacy. Yet, according to the soft power literature, while state leaders often seek international approval, Bolsonaro’s case suggests that ideological factors and domestic political calculations can override the typical logic of diplomatic engagement. His skepticism toward multilateralism, confrontational approach to international criticism over land use and exploitative resource management, and total disregard for media accountability were a defining feature of his administration’s approach to foreign policy, including climate

negotiations. Again, Bolsonaro's administration appears as the example that disqualifies the Soft Power Hypothesis similar to the Economic Development one.

Additionally, the consistent presence of Amazon- and biodiversity-related discourse across recent years highlights Brazil's environmental identity as a tool of soft power. However, how this identity is framed depends on political leadership. As observed in Table 6 and Table 9, Bolsonaro and Lula used the Amazon significantly in their UNGA opening speeches, yet with reasons. Under globally engaged administrations, frequent mentions of "Amazon conservation," "Indigenous rights," and "biodiversity" relate to Brazil presenting itself as a climate leader, leveraging its natural resources for international credibility. Nevertheless, under Bolsonaro, mentions of "Amazon" persist but shift to "sovereignty," "misinformation," and "external interference." Instead of soft power, the Bolsonaro administration frames the Amazon as a national security issue, resisting international environmental pressure.

Although no other relevant examples of how soft power and the Brazilian identity affect its climate policy were found, this finding cannot be disqualified entirely. These quantitative discoveries confirm that Brazil's participation in climate diplomacy is not merely reactive but follows patterns based on political governance, economic priorities, and soft power strategy. The fluctuating nature of climate commitments aligns with shifts in democracy, economic growth, and Brazil's global position as an emergent country.

8. Conclusion

My first hypothesis on Democracy's connection to high engagement in climate conferences was the only argument consistently supported by reading and analyzing more than 50 years of speeches, agendas, and other official UN climate-related documents. Democratic governance has proved essential for sustained Participation in global climate discussion and

diplomatic support of climate Commitments. The Economic Development hypothesis, however, requires revision, as economic stability, rather than pure economic development, could be a stronger determinant of higher climate engagement. As observed through the discourse examination proposed, Brazil appears far from an EKC turning point in global environmentalism. Last, the Soft Power hypothesis remains unsupported by diplomatic material. It concerns subjective themes such as national and international norms and identity in the globalized world and would require a different methodology to be more appropriately evaluated.

Yet, again, none of the hypotheses are mutually exclusive. All indicate what influences the behavior of Brazilian officials in the international environmental arena. High democracy levels foster engagement in global climate negotiations. Economic priorities, sustainable and sustained through time or not, significantly shape all policy directions as economics and politics are inherently intertwined. Soft power considerations drive Brazil's self-presentation worldwide regarding all international collective action problems. The interplay between these factors defines the shifts in Brazilian climate diplomacy I observed throughout this thesis.

Despite the primacy of the Democracy hypothesis, these findings provide the foundation for further investigations into Brazil's evolving role in international climate negotiations in the international relations literature. While this study highlights key factors shaping the country's climate diplomacy, there remains significant room for further research considering more specific democratization, economic, or identity theories. Future research could explore Brazil's position in particular climate agreements, its interactions with major global powers or other developing nations, and the influence of political shifts on the implementation of domestic actions that reflect environmental commitments made abroad. Furthermore, studies could analyze more than

one hypothesis for international climate engagement comparatively, as was performed in this thesis, for more reliability in the results encountered.

Given the country's renewed global environmental leadership under Lula's third term and the eminence of 2025's COP 30, observing Brazilian climate politics unfold might be essential for making predictions for the planet's overall environmental future. As Minister for the Environment and Climate Marina Silva stated in an appearance on the Pauta Pública podcast (2025): "[Climate] is an entirely shared responsibility. [COP30] is a COP in the Amazon, not by the Amazon. [COP30] is a COP in Brazil, not by Brazil. But Brazil has a vital role because, 33 years ago, they [climate negotiations] were born here, still in a state of concern. Today, it happens in Brazil in a state of emergency."

