

The Brazilian Image in the German press before the political-economic turmoil

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the image of Brazil produced by the German press from 2000 to 2014, employing quantitative content analysis based on a sample of 742 news articles. The study comprises at first the two main leading quality newspapers – the Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) – and additionally the alternative tageszeitung (taz) from Berlin. Moreover, one included the most relevant German political magazine – Der Spiegel. Results demonstrated a different pattern of foreign reporting from the one discussed almost forty years before by the Foreign News Study. Brazil boasts – at least until 2014 – considerable attention to economic issues and a small focus on politics. Among other Latin American countries, Brazil exhibited the most balanced image (i.e. small negativity) and a considerable amount of cultural coverage. Future studies should analyse in the long run, the impact of the conservative political turn on the country's image.

Keywords: international news coverage, Brazilian image, news factor, NWICO, structural traits of foreign reporting.

Introduction

The foremost interest in analysing international foreign reporting lies in its impressive agenda-setting effect not only on the general audience but also on domestic and foreign policy. The media have a considerable influence on people's perceived image of countries, considering that the public usually does not have the primary experience, i.e. the first socialisation instance in the several reporting areas of the globe (HAFEZ, 2002a; WU, 1998). Thus, the majority of people do not have the opportunity to compare, judge or criticise the image of foreign nations produced by the press with their knowledge and experiences (HAFEZ; GRÜNE, 2015).

In the case of Latin America in general, the continent is one of the blind spots of foreign reporting in Germany (WIENAND, 2008), even though Brazil received the most press attention within the region (CAZZAMATTA, 2018). At the same time, the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 in New York and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq significantly modified the global geopolitical order and the entire constellation of

news production (TIELE, 2010). As a result, German correspondents have observed during interviews with the author that the competition for space in the German and European media has increased, making even more challenging to report about events in the region. Several previous and more updated studies on global news flow have already pinpointed the low level of attention paid to the continent in the global news structures (SCHRAMM, 1959, SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985, TIELE, 2010). Hence, one classifies Latin America as a “white spot” of the media map.

This lack of attention is problematic because public opinion is one of the most relevant variables for the development of foreign policy in democratic societies (WU, 1998). Scholars have already demonstrated that global news is capable of shaping foreign policy and international relations (COHEN, 1993). Apart from that, the research concerning the image construction of Latin America, or Brazil, in Germany is insufficient and outdated. The last significant analysis in this context dates almost thirty years back (ROEMELING-KRUTHAUP, 1987, 1991, WILKE; SCHENK, 1987, WÖHLCKE, 1973), although not only Brazil but also the entire continent has undergone significant economic, political and social changes since the 1980s. The studies of international communication in Germany concentrate mostly on a few Asian countries and the Islamic world, while Latin America plays a very marginal role (GÖBEL; BIRLE; SPECHT, 2009).

This paper aims to close this research gap and to re-examine, i.e., update the Brazilian image in the German press in the first 15 years of the 21st century, which mostly coincides with the presidential rule of the workers’ party (PT in Portuguese). During this period, the country has experienced extraordinary changes, that mostly impacted its image. In order to re-evaluate the representation of Brazil in the German press, we analysed 742 news items published from January 2000 to December 2014 in four marketing-leading German publications, namely the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ), the *tageszeitung* (taz) and *Der Spiegel*. The primary purpose is to observe if the country’s depiction still follows the traditional patterns of foreign-reporting identified by the Foreign News Study (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985), i.e., the high amount of negativity, strong focus on politics and elite-centrism.

A shift in the country’s image seems plausible since the Brazilian and Latin American relations to the world differed considerably from their original patterns from the 1960s to the 1990s and even from the turn to the 21st century (LOWENTHAL; BARON, 2015). The beginning of the millennium was also marked by a diversification of the Brazilian foreign policy, which fostered significant international relations, both with other Latin American countries and with Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East (FONTAINE, 2012, LOWENTHAL; BARON, 2015). In the course of the commodity boom since the 2000s, Brazil and South America gained a visible self-confidence (ZILLA, 2016). While Argentina and Mexico showed a less international influence, Brazil and Venezuela moved into the spotlight of the global scene as leading regional powers, as a result of their foreign policy commitment (ZILLA, 2016). Besides, Brazil played an increasingly important role in the

international stage and was one of the most influential (LOWENTHAL; BARON, 2015) BRICS countries. Economically speaking, the majority of German direct investments focus on Brazil with 37% and Mexico, with 28% (HAUSER; KONNER, 2009). Despite the economic upswing in Asia in recent years, Brazil remained the most significant German industrial plant outside Germany (HAUSER; KONNER, 2009).

