

## The distribution of treaties as a reflection of foreign policy<sup>†</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the relation between treaties, foreign policy and geopolitics, on the basis of the study of information extracted from a collection of bilateral treaties -in this case, Argentina's Digital Library of Treaties- using data analysis tools.

**Resumen:** Este artículo explora la relación entre tratados, política exterior y geopolítica, sobre la base del estudio de información extraída de una colección de tratados bilaterales -en este caso, la Biblioteca Digital de Tratados de la Argentina- utilizando herramientas de análisis de datos.

**Keywords:** International Relations, Foreign Policy, Geopolitics, Treaties, Data Analysis, Argentina

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<sup>1</sup> The opinions expressed here are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Argentine government.

## Introduction

This article applies data analysis tools to examine a collection of bilateral instruments signed by Argentina in search of patterns that may be used in the study of foreign policy.

Initially conceived as an experimental trial, this work offers an example of data analysis application to a different field than those that are more naturally associated with this type of tools because of their predominantly numerical variables (finance, economics, commerce, among others). At the same time, it demonstrates that it is possible to obtain relevant information about a country's external relations through this process.

Since this constitutes a first approach to this set of instruments from a data analysis perspective, it is not intended at this stage to extract all information contained in said collection or exhaust its analysis. Such an attempt would require comprehending Argentine foreign policy in its entirety, a task well beyond the scope of this work and the author's individual capabilities. For this reason, the present work is methodologically restricted to only consider a small number of variables, as will be explained below. Despite this limitation, the utility of this exercise will be hopefully demonstrated and future research encouraged.

### Some conceptual clarifications

This work is inserted in the field of study of foreign policy, defined by Professor Roberto Russell in the following manner:

*"the specific area of government political action that encompasses three analytically distinguishable dimensions --political-diplomatic, military-strategic and economic-- and that projects itself to the foreign domain facing a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors and institutions, both on a bilateral as well as multilateral level"* (Russell, 1990, p. 255, author's translation).

Furthermore, the present work's object of study -international instruments signed by Argentina- is approached from the sub-systemic level of analysis of the National State, following the analytical model proposed by Singer (1961, pp. 82-89).

The sub-systemic level assumes the State is the main -but not the only- actor in international relations. In turn, the use of this level of analysis entails certain advantages and disadvantages for research, which distinguish it from the systemic approach, especially in the descriptive and explanatory functions that every analytical model should include (pp. 82-83 y 89-90).

In addition to these implicit constraints on the nation-as-actor focus, Singer identifies two issues that need to be defined, as they are not determined by the selected level of analysis. In both cases, the definitions proposed by this author are considered to be applicable to this research, broadly summarized below:

1. Intentionality (*voluntarism or determinism*): Singer argues that, although nations move toward outcomes on which they have little knowledge and even less control, they do prefer certain results and seek to achieve them through the conscious formulation of strategies (p. 85).
2. Phenomenology (*objectivity or subjectivity*): Singer leans towards examining the actor's behavior in terms of objective factors, rejecting the subjective or phenomenological perspective, which would prioritize the actor's perception of phenomena (p. 89).

In this regard, Singer considers that it is only on the national level of analysis that the observation of decision-making processes is applicable (p. 84) and that, furthermore, this task must be carried out if one aims to *explain* -and not just *describe*- a country's foreign policy (p. 86). With this goal in mind, Singer acknowledges the difficulty of obtaining data in this area but warns against the futility of accumulating information outside of a systemic framework (pp. 89 and 92).

In addition, for Russell (*ibid.*, p. 256), the study of decision-making processes in foreign policy requires taking into account three elements:

- a) the external and domestic stimuli and limitations;
- b) the internal macro-political context, which includes general traits of the political system and specific features of its foreign policy; and
- c) the specific context of the decision.

While Russell acknowledges that the weight of these variables may depend on each specific situation, he does emphasize that at least the first two elements must be known in order to understand State behavior in external matters (p. 257).

Within this framework, for the purposes of this work, the act of signing a bilateral instrument is considered to belong to the conscious dimension of State action, in the terms of Singer (*ibid.*, p. 86). In effect, the conclusion of bilateral instruments between two States involves linking processes of varying degrees of complexity in coordination with the other party. The signing of an instrument is thus preceded by multiple instances of internal analysis and bilateral negotiations, forming a web that is influenced by the three elements Russell recommends considering when studying decision-making processes in foreign policy and that were mentioned above (*ibid.*, p. 256). From this, it can be deduced that the

distribution of bilateral instruments reflects foreign policy as well as the decision-making framework in which the latter is formulated and executed.