In 2024, the Earth surpassed the 1.5-degree Celsius threshold set by the Paris Agreement to preserve a sustainable future for humankind, marking a critical moment for climate action. As a result, many climate experts view Brazil's COP30 as potentially as significant as the Paris Agreement's role in current global climate expectations for peoples and governments, especially in discussions on climate technology financing mechanisms. Now, more than ever is the time to research, discuss, and advocate for climate action. Beyond national concerns and individual challenges, every movement to preserve the climate means a step closer to guaranteeing a tomorrow for you and all.

9. References

Alló, Maria, and Maria L. Loureiro. 2014. “The Role of Social Norms on Preferences towards Climate Change Policies: A Meta-Analysis.” Energy Policy 73: 563–74. doi:10.1016/j.enpol.2014.04.042.

Alonso, Angela, and Débora Maciel. 2010. “From Protest to Professionalization: Brazilian Environmental Activism After Rio-92.” The Journal of Environment & Development 19(3): 300–317. doi:10.1177/1070496510378101.

Bättig, Michèle B., and Thomas Bernauer. 2009. “National Institutions and Global Public Goods: Are Democracies More Cooperative in Climate Change Policy?.” International Organization 63(2): 281–308. doi:10.1017/S0020818309090092.

Bolsonaro, Jair Messias. 2019. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 74th session (A/74/PV.3).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/76/PV.3.

Bolsonaro, Jair Messias. 2020. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 75th session (A/75/PV.4).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/75/PV.4.

Bolsonaro, Jair Messias. 2021. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 76th session (A/76/PV.3).” United Nations. http://undocs.org/en/A/76/PV.3.

Bolsonaro, Jair Messias. 2021 “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 77th session.” United Nations. https://gadebate.un.org/en/77/brazil.

CanalGov. 2024. “Alckmin discursa na Cop 29, no Azerbaijão.” COP29. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-TAybfVzCk.

Casarões, Guilherme, and Daniel Flemes. 2019. “Brazil First, Climate Last: Bolsonaro’s Foreign Policy.” German Institute for Global and Area Studies. https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/brazil-first-climate-last-bolsonaro-s-foreign-policy.

Burges, Sean W. 2005. “Auto-Estima in Brazil: The Logic of Lula’s South-South Foreign Policy.” International Journal 60(4): 1133–1151. doi:10.2307/40204103.

Chayes, Abram, and Antonia Handler Chayes. 1995. “The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements.” Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1pncs3m.

Coletta, Michela. 2016. “Provincialising Nature: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Politics of the Environment in Latin America.” University of London. doi:10.14296/0420.9781908857811.

Diniz, Eli. 2013. “Desenvolvimento e Estado desenvolvimentista: tensões e desafios da construção de um novo modelo para o Brasil do século XXI.” Revista de Sociologia e Política 21(47): 9–20. doi:10.1590/S0104-44782013000300002.

Dip, Andrea, et al. 2025. “Crise climática e transição energética - com Marina Silva.” Pauta Pública. https://apublica.org/podcast/2025/02/podcast-pauta-publica/crise-climatica-e-transicao-energetica-com-marina-silva/.

Erkomaishvili, David. 2019. “Alliance Index: Measuring Alignments in International Relations.” International Studies 56(1): 28–45. doi:10.1177/0020881718825079.

Fankhauser, Samuel, e Richard S.J. Tol. 2005. “On Climate Change and Economic Growth.” Resource and Energy Economics 27(1): 1–17. doi:10.1016/j.reseneeco.2004.03.003.

Finnemore, M. (1996). “National Interests in International Society.” Cornell University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1rv61rh

G1. 2020. “Ministro do Meio Ambiente defende passar ‘a boiada’ e ‘mudar’ regras enquanto atenção da mídia está voltada para a Covid-19.” Política. https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2020/05/22/ministro-do-meio-ambiente-defende-passar-a-boiada-e-mudar-regramento-e-simplificar-normas.ghtml.

Gazeta do Povo. 2012. “Brasil retrocedeu pata antes da Eco-92, diz Marina.” Vida e Cidadania. https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/vida-e-cidadania/brasil-retrocedeu-para-antes-da-eco-92-diz-marina-3078pi4bi5025bqdozly89xse.