In the face of this political order and the new conditions of global foreign correspondence, we aim at investigating which structures or characteristics determined the Brazilian foreign reporting in the first 15 years of the 21st century. In what way was Brazil portrayed in the German press during the role of the workers' party? Do we still associate the country with political conflicts, military coups, guerrilla movements, election manipulation and debt crises as during the cold war (WILKE; SCHENK, 1987)? Future researches should compare statistically the here presented results (from 2000 to 2014) with the next following years to check if the political turmoil, and the extremist right-wing conservative turning point, which was initiated with the impeachment of the president Dilma Rousseff, will have a considerable impact on the country's image in the long run (SAUCEDO AÑEZ; CAZZAMATTA, 2020). At present, under the administration of Jair Bolsonaro, the "Brazilian-German relationship have not been more distant since the Brazilian military dictatorship" (CASARÕES; FLEMES, 2019).

Structural characteristics of international news coverage

Almost 40 years ago, disapproval from the back then classified Third World concerning the unequal global flow of information resulted in the endorsement of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). With the support of UNESCO, a discussion emerged debating two primary considerations: a) the international pattern of news collection and dissemination, which express a particular global arrangement of political and financial power and b) the elucidation of news and its values (MACBRIDE, 1980). Several developing countries amidst UNESCO denounced the preponderance of Western global news wires and the image of the developing states they manufactured in the Western media. The perception of news as something unusual and deviant culminate in the exaggerated depiction of adverse events (HAFEZ, 2007).

This debate triggered one of the most extensive news studies so far, arranged by the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), identified as the Foreign News Study (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985), in which the research group investigated the principal structural characteristics of global news coverage from 29 countries around the world¹. These dominant features were: regionalism, negativity,

¹ The research design of the Foreign News Study included three or four daily newspapers for each of the 29 analysed countries. When possible, the papers with the largest circulation were prioritised. The period of analysis comprised two weeks, a chronological (from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 April 1979) and a composite one (constructed from April to June 1979). Through quantitative content analysis, the research groups categorised the news items according to its location, origins, sources, authorship, position and nationality of actor, topics, contexts and themes. The IAMCR prepared the coding instructions at Leicester University, and the codebook is

the predominance of political reporting, strong emphasis on elites and decontextualization (HAFEZ, 2002a, SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985). About the amount and direction of the news geography, the investigation confirmed that the USA and Western Europe draw the most press attention in all analysed global media systems, while Asia, Africa and Latin America stayed almost invisible. Up-to-dated news flow analyses also describe Africa and South America as “consistent areas of invisibility” (TIELE, 2010, p. 261). Nevertheless, after 9/11, “socialism has been replaced in the media by the threat of ‘Islamic terrorism’” (THUSSU, 2006, p. 144), attracting the press attention to this international issue. In conclusion, the global news circulation still manifests a particular pattern – first, the constant newsmaker (the USA and Western Europe), succeeded by the neighbouring nations of each press system and the crisis regions (for instance, the Arabic World) and lastly the ignored states.

As stated by Hafez and Grüne (2015), the quintessence of the NWICO-debate is still pertinent up to the present time, considering that crisis and conflicts still determine the global news coverage substantially. This negative perspective is undeniably connected to the structure of foreign reporting, which is heavily based on political systems and conflicts (HAFEZ; GRÜNE, 2015). Hence, the researchers appeal to a progressive modification in the patterns of press coverage, which also should consider the daily life of citizens around the globe (*Lebenswelt*) and concentrate on the daily culture of people to balance the negativity in the news.

News values research: a useful instrument to describe media reality

Milestone researches of global news are based on indicators that are either context (traits of countries) or event-oriented (attributes of occurrences). One of the crucial papers that prompted the newsworthiness’ research tradition was the list of 12² factors of Galtung and Ruge (1965), the most quoted paper and a departure point for several other empirical investigations since its publication. Regardless of its relevance, the work faced a few criticisms related to its problems of operationalisation, since diverse factors were understood – as stated by the authors (GALTUNG; RUGE, 1965) – as psychological perceptiveness (CHANG; LEE, 2010). A further benchmark in the discipline was the work from Schulz (1976), which firstly operationalised the discussed news factors empirically and quantified their specific effect on the editorial choices in the German media. Schulz (1976) enlarged and adjusted the categorisation of Galtung and Ruge (1965) and distinguished, for example, between geographical, political and cultural proximity. The review of the determinant of global news coverage in the US context by Chang *et al.* (1987) was equally a landmark.

available in appendix 3 of the reporting (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985). In summary, the study aimed at investigating the overall structure of international news reporting and its main focus of attention.