In this regard, the primary focus of this work is to produce and present data on Argentina's activity regarding bilateral instruments. In addition, bearing in mind the precautions pointed out by Singer (*ibid.*, pp. 91-92) and Russell (*ibid.*, p. 274), it also attempts to observe the potential of this process to provide meaningful explanations on foreign policy. To this end, the work will propose factors that could serve as the basis for correlations between the distribution of bilateral instruments and the country's foreign policy.

### **Indicators**

Within the scope of the information produced in this work, at least two possible transmission lanes between the distribution of instruments and foreign policy can be explored:

- The distribution of instruments over time as an indicator of the prioritization of foreign policy within the national political sphere at a specific moment<sup>2</sup>. This implies that the number of new bilateral instruments should increase when the country is willing or able to prioritize foreign policy objectives over other national interests, and vice versa.
- The distribution of instruments over time with a specific country as an indicator of foreign policy priorities at a given moment<sup>3</sup>. In this way, the proportion of new bilateral instruments with a particular country should increase when relations with that country have been defined as a foreign policy priority, and vice versa.

Foreign policy, for its part, is influenced by geography. This is the essential premise of geopolitics, understood in the classical sense as the study of the impact of geographic factors on foreign policy (Kelly, 1997, p. 1). In this sense, foreign policy sustains an *indirect* relation between instruments and geography, whereby the former are influenced by and reflect the latter.

At the same time, it must be borne in mind that every bilateral instrument necessarily contains a geographical component, as it links two entities based in a specific territory. In

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<sup>2</sup> A relation that could be formulated as:  $\frac{\textit{foreign policy}}{\textit{national policy}}$

<sup>3</sup> In the same manner, a possible formulation for this relation:  $\frac{\textit{country}_x}{\textit{foreign policy}}$

this way, an *immediate* relationship between instruments and the geographical dimension is manifest in the territorial existence of the States that are a party to an instrument.

There is an additional bridge between instruments and geography worth mentioning. Instruments, in general, aspire to endure over time to fulfill their primary objective of providing stability and predictability to bilateral relations. Thus, it is common for instruments to contain within themselves the rules on issues that pertain to their own durability<sup>4</sup>. It is easy to observe the parallelism here between, on the one hand, the perennial aspiration of instruments as a requirement to fulfill their objective and, on the other hand, the immutability of geography as a measure of the possibility and usefulness of geopolitics.

Given the relationship noted between instruments and geography, the distribution of instruments can be used to approach a possible criterion for measuring geopolitics:

- The distribution of instruments over time with countries sharing common geographical factors can serve as an indicator of the weight of these factors in foreign policy<sup>5</sup>. From this perspective, the proportion of bilateral instruments with groups of countries that share certain geographical factors should be relatively homogeneous or, at least, exhibit similarities.

The foregoing anticipates the potential of observing the activity of concluding instruments in assisting to produce a foreign policy analysis informed by geopolitics.

### **The Digital Library of Treaties**

The present work is based on the collection of bilateral instruments between States published in the Digital Library of Treaties of Argentina<sup>6</sup>. Maintained by the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship, the main purpose of the Digital Library of Treaties is to facilitate access to specific instruments and their contents, in the same vein as other similar collections<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, provisions on dispute resolution, amendments, and especially those establishing procedures for termination. Such is the importance attributed to this function of bilateral instruments that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969 contains subsidiary rules on these matters in case a treaty does not regulate them.

<sup>5</sup> As done previously, this relation could be presented as follows: 
$$\frac{\text{geographic factor}_x}{\text{foreign policy}}$$

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://tratados.cancilleria.gob.ar>

<sup>7</sup> Several countries and international organizations, primarily the United Nations, offer similar platforms to the one analyzed in this work.

In addition to the text of the instruments, the Digital Library of Treaties also provides a record for each instrument with 21 variables or fields of information: (1) identification number, (2) title, (3) type of instrument, (4) counterpart, (5) date of signature, (6) place of signature, (7) date of entry into force, (8) status, (9) approval norm, (10) date of Argentine approval norm, (11) date of Argentine notification of compliance with internal requirements, (12) ratification date, (13) date of commencement of provisional application, (14) date of denunciation, (15) termination date, (16) reason for termination, (17) signatory, (18) counterpart signatory, (19) registration number with the united nations, (20) remarks, (21) subjects<sup>8</sup>.

