

The Egoistic Union

- EU from an Argentine perspective

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Abstract

In the lights of the reopening of formal negotiations between the EU and Mercosur, this thesis investigates the image of the EU in Argentina. How others' view the EU is important for the union's possibility to succeed with its foreign policy goals. Mutual understanding is crucial in order to make the cooperation run smoothly. The EU seems to expect that the cooperation automatically would benefit from the fact that the continents have similar culture. It seems however that the Europeans are mistaken. Argentineans, "the Europeans of Latin America" give the EU the lowest grade out of all Mercosur countries. This thesis investigates sources of criticism of the EU in Argentina. Through a media investigation and by interviewing students, the main debates regarding the EU are exposed. These are compared to the EU's self image as a special kind of power, driven by values such as democracy and human rights. The contrast between how the Argentineans view the EU and the EU's self image is astonishing. Stricter immigration control and racism strongly devalue the opinions of the EU. The findings also suggest that the union isn't viewed as a special kind of power at all. Quite on the contrary, it is often grouped together with the USA and presented as acting out of self interest. The central question to answer for many Argentinean students was whether they liked both the EU and the USA, or neither.

Key words: EU, Argentina, Mercosur, perception, civilian power

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1 Introduction

Argentineans are called “the Europeans of South America” by Latin Americans. This is not surprising, since the country’s population to a big extent has European origin. Argentina is a country characterized by its European immigration, not just Spanish and Italian, but also Polish, German and Scandinavian. Every city of Argentina has its own “barrio Aleman” (a German neighborhood). Olivier and Fioramonti (2009) points out that the notion of the EU is fairly unknown in developing countries. Newspapers ignore the topic. However, in Argentina the three most influential newspapers all have an average of more than one article a day mentioning the EU. The fact that the EU’s foreign policy is covered by the media in a developing country almost seems unique for Argentina. Taking this into account, it might not seem surprising that the most developed interregional cooperation in the world is the one between EU and Mercosur, the regional organization in which Argentina is a key participant. In May 2010, the two organizations decided to reinstate formal negotiations regarding the creation of the world’s biggest free trade zone between the blocks. The fact that the EU now accepts negotiating its agricultural policies in another forum than in the Doha rounds, is a great step forward for the interregional cooperation. Many believe that the change of attitude is due to the increased competition with China of investments opportunities in Mercosur countries. It is easy to simply assume that the cultural closeness between the EU and Argentina would facilitate further cooperation. Certainly, the EU itself seems to take for granted that common cultural heritage guarantees similar values and political interest (Crawly 2006:169). However, this seems to be inaccurate in the Argentine case. Out of all Mercosur countries, Argentineans shares the lowest opinion of the EU (Latinobarómetro 2004)¹. Equally many Argentineans say that they have a good opinion of the EU as of China (ibid.). This thesis takes on the challenge of investigating the Argentineans’ interpretation of the EU.

1.1 Purpose of thesis

The small group of scientists that have dedicated themselves to investigating other countries’ opinions of the EU agree that it is crucial for the EU to be aware of

¹ The 2004 Latinobarómetro poll included the question “Do you have a very good, good, bad or very bad opinion of the EU?”. 78,7% of the Argentineans asked answered the question “good” or “very good”. The equivalent number in Brazil was 79,7%, Paraguay 93,3% and Uruguay 87%.

others' expectations and images of the EU. Mutual understanding is necessary if the EU wants to reach its foreign policy goals, and implement these in an efficient way (Lucarelli - Fioramonti 2010:1-2, Chaban et al. 2006). An illustrating example of where the views diverge is regarding the democracy clause that the EU has pushed for in EU-Mercosur cooperation. The EU sees itself as a legitimate promoter of democracy, as it consists of some of the world's oldest and most stable democracies. However, the Argentineans do not completely share this view. While interviewing Argentinean students for this thesis, it became clear to me that "European democracy" wasn't necessarily something they desired. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to mutual understanding by acknowledging the Argentinean view of the EU. Implications will also be drawn as to what the Argentinean position could mean for further EU-Mercosur cooperation.

1.2 Field of study

While research on external views of the EU is in general rare (Chaban et al. 2006), the Latin American view has so far been represented by Brazil and Mexico (Ortega 2004, Lucarelli – Fioramonti 2009). Inspiration for this study has been taken from an investigation made by Olivier and Fioramonti (2009). They compare the European discourse of the EU as a better global actor with how global south countries, represented by IBSA countries (India, Brazil and South Africa), picture the EU. They conclude that global south countries deeply question the credibility of the EU as a different global actor. This perspective is expressed also by Fioramonti and Poletti (2008). They claim that there is a gap between the common description of the EU as an international actor and how it is actually perceived:

"It seems that the 'uniqueness' of the EU as a global actor permeated by values such as solidarity, sustainable development, human rights promotion and the like, which is very common in the EU rhetoric, is belied by the common perceptions of the leading nations of the global South." (ibid)

However, Chanona (2009:120, 123) concludes that the EU is popular in Mexico due to shared values, especially regarding democracy and human rights, and that the idea of a "civil power" EU is somewhat spread.

Olivier and Fioramonti (2009) investigate the global south view of the EU among the public opinion, political elites and the civil society and in the media. Chanona (2009) chooses to investigate the business elite view instead of the media. Elgström tackles the matter from an issue oriented angle, investigating the view of the EU among diplomats at three multilateral negotiations (Chaban et al 2006).

This thesis is also country oriented and contributes to the debate with the view of a country not previously investigated. It both employs the already explored

method of a media investigation and breaks new grounds by including a new group; students.

1.2.1 The Brazilian view of the EU

Olivier and Fioramonti (2009) come to a rather pessimistic conclusion regarding the Brazilian view of the EU. The union is over all a much unknown concept to the general public. Brazil is believed to have a better relation with the USA, Japan and other countries in Latin America rather than with the EU. Among political elites, the economic issue is the most important, since EU above all represents a huge trading partner and an opportunity to boost economic growth. However, this positive perception has now shifted to a view closer to that of a 'fortress' EU, due to concerns of the EPAs' (European partner agreements') effect on poor economies and criticism of newly appointed restraints on migrants' access to Europe (Olivier- Fioramonti 2009:110-113). The opinion of the Brazilian civil society is in line with the one presented by the political elites, but is generally more critical. Trade liberalization is the most criticized policy of the EU. They believe that the EU presses for a quick Mercosur agreement, although the European accomplishment took many years to reach (Olivier - Fioramonti 2009:113-114).

1.3 EU-Mercosur relations

EU and Argentina are interlinked through an interregional cooperation between EU and Mercosur ("Mercado común del sur" or "the common market of the south"). The initiative to create Mercosur, the southern cone countries' equivalence to the European cooperation, was taken by Argentina and Brazil. In addition to these two countries, Uruguay and Paraguay also joined (Gomez Mera 2005). A 'third generation' agreement was created with the EU between 1990 and 1992. It regarded economical issues as well as integration and regional cooperation. A unique feature was also the inclusion of a democracy clause and a 'future development' clause, encouraging the countries to go further than just economical cooperation. The long term aim was to construct a free trade area (FTA) between the regions (Santander 2005). A new agreement was planned to be signed in 2004, but was postponed and has still not been signed, due to disagreement regarding trade. (Olivier – Fioramonti 2009:106). However, at present time of the writing a new agreement is in making. The reopening of formal negotiations between the blocks was commenced in May 2010.

The EU is by far the largest supplier of assistance to Mercosur. A 2007-2013 regional program provides €50 million to Mercosur for assistance of institutional strengthening, preparation for the implementation of the Association Agreement and participation of civil society in the Mercosur integration process (EC 2010).

EU has deliberately worked to strengthen the other region's cohesion, thus taking on the role as an "external federator" (Hänggi et al. 2006:10, Rüländ 2006:308).

For Brazil, consolidating Mercosur has been a first step towards creating a powerful Latin American bloc, which they would be the leader of. The US ambition to create a free trade area of all Americas (FTAA) worked contrary to this plan of Brazil (Gomez Mera 2005). "[Progress in the FTAA negotiations] does not leave Brazil any option but to strengthen Mercosur, despite the difficulties it has been facing since 1999" said Brazilian president Barbosa (cited in Gomez Mera 2005).

In 1998 EU became Argentina's second most important trading partner, following Brazil (Faust 2006:160-161). However, the trade balance is very unequal. While EU represents 26 % of Mercosur's external trade, Mercosur only represent 2,9 % of the union's external trade. EU countries export almost exclusively industrial goods while Mercosur mainly export raw material (although these exports have decreased since 1970s) and agricultural products. Hence, the trade relation bears resemblance to a North-South relation (Faust 2006:161, Santander 2005).

Argentina and Brazil are among the countries most negatively affected by the CAP, since they too produce temperate food products (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:70).

1.4 Defining crucial concepts

1.4.1 The EU concept

Defining the concept of the "EU" might seem abundant, since the EU is a fairly tangible phenomenon. However, I am convinced that when people talk about the EU, they don't always strictly talk about the EU institutions, but includes individual member countries as well. In the case of Argentina, this is clear. The distinction between "Europe", "EU" and the individual European countries is blurry. Consider this reply I got from a student (Interview 6):

-Do these papers write anything about the EU?

-Oh yes, a lot about France, Spain, Italy.

For this study, it was what the Argentineans put in to the concept that was of interest. I have not, therefore, sorted out opinions that more or less only regarded one or a few member states. For the media investigation, I simply searched for articles containing the phrase "Unión Europea". In the interviews, I let the interviewed person decide what content to put into the concept.

1.4.2 The "Global actor" concept

In this thesis Bretherton and Vogler's (2006:35) definition of "actor" will be used. They see an actor as an "entity that is possible of agency; of formulating and acting upon decisions". However, agency isn't unlimited, it is rather considered "that the capacity to act reflects the interaction between understandings about internal character and capabilities and external opportunities". The theory used recognizes the view of self as influencing the possibility to act. Listening to others' images of the EU can contribute to the shaping of the EU identity. Others can present new key characteristics of the EU that haven't been reflected upon by Europeans themselves (Lucarelli, Fioramonti 2010:1, Chaban et al. 2006, Roghan et al. 2006). Others' view of the EU also determines what opportunities they will offer the Union.

In order to do so, it is important to investigate how others' look at, not only EU's actorness itself, but also its character. For example, the recognition of EU's successful regional integration is absolutely crucial in order to be able to understand the "civilian power" idea, presented in the following chapter. Although I investigate the EU as a "global actor" I also take into account opinions about the characteristics of the EU. In fact, when I asked for the students' opinions about the "EU as a global actor" I found that this was only confusing for them. When I asked for their opinions on the EU itself, I usually got answers regarding the EU as a global actor.