2 Frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite-nation, to elite people, personification and negative (the last four are culture-bounded).

Under seven analysed factors, the scholars detected three as the most crucial – normative deviance (how the happening would have infringed the law if occurred in the US), relevance for the US and potential for social change. Since the core of this particular work refers to the US-media system and its variables are “highly subjective” (GOLAN, 2010, p. 127), this analysis concentrates mostly on the categories-set submitted by the German researchers Schulz (1976) and Staab (1990a, 1990b). The last, additionally, incorporated the variable “economic proximity” in his investigation.

Furthermore, Staab proposed the consideration of a “functional model” of news gathering (alternatively to the “causal model”), i.e. journalist do not select an occurrence solely because of its characteristics. They can – following the author’s arguments – equally ascribe and emphasise news factors to a particular story in order to get it published. That is, journalists instrumentalize news factors (STAAB, 1990b). However, the assumption of the functional model does not refute or contradict the causal one. Only because news factors are a valid and recognised assessment of journalistic choices, they can be utilised to promote and support the coverage of particular topics. Thus, the author does not understand the news factors as a theory to elucidate news selection, but a convenient instrument to describe the medial constructions. Based on these theoretical premises, the focus of this paper lays on the nature and type of Brazilian foreign reporting in the German press. One did not understand the factors above as ultimate predictors of coverage but used them to report and analyse the structure and patterns of reporting. Bearing in mind that the Brazilian image may have been modified substantially since the NWICO debates, we asked the following research questions:

RQ1: How the German press depicts several Brazilian events? Is it possible to recognise any reporting-patterns?

RQ2: Are the main structural characteristic of the foreign reporting pointed by the Foreign News Study – negativity, the dominance of politics and focus on elites – still a valid assumption for Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century?

Methods

Unit of Analysis

In order to answer these questions, the empirical study incorporates the two national leading German dailies, which boast the most significant correspondent network in the region, namely the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (liberal and politically broad) and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (economically liberal and politically conservative). Moreover, we included the most prominent and relevant political magazine in the country – *Der Spiegel*. In addition to these three periodicals, one includes, lastly, the alternative *tageszeitung*³ (taz)

3 Since the mid-1970s, the alternative newspapers have been filling the information gap left by the traditional press. The term refers to forms of media-based public communication evolving from the criticism against the established mass media, contributing to the emergence of a counter-public sphere – “*Gegenöffentlichkeit*” (BENTELE; BROSIUS; JARREN, 2013; PÜRER; RAABE, 2007;

because of its potential of agenda-setting. An empirical analysis conducted by Mathes and Pfetsch (1991) demonstrated a spill-over force mostly initiated by *taz*, i.e., a counter-issues spreading from the alternative to the traditional press.

Relevant for the selection of these periodicals was their substantial influence on the active public sphere, i.e. state's representatives, politicians, decisionmakers and other relevant social organised groups (JARREN; DONGES, 2011). Furthermore, they are "nationwide" publications, whose journalistic product is distributed in entire Germany. We excluded regional newspapers since they focus mostly on local events rather than global reporting (PÜRER; RAABE, 2007). Finally, several analyses proved that the national, quality press also possesses an essential role in the intra-media agenda setting, i.e., it dictates the news choice of the regional outlets (JANDURA; BROSIUS, 2011). To sum up, the analysed corpus considered three relevant factors – readership size, influence as intra-media agenda-setter and political range.

Sampling

At first, we listed every article about Brazil published between January 2000 and December 2014, completing fifteen years of evaluation. Every story was categorised according to the periodicals, the number of words and date of publication (3,731 contributions). One did not include news items from *SZ.de*, *FAZ.NET*, *taz.de* and *Der Spiegel Online*. A study of newspapers and their online forms among 18 European countries showed that 70% of the online news articles originate from their printed versions (WURFF, 2008).