Hailemariam, Abebe, e Michael Odei Erdiaw‐Kwasie. 2023. “Towards a Circular Economy: Implications for Emission Reduction and Environmental Sustainability.” Business Strategy and the Environment 32(4): 1951–65. doi:10.1002/bse.3229.

Hardin, Garret. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." Science, New Series 162(3859): 1243-1248. https://pages.mtu.edu/~asmayer/rural_sustain/governance/Hardin%201968.pdf.

Hochstetler, Kathryn, e Cristina Yumie Aoki Inoue. 2019. “South-South Relations and Global Environmental Governance: Brazilian International Development Cooperation.” Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional 62(2): e004. doi:10.1590/0034-7329201900204.

Hochstetler, Kathryn, e Manjana Milkoreit. 2014. “Emerging Powers in the Climate Negotiations: Shifting Identity Conceptions.” Political Research Quarterly 67(1): 224–35. doi:10.1177/1065912913510609.

Hochstetler, Kathryn, e Manjana Milkoreit. 2015. “Responsibilities in Transition: Emerging Powers in the Climate Change Negotiations.” Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations 21(2): 205–26. doi:10.1163/19426720-02102003.

Hopf, Ted. (1998). “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory.” International Security, 23(1), 171–200. https://doi.org/10.2307/2539267.

IISD. 1995. “SUMMARY OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES FOR THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: 28 MARCH -7 APRIL 1995.” Earth Negotiations Bulletin. https://enb.iisd.org/events/unfccc-cop-1/summary-report-28-march-7-april-1995.

Imazon. 2022. “Desmatamento no Pará chega a quase 4 mil km quatdrados nos últimos 12 meses, maior derrubada entre os estados da Amazônia.” Imazon. https://imazon.org.br/imprensa/para-lidera-ranking-de-desmatamento-da-amazonia-em-julho/.

Instituto Lula. 2009. “Discurso de Lula na COP-15.” COP15. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JUtKGlU5v8.

Jenkins, Rhys. 2012. “China and Brazil: Economic Impacts of a Growing Relationship.” Journal of Current Chinese Affairs 41(1): 21–47. doi:10.1177/186810261204100102.

Johnson, Ken. 2001. “Brazil and the Politics of the Climate Change Negotiations”. The Journal of Environment & Development 10(2): 178–206. doi:10.1177/107049650101000204.

Johnstone, Barbara. 2001. *Discourse Analysis*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Kasa, Sjur. 2013. “The Second-Image Reversed and Climate Policy: How International Influences Helped Changing Brazil’s Positions on Climate Change,” Sustainability 5(3): 1049–66. doi:10.3390/su5031049.

Kiessling, Christopher Kurt. 2018. “Brazil, Foreign Policy and Climate Change (1992-2005).” Contexto Internacional 40(2): 387–408. doi:10.1590/s0102-8529.2018400200004.

Lafer, Celso. (1992). “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 47th session (A/47/PV.4).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/47/PV.4.

Lula da Silva, Luis Inácio. 2023. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 78th session.” United Nations. https://gadebate.un.org/en/78/brazil.

Lula da Silva, Luis Inácio. 2024. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 79th session.” United Nations. https://gadebate.un.org/en/79/brazil.

Mak Arvin, B., e Byron Lew. 2011. “Does Democracy Affect Environmental Quality in Developing Countries?” Applied Economics 43(9): 1151–60. doi:10.1080/00036840802600277.

Menezes, Roberto Goulart, e Ricardo Barbosa. 2021. “Environmental Governance under Bolsonaro: Dismantling Institutions, Curtailing Participation, Delegitimising Opposition.” Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft 15(2): 229–47. doi:10.1007/s12286-021-00491-8.

MMA. 2017. “Acordo de Paris.” Convenção das Nações Unidas. https://antigo.mma.gov.br/clima/convencao-das-nacoes-unidas/acordo-de-paris.html.