2 Methodology

The thesis uses a qualitative research method, through a media investigation and interviewing students. Quantitative research, although interesting and taken into account in this thesis, has its limitation. Latin American countries constitute very divided societies, and therefore, finding the average opinion is not very useful. Chanona (2009:121-122) finds that the perceptions of the EU among political parties in Mexico were equally high, independent of political ideology. However, the motivation for the high regards differed between left and right oriented parties. I believe that such distinctions are important to acknowledge. When a European interprets statistical data from a different continent it always involves a high risk of misinterpretation. The method of this thesis has had the ambition to allow the Argentineans to present their own interpretations in their own words. The theory of the thesis has therefore only been used to put the Argentinean view in perspective by contrasting it to the EU self image. Instead of pushing the theory onto the case, I have let the case decide. This is crucial to guaranteeing high validity. A question asked by the Latinobarómetro survey illustrates this. They asked Latin Americans which power, the USA or the EU, contributed most to democracy and world peace (2004, found in Olivier – Fioramonti 2009:110). However, the findings of this thesis suggest that such values aren't associated at all, with either of the powers.

2.1 Media investigation

2.1.1 Selection of three newspapers

Argentina is a media consuming nation in general, and a newspaper reading nation in particular. The country has over 150 daily newspapers (BBC 2010). The selection of newspapers as fitting material for investigation was therefore a natural choice. The biggest national newspaper is *Clarín* (800,000 circulation; 1.2 million on Sundays) and the second is *La Nación* (500,000 circulation; 800,000 on Sundays) (Pressreference 2010, BBC 2010). These Buenos Aires based papers are the most influential national newspapers, according to Pressreference.com (2010). “La Nación” can be characterized as conservative and “Clarín” as popular (BBC 2010). While in Argentina, I was told that the inclusion of the main left

wing dailies, *Página 12*, was absolutely essential to the study. As a rather right-oriented student told me; it is a paper that not so many read but which content is familiar to most (Interview 5). Discussing with Argentinean students, the most important distinction between the papers for them was that “*la Nación*” and “*Clarín*” were government critical, while *Página 12* was pro-government. Since “*Clarín*” is the biggest paper, and is read by most, indifferent to ideology, it has been given slightly more attention than the other two. The three papers together represent a broad view which captures a broad spectrum of political opinions.

2.1.2 Method of the media investigation

The goal of the newspaper investigation has been to not only present the Argentinean view of the EU through the theoretical framework, but also to let their view speak for itself. Letting the framework, crafted by Europeans, decide what to present forward would leave out the aspects that are important to the Argentineans. The first part is therefore dedicated to presenting a summary of opinions and views presented in the papers. This is similar to the way that Olivier and Fioramonti (2009) conducted their media investigation.

The method of finding these dominant interpretations took part in two stages. At a first stage, I examined all articles mentioning the EU in a context that in some way dealt with its role as a global actor (i.e. articles about suspended air traffic etc were excluded). Only articles from the printed issues were taken into account. While reading these articles, I made notes and highlighted parts where I found more subjectively made analyses, reflections or arguments regarding the EU as a global actor. These are particularly interesting since they are directly informative of how the information actually is received and interpreted. In a second stage I divided the articles in three thematic categories into which the most commonly discussed themes fitted. I summarized both what type of information that was given most attention, and added the analyses. In order to increase intersubjectivity, reference to representative articles has been made.

In the second part of the chapter the Argentine media view is compared to the EU’s self image.

2.2 Interviewing students

Students are a group well suited for investigation within the frame of a master thesis. They are practically easy to reach, which allows the possibility to conduct many interviews in a short amount of time. Students at university level are also important since they are the future economic and political elite. In the Latinobarómetro survey from 2004 it was clear that the group of university educated people answered questions regarding the EU quite differently in

comparison to the general average. They were a lot more familiar with the organization and gave it a better review (Data presented in Olivier-Fioramonti 2009:110). Therefore, the opinions of students can be expected to complete the statistical investigation of the general public made by Latinobarómetro. The investigation of students' opinions also completes the media investigation of the thesis. Students can be supposed to read the papers and they are well equipped to evaluate the articles in the papers. The interviews contribute with a probable interpretation of how the news of the EU is interpreted and gives a hint as to which the strongest debates regarding the EU are.

2.2.1 Picking students

The purpose of interviewing students is to gather opinions of people with greater knowledge, and more opinions, of the EU in comparison to the general average. The opinions collected in this thesis are thereby not representative for the whole society. The possibility to afford to study in Argentina is a privilege. However, I believe that it is the students that have the possibilities to influence the future politics. Neumann (2007:58) writes that on one hand there are an infinite number of opinions. On the other hand isn't politics a conflict between an infinite number of opinions. Rather, politics is about a quite limited number of clearly defined points of view which have the possibility to gather followers. Even through interviews of a rather small number of students, one can expect with fairly high certainty that these main opinions would be revealed.

In order to further make sure to reach the group with strong opinions about the EU, I mainly interviewed students of related careers. However, economic students were much more reluctant to participate in comparison to political science students, leaving the latter type of students over represented. This has been taken into account while evaluating the material. In total, 21 students were consulted with one question or more. The distribution of careers is indicated in table 1.

Table 1		Distribution of careers	
Political science	9	Economy	1
Master of international trade	2	History	1
International relations	2	Linguistic studies	1
Communications	1	Engineering	1
Law	2	Film	1

The students of history and linguistic studies were selected because of their commitment to a political party. The engineering, film and communications students were only asked between one and three questions. In selecting people to interview, I used the snow ball technique. Consequently, I started with students that I believed to be relevant to the study and asked them for further contacts (compare with Esaiasson et al 2007:291). Through three different contacts I was able to book meetings with students for more in depth interviews. In order to make sure I included a diverse sample of students I also visited three faculties and

spontaneously asked students questions. In general, they were very helpful and willing to answer questions. However, there were students of management, economics and law who claimed they didn't have any comment at all.

2.2.2 Interview technique

When it comes to interview technique it is important to find a form which creates a dynamic situation (Esaiasson 2007:298-299). In this case, I found that semi-structured interviews were most suited. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, as to guarantee the interviewed person's comfort. In general, I followed the recommendation of Esaiasson (*ibid.*) to start off with more general questions and follow the direction the conversation is taking. Due to the informal setting of the spontaneously conducted interviews, these were less structured than the planned ones. As I talked to one person, it wasn't uncommon that a friend joined the conversation after a while. Due to differences in time that the students had at their disposal, the interviews were of very different length.

I told all students interviewed that I was looking for their spontaneous thoughts about the EU. The students generally embraced this idea and answered the questions freely, sometimes going back to questions asked earlier on. Sometimes they hardly answered my question at all, rather preferring to talk about another theme they found more interesting. My experience is, therefore, that it made little difference in what order the questions were asked or what additional questions that were added. If anything, the additional questions lead to more interesting and specified answers, since the students felt more comfortable with a conversation like interview.

2.2.3 Interview questions

In accordance to my ambition to let the students decide the topics, I kept the questions broad. In order to create a dynamic discussion, the first questions generally touch upon what they think in general. The more specific questions asked later on were designed to find new angles of the discussion. In creating the specific questions, I was inspired by the different roles of the EU presented by Bretherton and Vogler (2006). They assign the EU roles such as environmental policy leader, development and humanitarian actor and regional actor. These roles include both the inclusive and exclusive traits presented in chapter 3.

None of the questions touch directly on the issues connected to the union being exclusive to its nature (such as immigration or market access). However, some questions directly regard the union as a normative or civilian power. This is a carefully planned strategy. Guessing that the answers would be similar to the study of Olivier and Fioramonti (2009), I wanted to investigate why the civilian power notion was rejected and how strong the exclusive perspective was. The comparison to other countries played a central part of the questions. The academic

theory about the EU stresses the uniqueness of the EU, which makes the comparison to other actors given.

Table 2	General Questions
What do you think about the EU as a global actor?	
Which issues do you think are the most important for the EU?	
Which issues do you think should have been the most important?	
Do you like the politics of the EU?	
Do you think it's a good idea to collaborate as much as the European countries do?	
What do you think is the biggest difference between the EU and other global powers, like the USA and China?	
Could Brazil develop into a global power? Would it be better than the EU?	

Table 3	Particular questions/connects to part of theory
In your opinion, is the EU a promoter of democracy? Of peace?	Normative /civilian p.
In your opinion, is the EU a promoter of human rights?	Normative power
Do you think that the EU does a good job in supporting and assisting developing countries?	Dev. and hum. actor
Is the EU a leader in environmental negotiations?	Environmental leader
What do you think about the enlargement of the EU?	Regional actor

3 Theory

The EU's self image, presented by Bretherton and Vogler (2006:41-55), will be used as a theory. This image is frequently repeated by EU officials and is supposed to be a guideline in accordance to which the union should act. Javier Solana (high Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy) said in 2002:

“Our common foreign policy cannot just be interest-based. Protecting and promoting values, which are part of our history and very dear to the hearts of our citizens, must continue to be a priority. The values of solidarity, of tolerance, of inclusiveness, of compassion are integral part of European integration. We cannot give up on them, especially now that ugly racist pulsions are surfacing again...” (Cited in Bretherton – Vogler 2006:39-40).

The perspective corresponds quiet well to the inclusive perspective presented below. This perspective was invented by Europeans. A less dominant perspective in the EU's self image is the exclusive perspective. The idea of the “fortress Europe” was expressed externally from the beginning (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:46).

3.1 The EU as an inclusive entity

An EU identity is of course dependent on the possibility to differentiate it self from others. But it is not necessary to do so by using negative stereotyping of others. The EU identity as an inclusive actor is made in comparison to the USA but also through recognizing the singularity and originality of the Union (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:38, 41).

Ducène was the first to introduce the idea that the EU is a unique actor. This is foremost based on the fact that the European countries, with a historic background of war, unified themselves into the first of the world's civilian centres of power (Rogers 2009). Since then, the union has been referred to as for example a “civil power”, “normative power” and “soft power”. Diez writes:

There is a widespread belief that the European Union [. . .] is a novel kind of power not only in its own institutional set-up, but also in its external relations. It is said to rely on civilian rather than military means and to pursue the spread of particular norms, rather than geographical expansion or military superiority. (Cited in Rogers 2009)

3.1.1 Civilian power Europe

The notion of a civilian power was created by Duchêne, and builds on the idea that the union acts according to its inner characteristics like collective action, civilian ends and means and norms like equality and social justice. Civil power is the opposite to military means, which creates a problem when the EU created a common army. Was the union's strongest power then lost? Some claim that the EU could still be a civilian power, if the military means only were used on UN Security Council mandate and in accordance to the 'civilizing' influence of the EU. This is similar to the European Council's view that security is related to human development issues and poverty eradication (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:41-42).