The search specifications were composed of the term "Brazil" and the names of its big cities. The word could appear not only in the headlines but also in the first paragraphs. We also considered the adjectives relate to "Brazil" and its German declination to fine-tune the search categories. *SZ* and *FAZ* possess their online archive, whereas the articles from *taz* and *Der Spiegel* derive from the LexisNexis databank. Moreover, we ignored small articles (less than 150 words), since they have almost no news factors. In the next step, based on the rotation principle, we choose every n-4th news stories related to Brazil within each publication. The requirements for a layered sample was achieved because we were aware of the distribution of the population from the previous list. The final sample was composed of 742 contributions (already excluding that ones with weak focus, i.e., when Brazil appeared just illustratively). Lastly, one conducted a Holsti coefficient reliability test, based on a sampling of 5%, and the results pointed out a 94.3% overlap between the two coders.

SCHRAG, 2007). However, since the 1980s, these titles have been assimilated by the professionalization and commercialization of the media industry. For instance, *taz* has shifted closer to the centre (Blöbaum, 2006). Notwithstanding, it keeps challenging public discourse due to its critical stance (ibid.).

The analysed categories

In order to review the reporting patterns of the Brazilian news coverage in Germany, every article was analysed according to eleven thematic areas, central and subtopics, portrayed actors⁴ and reporting valence (positive, negative or neutral⁵). Furthermore, we investigated the manifestation of news factors not only concerning their frequency but also their intensity from null to three (not recognised at all; light, medium or strong appearance), oriented on definitions presented and tested by previous empirical studies (HARCUP; O'NEILL, 2017, SCHULZ, 1976, STAAB, 1990a). Generally, we coded the following news factors:

- Magnitude: quantity of affected people (no person impacted, the effect on individual, subgroups or the entire country).
- Personification: how a person is the focus of an article (no allusion to people; named but without importance for the main event; the occurrence concerned a person's action or attitude; people are central to the event).
- Eliteness: the portrayal of elites, counter-elites and non-organised social groups (ordinary population).
- Prominence: Degree of actors' prominence (regional, national or international awareness).
- Crisis and Conflict: Crises' categorisation as identified by the Heidelberg Conflict Research: non-violent crises, violent crises and limited wars (HIIK, 2013).
- Negativity: Tone of occurrences. It was analysed independently from the previous category because crises can also be presented in a positive angle (e.g., peace agreement).
- Damage and Success: extent of harm or favourable issues.

Results

In comparison to the other Latin American countries, Brazil comprises the most robust “power status” and “economic proximity” to Germany (CAZZAMATTA, 2018). Besides, it boasts a substantial concentration of international news agencies and correspondents' network. Related to the topic's distribution, Brazil has a divergent pattern of foreign news coverage from the one identified by the Foreign News Study (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985). First, it exhibits a small amount of political reporting, as shown in Figure

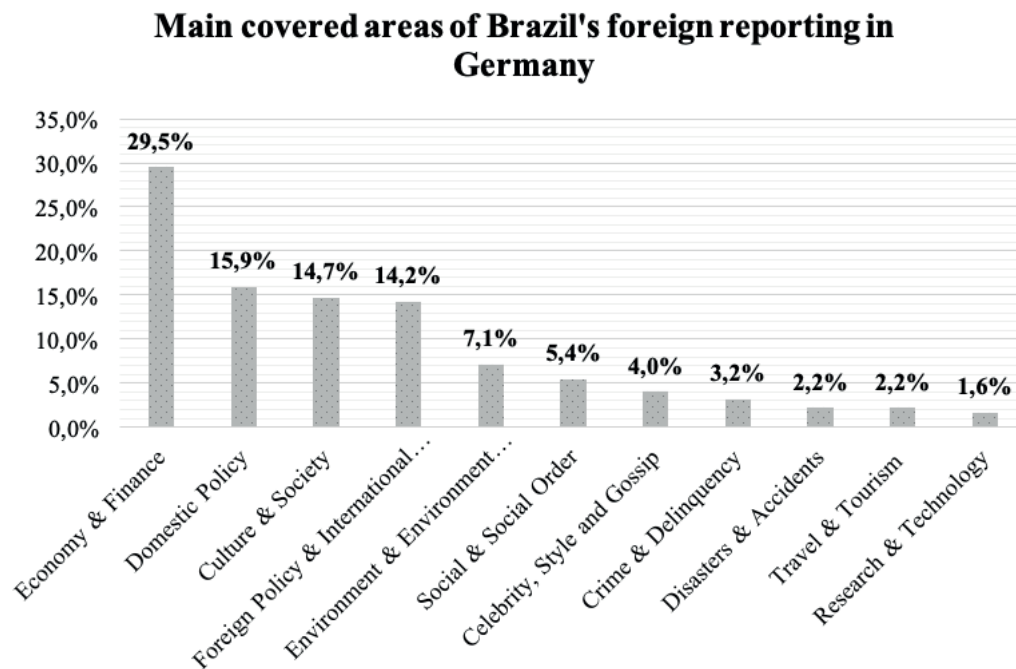
4 Official states representatives, organised social groups, non-organised social groups, and personalities from Latin America, Europe, the USA or other nations.