The consolidation of these series of variables constitutes the dataset on which this work is based.

### **The bilateral instruments**

The initial exploration of this collection reveals a high degree of variation among the bilateral instruments, according to different criteria.

Despite its name, the Digital Library of Treaties does not only contain treaties in the strict sense, understanding a treaty as "an international agreement concluded in writing between States and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation" (Article 2, paragraph (a) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969). In fact, this database includes different types of instruments. In order to have a more homogeneous dataset, it would be preferable to use a collection of instruments of the same legal nature. However, the collection does not offer a uniform method for discriminating between treaties and other instruments<sup>9</sup>. Although it would not be impossible to identify and separate at least some of the treaties, this task would require extensive work on the dataset. It is for this reason that this work uses the more general category of "instrument."

The instruments also vary according to other criteria, such as their purpose (declaration of a political nature, regulation of a specific domain of the relationship, minutes of a meeting, etc.), their hierarchy (stand-alone instruments and instruments signed within the framework of the former), the subject matter (trade, defense, migration, borders, etc.), among others.

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<sup>8</sup> An example of an instrument record can be accessed at: [https://tratados.cancilleria.gob.ar/tratado\\_ficha.php?id=k6Gpmg==](https://tratados.cancilleria.gob.ar/tratado_ficha.php?id=k6Gpmg==)

<sup>9</sup> Some instruments include the label "Interinstitutional" among their "Subjects," and a relatively small number include "Treaties," but it is not evident that such categorization covers the entirety of the collection.

In order to exploit the collection as a dataset, the records have to be similar based on some category. This implies determining the level of detail of the selected category to distinguish the instruments contained. Observation from a high level can risk producing information that is too general or lacking relevance. However, excessive detail could result in a collection of unique records, making any comparison impossible.

With this in mind, for the purposes of this work and as a first approach, all instruments contained in the collection are treated as equivalent. Thus, when calculating distributions, every instrument will have a numerical value of "1". Between the two extremes of homogenization and differentiation, the proposed abstraction constitutes, following Singer's perspective (*ibid.*, pp. 83 and 90-91), the preferable solution as it at least enables this initial approach to the Digital Library of Treaties. Additionally, in support of this solution, it can be noted that all instruments being considered have been signed by a high-level Argentine authority, following a process of internal analysis and bilateral negotiation.

### **The variables**

After examining the 21 variables of the instrument record, it was determined that two of them could serve as the basis for a simple distribution calculation in their original state: the *date of signature* and the *counterpart*. Although the potential of the other variables to produce interesting information is not overlooked, they were discarded at this stage because they require homogenization or simply do not provide information applicable to the approach adopted in this work.

The two selected variables are sufficient to obtain the distribution of instruments in the temporal dimension (date of signature) and the spatial or geographical dimension (counterpart). Regarding information about the counterpart, it should be specified that the Digital Library of Treaties attempts to condense successor States into a single entity, a criterion that is maintained in this work. In this regard, the following cases were identified:

- Russia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
- Prussia, Germany, and both German Republics before reunification in 1990.
- Yugoslavia and Serbia.
- The Ottoman Empire and Turkey.
- The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Austria.
- Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. Slovakia appears as a counterpart in instruments signed before its separation from Czechoslovakia in 1993 when they were expressly kept in force under a new agreement.

In this manner, the 200 different counterparts that appear throughout the entire collection have been condensed into 192 unique entities, that will be generically referred to as

"countries". Regarding the date of signature, the collection includes instruments signed in 2020 or earlier. Within these parameters, the collection of instruments on which the distributions presented below are based includes a total of 8,072 instruments signed between 1811 and 2020.

