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**EUROPEAN UNION AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE:  
strategic narratives and the defense of the Amazon rainforest**

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strategic narratives and the defense of the Amazon rainforest**

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Direito da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Direito.

Orientadora: Profa. Carla Ribeiro Volpini Silva

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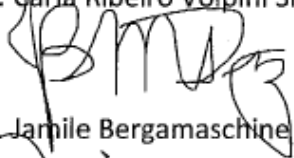
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## **ABSTRACT**

This master's dissertation critically examines the European Union's (EU) approach to Global Environmental Governance with a specific focus on safeguarding the Amazon rainforest, emphasizing the scrutiny of its strategic narrative. The research navigates through the intricate landscape of the EU's climate change commitments juxtaposed against the escalating deforestation rates in the Amazon region. This exploration delves into the intersection of these elements within the complex realms of international political dynamics and public international law.

The EU, recognizing its "unique position" in combating climate change, underscores the pivotal role of forests in this endeavor. This commitment materializes in various formats, featuring binding environmental protection provisions aligning with international agreements such as the Paris Agreement. However, within the EU, political resistance surfaces, with expressions of apprehensions about environmental costs and Brazil's adherence to climate change commitments amid rising deforestation in the Legal Amazon region.

The Amazon rainforest, a dynamic global governance arena, grapples with external pressures and diverse narratives, reflecting political, economic, environmental, and social imperatives. Its irreversible degradation holds global consequences, positioning it as a focal point in the Global Environmental Governance agenda. The dissertation aims to unravel the EU's strategic narrative amid Brazil's sovereignty over the Amazon Forest, shedding light on power dynamics and conflicts surrounding this critical region.

Introducing three hypotheses, the research explores how the EU's strategic narrative aligns with Global Environmental Governance principles and shapes discourses on the Amazon rainforest's significance. This research employs a qualitative methodology to analyze the strategic narratives of the European Union (EU) regarding the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. The study draws on official documents from key EU institutions, such as the European Parliament, European Council, and European Commission, to unravel the nuanced narratives shaping the EU's stance on the protection of the Amazon rainforest.

Structured across four theoretical chapters, the dissertation traces the evolution of the EU as a global actor, emphasizing its contributions to sustainable environmental development. The exploration of the Amazon's dynamics, from Brazil's military dictatorship to the present, unravels the geopolitical significance and complex network of actors involved. Examining the historical evolution of the EU-Brazil relationship, with a specific focus on the Amazon's role,

provides context for understanding forest preservation within this partnership. The final chapter introduces and analyzes European strategic narratives, scrutinizing the EU's stance on Amazon protection through various EU institutions.

The analysis of the EU's strategic narrative draws from diverse sources, including documents from the European Parliament based on Plenary debates, speeches by EU High Representatives, and European Council documents.

This research contributes into comprehending the EU's role in addressing climate change and deforestation, offering a nuanced understanding of power dynamics and conflicting narratives surrounding the Amazon rainforest within the framework of Global Environmental Governance.

**KEYWORDS:** European Union; External Relations; Global Environmental Governance; Strategic Narratives; Amazon rainforest; Brazil.



## RESUMO

Esta dissertação de mestrado examina criticamente a abordagem da União Europeia (UE) à Governança Ambiental Global com foco na proteção da Floresta Amazônica, destacando a análise de sua narrativa estratégica. A pesquisa navega pela paisagem intrincada dos compromissos da UE com as mudanças climáticas em contraste com as crescentes taxas de desmatamento na região amazônica. Essa exploração adentra a interseção desses elementos nos complexos domínios da dinâmica política internacional e do direito público.

A UE, reconhecendo sua "posição única" no combate às mudanças climáticas, destaca o papel crucial das florestas nesse esforço. Esse compromisso se materializa em acordos de livre comércio, apresentando disposições vinculantes de proteção ambiental alinhadas a acordos internacionais como o Acordo de Paris. No entanto, dentro da UE, surgem resistências políticas, especialmente em resposta ao Acordo de Associação UE-Mercosul de 2020, expressando preocupações sobre os custos ambientais e o cumprimento das obrigações climáticas pelo Brasil diante do aumento do desmatamento na região Amazônica Legal.

A Floresta Amazônica, uma dinâmica arena de governança global, enfrenta pressões externas e narrativas diversas, refletindo imperativos políticos, econômicos, ambientais e sociais. Sua degradação irreversível possui consequências globais, posicionando-a como ponto focal na agenda de Governança Ambiental Global. A dissertação visa desvendar a narrativa estratégica da UE diante da soberania do Brasil sobre a Floresta Amazônica, lançando luz sobre as dinâmicas de poder e conflitos em torno desta região crucial.

Introduzindo três hipóteses, a pesquisa explora como a narrativa estratégica da União Europeia (UE) se alinha com os princípios da Governança Ambiental Global e molda os discursos sobre a importância da floresta amazônica. Esta pesquisa emprega uma metodologia qualitativa para analisar as narrativas estratégicas da União Europeia (UE) em relação ao desmatamento da floresta amazônica. O estudo utiliza documentos oficiais de importantes instituições da UE, como o Parlamento Europeu, o Conselho Europeu e a Comissão Europeia, para desvendar as narrativas sutis que moldam a posição da UE na proteção da floresta amazônica.