5 **A) Positive:** success, economic aid, positive developments, cooperation, inventions, discoveries, attempts at reconciliation, peace negotiations, settling disputes, unification, justice, bilateral agreements, peace efforts, peace process, state improvement, dialogue between opponents, survival, release of hostages, stock market upturn, rating agencies' grading improvements, agreements, cultural exchanges or travel recommendations. **B) Negative:** violence, failures, crime, disaster, war, electoral fraud, political unrest, interruption of peace negotiations, repression, aggression, destruction, damage, protests, demonstrations, conflicts, electoral fraud, economic crisis, trade conflicts. **C) Neutral:** general social processes such as state visits, conferences, stock market events, memories of historical events, jubilees (without protests or arguments), and fair elections.

1. Thus, the assumption of a strong focus on political issues (more than 50%) is not a valid premise for Brazil any more (at least not until 2014). On the contrary, the most considered area of coverage was “Economy & Finance” with 29.5% of entire Brazil’s foreign reporting. The attention to “Culture & Society” was also outstanding if compared to the coverage of other regions of the globe in the German media, for instance, the Arabic World, Africa or Japan (HAFEZ, 2002a, MÜKKE, 2009, NAFROTH, 2002).

Until 2014, the Brazilian coverage was untypically not concentrated on its political system’s problems and distribution of powers as in the case of Venezuela, Honduras, Colombia, Bolivia or Ecuador (CAZZAMATTA, 2020a). The minimal interest in political affairs was counterbalanced by the attention of economic and cultural topics. However, regardless of the primary prominence dedicated to financial affairs, one can debate if the German press is indeed interested in the Brazilian economics’ developments in itself. Within the area “Economy and Finance” the two most reported main topics were “currency, shares and stock exchange” and “Latin America as a growing investment market and production location”, i.e. issues that are potentially relevant for German corporations, investors and industry. Thus, Hafez arguments that the press is less interested in internal economic processes per se since the reporting focuses mostly on global relevant subjects, i.e., regional or local economic developments that might be significant for Germany and other Western nations (HAFEZ, 2002b).

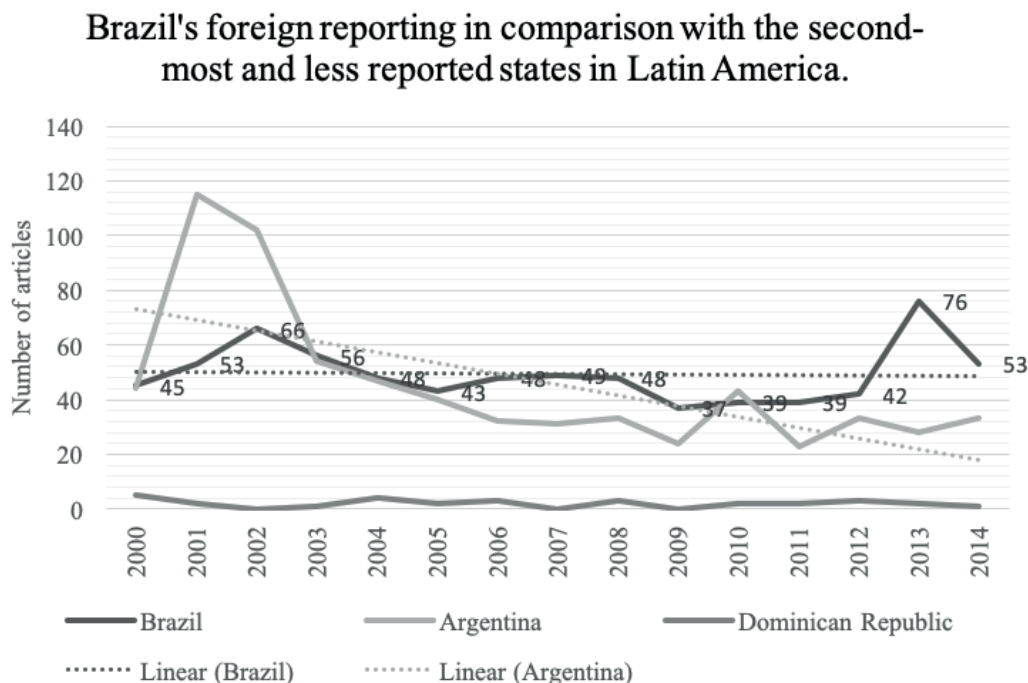
Figure 1 – Areas of Brazil’s news coverage in the German press from 2000-2014