MMA. 2018. “COP-24: ministro faz balanço de combate à mudança do clima.” Ministério do Meio Ambiente. https://antigo.mma.gov.br/informma/item/15313-na-cop-24,-ministro-faz-balan%C3%A7o-de-avan%C3%A7os-no-combate-%C3%A0-mudan%C3%A7a-do-clima.html.

MMA. 2021. “COP26 | Dia 1: Discurso de abertura do presidente da República | Jair Bolsonaro COP26.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ksTwG_9vvY.

MME. 2019. “01 DISCURSO - COP 25 PLENARY MEETING dia 10 dez 18 a 20 hs -REVISADO - MINISTRO.” Antigo Ministério de Minas e Energia. https://antigo.mme.gov.br/documents/20182/1045954/01+DISCURSO+-+COP+25+PLENARY+MEETING+dia+10+dez+18+a+20+hs++-REVISADO+-+MINISTRO.pdf/3a49add4-c72b-2ae2-ff4f-03bca8b0471d.

Moreira, Helena Margarido. 2009. “A Atuação do Brasil no Regime Internacional de Mudanças Climáticas de 1995 a 2004.” Universidade Estadual Paulista. http://hdl.handle.net/11449/93729.

Neumayer, Eric. 2002. “Do Democracies Exhibit Stronger International Environmental Commitment? A Cross-Country Analysis”. Journal of Peace Research 39(2): 139–64. doi:10.1177/0022343302039002001.

Nye, Joseph. 2017. “Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept”. Palgrave Communications 3(1): 17008. doi:10.1057/palcomms.2017.8.

Nye, Joseph. 1990. “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power.” Basic Books. https://archive.org/details/boundtolead00jose.

OEC. 2025. “Brazil". Country Profiles. https://oec.world/en/profile/country/bra.

ONU Brasil. 2011. “A Cúpula da Terra - Conferência da ONU sobre Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento (1992).” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hraPn_XFgg8.

O Antagonista. 2022. “Veja o discurso completo de Lula na COP 27.” COP 27. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrXId6NTE2w.

Palmeira Lampreia, Luiz Felipe. 1995. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 50th session (A/50/PV.4).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/50/PV.4.

Palmeira Lampreia, Luiz Felipe. 1997. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 52nd session (A/52/PV.5).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/52/PV.5.

Palmeira Lampreia, Luiz Felipe. 1998. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 53rd session (A/53/PV.7).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/53/PV.7.

Parks, Bradley C., e J. Timmons Roberts. 2010. “Climate Change, Social Theory and Justice”. Theory, Culture & Society 27(2–3): 134–66. doi:10.1177/0263276409359018.

Payne, Rodger A. 1995. “Freedom and the Environment”. Journal of Democracy 6(3): 41–55. doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0053.

PBS. 2023. “As COP28 Climate Talks Move Closer to Final Deal, Critics Say Draft Is Lacking.” *PBS News*. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/as-cop28-climate-talks-move-closer-to-final-deal-critics-say-draft-is-lacking.

Planalto. 2023. “Speech by President Lula at the First Session of the High Level Segment for Heads of State and Government of COP 28.” COP28. https://www.gov.br/planalto/en/follow-the-government/speeches-statements/2023/speech-by-president-lula-at-the-first-session-of-the-high-level-segment-for-heads-of-state-and-government-of-cop-28.

Ribeiro, Renata Maciel, Silvana Amaral, Antônio Miguel Vieira Monteiro, e Ana Paula Dal’Asta. 2022. “‘Cities in the Forest’ and ‘Cities of the Forest’: An Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) Spatial Approach to Analyzing the Urbanization-Deforestation Relationship in a Brazilian Amazon State.” Ecology and Society 27(2): art1. doi:10.5751/ES-13224-270201.

Rousseff, Dilma. 2013. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 68th session (A/68/PV.5).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/68/PV.5.

Rousseff, Dilma. 2014. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 69th session (A/69/PV.6).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/69/PV.6.

Rousseff, Dilma. 2015. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 70th session (A/70/PV.13).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/70/PV.13.