3.1.2 Normative power Europe

The 'normative power' notion is a response to the problem with the combination with a 'civilian power' and the usage of military means. The focus is instead on the "ideational impact of the EU". The union is believed to have normative power, since it projecting core values such as peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and subsidiary values such as social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance. Such values circulate commonly in the rhetoric of EU representatives. These norms derive from three sources: the rejection of an imperial and war-ridden past, it's unique character as a 'hybrid polity' and a body of values, imbedded in successful treaties and practices. An important part of the notion of 'normative power' is a belief that the union is superior to other global powers, most notably the USA (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:42-43).

3.1.3 The union as peculiar polity

Other contributors to the debate see a certain potential in the EU as a global actor, but are a bit more pessimistic. The fact that the EU is not a state in the conventional sense has made some scholars conclude that it cannot be an actor at all. Intergovernmentalists see the European Union merely as a tool for its member states. Others believe the union to be inefficient in comparison to a state, because of its lack of military instruments and because of structural difficulties in reaching agreements between member states (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:45-46). Hill (1993) argues that such weaknesses have created capability – expectations gap, since the union is expected to do more than it is capable of. Demands for money and political assistance from developing countries all over the world, among other pressures, are unmanageable.

Kagan argues that it's only because of these weaknesses that the union promotes soft power tools. Smith is more optimistic and argues that the union isn't different

because what norms it tries to promote but with which means it uses to reach these goals (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:45-46).

3.2 The excluding EU

The idea of the EU being exclusive to its nature is contrasting the value-based identities presented above. This is an understanding of the EU as unwelcoming or hostile towards outsiders, a ‘fortress Europe’ (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:46). The definition of self is here as Europeans in the stricter sense, which excludes non-Europeans.

3.2.1 Market exclusion

A view of the EU as a self-interested economic power that protected its own market was invented by third parties, in particular the USA. It originates from the many exclusionary practices used by the EU such as anti-dumping and anti-subsidy provisions. Especially when used towards the least developed countries, this undermines the union’s commitment to poverty reduction and human rights. The usage of protectionism towards labor intensive sectors has created a demand-pull immigration pressure from south to north, since European need cheap labor (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:46-47).

3.2.2 Eligibility restraints

A number of rules and criteria governs eligibility, concerning both third country migrants that wish to live within the union’s borders and to states applying for membership. The fear of migrant flows was renewed after the end of the cold war, when an ‘invasion’ of migrants from the east was expected. “The end of the cold war had banished traditional fears and dangers, and this new evil was, it seemed, to take its place” (Thränhardt 1996, cited in Bretherton – Vogler 2006:48). Immigration from Yugoslavia and the 9/11 attacks contributed to a hardening of attitudes and control of immigration. In the European council meeting in Seville in 2002 immigration “became virtually synonymous with illegality and threat” (Guild 2002, cited in Bretherton – Vogler 2006:48). It is in the areas of immigration and asylum that the exclusive discourses are most evident, and very far away from the self proclaimed openness of the EU (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:49).

Also, when it comes to states applying to become members it is obvious that a narrow definition of “European” is used. The accession of Turkey has caused a wild debate whether Turkey can be classified as a European country. In the case of Morocco, the normal procedures for dealing with application weren’t even

undertaken. Morocco was simply too “not-European” (Bretherton – Vogler 2006:50-52).

4 Media picture

Olivier and Fioramonti (2009:114) find that the interest for the EU in the Brazilian, Indian and South African press is rather low and that the tone in the articles generally is critical. When covered in Brazilian media, it was usually in financial newspapers, especially in relation to Mercosur and the Doha Round. The review was conducted in 2005-2006 and some articles also dealt with referendum on European constitutional treaty. Others concerned unmet aspirations and contradictions of the European integration process (Olivier – Fioramonti 2009:114-115).

In Argentina, the interest of the EU was generally high. In the month of May, 101 articles mentioned the EU in Clarín, 227 in La Nación and 128 in Página 12. Clarín does not present all articles online which explains their slightly lower number. Still, during this month over three articles/day mentioned the EU in all papers. May was a month characterized by European news. But even counting a year back, an average of over one article/day mentioning the EU has been published in all three newspapers².

The press in India and South Africa was dominated by British sources (Olivier - Fioramonti 2009:115-116). In the Argentine case, the influence comes from different sources. The British influence is big even here, since “La Nación” prints articles from “The Economist” among others and “Página 12” print articles from “the Independent”. But the papers also have their own correspondents in various cities around Europe, and academics as well as politicians with a variety of nationalities are interviewed or consulted in articles in all three papers.

4.1 How the EU is presented in the Media

In the first section I try to present the Argentinean view of the EU by focusing on the main topics that was dealt with. Interpretations and analyses are given most attention here, since it is *their* view that is of interest. Although representing different ideologies, the papers present the EU in a similar way regarding several issues. Therefore, I have presented their views in relation to the topics which got most attention in all three papers; EU economical crisis, EU-Mercosur negotiations and other issues grouped together under one heading. In general, “La Nación” is the paper most positively inclined towards the EU. “La Nación” is a

² P12: 671, La Nacion: 1236, clarin 407 according to the papers own search engines.

believer in the model of the rich countries and in free trade (La Nación 100608). It also has an international focus, which is indicated by allocating international news at the first pages in the paper. Página 12 is the paper which covers EU the least, since it directs its international attention mainly to its own continent.

In the second section I compare the Argentinean view to the theoretical framework.

4.1.1 The Greek/euro crisis

The euro crisis, starting with the fear of Greek insolvency, has been given great coverage in Argentine media. A possible explanation for the great interest could be that they see similarities with the Greek crisis 2010 and their own in 2001 (La Nación 100507; P12 100515b, 100502). A common conclusion drawn in the papers is that the EU, and perhaps also the USA, has lost power with the crisis. Some come to the conclusion that the crisis may be the end of the existence of the euro or the European model (Clarín 100605, 100516, 100509, 100508, 100410, 100406; La Nación 100606a, 100525b, 100520, 100509). Although the rescue package is called “ambitious” and “historic” (Clarín 100516; La Nación 100503), the salvation politics of the EU are mostly criticized. The EU’s slow and “inefficient” reaction to solving the crisis is criticized by Obama, president of the USA as well as Brazilian president Lula and Argentine president Kirchner (Clarín 100531, 100517; 12 100517).

The crisis has shown that the Union has become too diverse, including too many problems. Many talk about the necessity of the centralization of power, although they admit that this seems difficult at the moment. (Clarín 100529a, 100516; La Nación 100512, 100509, 100428).

The presentation of the EU countries as acting unilaterally and out of self interest is very common in *Clarín* and *Página 12*. Germany is said to be as non-cooperative as China and to care more about stability rather than solidarity. Angela Merkel, “frau nein”, “iron lady” or “Angela Bush” as she has been called, is said to act non-cooperatively and to be very reluctant to help a Greece in need (Clarín: 100527, 100522, 100427b, 100420a, 100420b, 100413, 100406, 100327; P12 100520, 100519b, 100518a). France is accused of conditioning the rescue package for its proper benefit (La Nación 100508). United Kingdom is presented as a country who doesn’t really want to be part on the Union at all, hence resisting all attempts of further integration (Clarín 100527, 100519c).

The “severe”, “brutal” saving plans that the individual countries have decided upon have also been a common theme in the Argentine media. The adjustments, demanded by IMF and the EU, are said to affect the workers the most (Clarín 100611, 100609, 100521, 100430; La Nación 100525a; P12 100609a, 100521a, 100518a). The manifestations against these measurements, with messages such as calling the politicians thieves or complaints about the poor having to pay for the crisis, have been given a lot of attention (La Nación 100613, 100609; P12 100521a, 100517, 100506). In “La Nación” the corrupt Greek government is blamed (100503, 100416). In *Página 12*, however, this focus is questioned

(100517a, 100517b, 100506). Especially Página 12 takes on a critical perspective, since they believe that the rich countries, and even more so IMF, prioritize the salvation of the banks rather than caring for the people (P12 100517a, 100517b, 100516a, 100516b, 100515b). The title “Money in the banks, people on the streets” (P12 100513), pretty much summarizes the perspective of Página 12.

4.1.2 EU-Mercosur negotiations

The media watched the reopening of the EU-Mercosur negotiation with interest, talking about the creation of the world’s largest and most important free trade zone. However, not so many opinions are made about the cooperation. Both a claim that the cooperation would be beneficial for both sides is stated as well as complaints about the uneven power relation (La Nación 100608, 100525c, 100420b; P12 100609b). Some claim that the power relation has become a bit more even since the EU crisis (Clarín 100606b; La Nación 100418). Many predict a better growth to countries such as their own, Argentina, and claim that the southern American countries have managed the crisis better than the EU (P12 100508; Clarín 100606b)

The resistance of some of the European countries, led by France, to the continuation of the negotiations is given somewhat attention (La Nación 100418; P12 100516c, 100515a). Both Argentina and the EU have criticized one another for using protectionist measures. The EU, as well as Brazil, criticizes new, informally applied protectionism by the Argentinean government. Journalists and President Kirchner complain about the complex system of subsidies that protect European food production (Clarín 100529b; La Nación 100415b; P12 100518c)

Regarding cooperation with the EU, the issue of The Falkland islands conflict seems to have the greatest emotional impact. Several articles acknowledge that the Falkland Islands appear in the Lisbon treaty, where it is considered to belong to the United Kingdom (Clarín 100405; P12 100519a). This has caused a lot of criticism, since the Argentineans generally consider the British presence on the islands as illegal colonization (Clarín 100507, 100405, 100523, P12 100519a). At the EU-Latin America meeting in Madrid on the 18th of May, president Cristina Kirchner pleaded for the initiation of a UN led negotiation on the conflict. However, she received an answer sent by telegram from London saying that “there cannot be negotiation, we don’t have any doubts about our sovereignty over the Falkland Islands”, according to an article in Clarín (100519b).