Source: Own authorship (CAZZAMATTA, 2020).

Since “Domestic Politics” does not prevail, Brazil showed a relatively small amount of “official state representatives” as described actors, just 31.4%. Besides, it exhibits a relatively smaller intensity of the factor “personification” and “prominence” (Table 2). Additionally, because “Politics” does not dominate, the country reveals a comparatively more balanced image and its coverage is generally constant, i.e. without significant gaps. Although one notes a few fluctuations due to important events, the oscillations are not as intense as by other states, and consequently, the reporting remains roughly constant, as shown in Figure 2. In comparison to other Latin American countries, Brazil receives the most attention (CAZZAMATTA, 2018) with an average of 49,5 articles per year. The average of published articles varies strongly among the Latin American nations as we have demonstrated somewhere else (CAZZAMATTA, 2020a). To give a dimension of this contrast, Argentina is the second most reported state (45,4 articles per year). In comparison, the Dominican Republic stays in the last position, with an average of solely two items per year.

Figure 2 – Brazil’s foreign reporting in the German press from 2000 until 2014 (all covered areas)



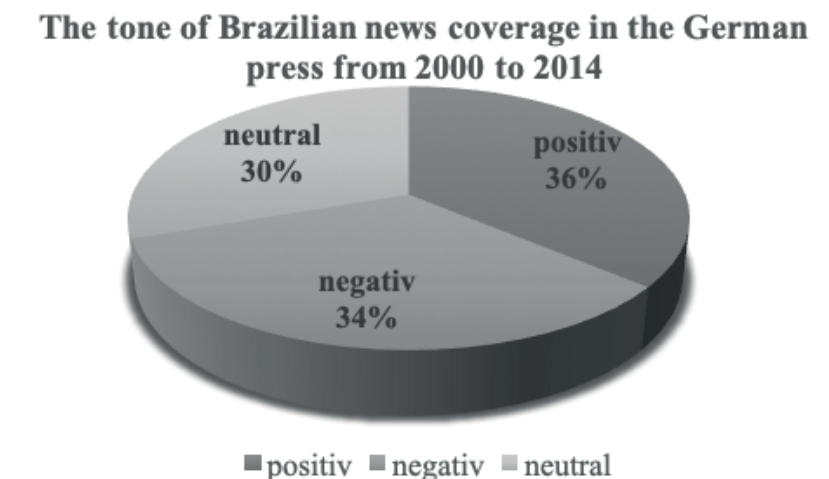
Source: Own authorship.

One observed two primary attention’s peaks, especially in the years of 2002 and 2013. At the beginning of the decade, the climax was due to the election of the ex-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and its impact on the financial markets. In 2013 the high point

was related to the demonstrations that exploded previously to the World Cup. In the same year, Brazil was also the host country of the Frankfurt Book Fair, which prompted several articles in the area of “Culture and Society”. Even in these two years of peak-coverage, the percentage of articles related to “Domestic Politics” was respectively only 9,9% and 12,1%. It was unusual that the Domestic Politics surpasses 10% of the total foreign reporting, as Figure 4 demonstrated.

