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Natalia Chaban · Martin Holland  
Editors

# Shaping the EU Global Strategy

Partners and Perceptions

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Natalia Chaban  
Martin Holland

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## The EU Seen from Brazil: Images and Perceptions

*Paula Sandrin and Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann*

The study of EU foreign policy has evolved in parallel to the development of the process of institutionalisation of EU external relations, especially after the Treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon. The two Treaties are benchmarks for EU foreign policy as they laid the foundation for instruments and concepts strengthening the EU's capacity to act in a more unified and strategic manner on the world stage. More recently, EU foreign policy scholarship has included a focus on the EU's public diplomacy, which aims 'to raise awareness of its foreign policy goals and to positively influence the perception of the EU as an active and effective player on a global level [...] to promote EU values based on delivery of peace, security and prosperity' (PPMI/NCRE/NFG 2015, p. 15). Hence, the EU's public diplomacy endeavours to facilitate receptive audiences to the values and policies communicated by the EU.

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Informed by the theory of Othering (detailed in the Introduction to this Volume), this chapter argues that importance should be accorded to the perspective of third countries on the EU and acknowledges the influence of such perspectives on EU external relations. Active consideration of the Other adds an innovative touch to the study of EU external relations. We argue that the construction of EU identity (internally and externally) and capacity to have an impact on world politics may be fully understood only when perspectives of and interactions with the Others are factored in. Our conceptual priority assigned to the concept of the Other led us to engage with additional theoretical links, specifically to the theoretical approach of Normative Power Europe (NPE) (Manners 2002) and strategic narrative theory (developed by Miskimmon et al. 2012, 2013).

The NPE theorisation has highlighted a conceptual interest towards the role of the Other when considering normative exchanges between the EU as a norm-sender and global norm-receivers. This approach postulates six ways of how ideas, norms and policies may diffuse globally: through contagion (unintended diffusion), informational (strategic communication), contractual agreements, transfer through exchanges and technical assistance, physical presence of the EU abroad, and cultural filters leading to the construction of knowledge about the EU by third parties (Manners and Whitman 2013, p. 189).

The concept of the Other receiving and reacting to the projected messages is also a core concept in strategic narrative theory. By tracing the formation, projection and reception of strategic narratives, the theory tries to explain 'how states seek to shape the international order, pursue policy outcomes, and enhance policy and political legitimacy. Conceptually, narratives offer a particular structure through which shared sense is achieved, representing a past, present and future, an obstacle and a desired end-point' (Miskimmon et al. 2012, p. 1). The theory is found here to be of particular relevance to our focus on public diplomacy as strategic narrative is defined as 'a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of international politics to shape the behaviour of domestic and international actors' (Miskimmon et al. 2012, p. 3). To these authors, EU public diplomacy uses, therefore, strategic narratives to influence the behaviour of others.

Manners and Whitman (2013) argue that while critics of (nation-states') public diplomacy conceptualise it as an instrument to 'win hearts and minds', EU public diplomacy is less straightforward given



the contested nature of EU identity and actorness in world politics. EU public diplomacy for them is not about propaganda, but rather, recognising how power, influence and decision-making have become complex (Manners and Whitman 2013, p. 184). EU foreign policy constitutes EU identity even more than in the case of nation-states; it is tasked to engage with different values and policy stances reflecting on Europe's own values of human rights, democracy, solidarity and diversity, instead of imposing coherence (Manners and Whitman 2013, p. 195). The EU is seen as an innovative undertaking which should not copy twentieth century diplomacy and public diplomacy of nation-states, and move away from the notion of 'soft' power.

The relationship between EU normative self-visions and the image the EU projects beyond its borders is indeed complex; the interaction of these two dimensions brings to the fore the so-called 'intermestic nature of the EU's public diplomacy' (Duke 2013, p. 3). If there is a mismatch between the EU's self-proclaimed values of human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, justice, solidarity, equality, non-discrimination, pluralism and respect for diversity and wishes to respect domestic and international law (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 15), then the EU's projected images will not be considered consistent and credible. If the EU model of integration and history of achieving peace and prosperity is questioned due to its most recent internal crises, such as the Eurozone crisis, the irregular migration crisis and Brexit, it will be harder for the EU to "sell" its positive image or a "nice" storyline on the world stage. It will be less likely that third countries, such as Brazil, will pay heed to the EU's advice on how to promote regional integration, social development and human rights, if the EU is perceived as not following its own rulebook.

Positioning our chapter within broader post-structural literature on foreign policy, we echo other authors who state that discourses are constitutive of practices and ways of being and acting in the world (Campbell 1998; Doty 1993; Epstein 2011, 2013; Hansen 2006; Jackson 2005; Milliken 1999). We argue that strategic narratives conveyed through EU public diplomacy are one such discourse. Viewed from this position, it is not only the policies and practices that influence images and narratives, but representations themselves influence practices and practices help produce and reproduce representations, discourses and identities. These discursive practices help define the subjects who are authorised to speak and act and the audiences to whom they speak, disciplining or eliminating certain groups or ways of acting.

Discourses might define, allow, silence and exclude subjects and practices (Milliken 1999). The EU's internal problems might be silenced and hierarchical relations with certain parts of the world might be authorised as a result of discourses which present the EU as a superior entity, with universal values that should be embraced by the rest of the world. Together, discourses and practices of the EU's public diplomacy, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Neighbourhood Policy, strategic partnerships and academic scholarship on these topics form a body of knowledge that reinforce one another and reproduce a certain image of the EU that authorises certain practices while excluding others.

This chapter engages with this literature by exploring the case of EU public diplomacy with Brazil. It focuses on the third element in the strategic narratives schema—the *reception* of narratives. It explores how Brazil sees the EU, namely to what extent the image that the EU seeks to promote is considered credible, how the images projected by the EU are received (in particular, if they are supported, protested, appropriated or acquiesced), and what are the contingent factors affecting reception. Among the factors shaping the perceptions of the EU (and Europe as a broader concept) are cultural and linguistic similarities, historical ties, education and training, political context, age and demography, personal ties to Europe, geopolitical context, and economic interdependence (Miskimmon et al. 2012, p. 2; see also Introduction by Chaban and Holland [2018] in this Volume).