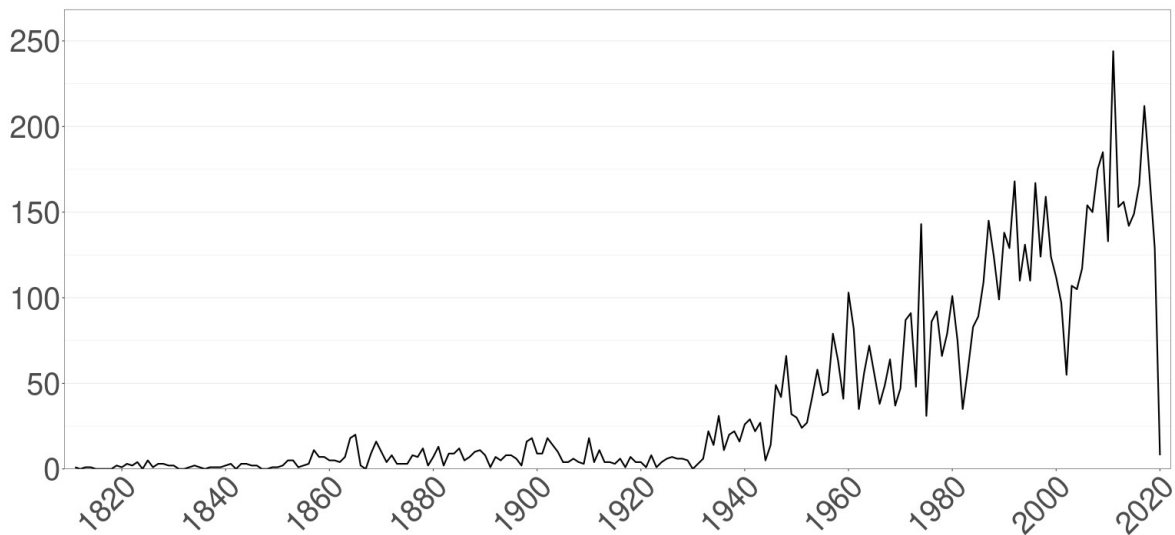


## Analysis

### Distribution by time

The following graph presents the distribution over time by year of signature:

Graph I: Number of treaties signed per year



Source: Own elaboration based on the Digital Library of Treaties

The distribution over time allows us to observe a tendency of records concentrating, forming peaks and troughs between years of high and low activity. This seems reasonable, as the act of signing instruments generally involves the getting together of high-level authorities with severe agenda constraints (such as Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers in charge of foreign relations).

In general terms, three phases in the distribution of instruments could be distinguished from the graph. Until around 1860, relatively small quantities of signed instruments and periods of no records are observed. Between 1860 and the First World War, peaks reach higher levels and it is less frequent to find years without any activity. 1930 is the last year of the collection that presents zero signed instruments. From that year onward, the number of signed instruments steadily rises, with minor fluctuations in some periods and significant ones in others.

It is interesting to note that the two transitional moments between these three phases offer events of historic significance for Argentina, whose relationship with the distribution of treaties may warrant further investigation. The first of these transitions coincides with the reunification of Buenos Aires with the Argentine Confederation in 1862. From Rapoport's

point of view (2006, p. 33), this reunification marks the beginning of the process of formation of the Nation State. This process will be consolidated when Julio A. Roca assumes the presidency in 1880, with the author highlighting the signing of boundary treaties with neighboring countries, as well as the formation of a rapidly expanding central administrative apparatus. The second transition surrounds the crisis of 1929, the deepest that capitalism has ever experienced in its history (p. 191), and the first of a series of coups that will mark Argentina throughout the 20th century. In this context, Rapoport (p. 205) observes that the international trade restrictions arising from the crisis compelled the Argentine government to promote bilateral agreements in trade matters, such as the Roca-Runciman Pact of 1933.

In its third phase, the graph presents considerable variations. While the high concentrations of instrument signings in certain periods could be in part explained by the convenience of chaining such activities when conducted abroad (as a means to more efficiently use the limited availability of involved high-level authorities), abrupt drops in activity could point to other dynamics. Specifically, the years 1944, 1975, 1982 and 2020 show significant decreases in the number of signed instruments. Using each of these years as a vantage point, certain developments' proximity in time and impact make them worthy of special consideration:

- 1944: De facto President Ramírez resigns and is replaced by the Vice President, General Farrell.
- 1975: The year following the death of President Juan Domingo Perón in July 1974.
- 1982: Armed conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic.
- 2002: Argentina goes through a profound political and economic crisis starting December 2001.
- 2020: The COVID-19 pandemic.