4.1.3 Other issues

EU foreign policy regarding Cuba, Iran, Sudan, Kirgizstan and Russia has been briefly commented upon (Clarín 100427a, 100331; La Nación 100606b, 100614, 100412, 100410; P12 100518b, 100610). Furthermore, there have been reports about EU mediating in Israel – Palestine conflict, together with the USA, Russia

and the UN (Clarín 100320, La Nación 100320, 100327). The recognition of EU criticism and demand for a UN investigation after the Israeli boarding of the ship to Gaza has also been acknowledged (Clarín 100606a, 100604; P12: 100531). Catherine Ashton, high representative for foreign affairs and security policy of the European Union is cited saying that the isolation of Gaza is “inacceptable and contra productive”. Also the statements of French president Nicolás Sarkozy are documented (P12 100601). One article presents an opposing view, saying that the USA and the EU indirectly support the blockade (P12 100606).

Many journalists report about a conservative wave in Europe. Phenomenon such as skepticism towards changes, intolerance, xenophobia and separatism has been linked with elections in Europe (Clarín 100614, 100428, 100427b, 100412; La Nación 100413). At the EU-Latin American and Caribbean summit at the 18th of May, Cristina Kirchner criticized the European countries, in particular the most developed ones, for discriminating treatment of immigrants. “It’s about defining them as adversaries, as enemies or as separated from the society”, she said (Clarín 100519a).

The growing share of Chinese investment in Latin American in comparison to the EU is acknowledged. China could be the biggest destine for exports in 2020 or 2015, according to different sources (La Nación 100420a, 100414). One article claim that the economical crisis in the USA and the EU forces Latin America and Asia to negotiate together (La Nación 100415a). The EU’s growing interest for Mercosur countries is mirrored in the growing competition with China for investments in the area (Clarín 100530).

4.2 The media in comparison to the theory

The comparison between the European theoretic debate and the view of the EU presented in the argentine media is rather tricky. The focus is on completely different things. The civilian power view is looking at the differences between the EU and other powers. The Argentine media, on the other hand, looks in most cases at the global powers as one kind if actors, different from their own country. When distinction between the powers is made, it is rather made between the “old” powers (The USA and Europe) and the “new” (Brazil, China and India). And the hopes of the writers are set to the “new” powers. In the debate presented above of the financial crisis, this is very clear. Many semi developed countries, like Argentina, has survived the crisis better than the “old” powers and are also expected to enjoy the biggest growth in the years to come (P12 100508). One analyzer calls the BRIC-countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) the new middle class of the world (Clarín 100416). Perhaps this is also reflected in the constant repetition of referring Europe as “the old continent” in the media.

However, there are some interesting comments to be made about the ‘inclusiveness’ and ‘exclusiveness’ about the EU.

4.2.1 The EU as an inclusive entity

It seems to be acknowledged that the EU has come very far in creating regional integration (P12 100519b, 100516b). At least, I didn't find any direct contradictions to this. But there aren't any reflections made upon how this affects the EU role on the global arena. The coverage of the EU crisis also presents the national leaders as acting individually and egoistically. This contradicts the idea of the union being inclusive to its character in general. Even more so, it contradicts the idea of the union being built on values such as tolerance, cooperation, multilateralism and understanding. The coverage of the EU crisis resembles the theoretic perspective of the EU as a peculiar entity more than anything else. The presentation of the EU as consisting of individualistic member states has resemblance to the theoretic perspective believing that states are the important actors. The EU institutions, if at all mentioned, are being presented as weak in comparison to the state actors. The EU is often presented as a bargaining game between France, the UK and Germany.

Only in *La Nación* the EU is presented as something similar to a normative power. China is in one article criticized for its poor contribution to Haiti, after the catastrophe, in comparison to the EU and the USA (La Nación 100406). Another analyzer says that the world shouldn't only applaud the success of China, but be more preoccupied with what kind of politics this bloc stands for. The Chinese economy legitimizes the one party state and restrictions of political and cultural rights. The EU model, however, is admirable since the economical integration is based on deliberation and democratic consensus (La Nación 100401). But not even in *La Nación* this is a very dominant perspective. And the distinction is rather made with China as the contrast, not the USA.

4.2.2 The EU as an exclusive entity

There are more articles that directly touch upon examples of the excluding traits of the EU. As presented above, both the eligibility restraints and market exclusion are sources for criticism. However, this is not criticism reserved for the EU, also the USA is judged for similar reasons.

4.2.3 The EU as a "normal" power

In contrast to what the excluding perspective suggests, the EU is not presented as uninterested in the rest of the world. The fact that they negotiate with Mercosur and mediate or make statements regarding world conflicts suggests something differently. However, it is not as a "civilian power actor" that the EU is portrayed either. In fact, there isn't anything in these articles that would suggest that the EU is a different sort of power. Many of the mediating roles of the EU are shared with

the USA. Furthermore, there are several articles dealing with Brazil mediating with Iran regarding their nuclear programme. The mediating role is thereby nothing unique for the EU. Neither is the interest for Mercosur markets. As mentioned above, it is believed that the EU is competing with China for market shares and economic influence in Mercosur countries.

Especially in Página 12, EU politicians are portrayed as acting unilaterally and out of self interest, whether regarding the conflict of the Falkland Islands or the economic crisis. In connection to the debate around the suspension of the Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón, the EU is accused of having double standards when it comes to the defense of human rights (P12 100521b, 100519a). To sum up, the EU is to a big extent presented as equally self absorbed and dominant as the USA and other powers.

5 The students' opinions

Almost all students comment about the economical strength of the EU, sometimes in passing, as if it was so obvious it didn't need to be stated properly (Interview 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18). Most students had a clear view of whether they "liked" the EU or not, which became clear on an early stage through tone and comments. One of the students said: "Some believe that the rich countries are the model. Some don't." (Interview 2). A little simplified, out of the 21 students interviewed, all but three can be classified into those two groups. The groups are indicated in table 4.

Table 4 Interviews sorted according to general opinion	
The rich countries are the model	Interview 4, 5, 8, 10 (person 1&3), 15, 16, 17, 19
The rich countries aren't the model	Interview 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10 (person 2), 11, 12, 14

However, interviewed person 4 only viewed the EU and China as a model, not the USA. Person 1 & 3 in interview 10 never commented upon the USA, which makes it impossible to tell whether they considered all rich countries a model.

The students that liked the EU often pointed out cultural closeness with Europeans. However, the ones that disliked the EU often claimed that the union has little importance in their country. The most extreme example is England, which for one student is a good example of Argentine closeness with the EU, and for another student the member of the union with the worse politics (Interview 3, 8). It is interesting to note that the two groups follow a left-right scale. The most "left" students, like the one in interview 1 (who is part of a socialist-peronist movement) and the student in interview 7, are also the most critical towards the EU. The most "right" students (interview 5 and 8) seem to admire the USA more than the European countries. The student in interview 5 talk about the realist dominance at his faculty, a perspective that recommends Europe to use more military power, similar to the one of the USA. The student in interview 8 believes that Brazil will cooperate more with the USA since they are both more "right". The people harder to place in a group are the ones that stand in the middle of the scale. Person 1 in interview 10 claims he is a social democrat of the Northern European kind. The student in interview 4 say she is neither right nor left. These two students are also among the ones that evaluate the EU in the most positive way. Another clear tendency is that the students that have had direct contact with Europeans, through travelling etc, generally share more generous comments.

5.1 The EU as a civilian/normative power

Almost all students had to think for a while before answering questions about whether the EU is a promoter of values such as democracy, human rights and peace. It was obvious that these kind of questions weren't something commonly discussed in relation to the EU. If I hadn't specifically asked for their opinions on these issues, I doubt much of it would have been mentioned at all. The unusual topic may explain why the answers differed a great deal. A certain tendency can be found, however. The group believing that the rich countries are the model generally answered these questions with "yes", and the other group generally with "no". One student asked whether she thought that the union represented human rights answered: "Out of prejudice I would say no, but to tell the truth, I don't know." (Interview 14). This honest reply is probably valid for many of the comments of the other students. In both groups students said "yes" or "no", although they had trouble giving examples to support their position.

5.1.1 The pro-rich countries group

Within the pro-rich countries group, the EU was commonly described as a successful regional project (Interview 8, 10 person 1, 15, 19). The fact that the EU is an institution of different countries cooperating is what generates the most positive opinions about it. Two students answer that ability to cooperate is the biggest difference between the EU and the USA (Interview 4, 16). However few use this fact to evaluate the EU as a global actor. Only one student argues in a way similar to the 'civilian power' perspective: "I would say that it [the EU] is based on values such as democracy, the spirit of unity, tolerance and human rights." (Interview 5). This student claim that the EU uses "smart power", which suggests that he was in touch with an academic debate similar to the theory presented in this thesis.

The issue of the EU representing democracy had the bigger support than other values. All students from this group, that were asked, agreed that the EU represented democracy. The answer to whether the Union represented human rights was a bit more modest. As a reply to as whether the union represented peace or not, some argued that the union is neutral or hasn't agreed upon a common policy on the issue yet (Interview 2, 4, 8, 17). Two students bring up European social politics system or the living standard for its citizens as a positive evaluation (Interview 8, 10 person, 1). Others see the financial help given to Greece as a receipt of the strength of the EU (Interview 8, 10, person 1, 16, 19).

5.1.2 The contra rich countries group

Even within this group, many acknowledge the EU's success in regional cooperation although some also mentions weaknesses in the cooperation (Interview 2, 3, 6, 10, 11). Some claim that the cooperation is built on economical incentives, and not on cultural closeness (1, 7, 12).

It is obvious that the concept "democracy" is defined differently in Argentina in comparison to what the Europeans mean. This is particularly clear in this comment: "China isn't a democracy? Yes I guess they're not really following Mao anymore." (Interview 1). For many people of this group, European democracy is a model designed for rich countries. Having the defence of the weaker groups of society as their prime interest, this group generally equates what democracy *should* be with social equality (Interview 1, 3, 6, 7, 9). Most would probably agree that the EU represents a European kind of democracy, which is a kind of democracy they don't desire. Hardly anyone in this group agreed that the union was a defender of human rights or peace. However, the two women engaged with a political party put forward women's rights and sexual minorities' rights in the EU as an argument in favour of the human rights promoting EU (Interview 6, 7). However, they also found contra arguments towards the EU promoting human rights.

5.2 The EU as an exclusive entity

If the discussion on the EU as a defender of certain values was forced, it was the exact opposite with the discussion of immigration politics. None of the questions directly invited to a discussion on the EU immigration policy. Still, no other subject was more commonly brought up. Among other things, immigration policies were called unjust and the worst aspect of the EU, and the Europeans were described as "very racist" (Interview 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13). The complaints were put forward of the contra rich countries group. However the outraged response of the group of friends to the comment that immigrants have a lot of rights in the EU suggests that even within the other group, this is a common argument.