We proceed as follows: in the next section, we provide a brief overview of the history of EU–Brazil relations and a literature review of previous research on Brazilian perceptions of the EU, in order to set the broader context for our own research and to provide a basis for comparison across time. Then, we present our data on Brazilian perceptions of the EU, based on a media analysis and a public opinion poll, both conducted in 2015, and compare it to Brazilian views on other international actors, including states and international organisations. Informed by insights into existing perceptions, the chapter then assesses how the EU's 2016 Global Strategy is likely to be received in Brazil. Our main finding is that the EU's attempts to project itself as a normative actor is sometimes seen in Brazil as perpetuating hierarchical Euro-centric relations. This can potentially harm prospects for cooperation between Brazil and the EU, as the bloc is perceived as arrogant and unable to treat Brazil as an equal partner.

## 2.1 EU–BRAZILIAN RELATIONS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Brazil's diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community (EEC) were established in 1960, with the Brazilian Mission to Brussels inaugurated in 1961. A Framework Agreement between Brazil and the EU was signed in 1980 but, except for trade, other relations remained at the member state bilateral level. The creation of Mercosur in 1991 intensified Brazil's relations with the EU. It was seen as a successful model of regional integration and consistent with the EU's foreign policy strategies to promote regional integration abroad and facilitate interregional dialogue globally. For Brazil and Mercosur, the EU became key to balancing the influence of the US and its attempt to create a free trade area in the Americas (FTAA). A bilateral Framework Cooperation Agreement was signed between the EEC and Brazil in 1992, an Inter-Institutional Agreement between the EEC and Mercosur in 1992, and a Framework Agreement between the EU and its member states and Mercosur member states in 1995. These agreements promoted political and development cooperation. In contrast, free trade negotiations launched in 1999 have not yet been concluded due to disagreements especially over agriculture, services and government procurement (Ribeiro Hoffmann 2010; Doctor 2007, 2015).

Despite the Framework Agreement delays, other agreements were concluded, for example for science and technology coöperation (2004) and fusion energy research (2009). Furthermore, in 2007, the EU and Brazil established a strategic partnership, which has promoted political and economic relations. The Partnership established annual high-level Summits and Joint Actions Plans (JAP). The most recent JAP (2014–2017) included cooperation in areas such as the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy, the fight against terrorism, organised crime and corruption, promotion of economic cooperation, trade, investments and business exchanges.

In regard to economic exchanges, despite a negative trend in the last decades, the EU is still Brazil's main partner for imports in trade in goods representing 21.4% of total imports (China is second with 17.9% and in third place the US, with 15.6%). The EU is Brazil's second largest export market (17.8%) behind China (18.6%) but preceding the US (12.7%). Trade relations remain asymmetric: Brazil is the 10th most important partner in imports to the EU and 14th partner in exports, although accounting for only 1.8 and 1.9% of trade respectively (European Commission 2017).

Few previous studies have addressed the matter of perceptions in EU–Brazil and EU–Mercosur relations in a structured and systematic manner. Most studies which explicitly refer to perception (Ribeiro Hoffmann 2010; Saraiva 2010, 2012) are normative assessments, limited at best to interviews with elites (academic, government or business). Among the studies which systematise Brazilian perceptions making use of media analysis or opinion polls, we highlight Braghiroli and Salini (2014), Guimarães and Piefer (2017), and Fioramonti and Poletti (2008). Their works point to low visibility of the EU in Brazilian media discourses and among the general public and elites, as well as an ambiguous and/or undistinguished profile. Braghiroli and Salini (2014) analysed public opinion perceptions of the US and the EU in third countries between 2000 and 2010, presenting a few indicators related to Brazilian perceptions on the EU. Of special interest are studies that compared perceptions across that decade. The surveys analysed revealed a decline in positive perceptions in the period between 2000 and 2005. Thereafter, opinions remained relatively stable. Between 2000 and 2005, the percentage of respondents with a ‘very good opinion’ about the EU decreased from 11.8 to 6.1%, those with a ‘good opinion’ sharply declined from 78.4 to 48%, whereas those with a negative view increased from 11.4 to 17.6% (Braghiroli and Salini, p. 148). The survey then compared answers from 2007 to 2010: 48.3% of respondents had a ‘Somewhat favourable’ opinion in 2007 and 49.2% in 2010. Those respondents with a ‘Somewhat unfavourable’ opinion decreased from 28.4% in 2007 to 23.2% in 2010 (p. 126). Guimarães and Piefer (2017) assessed how Brazil sees the EU as an energy actor, and their analysis of two prominent Brazilian newspapers, *Folha de São Paulo* and *Valor Econômico* (covering the years of 2006–2013) revealed a low visibility of the EU in this issue-area, despite a shared priority given to renewable types of energy in both politics and joint commitment to the fight against climate change. Fioramonti and Poletti (2008) measured Brazilian, Indian and South African perceptions of the EU based on a variety of sources, including public opinion polls, interviews and media from 2000 to 2006 and concluded that the ‘EU is an unknown entity to most citizens in these countries and is rarely covered by local media. Moreover, it is often criticised for inconsistencies and double standards by political elites

and civil society, especially in the area of international trade, while being praised as a successful example of regional integration' (p. 167). These 'inconsistencies and double standards', which have affected the Brazilian perceptions of the EU, were also detected in our research, as is demonstrated further in subsequent sections.

Public opinion studies based on different sources reviewed by Fioramonti and Poletti (2008) showed that Brazilians were relatively familiar with the EU (43% knew the EU enough to have an opinion about it). Other data collected by the authors, from *Latinobarometro* for the period of 2000–2004, showed that more than half of Brazilian respondents (55%) had a positive perception of the EU in general. Regarding political elites, Fioramonti and Poletti argued that 'Brazilian political elites perceive the EU as providing their country with an opportunity to achieve its developmental goals. In particular, there is a clear recognition of the importance of the EU both as a market for Brazilian exports and as the main provider of foreign direct investment in the country' (2008, p. 173). This positive perception of the EU as an opportunity—that is, as a market for Brazilian products and a source of direct investment—has persisted over time, as our own research shows below. Past research also demonstrated that the EU was seen in a positive light during bilateral and multilateral negotiations, especially EU–Mercosur negotiations; EU–Mercosur relations were often referred to as a better option than the US-led initiatives, such as the FTAA or bilateral free trade agreements (Fioramonti and Poletti 2008, p. 173). The EU was also seen as fostering multilateralism, as well as being a role model in regional integration for Mercosur (p. 173).