The conjunction of (a) magnitude of variation in the quantities of signed instruments, (b) impactful events for the country, and (c) their proximity in time observed in these cases seems to suggest that the mentioned events may have affected Argentina's ability or capacity to develop ties with other countries in the form of the signing of instruments.

## **Distribution by counterparts**

Next, the study addresses the distribution of instruments signed by counterpart, based on the list of countries with which Argentina has signed the highest number of bilateral instruments.

### Ranking

The 10 most frequent countries:

1. Chile: 9.6%
2. Brazil: 9.1%
3. Bolivia: 6.7%
4. Paraguay: 5.3%
5. Uruguay: 5.0%
6. Germany: 3.6%
7. Italy: 3.6%
8. United States: 3.6%
9. Venezuela: 3.3%
10. Spain: 3.2%

Based on this information, it is already possible to formulate some initial observations. Firstly, the top 10 countries account for more than half (53%) of all signed instruments. Among these, the first 5 are all neighboring countries to Argentina. From a regional perspective, more than two-thirds of the countries on the list are American countries, with the remaining three being European.

### Concentration

This short list demonstrates that signed instruments are not evenly distributed. Indeed, out of the 8,072 signed instruments, the top 10 countries (5% of the total 192) alone account for 53%. The remaining 182 countries (95%) share the remaining 47% of signed instruments.

With that said, it is of interest to try to elaborate, in broad terms, possible explanations for why each of these countries is among the top 10 most frequent. This exercise is not intended to be exhaustive but sufficient to argue that each and every one of these countries belongs in the top rank. Furthermore, as this is a global classification, spanning over 200 years of bilateral instruments, it should be noted that the observations do not necessarily reflect current trends in this activity.

## Neighboring Countries

First and foremost, the distribution of countries clearly communicates that *geography is important*. In particular, geographical proximity, as the 5 countries bordering Argentina head the ranking of most frequent counterparts in bilateral instruments. This does not seem to require further explanations, as simply sharing borders lends a special character to the bilateral relationship.

### Venezuela

The presence of Venezuela, although lower on the list, could also be addressed with a geopolitical perspective. While not a neighboring country, Venezuela's position at the opposite pole of South America and on the northern border of Brazil has historically made it an attractive partner for Argentina. According to Kelly, Venezuela's importance to Argentina fully fits into the geopolitical concept of checkerboards, understood as multipolar structures of power balance that fragment a system according to the logic of "*my neighbor is my enemy, but my neighbor's neighbor is my friend*" (ibid., pp. vii, 37). This concept is used by the author to explain the historical fragmentation of the South American environment into two coalitions: Brazil, Chile, and Colombia on one side, and Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela on the other (p. 37). Barrios, within the context of Mercosur, argues that Venezuela's entry in 2006 contributes to balancing the initial Argentine-Brazilian core, destabilized by the growing power asymmetry between Argentina and Brazil in favor of the latter (2011, pp. 44, 51-52).

Despite the historical ties between both countries, it is interesting to note that more than half of the instruments with Venezuela were signed between 2000 and 2009<sup>10</sup>. This provides a sample of the utility of the present exercise: even ignoring any other aspect of Argentina's foreign policy during the first decade of the millennium, this exceptionally high concentration of signed instruments -not seen in any other case- suggests a change in the relations between both countries during this period, which exceeds the limits of a superficial analysis.

### United States

The role of the United States as a predominant military and economic power, both regionally and globally, and its position among Argentina's major trading and investment partners, makes it difficult to point to a single factor that explains the number of signed instruments. On the contrary, despite a history of misalignments and suspicions in their bilateral relations (Lanús, 2000, pp. 17-19), it would seem odd, at present, to not find the United States among Argentina's most frequent bilateral counterparts.

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<sup>10</sup> More than half (56.6% or 151) of the nearly 270 instruments concluded between Argentina and Venezuela throughout their bilateral relations were signed between the years 2000 and 2009.

Nevertheless, the United States also shows a concentration of instruments over time that complements the point previously made. Almost a third of all bilateral instruments were signed during the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a period commonly referred to in the region as the Washington Consensus era<sup>11</sup>. Like in the case of Venezuela, the sudden increase in instruments with the United States in the 1990s hints at a change in bilateral relations during this specific period of time. Indeed, the shift in relations with the United States that occurred after Carlos Menem became President in 1989 has been considered a "cultural shock", by its contrast to Argentine diplomatic tradition, until then rather reluctant to engagement with Washington (Corigliano, 2003, p. 140).