Criticism against trade regulation was brought up by some (Interview 3, 4, 5, 11). On the question of whether the EU does a good job in assisting and supporting developing countries one student replied: "No, the EU doesn't take any real kind of action towards helping developing countries what so ever. These countries need money and they need trade partners. The EU offers them none of these things.". Nobody answered this question with a clear "yes", which seems to speak in favour of the exclusive EU perspective.

An eligibility restraint for membership was mentioned by two students. For one of them, union building is an excluding process in it self, for the other the demands on the new, less developed states are too big (Interview 6, 14). However, opening up to Eastern Europe made the EU seem less restrictive to others (Interview 5, 9).

5.3 The EU as an egoistic entity

Many share a perspective similar to the EU as a peculiar entity, especially as seeing the individual states as the driving actors. The way in which the concept of the EU is equalized with the individual member states shows this. Another of the most dominating views of the EU presented in the interviews is as an egoistic actor. This, of course, is similar to the exclusive perspective, but not quite the same. The exclusive perspective assumes that the EU doesn't bother at all with politics outside its borders. However, the selfish image of the EU isn't necessarily also excluding. The EU *is* negotiating with other parts of the world, but only with "important" countries (Interview 4, 5, 11). Some claim the EU negotiate in it a dominant or exploiting way (Interview 2, 6, 11). The EU, and its member states, is considered to always put economical interest first. Asking what questions were most important for the EU, the answers were almost exclusively of economical kind (Interview 10 person 1, 9, 7, 6, 4, 11). Most students asked about the role of the EU in environmental negotiations answered that the EU didn't want to see its economy negatively affected (Interview 5, 9, 11). The contra rich countries group goes further, with comments such as "the EU only cares about its companies" or about saving the banks (interview 2, 6, 7). This group also criticized European motives for involvement in external conflicts such as in Iraq and Afghanistan (Interview 7, 9, 11).

6 Conclusions

The main findings of this thesis are that the Argentines don't view the EU as particularly different to other powers. For Argentines, the important distinction is what phase of development a country (or union of countries) is in. This distinction explains why China is equally popular in Argentina as the EU. They simply represent a country in their own category, a team player. Also, the EU isn't associated with democracy in the way that the Europeans might expect. The European kind of democracy is in most cases not seen as something admirable. Therefore, the contrast to the undemocratic Chinese model might not seem that big.

The euro crisis of 2010 has negatively affected the reputation of the EU. The handling of the crisis has made the EU seem like a cold project in which every member state try to gain as much as possible. The top politicians are presented as ignoring the sufferings of the workers and the less developed states. However, the data presented in this thesis suggests that ideology is a more important determinant of whether the EU is viewed as "good" or "bad". Both the right-oriented paper, *La Nación*, and the "right students" were in general more positive towards the EU. Similarly, both the left oriented newspaper, *Página 12*, and the "left students" were in general critical towards the EU. It seems the crisis has given both sides more examples, rather than changed attitudes.

The worse part of the EU image is clearly the xenophobic trait that the Argentines apply to the Europeans. The other is the union as being egoistic to its character, always seeking to gain as much as possible. Olivier and Fioramonti reach a similar conclusion in their investigation of the EU's image in global south countries. They write: "The EU will have to make bald decisions with regard to pending trade imbalances if it wishes to shrug off the neo-colonial stigma." (Olivier – Fioramonti 2009:116). Developing as a country is what is important to the Argentines. As a student said: "First we're going to develop, then we can criticize them [China] for killing people." (Interview 4). Helping Argentina to develop might be the only way for the Europeans to fundamentally change its own reputation. The cultural closeness, or at least the uncommonly big interest in the European countries, has seemingly done little to improve the European image. However, it is the students that have had personal experience of the European model that also have the most positive view of it. It also is rather unique that EU has an image of being some kind of political actor in Argentina. If the cooperation with Mercosur succeeds in improving the Argentine economy, it might be in Argentina that the global south image of the EU has the best probabilities to change.

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7.2 Press articles

7.2.1 Clarín

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100611: Juan Carlos Algañarás: "Todas pérdidas", El Mundo

100609: "Pararon las tres centrales obreras contra el ajuste de España", El Mundo

100606a "Israel rechaza una investigación internacional sobre el ataque", El Mundo

100606b "UE y América latina: nuevas formas de diálogo", El país

100605 Julio Algañaraz: "El economista Roubini ve 'riesgos de una nueva crisis global'", El Mundo

100604 Shlomo Slutzky: "Israel cede a la presión y dice que podría aliviar el bloqueo a Gaza", El Mundo

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100530 Néstor Restivo: "El acuerdo con la UE, en clave china", El Mundo.

100529a, Felipe de la Balze: "Sin buenas estrategias contra la crisis global", Opinión

100529b Natasha Niebieskikwiat: "Para la UE, la Argentina es de los países que más frenan el comercio", El Mundo

100527, Carlos Pérez Llana: "UE: cada cual atiende su juego", Opinión

100523, Natasha Niebieskikwiat: "Malvinas: el gobierno citó a la embajadora británica", el país.

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100519c Idafe Martín: "Europa impone más controles sobre los fondos especulativos", internacionales.

100517 Leonardo Mindez: "Cristina llegó a España y cuestionó las recetas del ajuste europeo", El país

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100507 Leonardo Mindez: ”El Tratado de Lisboa, un revés en Europa”, El País

100430 Idefe Martin: “Presionada para conseguir dinero, Grecia baja salarios y sube impuestos”, El Mundo

100428 María Laura Avignolo: ”Los inmigrantes, una obsesión en la campaña electoral británica”, El Mundo

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100416 Jorge Castro: “La clave de los BRIC's: mercado interno y auge del consumo popular”, Opinión

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100413 Ulrich Beck: ”Berlín se aleja del foco europeo”, Opinión

100410 Marcelo Canelmi: ”Grecia, o el desafío alemán de alejarse del enfermo”, Opinión

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7.2.2 La Nación

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100609 Adrián Sack: “Protestaron en España contra el ajuste”, exterior

100608 Alfredo N. Atanasof: ”El Mercosur y La unión Europea”, Opinión

100606a Luisa Corradini: ”Los países ricos són más endeudados que nunca”, Economía

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100525a Adrian Sack: “El FMI reclama a España un mayor ajuste ante la crisis”, Exterior

100525b, DPA, Reuters, ANSA: “Londres anunció un drástico recorte fiscal”, Exterior

100525c, Florencia Carbone: “Del coqueteo a la firma de los papeles”, Comercio exterior

100520 Reuters (Paris): “Buscando asegurar la supervivencia”, Exterior

100512 Wall Street Journal: “El rescate de Europa allana el camino para una unión fiscal más estrecha”, exterior.

100509, EFE, DPA, AFP & Reuters: “Crecen las críticas a la UE por Grecia”, Exterior

100508 Paris: “Acusan a Sarkozy de condicionar el rescate” Exterior

100507 Elisabetta Piqué: “Teme Gracia terminar como la Argentina”, Exterior

100503 Luisa Corradini: “Histórico rescate financiero de Grecia”, Exterior

100428 Luisa Corradini: “Una carrera para evitar el contagio”, Exterior

100420a “China sería el principal destino de exportación”, Comercio exterior

100420b Marcelo Halperin: “Una negociación con temas pendientes”, Comercio exterior

100418 Brussels: “La Ilusión de libre comercio”, Economía

100416 Marcus Walker/Wall Street Journal: “Detrás de la crisis de la deuda griega: la corrupción”, Wall Street Journal

100415a Brasilia (AFP): ”La región atrae cada vez más la mirada de Pekín”, Exterior

100415b ”Prometen ayuda a obreros de la carne”, Economía

100413 Luisa Corradini: ”Inquieta a Europa el contundente avance de la ultraderecha”, Exterior

100414 Wall Street Journal: “Brasil quiere seducir a China, una relación vital para su desarrollo”, Wall Street Journal

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100502 "Grecia 2010; Argentina 2001", Principal, El mundo

8 Appendix: Transcribed Interviews

Interviews numbered and presented with the student's gender, age and political career followed by type of interview and current date. The students belong to three different universities, UBA (Universidad de Buenos Aires), Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero, and UCA (Universidad católica de Argentina). The two former are public universities and the latter private.

8.1 Longer interviews

1. Woman, political science, involved in a socialist-peronist movement, 19 years old. Met with at the faculty of political science, UBA, 20/5 2010.

What do you think about the European Union as a global actor?

Not good, it's just a cooperation for economical reasons. It's not like here with Unasur, we're united for cultural reasons. In Europe they're so unlike each other. Like for example, when they thought there was going to be a military coup in Bolivia we all went out to the streets here in Argentina.

So you believe that the people are more alike in Latin America than in Europe?

At least the tolerance is bigger.

And it is really bad that the EU is doing everything that the IMF says with Greece and Spain. Now it's not really European Union, it's the IMF union.

When Cristina Kirchner brought up the Falklands conflict in the EU-Latin America meeting the EU didn't want to negotiate.

Europe consists of the most developed countries in the world- and they don't do anything! They're not intervening in the Israel/Palestine conflict, they say they're neutral. How can you be neutral in such a conflict?? I think this conflict is one of the hardest in the world. That and the conflict regarding the Falklands.

If you could change the politics of the European Union, what would you change?

The migration politics! I have a friend who lives in Spain, and every day she is discriminated. And she is so light and looks so European and she is still discriminated! I don't understand it.

And in negotiations regarding climate change?

Also horrible! In Copenhagen it was dreadful. The powerful countries of Europe had a chance to unite and put pressure on others-but they didn't! There is so much that the EU doesn't care about.

And the EU is so allied with the USA, they have so much power over the EU.

What do you think about China as a global actor than?

China has a really bad conflict with Tibet, they kill people. And the EU doesn't say anything!

And Brazil could be a world power (potencia) in the future too?

Yes, I think so.

Would it be a better world power?

Yes I think so, much more socially and politically and a better defender of human rights. But without military violence.

In Europe we think it is strange that countries like Brazil rather side with China in negotiations than with EU since China is so undemocratic, what do you think?

China isn't a democracy? Yes I guess they're not really following Mao anymore. But everyone is cooperating with China- the EU could have the power to put pressure, but they don't. What's the point of Argentina doing it then?

2. Man and Woman, 22 years, political science. Met with at the faculty of political science, UBA, 20/5

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

Him: New way of making regional cooperation, but it appears to me they've done it too fast, without people keeping up. I think the project is diminishing the sovereignty of the member countries. Every country still has its distinct politics, financially for example.

Is the EU a promoter of democracy?

Both: No!

Why not?

Her: Because the politicians only care about the companies, that they are doing well, they don't listen to the people.

Is the EU a promoter of peace?

Both: No!

Him: They don't have the capacity to act together. What are really the politics of the EU?