As for the media framing of the EU in Brazil, Fioramonti and Poletti argued that the Brazilian press, between May 2004 and February 2006, had represented the EU mainly in terms of its trade activities—'Even when other economic topics are presented, agriculture for instance, they tend to be related to issues influencing the country's relative position in the international trade system' (2008, p. 175). The authors also argued that media representations of the EU as an actor in social affairs were rare. In contrast with its image as an economically relevant actor, the EU's political relevance was downplayed by the influential Brazilian press, a consistent trend over time, as our more recent findings show below.

## 2.2 MEDIA ANALYSIS: IDENTIFYING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE EU IN THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA

The aim of our media analysis—that monitored the newspapers *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Globo* and *Valor Econômico* in their coverage of the EU and Europe daily over three months (1 April–30 June 2015)—was to identify which aspects of the EU were selected for communication and highlighted in Brazil's most influential newspapers. The EU sample was composed of 573 articles and the Europe sample, of 286 articles (in this chapter we focus our analysis only on the EU dataset). We also aimed to trace how the EU was profiled during important international events in relation to other international actors. The content analysis (for more details about the method see Introduction in this Volume) revealed the main trends in the visibility and framing of the EU in the newspapers selected for observation. Our in-depth content analysis included consideration of the contexts of EU actions (taking place in Europe, in/with Brazil, in Brazil's immediate geopolitical region, with third countries and globally), evaluation (on a scale from positive to negative) and local 'hooks' (whether in the news pieces the EU was presented acting in Brazil and/or interacting with Brazilian actors).

Assessing the visibility (see Introduction for the description of this analytical category), the volume of articles published in the three-month period studied sharply increased in the course of observation due to three main dramatic events: the beginning of the irregular migration crisis, the result of the UK General Election and the consequential Brexit referendum, and the continuation of the Greek debt crisis. Reports about the death of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea (end of April/beginning of May 2015) and the proposed EU policies on migration (such as sinking traffickers' vessels off the coast of Libya and quotas for resettling refugees in EU member states) resulted in 59 articles from the three papers. The UK election, for the same period, saw a total of 65 articles published where the EU was mentioned in the context of the proposed referendum and the possible consequences of Brexit. Finally, a new stanza in the Greek debt crisis drama (end of June) produced 129 articles covering the collapse of negotiations between Greece and its creditors, and the scheduled referendum on the bailout conditions.

The most cited EU institution was the European Central Bank, followed by the Commission, both appearing in the context of negotiations with Greece (Fig. 2.1). Overall, visibility of the EU member states was somewhat higher than the visibility of the EU institutions. Supporting this trend, EU member state actors received more media attention in the articles referencing the EU than the EU's official actors (Fig. 2.2). Visibility of these events and actors suggests that the EU's visibility carried a message to the Brazilian readers—it is the negative and dramatic that attracted most of media attention in the reportage of political, economic and social affairs of the EU.

The majority of articles (66.4%) in the three observed newspapers reported the EU with a major or secondary degree of centrality, meaning that EU institutions, actors and member states were among the main “characters” of the news articles and raised the overall profile of the EU among Brazilian audiences. With regards to thematic frames, all three newspapers published more articles about economic topics, followed by politics and social and cultural affairs, reflecting the importance accorded to the Greek debt crisis, Brexit and irregular migration crisis, respectively.

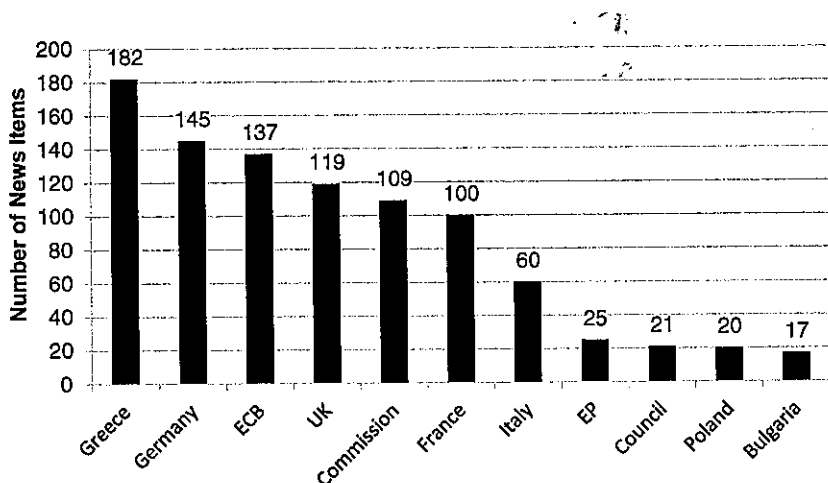


Fig. 2.1 Visibility of EU institutions vs. EU Member States

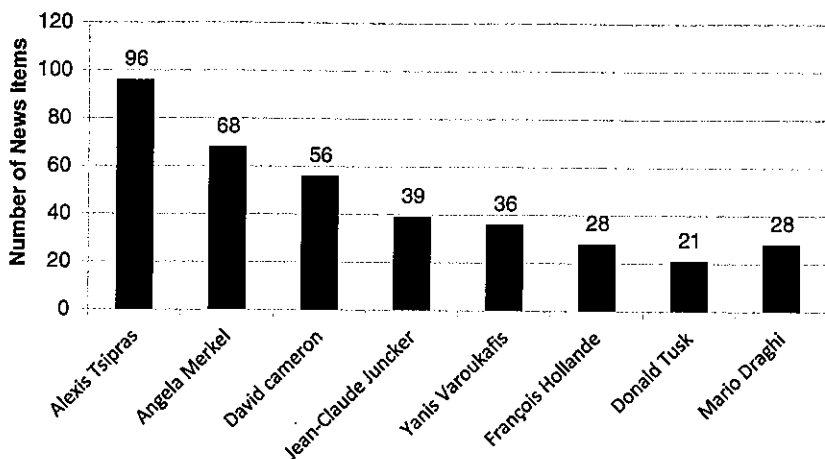


Fig. 2.2 Visibility of EU officials vs. EU Member States leaders

In the *political* frame, most stories concerned EU external relations and focused on EU sanctions against Russia and Iran. Closer to home, the Brazilian press reported on EU relations with Venezuela and the June 2015 EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit. By far, the most visible political theme of the EU's internal politics was the UK election, with reports dissecting the UK's relations with the EU and discussing the consequences of the proposed referendum on the UK's EU membership. A scant few other articles commented on the rise of far-right parties across the continent, particularly in France. A spike in the Greek debt crisis dominated *economy*-related news, which featured a total of 129 articles in a sample of 326 economy-focused articles, or 39% of the total. Other economy-related issues carried a more locally-focused weight. These reported the possibility of unlocking the EU-Mercosur trade deal (27 news pieces), the alternative of a bilateral Brazil-EU trade deal if interregional negotiations failed (16 articles), and the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment partnership (15 reports). Migration dominated the *social and cultural affairs* theme, with an emphasis on the death of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the proposed EU policies to tackle the irregular migration crisis.