Analysing the coverage’s tone, Brazil displayed the most balanced image in Latin America (CAZZAMATTA, 2020b), at least until 2014 (36.1% positive, 33.6% negative and 30.3% neutral events), as Figure 3 illustrated. Hence, the assumption of a “conflict perspective”, that is usual in the global news literature and was problematised by the Foreign News Study (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985), cannot be confirmed in the Brazilian case. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the studied phase coincides to the Brazilian economic boom. A lack of positive news can be even more problematic than the overrepresentation of negative occurrences, according to Hafez (2002a). However, this discussed underrepresentation of positive events was also not the case of the Brazilian coverage at all, since it boasted 36% of positive contributions. Indeed, the “negativity” is sectorial and depends on the covered area. For instance, without the soft news reporting the “negativity” increases to 41,6% (Table 1). Analysing the areas separately, “Disaster & Accidents” (100% of its articles), “Crime & Delinquency” (87,5%), “Social Order” (60%), “Environment” (67,9%) and “Domestic Politics” (433,2%) displayed the most considerable amount of “negativity”.

Figure 3 – The tone of Brazil’s foreign reporting

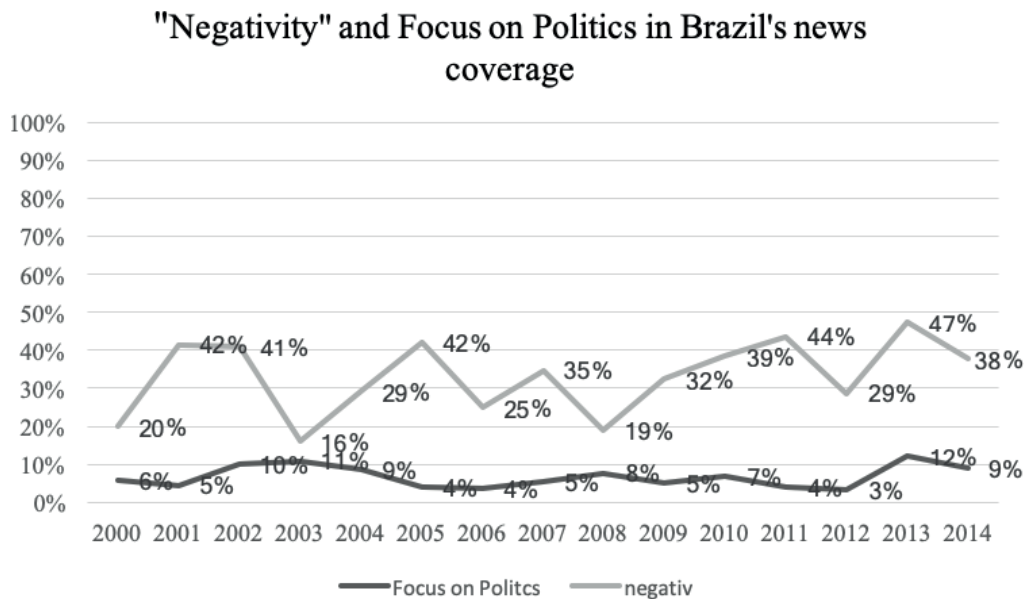


Source: Own authorship (CAZZAMATTA, 2020b).

While the amount of political coverage remains more or less stable during the years (varying from 4% to 12%), the fluctuation of “negativity” seemed to be more robust (from

16% to 47% considering all covered areas), as illustrated by Figure 4. However, even in 2013 the amount of “negativity” did not transcend the limit of 50%, as stated before. Other areas such as “Culture and Society” compensated for the negative coverage, balancing its image.

Figure 4 – Development over the years of the factor “negativity” and the dominance of politics



Source: Own authorship.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of “Politics” (Domestic Politics and Foreign Affairs altogether) and the amount of adverse reporting among all covered areas. The political articles seldom exceed 10% of the total coverage (except in 2013), and negativity never surpasses 50%. Despite that, one can observe a few peaks of “negativity”. In 2005 two events played a fundamental role, namely the outbreak of the political scandal “big monthly” (Mensalão, i.e., the diverter of public funds to buy support in parliament) and the murder of the American nun Dorothy Stang, who became a symbol of the conflict on natural resources in the county. Two years later in 2007, the discussion regarded the San Francisco river diversion took place.

Further environmental issues contributed to the extent of negativity in 2011: the German involvement in the atom energy project Angra 3 and its ecological side effects; floods and mudslides in Rio de Janeiro; the discussion regarded the Belo Monte dam and its damage to the environment and the local population and, finally, the proposal to relax the forest code. The last negativity climax was reached in 2013 with the outbreak of the mass protests. The majority of this political or environmental (negative) coverage offers a bunch of news factors such as damage, crisis, conflicts and magnitude. The most intense one is “magnitude” as shown in Table 2, considering the high amount of impacted people in these described events.