### European countries

When it comes to the three European countries in the ranking, the geographical factors previously utilized don't seem applicable. To explain why these specific countries reach the top 10, it's necessary to turn to other potential sources of information. Although the relationship with these three countries cannot be reduced to a single dimension, the following set of diverse factors will be proposed, within the limitations of this exercise, to demonstrate their particular relevance.

- Currently Argentina's main commercial partner within the European Union, Germany is an important trade and investment partner. Between 1980 and 1995, Germany was one of the top 4 trading partners, averaging 6.45% of total annual trade during this period<sup>12</sup>.
- In the case of Italy, a considerable part of Argentina's population is composed of migrations from that country. As early as 1869, one-third of all foreigners in the country were of Italian origin, outnumbering Spaniards. In fact, between 1857 and 1914, Italians accounted for nearly half of all immigrants and almost doubled the number of Spaniards admitted during the same period, with Italian nationals being the largest group among foreign residents in 1914<sup>13</sup>.
- When considering the presence of Spain, currently one of the largest investors in Argentina and a significant trading partner, it seems impossible to overstate the particularity of the historical ties between both countries, with Argentina having been a colony of Spain and Buenos Aires the capital of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata before the independence process initiated in 1810.

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<sup>11</sup> Nearly a third (30.7% or 88) of the almost 290 instruments concluded between Argentina and the United States throughout their bilateral relations were signed between the years 1990 and 1999.

<sup>12</sup> According to calculations based on the reports "Exportaciones por destino - anual 1980-2022" and "Importaciones por origen - anual 1980-2022" prepared by the Center for International Economy of the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship (2023).

<sup>13</sup> According to figures from the Third National Census of Argentina of 1914 (p. 204), available on the website of the Provincial Directorate of Statistics of the Province of Buenos Aires.

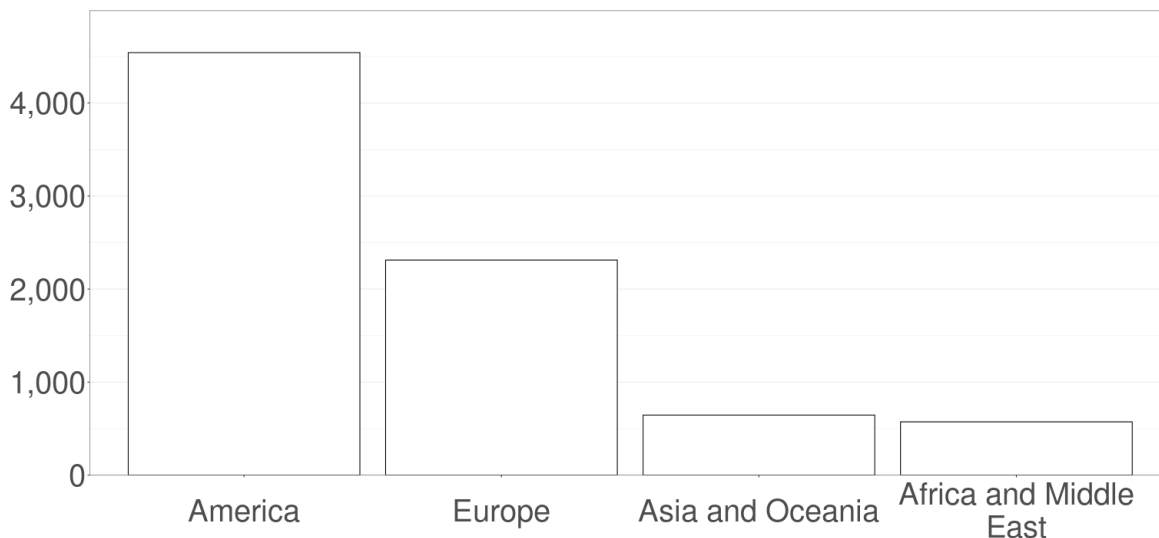
## **Distribution by regions**

Having presented the distributions based on the date of signature and the counterpart, the exercise is expanded to include the distribution of counterparts by regions solely for the purpose of observing if the tendency towards a concentration of instruments is also replicated at the regional and intraregional levels. For this purpose, regions have been defined and delimited as follows:

- Americas: The American continent.
- Europe: The European continent, including Russia and Turkey to the east.
- Africa and the Middle East: The African continent, the Arabian Peninsula, and Iran.
- Asia and Oceania: The Asian continent and Oceania, excluding Russia, Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula, and Iran.