EU news on *energy*, *research/science/technology* (RST) and *development* were not frequent topics. In the three months of observation, only one article was published about energy, two on RST, and none at all on development. *Environmental* issues also appeared infrequently, although more often than *energy*, *RST* and *development* reports. Most articles on the topic were about EU actions to combat climate change mentioned in the context of the G-7 summit and the upcoming COP-21 conference in Paris at the end of 2015.

Assessing the *local resonance* of EU media images, the most significant finding was a very low share of news about the EU's policies, initiatives or programmes in and towards Brazil (Fig. 2.3). Reports on EU–Brazil relations were overshadowed by news about the dramatic internal European issues discussed above (UK General Election, the Greek debt crisis and the EU's responses to irregular migration). When the EU was reported as acting internationally, it was generally portrayed as acting in third countries (e.g. EU sanctions against Russia and Iran) or in Brazil's immediate region (e.g. EU relations with Venezuela). Importantly, EU–Brazil relations were only covered in the context of the EU–CELAC Summit in June 2015, when former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff made proposals to revive the stalled EU–Mercosur trade liberalisation negotiations (16 articles over three newspapers mentioned the bilateral trade talks, as mentioned above). EU–Mercosur trade liberalisation negotiations were presented mostly in a positive light—a trade deal with the EU was seen to benefit Brazilian exports. Nevertheless, EU subsidies for agriculture were briefly mentioned as an obstacle for deeper trade relations. In addition, some articles referred to the alternative of having a

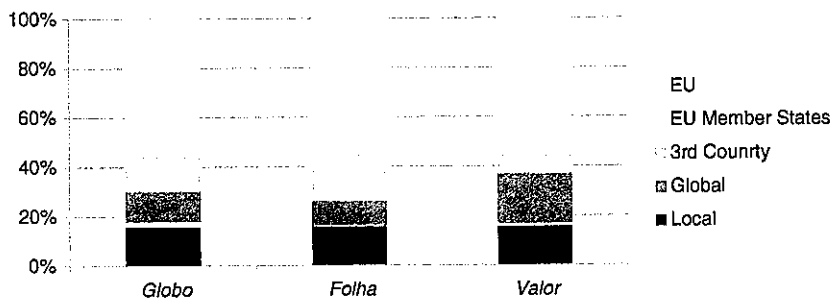


Fig. 2.3 Focus of domesticity of EU actions

bilateral trade deal between Brazil and the EU if interregional negotiations failed once again. In this context, when the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) was mentioned, some articles lamented the fact that world powers were moving ahead with free trade agreements whereas Brazil was stuck with Mercosur.

Analysing *emotive charge* of EU media images, most of the articles in the three newspapers were neutral about the EU and its institutions (Fig. 2.4). The EU was seen most negatively in articles about its migrant and Greek debt crises. In the former case, proposed EU policies to tackle migration were severely criticised for being inhumane, too restrictive and militaristic (e.g. the proposal to strike traffickers' vessels). European failure to integrate migrants, prejudice against migrants of African descent, Islamophobia and historical anti-Semitism were topics mentioned in the context of the EU's struggle to cope with irregular migration. In the latter case, the EU was lambasted for imposing harsh and ineffective conditions on Greece (e.g. many articles commented upon the severity of austerity measures and the consequences for the Greek population and the fact that the Greek economy was not improving). Intensifying the negativity found in the news texts, common visual images accompanying these reports frequently featured migrants on boats with desperate facial expressions and European leaders with angry faces in the context of the Greek debt crisis.

However, not all reports were negative. The EU was presented in a positive light in a number of economy-themed articles with a focus on Eurozone recovery, the attractiveness of European stock markets, the EU-Mercosur trade deal and EU regulations on digital services and

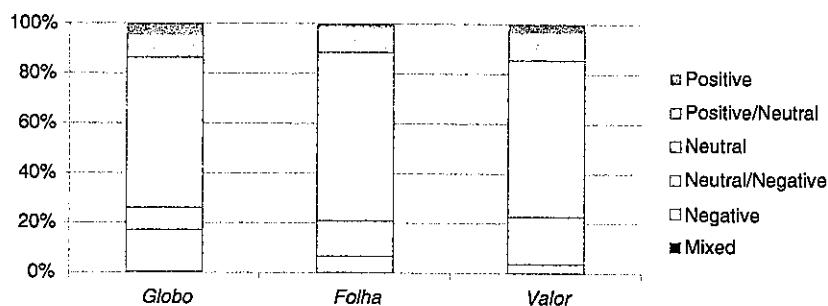


Fig. 2.4 Evaluation of the EU and its institutions

online content. In the environment field, the EU's actions to combat climate change attracted positive evaluations. Finally, the EU's role in the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme was a political theme that reflected a positive assessment of the EU and its actors.

In summary, the media analysis of influential local press revealed that the EU is rarely framed as acting *in* Brazil or *with* Brazilian actors. This relative lack of visibility and relevance of EU initiatives and programmes in/towards Brazil suggests consequences for Brazilian images of the EU in general and for the Union's public diplomacy in the country in particular. Significant for the EU's dialogue with Brazil is a growing media fascination with those EU practices that seemed to contradict the EU's self-proclaimed values and narrative of being a successful zone of peace, prosperity and democracy—such as restrictive policies on migration and integration problems (observed in the reportages of Brexit and Eurozone crisis). Such media profiles risk negatively affecting the image of the EU among the Brazilian audiences in the future.

### 2.3 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

The survey (see also Introduction by Chaban and Holland [2018] in this Volume) asked respondents to comparatively rate their views of the EU and other countries or international organisations by using a positive/negative scale.<sup>1</sup> The results reflected the overall visibility of the EU and the strength of positive and negative evaluations assigned to the EU *vis-à-vis* other countries (namely, the US, Japan, China, Russia and India) and organisations (UN, Mercosur, World Bank, World Trade Organization, NATO, NAFTA and ASEAN).