Are multilateral or bilateral agreements better in general?

Her: It's better doing it as blocks.

Him: I think the EU-Mercosur cooperation is unilateral.

Because one part is so dominant?

Him: yes

Which countries are candidates for becoming world powers in the future?

Her: China and India

Brazil?

Both: No!

A lot of people in Europe think so.

Him: Really?

If this were the case, which countries would Brazil cooperate with do you think?

Her: I think a lot are joining China. China represents the poor in the world.

Him: Here, the EU has little importance. Some believe that the rich countries are the model. Some don't. We also hear about protests made for social politics and the politics they recommend for Greece...

Is the EU only an economic cooperation or is there a culture origin as well?

Him: No, I think there is some cultural trait as well.

Him: But we only hear about the big countries, England, France, Germany.

Yes it occurred to me that nobody brings up the enlargement of the EU, it is a common subject for discussion in Europe.

Him: Yes, I think these countries may have bigger influence than we think.

3. Woman, 24 years, political science. Met with at the faculty of political science, UBA, 20/5

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

It's a good project, it's an interesting case. Impossible for others, like Mercosur, to copy, it seems to me.

Why impossible to copy?

Because this is Latin America, we have very corrupt governments.

Is it a good idea to cooperate as much as the European countries do?

In general cooperation is good but it seems to me they didn't succeed in creating a total unity. It's an economic cooperation, nothing else. The Euro etc.

Which countries are candidates to become potencies in the future?

China will become the next big power. They're so many, how can they not?

And what do you think about China?

It's a fast growing economy. But they have problems with liberty, the government is really coercive.

Is the EU a defender of democracy in the world?

Well.. Yes I guess. Historically they have strong democracies with a social system that it is impossible for others to copy, I think. I have relatives in Spain so I know it's not all bad. But now, you know, they are cutting down on the social welfare in Spain. And who decided that? The bank! And now they are talking about that Spain may have to change currency, it's incredible! Such thing never happened before.

Do you think that the EU is a defender of world peace?

No! Not when England is doing what they're doing and.. No!

Which countries are candidates to become global powers in the future?

The ones who have access to sweet water... Maybe the Middle East? Or no, I don't know. But in our life time we won't see a lot of change, I don't think. The EU will continue to have a big economical influence.

But the immigration politics of the EU they're so unjust! And commercial barriers, you know what I said to my dad the other day? Dad, I won't eat these French strawberries, they won't eat our food!

Well, it's not like I like the Argentinean government either! Brazil is doing a lot better than us. They're economically smarter than us. We have the best leather shoes in the world – and Brazil export plastic shoes to us! And we buy them because they're cheaper!

Do you like President Lula?

Well.. Yes. He had to make a lot of concessions, but yes.

4. Woman 27 years, master of international trade, Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero. Appointed interview 21/5, 2010.

What do you think in general about the EU as a global actor?

It's a very strong economic block, but also in a cultural level. In Argentina we have the same origin which makes us share the same principles which makes it easier to make agreements with Europe. It's much easier than with the USA, which have a completely different culture. I also think that the EU is to its nature cooperative, which is an advantage. Well it can be a hinder as well since it's stalling the decisions. I also think that the union has a lot of regulation regarding trade.

Do you mean trade barriers?

No I don't mean trade barriers. The union imposes regulation on how the products must be. But this is not only bad, I think, it can also be beneficial. It encourages the producers to develop and be more competitive. I have friends who believe that these are trade barriers as well, that the EU is more closed.

Which are the most important global issues for the EU, do you think?

Well the common market. I think also service business is developing and also commodities.

Which issues do you believe should be the most important?

Education of producers in global trade.

Do you think it's a good idea to cooperate as much as the European countries do?

Yes, yes yes, of course! It's very important.

Do you think it is something that Mercosur could copy?

Well not including Chile, for us they're too allied with the USA. But yes, certainly I believe that Mercosur could reach the same level. But we wouldn't weight equally much of course.

What do you think is the major difference between the EU and other global powers such as the USA and China?

Well China has a similar nature as the EU, it's more conciliatory, at the consumer's level. The advance of China is incredible. The United States have a much harder tactic, maybe more efficient as well. But they have a much more solitary culture.

Which countries do you believe are candidates of becoming global powers?

Well firstly China, since they have so many people! I think India as well and Brazil, well they still lack a lot of things but is developing.

Who do you think will collaborate? Which country side with?

Oh, very difficult question...

Well lately in global negotiation countries like Brazil and India have been siding with China, why do you think that is?

Well these are the countries that are developing the most at the moment, I guess they're in the same place.

What do you think is best in general, multilateral agreements or bilateral agreements?

It must be multilateral agreements, but they are harder to accomplish than bilateral ones.

Will multilateral agreements be important in the future?

Yes, of course! It's very beneficial.

Do you think Argentines feel close to the Europeans culturally?

Yes, think they share pretty much the same culture.

And with Brazilians?

Yes, but there is a lot of competition.

Would it be good for if Brazil developed into a global power?

Yes, for us it would be very beneficial economically since we're in a cooperation with them.

You are not scared that Brazil will go off on its own if that happens?

No, not really. I'm sure that the cooperation will continue.

And with Uruguayans, are you close culturally?

Oh yes, Uruguay is like a province of Argentina.

In your opinion, is the EU a promoter of democracy?

Yes!

In what way?

Well, with their cooperative nature. I also think in interregional cooperation democracy is also a part of it?

Yes, in the cooperation with Mercosur there is a democracy clause.

And I also think they mediate in conflicts.

Is the EU a promoter of peace?

Well... no I think it's neutral here. It takes on a fairly neutral stand, like Argentina it's fairly neutral as well. I don't think that the EU has managed to extract its own politics here yet.

In your opinion, is the EU a promoter of human rights?

Yes!

Do you have an example?

Well.. I can't really think of anything in particular. Well campaigns against starvation for example.

Do you think that the EU does a good job to assist and support developing countries?

Well.. Yes. But still, it could be a lot better! They prefer collaborating with Brazil because it is beneficial economically, and not with poor countries that might need it the most.

Do you believe that the EU plays an important role in climate change negotiation?

Well yes, it does because it is a big block that emits a lot of carbon dioxide. But I don't think it is a priority for the EU. It is an issue that is not really cared for in general. Economy before ecology.

Would you say that your personal ideology is more right or left?

It's neutral. I see bad and good things on both sides.

Which newspaper do you usually read?

Well it's really hard because Clarín has such a big monopoly. I try to consult other sources as well in order to get a more nuanced picture.

Like "Pagina 12"?

Yes, that is a good paper.

In my study program we have discussed the China phenomenon, which surprises us. These last years countries like Brazil and India side with them in international negotiation, although they are so undemocratic. What do you think about that?

Well when we talk about China, it's always about China as an economic block, as a commercializer. First we're going to develop, then we can criticize them for killing people. In my faculty they handed out booklets called "The Chinese dream", where China was presented as the good example. It didn't say anything about the fact that it is a one party state, that they oppress their people or that people die of hunger there.

5. Man, 24 years, international relations. Met with at faculty of law and social science, UCA, 26/5, 2010.

I just want to tell you, I'm actually Spanish so I'm not totally neutral when it comes to the subject of the EU.

Were you born in Spain?

Yes, I was.

But how long have you lived here in Argentina?

For 22 years, so I'm really Argentinean.

Do you visit Spain often?

Yes, I do.

But do you think you have a more positive view of the EU because of that?

Maybe a little, but generally, no.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

It could get more political influence if it used more military power. As it is now, some of the individual countries, like Germany, weigh more in itself than the EU.

Do you like the politics of the EU?

Yes, everything but the economic politics, with the crisis now, it's a disaster.

What other politics are important for the EU?

For the EU I think it is the cultural theme. The promotion of cultural integration. But know they're having a hard time agreeing. It's fragmented and one wonders, what are the politics of the EU really?

What do you think is the biggest difference between the EU and other world potencies, like China and the USA?

Well there's something called smart power that the EU have more of, EU is more about economics and less about military strength. I think the power of both China and the USA has to a big extent been developed out of military strength. China and the USA have their people united also, in one country.

Do you think Brazil could develop into a world power in the future?

Yes, I think so. Especially if we talk about a world power also economically and culturally. They have to fix some things but they have the basic traits to become powerful.

Does the EU represent values such as democracy?

Yes, definitely! I would say that it is based on values such as democracy, the spirit of unity, tolerance and human rights. In answering this question it might be my Spanish side talking. But when I talk about the EU crisis it's my Argentinean side speaking, we care a lot about the crisis since it's to a big extent how it was for us in 2001.

But in general I think the view of the EU is good here at this faculty. Most people have a realist view of things here. Therefore they admit that the EU is there but they don't really count it as a global power.

Is it the teachers who have a realist view?

Yes, most of them. There are some that have another point of view as well.

Do you think that the EU is a leader in climate change negotiation?

I wouldn't say a leader, no. Not with the failure at Copenhagen. And France has politics very unfriendly to climate change adjustments. Maybe your countries, and Norway, Finland and Denmark... But in general I think there is a lot of talk and little action from the EU. But I think this is the case for most countries.

What do you think of the enlargement of the EU?

Well, again, there are good things and bad things with it. For cultural reasons I think it is good. It's really giving these new, poorer countries a chance of influence for the first time. But I think they are really far behind the richer European countries. There has to be a limit.

Do you think that the EU does a good job in assisting and supporting developing countries?

No, absolutely not! Now, my Argentinean side is speaking. No, the EU doesn't really take any real kind of action towards helping developing countries. These countries need money and they need trade partners. The EU offers them none of these things. The EU prefers to make business with countries that matters.

Do you talk about the EU in your studies?

Oh yes, half of the material we read is about the EU.

What does it normally regard?

Everything, we read about European history, development, institutions and organization. Normally through a realist perspective.

So, you do this as your master thesis?

Yes, I study the newspapers as well. Clarín and La Nación. I know these are rather similar.

You have to read another paper as well, representing the other view. Página 12 is a good example. They are pro the government.

But Página 12 is not really that big..

But it's very influential. I don't read it, but I know what it says and I discuss it.

But I'm not sure if the image of the EU is that different between the papers...

The pro government media focuses more on the closer region and Latin America whether papers like Clarín and La Nación have a bigger focus on the EU and the USA.

6. Woman, 25 years, linguistic studies and active in a left political party, UBA. Planned interview in café 31/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

I think the European countries decided to engage in unification in order to be able to compete at a global level. But I also think they didn't only have economic goals but also political and cultural goals.

Do you personally like the politics of the EU?