Table 1 – Summarised main characteristics of Brazil’s foreign reporting from 2000 to 2014

Structural traits of foreign reporting in percentage	
Average number of stories per year	49.5 %
Focus on Politics (Domestic Politics + Foreign Affairs)	30.1 %
Focus on Crises	42.9 %
Negativity	33.6 %
Negativity without the soft-news coverage	41.6 %
Eliteness	85.6 %

Source: Own authorship (CAZZAMATTA, 2020).

Table 2 – Major news factors of Brazil’s international coverage from 2000 to 2014

Intensity of the news factor (Average 0–3)	
Magnitude	2.2
Personification	1.4
Prominence	1.5
Damage	0.5
Success	0.4
Crises & Conflict	0.5

Source: Own authorship (CAZZAMATTA, 2020).

Compared to other states such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Honduras or Ecuador, Brazil shows a small intensity on personification (CAZZAMATTA, 2020). That is much related to the actors presented in foreign reporting. Since Brazil has a high amount of economic and environmental issues, “social organised groups” (34, 5%) such as NGOs, Banks, financial institutes and corporations play a decisive role in its news. Comparatively, the number of states representatives (31.4%) is not inflated as in those countries with intensive political coverage (CAZZAMATTA, 2020). Despite that, we can still confirm a tendency of elites’ orientation, since no organised social-groups, i.e. ordinary citizens, appear just in 14.4% of the articles. Moreover, the intensity of crisis, conflicts or damage is also not so substantial in the Brazilian case (Table 2), considering that the country boasts a more or less balanced image.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the era of globalisation, comprehension and knowledge about global events have become of the utmost importance (WANTA; GOLAN; LEE, 2004) and media are “important arbiters of reality” (WANTA; GOLAN; LEE, 2004, S.7) not only for the regular recipients but also among politicians. Analyses have indicated that the more attention a state receives in

the global media, much probably the audience will regard it as relevant (WANTA; GOLAN; LEE, 2004). Further investigations have demonstrated a positive interdependence between the amount of global coverage and international assistance, certifying that foreign reporting influences significantly international relations (LIM; BARNETT, 2010).

The Brazilian foreign reporting in Germany differs considerably from the identified pattern of international news coverage of the developing nations, formerly debated by the Foreign News Study (SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI; GRANT, 1985). Its portrayal is pronounced by a keen attention to economic issues and a smaller number of political events. Furthermore, it boasts a relatively sizable focus on cultural events and hence a well-balanced topic distribution. Therefore, its image is comparatively more balanced (positive-neutral), since the press also takes into account a more elaborated positive quotidian-life environment of its citizens (HAFEZ; GRÜNE, 2015). Moreover, considering the small focus on politics, Brazil exhibits little intensity of personification and prominence. To summarise and answer the central research question, the main structural traits of foreign news are not a complete, valid assumption for Brazil any more, not at least until 2014.

Considering the political turmoil initiated in 2016 with the Impeachment of the former president Dilma Rousseff, one can assume that the Brazilian portrayal suffered a setback in its image. Not only has the country been facing the upsurge of right-wing extremism but also the escalation of political misinformation and an intense proliferation of Fake News (FLEMES, 2018, SAUCEDO AÑEZ; CAZZAMATTA, 2020). Additionally, the current administration has been ignoring the traditional principles of Brazilian diplomacy such as democratic multilateralism, and at the same time disregarding critical environmental issues (CASARÕES; FLEMES, 2019), prompting consequently negative headlines worldwide. On top of that, the imprudent (no) response to the global current healthy crisis of the COVID-19 (BLOFIELD; HOFFMANN; LLANOS, 2020) impacts the country's foreign reporting. "Where populist presidents from the right (Brazil) or left (Mexico) deny the seriousness of the pandemic, politicians at sub-national or local level try to fill the leadership vacuum" (BLOFIELD; HOFFMANN; LLANOS, 2020).

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate whether the increasing negative political coverage occurs at the expense of the cultural issues or if the country would still be able to keep a balanced range of topics that goes beyond its conservative political turn. Apart from that, it is an open question whether this pattern of Brazilian foreign reporting is reproduced among other European media systems, considering that international news agencies play a vital role in setting the agenda of global news around the world and not every quality paper can keep correspondents in the country. All these inquiries need further empirical analyses.

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