In Brazil, visibility of the EU among the general public was lower than that of three countries used for comparison (the exceptions being India and Russia) (Fig. 2.5). However, it was more visible than most other international organisations (with the exception of the UN and Mercosur). Compared to the selected countries, the EU was among the more positively viewed (below only Japan and the US), and at the same time rarely seen as negative (slightly behind only Japan) (Fig. 2.6). If compared to other international organisations, the EU was viewed more positively than all other organisations except the UN (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 6).

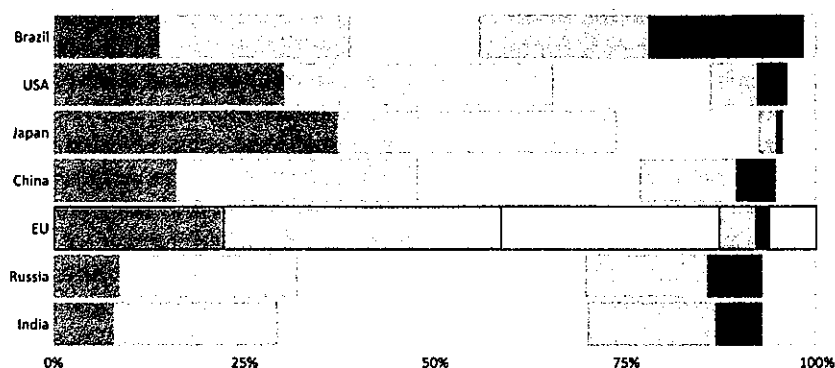


Fig. 2.5 The general view of the EU compared to the selected countries (Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

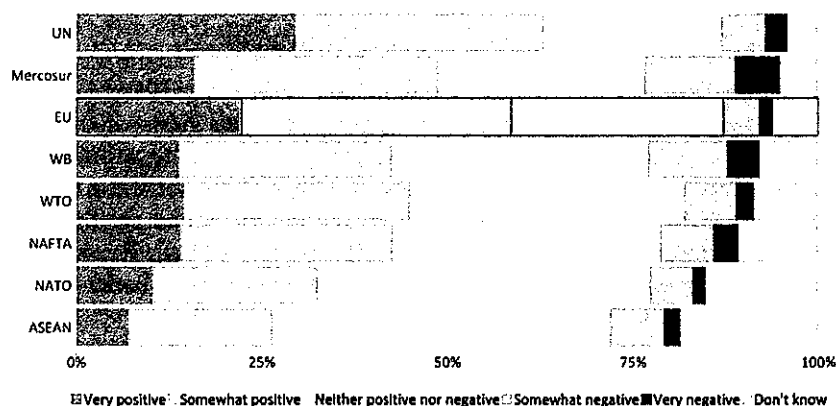


Fig. 2.6 The general view of the EU compared to international organisations (Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

Exploring further the emotive visions of the EU, the survey asked respondents to describe the EU by choosing between ten adjective descriptors with explicit evaluation attached. The most common

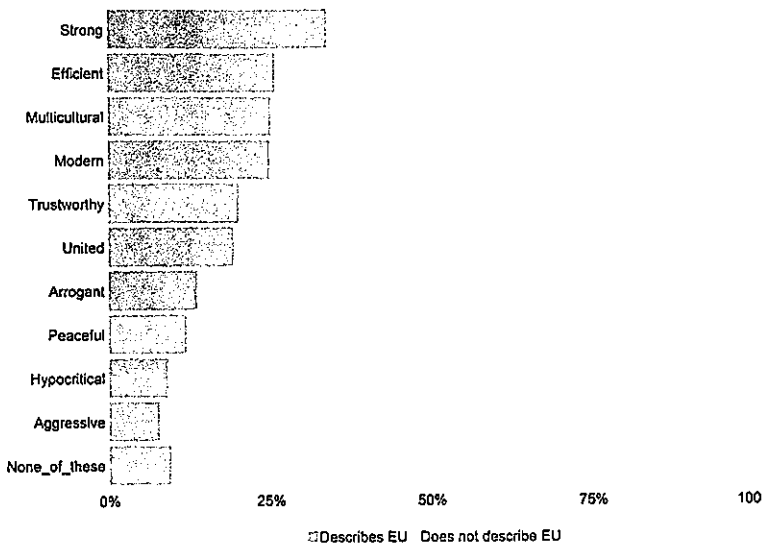


Fig. 2.7 EU descriptors chosen by Brazilian respondents (Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

descriptors associated with the EU were *strong* (33.9% of those surveyed), *efficient* (25.9%), *multicultural* (25.2%) and *modern* (25%). In contrast, negative descriptors were chosen only by a minority of respondents: *arrogant* (13.7%), *hypocritical* (9.2%) and *aggressive* (7.8%) (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 10) (Fig. 2.7).

Two survey questions aimed to measure the general perceptions towards the EU's role in international affairs. Firstly, respondents were asked to describe how desirable it would be for specific countries/organisations to take a strong leadership role in international affairs (Fig. 2.8). Subsequently, they were asked how likely it was that these countries/organisations would take an active role in international affairs in the future (Fig. 2.9). This analysis showed that, in the eyes of the Brazilian general public, the EU's leadership in world affairs was seen as desirable and only ranked behind Japan and Brazil in terms of overall desirability of its leadership.

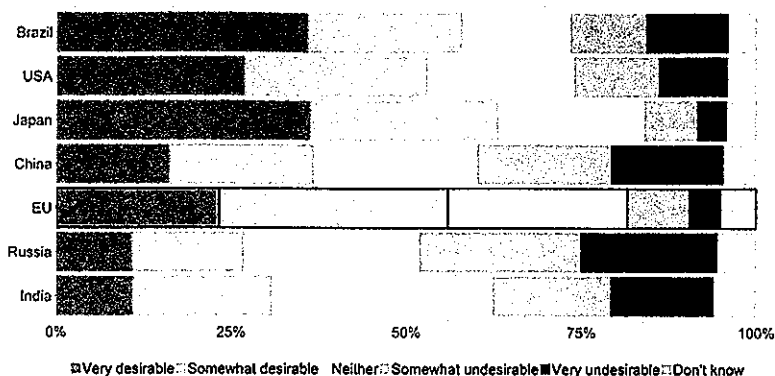


Fig. 2.8 The desirability of the EU's strong leadership role in world affairs  
(Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