They don't represent me. I'm also sceptical about the immigration politics with more and more restrictions. I think it's deepening the borders between the union and others. As I said I think the project was created in order to use labour and production more efficiently between borders. In other words to put in effect capitalistic means. On the positive side is the cultural integration they're trying to create. For example my cousin studies in Spain and in his degree they're trying to adjust it to the other member countries. I think they're trying to make sure everyone can share the cultural treasures that exist in the different European countries. It's a different cooperation than between Mercosur countries, which is only for economical reasons.

Which issues do you think are the most important for the EU?

1. Trade, especially international trade and international competitiveness.

2. The financial system, how to save the banks etc. To me it's a bit perverse that when a bank, a company with commercial interest, has problem, the entire world help them. But when people are starving on the streets, they don't do anything.
3. The immigration issue. I think they have different problems in every country. A lot of people come to find a better living there.

Which issues do you think should be the most important?

1. The integration of and giving help to of the poorer countries of the union.
2. Gender issues, I know the European countries have come a long way regarding this subject, and the rights of sexual minorities
3. Politics of cultural integration

What do you think is the biggest difference between the EU and other global powers such as the USA and China?

Hm.. I don't know much about economics. Was it difference economically?

No, as a global actor.

Well China is the main producer. The USA has more political importance, because they also govern other global institutions like NATO and the UN. But I think the EU was created because they wanted to reach the same level.

China could reach this level too?

Oh yes! Economical power.

Could Brazil also reach this level?

Yes they are going in this direction. At least to have bigger status, but they're not going to be like the USA and Europe- they're still going to be subordinated.

If they got more influence, do you think they would continue to cooperate with Argentina or would they go off on their own?

Well for geographical reasons they would have to continue the cooperation with Argentina but it would be different. They would separate more from the less developed countries. But I think countries like Argentina and Brazil are going to be important in the future since they produce food. Food will always be a crucial good.

Would it be a good idea for Argentina to cooperate with Brazil?

To cooperate with a powerful nation always means following their rules.

What about now, when it's not that unequal?

Yes, at the moment it's a good thing.

Do you think that the EU represents values such as democracy?

Well...yes. It depends on what you mean with democracy. In my opinion democracy works better between rich people. It's a way of administrating the capital between the people. It's a system which is good for the dominant class. Of course I would want to live under a dictatorship either!! Democracy is like the lesser bad alternative. To me the democracies we have today are quite far from the original idea of democracy, that the people of a certain town decided together. Today there aren't any towns making decisions. But yes I guess according to what democracy is considered to be today, the EU qualifies.

Do you think that the EU is a defender of human rights?

I don't know much actually. The organization dedicates itself to gender issues and sexual minorities, which is good. When I taught a group of students Spanish I wanted to create a political discussion so I put questions like "should abortion be legal" and "should gay couples be able to get married" on the board. And then some Dutch girls told me this wasn't even anything to discuss. The answer "yes" to these questions is so obvious to them. And I know you told me as well that these questions aren't really a debate any more in Sweden either. I think it's amazing that you've come this far in your societies!

But I think the immigration politics are the biggest argument that the EU isn't a defender of the human rights. To me it's a step backwards.

Do you think the EU is a leader in climate change negotiations?

Hmm... I don't remember what the European leaders said in Copenhagen. I know that the USA didn't sign the Kyoto protocol. They don't want to be affected negatively by regulation. I think the European companies respect the protection of the nature within the European borders. But outside they don't. Like the Finish paper company that is poisoning the Paraná river here. They could never do such a thing within the European borders it seems to me.

Why do you think about the enlargement to the east of the EU?

In general it's good but I think these countries are so far behind that they're going to be subordinated. I don't think they will be able to maintain the conditions demanded by the EU.

Do you think that the EU does a good job to support and assist developing countries?

Actually I don't know. I know a little of what they do in Spain but nothing else.

From what sources do you think you get your view of the EU?

Well I read the newspaper Clarín. I'm engaged in a left wing party so I read a lot of their papers as well.

Do these papers write anything about the EU?

Oh yes, a lot about France, Spain, Italy. They are generally critical since they are dedicated towards criticizing the status quo.

But I also get the image from my relatives living in Spain. I, too, have a Spanish passport because of them.

Do you also get your image from the Europeans you meet in your work?

Oh, yes! That's true. That's probably the main source to my knowledge about the EU. In my Spanish classes we have political discussions all the time.

7. Woman, 34 years, history student at UBA, active in a left political party. Appointed interview, 1/6 2010.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

I think it's an entity with weight, economically but also politically. I think the union responds to modern times, since the 90's onwards.

Do you like the politics of the EU?

Well, I live in Argentina so I don't get to share the benefits, we only suffer the consequences.

European politics are only good for Europeans?

Yes. I think the EU is a rather self absorbed entity.

What issues do you think are the most important for the EU?

At the moment? Solve the crisis! Above all on the basic levels, like caring for salaries and jobs. Solving the crisis is very important! Without the euro there is no EU.

What about say the next 5 years?

It all depends on how the crisis evolves.

Which issues do you think personally should be the most important?

Solve the crisis I guess.

And if you were the president of the European Commission, what would you do?

I would break up the whole project.

For me the immigration politics are the worse.

And they would be different without the EU project?

No.

So why would you break up the whole project?

Because it's only about economics, it's an artificial project. There is no common culture behind it. The interest for it is in the economical sectors.

Could Brazil become a global power in the future?

Depends on the crisis. But yes, I think so. Diplomatically.

Would it be a better global power?

No.

What do you think is the major difference between the EU and other global powers such as the USA and China?

Traditions, cultural and economical. They are very different. Well the USA continues to be the most important global power. They're the ones influencing the world dynamics.

And China?

The role of China is uncertain.

Do you think that the EU represents values such as democracy?

Well.. No. I mean the European countries ate democracies, and that's better than the Taliban regimes, don't get me wrong. But it's an official democracy. Legally everyone has the same rights, but practically they don't! Everyone doesn't have the same access. It's not the same going to Oxford as going to a country side university. But the protection of the rights of sexual minorities and women's rights seem to be a bit more advanced in the EU. It seems to be a bit better there.

Do you think that the EU is a defender of human rights?

No! Not in the Israel-Palestine conflict, not in Iraq. It's just nice words but no action. And former political oppressors still live in Europe, they live freely in all parts of the world!

Do you think the EU is a leader in climate change negotiations?

I guess it's the same as the other actors. They don't want to lose money. Really, it's so easy to regulate, to use solar energy etc, but they don't do it!

Do you think the EU does a good job in supporting and assisting developing countries?

No! Less than little. On the contrary. They support NGOs that give money to corrupt governments and dictators. There aren't any hospitals being built.

For us in Argentina the EU is like another European country. For us it's more important what the USA does, what China does too!

Where do you get your image of the EU from?

Different sources, newspapers, study programme, from the lefties party that I'm involved with.

8. Man, law student. Met with outside the classrooms of law, UCA, 4/6, 2010.

What do you think about the EU?

Rich, good living standard for its people.

As a global actor?

It's a counterweight to the USA when the countries cooperate. I think it does have a weight on the global arena. With the help they're giving to Greece now. I also think it's a very successful project in regional integration, which Mercosur is trying to copy but isn't at all as advanced.

What is the major difference between the EU and other global actors such as the USA and China?

I think now that Brazil is becoming more powerful as well, the EU might be a counterweight to Brazil and the USA, together representing the American view. China has a completely different culture.

The image of the Europeans is very good here. We have a lot of connections to European countries, like England which used to be a very important trading partner.

Which global actors will Brazil cooperate with in the future?

I don't think Brazil is going to cooperate much with anybody, they want to be autonomous.

What will happen to Mercosur in the future?

There is a divide in Latin America where some countries are more right oriented and other more left. Brazil is traditionally more right and Argentina more left. As long as Brazil and Argentina don't have the same ideology they won't go very far.

Does the EU represent values such as democracy?

Yes definitely.

And Peace?

Yes, in certain ways. The leaders of the European countries, like Angela Merkel, Sarkozy, all have their own opinion in world conflicts.

The EU could act as a mediator?

Yes and that's how you solve conflicts.

9. Woman, 21 years old, political science. Met with at the faculty of law and social sciences, UCA, 4/6, 2010.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

Very important unity on the global arena. For us here in Argentina, the EU is a superpower. It's a very, very strong actor. One of the global powers that influence the dynamics of the world.

Do you, personally, like the politics of the EU?

What kind of politics do you mean?

Like, how do the politics of the EU affect you?

Ah, ok. Well I don't agree with a lot of the politics of the EU. For example the ones of England, France and Spain. I don't agree with their objectives in developing countries. Like France in Sudan for example. But it's hard to say what the politics of the EU are. I don't think there is a policy for the whole union.

What issues do you think are the most important for the EU?

Resources like oil and water, which also has been a reason for intervention in other countries. The second thing is economy, the economical crisis etc.

What issues do you think should be the most prioritized issues?

Social politics, like the taking care of the immigrants. They complain a lot about the immigrants. Third thing is parties. They are obsolete, they don't respond to modern times.

Could Brazil develop into a global power in the future?

Yes! With Lula they've had a great development. A very important social development too. And considering how much resources they have...

Would Brazil be a better global actor?

If they continue the politics of Lula, than yes. Brazil would be a lot better, in particular for the Latin American countries.

Do you think that the EU represents values such as democracy?

They represent European democracy, a conservative type of democracy, yes. But every region has its own definition of the word.

Is the EU a defender of human rights?

They have ulterior motives with their interest in human rights. In Darfur for example, there were other interest behind it.

Do you think that the EU is a leader in climate change negotiations?

Oh yes, yes, yes. The climate change is a very particular issue. It's the rich countries that have caused an enormous, irreversible contamination of the environment, and they are the first to demand the developing countries to reduce their emission of carbon dioxide. It's like demanding them not to develop. It's impossible for them, it costs too much. The rich countries should give them the new green technique to make it possible.

So the EU is doing a bad job in climate change negotiations?

It's a bit hypocritical.

What do you think about the enlargement of the EU to the east?

I think it means an important access to the global market for countries that didn't manage to do it on their own in post-war times.

So you are in favour of the enlargement?

Yes, I think it's good of the EU to not be so restrictive.

Do you talk about the EU in your study programme?

Well, I'm only in my first year but yes, they do. Here political science is taught together with international relations, so yes.

What do they say about the EU in your study programme?

So far it's been mostly historical development, not so much debate.

Do you read newspapers?

Yes Página 12, web papers.

Where else do you get your picture of the EU from, are you engaged with any political party, do you discuss with your friends?