Rübbelke, Dirk. 2002. International Climate Policy to Combat Global Warming: An Analysis of the Ancillary Benefits of Reducing Carbon Emissions. Edward Elgar Publishing. doi:10.4337/9781782542742.

Saad, Marcela. 2018. “COP-24: ministro faz balanço de combate à mudança do clima.” Ministério do Meio Ambiente. https://antigo.mma.gov.br/informma/item/15313-na-cop-24,-ministro-faz-balan%C3%A7o-de-avan%C3%A7os-no-combate-%C3%A0-mudan%C3%A7a-do-clima.html.

Sauer, Sérgio. 2019. “Rural Brazil during the Lula Administrations: Agreements with Agribusiness and Disputes in Agrarian Policies.” Latin American Perspectives 46(4): 103–21. doi:10.1177/0094582X16685176.

Simmons, Beth A. 1998. “COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.” Annual Review of Political Science 1(1): 75–93. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.75.

Stuenkel, Oliver. “Bridge Builder, Humanitarian Donor, Reformer of Global Order: Brazilian Narratives of Soft Power Before Bolsonaro.” In B. Baykurt & V. de Grazia (Ed.), Soft-Power Internationalism: Competing for Cultural Influence in the 21st-Century Global Order. New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press. 129–152. https://doi.org/10.7312/bayk19544-007.

Temer, Michel. 2016. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 71st session (A/71/PV.8).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/71/PV.8.

Temer, Michel. 2017. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 72nd session (A/72/PV.3).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/72/PV.3.

Temer, Michel. 2018. “Statement at the United Nations General Debate, 73rd session (A/73/PV.6).” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/73/PV.6.

UNEP/WMO/ICSU. 1985. "Greenhouse Gases and Climate.” Technical Information Circular 203. https://webstatic.niwa.co.nz/library/nzmstic203.pdf.

UNFCCC. 1972. “Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment.” United Nations. https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1

UNFCCC. 1995. “High Level Statement COP1 Brazil.” COP1. https://archive.unfccc.int/cop1-high-level-segment-statement-brazil-19950405.

UNFCCC. 1995. “Directory of Participants.” Conference of the Parties. FCCC/1995/Inf.5/Rev.2 https://unfccc.int/cop4/resource/docs/cop1/inf05r02.htm.

UNFCCC. 1995. “REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES ON ITS FIRST SESSION, HELD AT BERLIN FROM 28 MARCH TO 7 APRIL 1995.” Conference of the Parties. FCCC/CP/1995/7. https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop1/07.pdf.

UNFCCC. 2000. “High Level Statement COP6 Brazil.” UNFCCC Archives. https://archive.unfccc.int/uploads/r/unfccc-archives/f/d/5/fd5d60f2e5b414f81c6f08fd206faaf16eae890108f7289ea22ff8b787a5cd98/COP6_High_Level_Segment_Statement_Brazil_20001121.PDF.

UNFCCC. 2004. “Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Ninth Session, Held at Milan from 1 to 12 December 2003.” Conference of the Parties. FCCC/CP/2003/6. https://unfccc.int/documents/3607.

UNFCCC. 2009. “COP15 High-Level Segment Statement Brazil 20091217.” UNFCCC Archives. F3-SF3-S5-SS42-F-1-NEG/TBS/PLE/18-001-024. https://archive.unfccc.int/cop15-high-level-segment-statement-brazil-20091217.

UNFCCC. 2009. “Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Fifteenth Session, Held in Copenhagen from 7 to 19 December 2009.” Conference of the Parties. FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1. https://unfccc.int/documents?f%5B0%5D=session%3A3404.

UNFCCC. 2010. “List of Participants.” Conference of the Parties. FCCC/CP/2009/INF.1 (Part 1 and 2). https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/681634?v=pdf.

UNFCCC. 2015. “Remarks of President Dilma Rousseff.” UNFCCC Archives. https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/cop21cmp11_leaders_event_brazil.pdf.