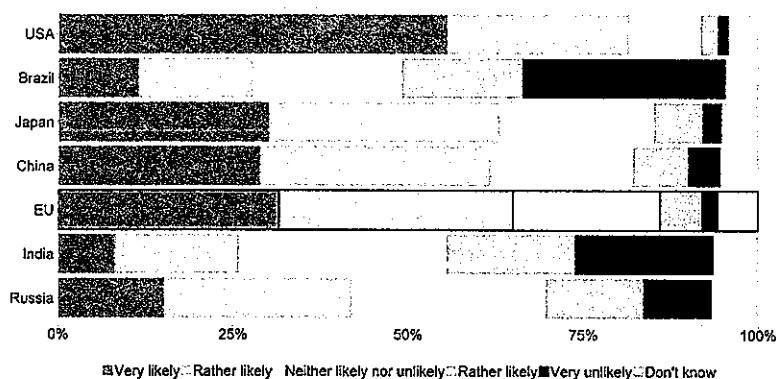


Fig. 2.9 The likelihood of the EU's strong leadership role in world affairs  
(Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

The EU lagged only behind the US in terms of how respondents perceived the likelihood that a strong leadership role would be taken in the future. Interestingly, at least prior to the Trump Presidency, most respondents saw the US to be a major player in world affairs in the future. The likelihood of leadership of the EU was viewed as slightly more likely than that of Japan and China (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 17).

Other survey questions were used to identify perceptions of the EU's performance in various thematic fields such as economic affairs and trade, global peace and stability, climate change and environmental protection, global development, human rights, innovation and technological progress, culture, education and lifestyle (results are grouped together in Fig. 2.10).

The EU was among the global players that Brazilian respondents saw as most influential in the issue-area of *economic affairs and trade* (Fig. 2.10). Although in this area the EU ranked below the US, respondents saw the EU's influence slightly above that of the IMF and the WTO. Compared with the remaining list of countries, the EU ranked highest, followed closely by Japan and China. The EU's performance in global trade was perceived to be 'very good'. This view was further supported by the finding that a high share of respondents agreed that the EU was an important trade partner for Brazil, as well as that the EU should have stronger economic ties with Brazil, a finding common to other research on EU perceptions in Brazil discussed above (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 19).

In terms of Brazilian public opinion on the *global peace and stability* issue-area (Fig. 2.10), the US and the EU ranked similarly, surpassed only by the UN. In this thematic area, the EU's performance in the fight against terrorism was regarded slightly more positively than in other areas related to peace and stability (such as peacekeeping and military operations).

The EU's role in *fighting global climate change and protecting the environment* fell behind the UN, but performed better than all of the countries used for comparison (Fig. 2.10). Intriguingly, Brazilians saw the EU's performance in green technologies lagging behind its performance in other economic activities and other specific fields of technological development (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 19).

With regards to *support to developing countries*, Brazilian respondents viewed the EU as less important than the UN although slightly more important than the US and World Bank (Fig. 2.10) and more important compared to all the other countries used for comparison.

Brazilian respondents saw the EU's performance in the field of *promoting and defending human rights* worldwide very similarly to how they saw the EU's role in social development, with main rivals in these areas being the UN and the US (Fig. 2.10). In this issue-area, the respondents saw the UN as the most important actor, ranking the EU similar if

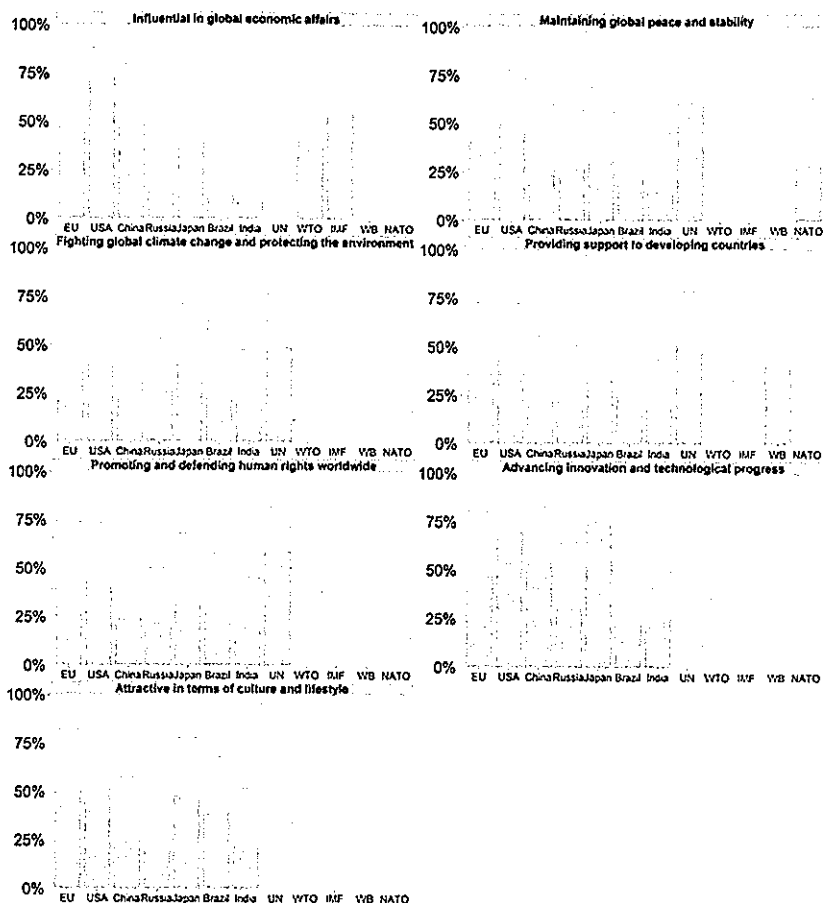


Fig. 2.10 Perceptions of the EU's performance in different thematic areas (Source PPMI/NCRE/NFG Final Report 2015)

slightly higher than the US. The role of other countries, except Japan, was seen as substantially less important than the role of the UN, the EU and the US.

In Brazil, when compared to other countries, EU member states were seen as particularly attractive for their *culture and lifestyle*. Even though respondents evaluated all areas related to EU culture very positively,



they were more likely to choose historical heritage, arts and lifestyle over sports, music, theatre and cinema. In relation to other questions, respondents also tended to agree less often with the statement that Europe is a producer of music and arts popular in Brazil. At the same time, Brazilian respondents viewed the EU particularly positively in terms of the level of education of its population, which was seen as the area of social development where the EU performed best (Fig. 2.10). The EU was also seen as an important partner for Brazil's educational exchanges (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 21).