I'm not engaged with any political party, but I do discuss a lot with my friends. I think here everyone is brought up with politics, often you are born into an ideology. I come from a family with a strong right-wing tradition, but our generation, me and my brother, are the first who can really choose ourselves and make up our own minds, so we believe in a left-wing ideology.

10. Group of students, political science. Met with at faculty of law and social science, UCA, 4/6 2010.

Person 1: Oh, you're from Sweden? I love your country! I am a social democrat...Do you speak German?

No, are you from Germany?

Person 1: No, but I lived there for a while.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

Person 1: In the current times a very important actor as a global power. The USA continues to be the world leader, a hegemony. I think the EU influence the decisions of the USA a lot. I think the EU is a good example of regionalism. With the Greek crisis, the others can help them. If Greece hadn't been in the Union, no one would have helped them.

Person 2: If they hadn't been in the Union, they wouldn't have had a crisis.

Do you personally like the politics of the EU?

Person 1: Yes, they are very efficient. On the social aspect, it *is* a good system, for developed countries.

Person 2: For developed countries, yes. For the new eastern European countries of the EU, it's not good. I know a girl from Slovenia, she says it doesn't work in her country.

Person 1: And for Romania, it's really bad.

So you are not in favour of the enlargement of the EU to the east?

Person 1+2: No!

Which issues do you think are the most important for the EU?

Person 2: Right now? Greece.

Person 1: And in general economics, cultural integration and international security.

Which issues do you think should be the most important?

Person 1: Ecology, since it's a global issue. For me, the EU is a project towards a common *global* market.

What do you think the current role of the EU is in climate change negotiations?

Person 1: I'm not sure, but I think protecting the environment is really important in Germany. Recycling among other things. It could be a good representative for the environment.

The EU or Germany?

Person 1: The EU in general and Germany in particular.

Could Brazil develop into a global power in the future?

Person 1+2: Yes! It already is a global power. It now has a permanent seat in the security council of the UN which is very important.

Will Brazil be a better global power?

Person 1: It depends, if it continues the way it does now... It will be a regional leader. It will operate together with the United States and solve the drug problems in Latin America.

Person 2: And Chile will follow as a global power.

Is the EU a defender of human rights?

Person 2: They don't bother with human rights issues.

Person 1: No, I don't think so. Not like the UN.

Person 3: I think that the EU is a defender of human rights. The immigrants have a lot of rights for example.

The rest of the group: What????

Person 1: The immigration politics are horrible! How the Romani people are treated in Italy for example. Haha, and I'm Italian.

You are Italian?

Person 1: No I was born here but I have an Italian passport.

What do you think the biggest different is between the EU and other global powers such as China, the USA and Brazil?

Here we give a lot more attention to the USA, and internal issues there.

What about China?

Person 1: It won't be a military power. But economically I think it will become bigger than the USA, not tomorrow but in the future.

Does the EU represent values such as democracy?

Person 1+2: No!

Person 3: What? The European countries are the most democratic in the world!!

Person 1: No... how many member countries does the Union have? Are really all of them democracies?

Person 4: Yes, you idiot! Otherwise they wouldn't have been allowed to enter the union!

To person 3: Did you travel in Europe?

Person 3: Yes, in Sweden and Germany.

11. Woman 27 years old, master of international trade, Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero. Planned interview, 9/6.

What do you think about the EU?

It's got an indisputable importance. It's the home for 30% of world trade. Now that the European imports have gone down we are very affected here. The EU is broader in its ambition, it's got more norms than the USA. China has got a very big problem with its internal political system.

Do you like the politics of the EU?

No! Not the policy of meat imports. They tell countries like Argentina to change, when the EU employs absurdly restrictive politics themselves. Subsidies and such.

Asia is rising however, a lot more than America and Europe.

Which powers will cooperate in the future do you think?

It's a question of common culture. Cultural closeness facilitates foreign investments a lot. The religious conflict between the east and west is a problem. And Europe has got a problem with immigrants, they've only experienced mix with other cultures for less than the past 30 years. It's not like here, where we are used to mixing cultures. Well by "here" I don't mean Argentina, they are Europeans, not Latin Americans. And Europe has got a natality problem, here the population is so young in comparison. In Venezuela a normal family has five, six children. How many siblings do you have? The USA is in between.

So there is a problem, Europe needs immigration but the immigrants don't integrate. An educated doctor has to work as a taxi driver. Every country has got their own problems. I'm sorry to say this but Europeans are very racist. Do you know what happened to me when I was in France? The waiter came up to me and told me that the fork wasn't for combing my hair but for eating. There is so much prejudice! At the same time India and China have got huge populations.

The Latin American governments are very tired, tired from exploitation for such a long time. They are still exploited because they lack the necessary know-how. The EU and the USA use this, they use the fact our countries aren't as organized, that we lack the rule of law. Instead we accept a lot of investments, from companies with the know-how. We accept all foreign investments, but it could never be the other way around. Do you think a Mexican company could start up in England? No, of course not! It would be way too expensive, and they would be asked so many questions and be subjected to so much investigation. Here it is very cheap for foreign companies and nobody asks anything. Europe could help us by sharing knowledge, but they don't.

It is the same with immigration to Europe. For Europeans to come here it is very easy, but the other way around is very hard. They demand that we have a lot of money etc.

What do you think about the EU-Mercosur cooperation?

It's like Goliath and the Giant. Except in this case Goliath doesn't win. In one of the unions, the rules are clearly defined, it is organized. In the other, the countries don't have anything in common, they act individually, trying to gain as much for themselves as possible. Chile is a very organized country. They are the only ones that live up to the standard. I'm a lawyer from the beginning but it is very hard to do my job here. Every day there is a change in the law. Every day! They change it just like that, you never know what's next. It's not like in your country, where the law is the law.

It all goes back to Spanish colonization that went on for hundreds of years. The enslavement of the Latin American people. And they still talk about the encounter of America. But it wasn't an encounter because the Latin Americans were already there! So they renamed it to the "encounter between the races". But it wasn't an encounter because it was one race killing the other! The mentality here is destroyed. We could never be as integrated as the EU because of this.

So the cooperation with the EU doesn't bring Mercosur anything in return?

Well, it's as if Mercosur was trapped in a pitch black room and the EU were the only ones with the power to turn on the lights. Cooperation with the EU is the only option. The USA try to use us as well, but there is nothing in it for us cooperating with them.

Together we could have been strong, but we don't cooperate so we're not. Instead it is Venezuela dominating. Chávez insults everyone in the world. He can do whatever because of the oil the country has. Somebody should just tell him to shut up! Instead it should be president Lula leading our continent! Equally, it should be Germany leading the EU, not the countries that scream the highest.

Which issues do you think should be the most important for the EU?

Immigration. Or if they don't want immigration they should lessen the taxes. You pay so much taxes but you won't get any pension. And getting in control of all the big debts that the European countries have.

What do you think is the biggest difference between the EU and other global powers such as the USA, China and Brazil?

The internal structure. The new powers lack this. Between the EU and the USA the USA is more like the teenager screaming to get attention. It's dominant, it hasn't got that many values. They try to solve the problem with drugs in other countries than their own. The EU doesn't need act like that, it's more old and wise.

Does the EU represent democracy?

No there is too much inequality. Especially in France. And many EU countries are members of NATO. The invasion of Afghanistan etc. Nobody spoke about women's rights in Afghanistan before the invasion, nobody cared then. Internally, it might be democratic, but not towards other countries.

Do you think the EU is a leader in climate change negotiations?

No I don't think it is a leader. But it isn't quite as bad as the USA, they ask a lot from the poorer countries but they don't want to do anything themselves. It affects the whole world and it costs a lot so it's difficult.

What do you think about the enlargement of the EU?

Well the countries are in very different stages of development. Like Germany giving money for them to change, it is the wrong way to go. The less developed countries have to make so many sacrifices to keep up with the level. Many admire the EU for this, they say the EU has given countries which would have been powerless on their own a chance to influence. But if Greece would be excluded from the union now it would have so much debt in Euros that it would never be able to pay back. These countries have “W” economies, they go up and down. And this affects the entire union, which also affects us!

8.2 Shorter interviews

12. Man, engineering. Met with at hostel Garden House, Buenos Aires, 18/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU?

It's a cold negotiation, nothing more. Why do they give money to Greece and not to Spain? It doesn't make sense. It's just a negotiation. Every country just wants to gain as much as they can.

13. Man, 27 years, film student. Met with at hostel Garden House, Buenos Aires, 17/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU?

I don't really know much, except that it has a strong currency, the Euro.

What would you like the EU to do? How would you want it to act?

I'd like them to ease the immigration control.

14. Woman, 22 years, communication studies. Met with at the faculty of political science UBA, 20/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

I don't like the idea of a few states forming a union closed to other countries.

So you think that the EU is an excluding entity?

Exactly.

Then you don't like the Mercosur cooperation either?

No, I don't.

Is the EU a defender of human rights?

Out of prejudice I would say no, but to tell the truth I don't know.

15. Man, 22 years, political science. Met with at faculty of political science, UBA, 20/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

Well I think it is a very successful project.

Is it a model that others could copy, Mercosur for example?

Yes, I think there are some good things that Mercosur could copy.

Does the EU have about the same politics as the USA and China?

No, not as the USA. China I don't know.

16. Woman, 23 years, international relations. Met with at the faculty of law and social science, UCA, 26/5, 2010.

What do you think about the EU?

Well they must be very intelligent who help a lot of other countries.

In your opinion the EU helps other countries?

Yes, supporting the poorer countries of the union.

What do you think are the most important issues for the union?

Oh.. I'm so focused on my studies right now, I can't really think of any.

What do you think the major difference is between the EU and other global powers such as the USA and China?

It must be the capacity to integrate and collaborate.

17. Woman, law studies. Met with at faculty of law and social science, UCA, 7/6, 2010.

What do you think about the European Union as a global actor?

It's a good union. It's neutral.

Is it good being neutral?

Yes in this case it is.

Do you think that the European Union represents values such as democracy?

Yes.

Do you think that the European Union is a defender of human rights?

Yes, in some ways.

What do you think of the EU as a global actor in comparison to the USA and China?

I don't know.

18. Man, economics. Met with at faculty of law and social science, UCA, 7/6.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

It has got a great weight since it involves so many countries. But it seems to me the difference in efficiency between the countries is quite big. I don't know what's going to happen with the euro at the moment. The value of the euro has gone down a lot lately.

19. Woman, law studies. Met with at faculty of law and social science, UCA, 7/6.

What do you think about the EU as a global actor?

It's a good project, it's really good to cooperate so much. They can help other countries a lot, like Greece. If they hadn't been in the union they would've been on their own.