The following graph illustrates the global distribution in each region:

Graph II: Number of instruments signed by region



Source: Own elaboration based on the Digital Library of Treaties

In addition to previous observations regarding the concentration of instruments, this same trend is also observed at the regional level. Indeed, the region of America concentrates more than half of the signed instruments. Moreover, America and Europe together represent over 80% of all records.

### **Intrarregional distribution**

Within the regional scope, the following list details the most frequent countries within each region:

America: 56.3% of all signed instruments, of which the following countries represent more than half of the total for the region:

1. Chile: 17%
2. Brazil: 16.1%
3. Bolivia: 11.9%
4. Paraguay: 9.5%

Europe: 28.6% of all signed instruments, of which the following countries represent more than half of the total for the region:

1. Germany: 12.7%
2. Italy: 12.5%
3. Spain: 11.2%
4. France: 9.8%
5. Russia: 6.9%

Asia and Oceania: 8.0% of all signed instruments, of which the following countries represent more than half of the total for the region:

1. China: 28.2%
2. Japan: 17%
3. India: 7.4%

Africa and the Middle East: 7.1% of all signed instruments (573 out of 8,072), of which the following countries represent more than half of the total for the region:

1. Israel: 9.1%
2. South Africa: 7%
3. Morocco: 6.6%
4. Tunisia: 6.3%
5. Libya: 5.4%
6. Algeria: 5.2%
7. Egypt: 4.4%
8. United Arab Emirates: 4.2%
9. Qatar: 3.7%

As can be observed, the series of intrarregional rankings show the same trends as other levels of observation in terms of concentration. Within each region, a small group of countries concentrates more than half of all signed instruments with counterparts in that

same region. Asia presents the highest level of concentration (3 countries) and the Africa and Middle East region the lowest (9 countries).



## **Conclusions**

The information extracted from the Digital Library of Treaties has made it possible to identify patterns in the distribution of bilateral instruments, to explore possible correlations, and to suggest potential influencing factors. At the beginning of this work, different avenues of communication between instruments, foreign policy, and geography were presented, on the basis of which it should be possible to formulate some general observations regarding Argentine foreign policy. Particularly, in the three areas where the distribution of instruments can serve as an indicator: the prioritization of foreign policy, the priority of bilateral relations, and the weight of geographical factors.

Regarding the prioritization of foreign policy, the observation of pronounced variations in the quantity of instruments suggests that Argentina's willingness or capacity to prioritize its foreign policy, as reflected in the number of newly signed instruments, has been constrained in situations of internal instability or armed conflict as well as in the recent pandemic. Conversely, the drive to sign bilateral instruments has materialized in different and varied contexts, such as boundary agreements during the formation of the national State or trade negotiations in the aftermath of the 1929 crisis.

As for bilateral priorities, Argentine foreign policy has tended to focus on a select few countries. This trend is replicated globally as well as within each of the four regional groups. In all cases, a small number of countries accounts for more than half of the instruments signed within their respective regional groups. Specifically at the global level, the five most frequent countries, which alone concentrate a third of all bilateral instruments, are those with whom Argentina shares a border.

A closer examination of this phenomenon allows us to recognize the geopolitical dimension within Argentine foreign policy. It is a geographical factor that clearly predominates among the various that were identified when addressing bilateral priorities as a result of the distribution of instruments: contiguity. It is interesting to note how this geographical factor prevails over others of undeniable relevance in the field of international relations and which were also considered, such as trade and investment, migration, or colonial ties.

From the above, it can be concluded that the analysis conducted on this set of bilateral instruments has served as a viable starting point to glimpse the general contours of Argentine foreign policy. While the outcome may reflect well known and established notions about how countries manage their foreign policy, for the purposes of this paper, the relevance of these observations lies in their ability to provide complementary elements of analysis obtained with a bottom-up approach, starting from a collection of specific individual actions.

Finally, the existence of multiple and diverse influencing factors on foreign policy invites us to question the nature of the interactions among these factors. In this regard, the quantification of foreign policy through the signing of bilateral instruments presented in this article also offers a potential method for comparatively measuring the impact of influencing factors on foreign policy, including those used in geopolitics.

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