The survey also contained several questions on more specific areas of *internal social development* (Table 2.1). This issue-area is particularly important because one of the key narratives the EU promotes internally and externally—as a means to gain legitimacy among EU citizens and to create receptive audiences to the EU's values and policies globally—is the narrative of the EU as of a zone of peace, prosperity and democracy brought about by the integration process. We suggest that if this projected EU narrative is dissonant with EU external perceptions, the EU's legitimacy and influence will be perceived as flawed.

Brazilian general public saw the EU as performing 'very well' in quality of education and overall quality of life and 'fairly good' in social justice and solidarity (e.g. social rights, the public welfare system) (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 21). On the other hand, results showed the EU's dealings with refugees and displaced people was seen as less positive when compared to all other fields of social development. This area clearly stood out as the one that the general public was least likely to evaluate positively (and its negativity echoes that found in our media analysis when the press reported on the migration crisis). The likely consequences of these perceptions for the EU's public diplomacy are discussed in the next section.

The public opinion survey revealed a slightly more positive perception on the EU than the media analysis—as we have seen, most news articles were neutral, but the remaining ones were equally divided between positive and negative evaluations. This minor discrepancy could be due to the particularly crisis-ridden period during which the press coverage was examined, whereas the public opinion survey gauged more persistent perceptions. Unsurprisingly, given the high profile global image of the EU as an economic giant, the issue-area of highest EU visibility and positive evaluations in Brazil, as shown by the media analysis, public opinion survey and previous research on Brazilian perceptions on the EU, is

Table 2.1 The EU's performance in different areas of internal social development

	Very good (%)	Fairly good (%)	Neither good nor bad (%)	Fairly bad (%)	Very bad (%)	Do not know/ cannot answer (%)
Overall quality of life	43.4	32.6	13.5	2.6	0.7	7.2
Level of education	52.0	24.6	13.4	2.3	0.6	7.0
Creating employment opportunities	23.2	36.4	23.2	6.5	1.7	9.1
Eradication of poverty	23.2	36.6	22.4	6.9	1.8	9.2
Equality between men and women	26.3	38.6	21.0	3.9	1.3	8.9
Protection of minorities	18.3	33.4	25.8	8.4	3.2	10.8
Reducing income inequality	22.6	35.8	23.1	6.9	2.0	9.6
Social justice and solidar- ity (social rights, public welfare system)	29.0	36.7	19.9	3.8	1.3	9.3
Integration of migrants and refugees	15.0	26.9	27.7	14.0	6.0	10.2

economy, in particular trade. Although in the period covered the Greek debt crisis led to less favourable representations of the EU in the media, overall perceptions on this issue area were positive, with the EU being described as 'influential', an important trade partner for Brazil, with a 'very good' performance on trade. Furthermore, stronger economic ties with Brazil were seen as desirable, either via Mercosur or bilaterally. On the other hand, as will be further explored below, there was some ambivalence in Brazilian perceptions of the EU in this issue area, mainly due to an unfavourable view of EU protectionism, particularly in the agricultural sector.

## 2.4 EU GLOBAL STRATEGY AND BRAZIL

In June 2016, the EU published its new Global Strategy, a year after we collected the data used in this analysis. Its goals are to 'set out the EU's core interests and principles for engaging in the world, explain what the EU stands for and hopes to achieve in the world, and give the Union a collective sense of direction' (EU Global Strategy 2016), replacing the European Security Strategy of 2003/2008. Importantly, it was published in the context of global power shifts and EU internal crises already noted—the Eurozone and irregular migration crises, and Brexit. These critical circumstances made some commentators view it as not merely aspirational, but almost wishful thinking (Lehne 2016). Our aim here is not to discuss whether the Global Strategy is realistic or not. Rather, we are concerned if and how Brazilian perceptions, expectations and concerns about the EU are addressed in this document.

The first remarkable feature of the document, with regards to Brazil, is the absence of the country in the text—Brazil is not mentioned at all. Less than ten years after the country was 'upgraded' as an EU strategic partner, the designation now seems irrelevant, as far as the Global Strategy formulation goes. In fact, the term 'strategic partners' seems to have lost its appeal, since it shows up only three times in the entire document: in reference to the conclusion of free trade agreements with Japan and India (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 38); with regards to the need to work with strategic partners in general in Asia, Africa and the Americas in the management of global governance (p. 43); and in the context of maritime multilateralism (p. 43).

Furthermore, Latin America as a region does not occupy a prominent position in the document. There is only one section dedicated to the EU's priorities in the region, entitled 'A Close Atlantic', which also includes North America and issues such as TTIP and relations with the US and NATO. In fact, only one paragraph of this 60-page document addresses the region. In this particular paragraph (p. 37), the Union declares its wishes to further cooperation and partnerships with Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular multilateral ties via CELAC and through bilateral projects. There is also reference to a free trade agreement with Mercosur.

Due to this limited profile, it is challenging to tell if Brazilian perceptions were taken into account when the Strategy was conceived. For this reason, the following analysis focuses on the document as a whole, trying to verify how the EU's declared Global Strategy is likely to be received in Brazil, given the images circulated by the media and perceptions among the general Brazilian public discussed above. We aim to understand to what extent the priorities spelled out by the EU are likely to be considered credible and whether they will be accepted and supported or contested and which factors are likely to influence this reception.

The foreword written by High Representative Federica Mogherini, stresses that the EU should play a major role in world affairs, including in the security domain. This is likely to be well-received in Brazil, since the public opinion poll has shown that most respondents (55.9%) consider it desirable for the EU to assume a leadership role in world affairs (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 28). In addition, it is emphasised throughout the Strategy that the EU aims for 'an international system based on rules and multilateralism' (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 4), with the 'United Nations at its core' (p. 8) and for a 'reformed global governance' (p. 4), including the UN Security Council and International Financial Institutions. Another positive resonance is expected here as these issues are traditional priorities of Brazilian foreign policy.

The Strategy also stresses the need to increase the EU's defence capabilities in order to act autonomously, stressing that 'investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency' (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 10). 77% of the Brazilian public think that the EU already plays a very important or somewhat important role in maintaining global peace and stability (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 29)—behind only the US. Although, as we have seen, breaking down the responses, the EU's

policies in the fight against terrorism are viewed more positively than other areas such as peacekeeping and military operations. This finding was obtained after the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks in January 2015, but before the subsequent terrorist attacks in France (November 2015 and July 2016), in Brussels (March 2016) and Germany (in July 2016). These more recent tragedies may arguably affect the general public's opinion on the EU's policies to fight terrorism.