UNFCCC. 2017. “COP23 High-Level Segment Statement Brazil 20171116.” UNFCCC Archives. F3-SF3-S5-SS69-F-1-NEG/TBS/PLE/19-008-120. https://archive.unfccc.int/cop23-high-level-segment-statement-brazil-20171116.

UNFCCC. 2021.“COP26 High Level Segment Statement Brazil 20211110.” UNFCCC Archives. F3-SF3-S5-SS76-F-1-22/01390. https://archive.unfccc.int/cop26-high-level-segment-statement-brazil-20211110.

United Nations. 1972. “Relatório da Delegação do Brasil à Conferência das Nações Unidas Sobre o Meio Ambiente Humano – Volume II.” https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2013/12/estocolmo_72_Volume_II.pdf.

United Nations. 1992. “REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITE FOR A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE NO THE WORK OF THE SECOND PARI OF IIS FIFTH SESSION, HELD AI NEW YORK FROM 30 APRIL TO 9 MAY 1992*.” INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE. A/AC.237/18 (Part II). https://unfccc.int/documents/951.

United Nations. 1993. “List of Participants.” Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change. A/AC.237/ INF.11 https://unfccc.int/documents?f%5B0%5D=symboldoc%3AA/AC.237/INF.11.

United Nations. 1993. “Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.” Resolutions Adopted by the Conference(1). A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I). ISBN 92-1-100498-5.

VEJA. 2019. “Ernesto Araújo: ‘Justiça social e clima são pretextos para a ditadura.’” VEJA. https://veja.abril.com.br/mundo/ernesto-araujo-justica-social-e-clima-sao-pretextos-para-a-ditadura/.

Vieira, Marco A. 2013. “Brazilian Foreign Policy in the Context of Global Climate Norms.” Foreign Policy Analysis 9(4): 369–86. doi:10.1111/j.1743-8594.2012.00191.x.

Vieira, Marco Antonio, e Chris Alden. 2011. “India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA): South-South Cooperation and the Paradox of Regional Leadership.” Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations 17(4): 507–28. doi:10.1163/19426720-01704007.

Viola, Eduardo. 2010. “A POLÍTICA CLIMÁTICA GLOBAL E O BRASIL: 2005-2010.” 2(2). 81-117. https://www.ipea.gov.br/revistas/index.php/rtm/article/view/120.

Von Stein, Jana. 2005. “Do Treaties Constrain or Screen? Selection Bias and Treaty Compliance.” American Political Science Review 99(4): 611–22. doi:10.1017/S0003055405051919.

Watts, Jonathan. 2018. “Brazil reneges on hosting UN climate talks under Bolsonaro presidency.” The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/28/brazil-reneges-on-hosting-un-climate-talks-under-bolsonaro-presidency.

WMO. 1979. “Declaration of the World Climate Conference.” IOC/SAB-IV/INF.3. https://dgvn.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DOKUMENTE/WCC-3/Declaration_WCC1.pdf

WTO. 1979. “Proceedings of the World Climate Conference: A Conference of Experts on Climate and Mankind.” WMO – No. 537. https://lpr.adb.org/sites/default/files/resource/990/proceedings-of-the-world-climate-conference.pdf.

WWF. 2018. “WWF responds to news of Brazil's decision to withdraw its offer to host COP25.” WFF. https://www.wwf.mg/en/?339290/COP25-Brazil-WWF-respond.

Zambrano-Monserrate, et al. 2016. “Relationship Between Economic Growth and Environmental Degradation: Is there an Environmental Evidence of Kuznets Curve for Brazil?” International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy 6(2): 208-216. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311433333_Relationship_Between_Economic_Growth_and_Environmental_Degradation_Is_there_an_Environmental_Evidence_of_Kuznets_Curve_for_Brazil.

Zhouri, Andréa. 2010. “‘Adverse Forces’ in the Brazilian Amazon: Developmentalism Versus Environmentalism and Indigenous Rights.” The Journal of Environment & Development 19(3): 252–73. doi:10.1177/1070496510378097.

Zillman, John W. 2009. "History of Climate Activities.” World Meteorological Organization Magazine 58(3). https://wmo.int/media/magazine-article/history-of-climate-activities.