When it comes to international trade, the Global Strategy urges for an 'open and fair economic system and sustainable access to the global commons' (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 8). This is likely to be supported by Brazilians in general, since the public opinion poll revealed that the EU is considered an important trade partner (58%) and foreign investor (55%) in the country as well as a trustworthy partner (54.9%) that should have stronger economic ties with Brazil (68.3%) (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 33).

An area of concern for Brazilians, evident in both the media analysis and the public opinion poll, is protectionism. In the media analysis, as we have seen, EU subsidies for agriculture were mentioned as an obstacle for closer trade relations. In the opinion poll, more than half of respondents thought the EU was protecting its market at the expense of others (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 33). In our background study with Brazilian elites and stakeholders, one academia/think tank interviewee noted that in the economic field, particularly with regards to agriculture, Brazil has interests which do not always coincide with those of the EU.

An area in which Brazilian perceptions of the EU was particularly negative was the EU's policies on migration. This negativity was observed in the media and among the general public. The EU's handling of migration in general and refugees in particular was seen as less positive than in all other areas of social development. This concern also surfaced in the contextual elite interviews, with one interviewee commenting that Brazil and the EU have the same targets but differ on how to achieve them—both want respect for human rights, but this value is challenged by immigration for the EU, whereas for Brazil this is challenged in its relations with its indigenous communities.

This policy area is argued to be problematic for the EU's external image due to the 'intermestic nature of the EU's public diplomacy' (Duke 2013, p. 3) mentioned above. An observed discrepancy between the EU's projected values and external perception of the EU as failing in those values damages the EU's image in general and its influence in particular.

It seems that if the EU model of integration continues to be shaken by internal crises, such as Brexit, the Eurozone debt crisis and irregular migration, it will be more difficult for the EU to project a positive and consistent image and to successfully exert influence at the global level.

A final aspect of the EU Global Strategy is the EU's declared desire to engage responsibly with the world, but without providing 'neat recipes' nor 'imposing solutions elsewhere' (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 17). In particular, it professes a commitment to support 'cooperative regional orders', striving not 'to export our model, but rather seek[ing] reciprocal inspiration from different regional experiences' (EU Global Strategy 2016, p. 32). Given that media analysis and public opinion survey conducted in this project (as well as contextual interviews) reflected on the Euro-centric 'top-down' communication mode of the EU with Brazil in the past, these formulations in the Strategy are promising. Several interviewees commented upon the 'vertical relationship with the EU' in which 'the diffusion of norms and dialogues are one-way' and on the 'EU's hearing problem', presenting itself as *the* model without listening to other countries' normative messages (Chaban et al. 2017).

Finally, in the public opinion survey, although the EU was most commonly ascribed positive or mixed descriptors (*strong, efficient, multicultural* and *modern*); it was also characterised—by a minority—as *arrogant, hypocritical* and *aggressive* (Final Country Report—Brazil 2015, p. 27). In this light, the fact that the EU Global Strategy stresses more horizontal relations with third countries might indicate stronger willingness of the Union to listen to its partners in order to avoid the accusation of being a counterpart who is good at 'talking at' partners, rather than 'talking with' them.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

One of the main research findings with the most potential to influence EU public diplomacy and the EU's reception in general was Brazil's ambivalence about its cultural and historical ties with Europe. At one extreme, elite interviews (albeit used with caution due to a small sample) revealed a perception of cultural affinity with the EU due to Brazil's history—its Portuguese heritage and several waves of European migration. It was noted that Brazil was embedded in European values and that the EU and Brazil both have the same objectives in the international system: to strengthen multilateralism, to ensure respect for

human rights and to tackle climate change. In this perspective, the EU is seen in a positive light, be it as a global security provider, a trustworthy partner in trade or as an actor with an established welfare system, high living standards, well-known educational achievements and cultural richness. At the other extreme, the media framing of the EU in the leading Brazilian press demonstrated a visible negativity assigned to the EU, in particular in the reportage on migration and the Greek sovereign debt crisis. These reports often brought up Europe's colonial past in a very negative light—linking the term 'the EU' to the concept of 'Europe' with both frequently associated with domination and exploitation of the weak: in this case, imposing harsh unreasonable conditions on Greece and mishandling immigrants.

More significantly, this ambivalence colours the perceptions about Brazil–EU relations. Although the public opinion survey, media analyses and elite interviews revealed plenty of positive images and perceptions towards the EU in general, the three analysed discourses also presented visions of the EU as a somewhat arrogant norm-setter with a hearing problem, unwilling to accept others' values and norms, reproducing hierarchical relations and channeling a colonial attitude. This set of EU images clashes with an evolving self-image of Brazil as an emerging country increasingly relevant on the world stage, and one which is engaging with normative debates and global governance in several areas, be it development or intervention norms. Hence, the perception that EU and Brazil have the same goals but differ on how to reach them.

The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that both the intermestic nature of the EU's public diplomacy and local factors, such as historical ties, affect Brazilian perceptions about the EU. If EU actions are considered inconsistent with the norms and values it tries to promote—peace, security, prosperity, democracy, human rights, justice, solidarity, non-discrimination—then it will be harder for Brazil to acquiesce or support such an image projected by the EU. And this is a crucial point to keep in mind in mapping and understanding Brazil's response to the EU's Global Strategy of 2016. Furthermore, Brazilian almost bipolar ambivalence towards the EU—seen most often as a strong, efficient, multicultural, modern and trustworthy partner yet one who is also sometimes arrogant, hypocritical and aggressive—filters, and perhaps dilutes, the messages the EU is trying to communicate to Brazil. This can potentially harm prospects for cooperation, as the EU is perceived as unable to treat Brazil as an equal partner.

## NOTE

1. For more findings, see Final Country Report—Brazil (2015). ‘Public Opinion Survey on the Perception of the EU and EU’s Policies Abroad’, September 14, 2015, available at: <ftp://ftp.ppmi.lt/III%20-%20Public%20Opinion%20Survey/Public%20opinion%20poll%20country%20reports/>. The online survey was coordinated and analysed by the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI) and conducted by TNS Global. The respondents in Brazil were surveyed in Portuguese. Data collection took place in August 2015 and the survey was designed to be representative with regards to age, gender and region. The survey covered a total sample of 1210 individuals within the 16–64 age group.

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