Estruturada em quatro capítulos teóricos, a dissertação traça a evolução da UE como ator global, enfatizando suas contribuições para o desenvolvimento ambiental sustentável. A exploração da dinâmica da Amazônia, desde a ditadura militar até o presente, desvela a significância geopolítica e a complexa rede de atores envolvidos. Examinando a evolução histórica da relação UE-Brasil, com foco específico no papel da Amazônia, fornece contexto para compreender a

preservação florestal dentro dessa parceria. O capítulo final introduz e analisa as narrativas estratégicas europeias, escrutinando a posição da UE sobre a proteção da Amazônia por meio de diversas instituições da UE.

A análise da narrativa estratégica da UE baseia-se em diversas fontes, incluindo documentos do Parlamento Europeu baseados em debates plenários, discursos de Altos Representantes da UE e documentos do Conselho Europeu.

Esta pesquisa contribui para a compreensão do papel da UE no enfrentamento das mudanças climáticas e do desmatamento, oferecendo uma compreensão refinada das dinâmicas de poder e das narrativas conflitantes em torno da Floresta Amazônica no contexto da Governança Ambiental Global.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** União Europeia; Relações Externas; Governança Ambiental Global; Narrativas Estratégicas; Floresta Amazônica; Brasil.

## **ILLUSTRATION LIST**

**Illustration 1** - 2019 Legal Amazon map by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE

**Illustration 2** – Brazilian Amazon – Territorial Coverage

**Illustration 3** - Northern region population over the years

**Illustration 4** – Deforestation Legal Amazon in Km<sup>2</sup>

**Illustration 5** – Annual Deforestation in the Amazon (in Km<sup>2</sup>).

## **TABLE LIST**

**Table 1** - Number of Seats by Green Alliances in the European Parliament.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. EUROPE IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD.....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. European Union history: formation and evolution .....	17
2.2. European Union External Action.....	29
1.2.1. European Union External Action in environmental matters .....	31
<b>3. AMAZON RAINFOREST AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS .....</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1. History of Brazilian political management of the Amazon rainforest.....	46
3.1.1. Military Dictatorship period.....	47
3.1.2. New Republic period.....	55
3.2. Geopolitics of Amazon rainforest.....	71
<b>4. EUROPEAN UNION-BRAZIL RELATIONS.....</b>	<b>78</b>
4.1. History and Evolution of EU-Brazil Relations .....	80
4.2 EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement .....	88
4.3 Environment in EU-Brazil relations .....	93
<b>5. NARRATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL GEOPOLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW.....</b>	<b>98</b>
5.1. The use of Narratives by the EU.....	104
5.2. Strategic Narratives of the EU .....	106
5.2.1 Formation: the EU global narrative of environmental protector .....	109
5.3. Projection of EU environmental strategic narrative.....	117
<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>140</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Master Dissertation intends to examine the European Union (EU) behaviour on Global Environmental Governance towards the protection of the Amazon rainforest through the analyses of its strategic narrative. This matter of study shows some complexities, as both subjects in hand present its own complexities and nuances in the international political realm and international public law.

The EU has committed itself to assume a “unique position” to respond to the impacts of climate change on international security, given its “leading role in development, global climate policy and the wide array of tools and instruments as its disposal” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2008, p. 2). As emissions from land-use and land-use change, mostly caused by deforestation, are the second biggest cause of climate change after burning fossil fuels, the EU already positioned itself about the importance of protecting the world’s forests to fight climate change in 2019, when the European Commission adopted a Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests. The EU set an objective to halt global forest cover loss by 2030 and has been including in its free trade agreements Trade and Sustainable Development chapters with binding provisions on environmental protection, including the obligation to ensure international environmental agreement such as the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019).

In fact, after both parties finally signing the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement in 2020, the European Parliament and several member States of the EU started to show opposition to the deal due to the concern with the deal’s environmental costs and whether Brazil’s compliance with its climate change commitment can realistically be achieved based on the levels of deforestation within the last years, especially in the Legal Amazon region (GRIEGER, 2020).

The Amazon Rainforest has experienced a significant reduction of approximately 20% of its original extent since the 1970s, accompanied by a notable escalation in deforestation rates in recent years. Analysis of satellite data provided by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE) reveals a 34% increase in deforestation within the Amazon region from August 2019 to July 2020, encompassing an expansive area exceeding 9,200 km<sup>2</sup>, compared to the previous reporting period's 6,800 km<sup>2</sup>. The alarming trend persisted in 2021, witnessing a further rise as a total of 13,038 km<sup>2</sup> succumbed to deforestation during the year. Notably,

between 2022 and 2023, the deforested area amounted to approximately 9,000 km<sup>2</sup> - the equivalent to the dimensions of the Republic of Cyprus - within a single year (INPE, 2023).

The Brazilian Amazon rainforest is a complex arena in the Global Governance scenario. It is surrounded by external interests and pressure, with different narratives concerning its management, as a plural space, with different local, national and international actors, with different realities and logics behind it. It is a multidimensional space, tensioned by political, economical, environmental and social demands that expresses the transition to a new development model founded in the idea of sustainability (SILVA, 2011). Added to that, its territorial dimension and geopolitical position, makes the Brazilian Amazon forest an important aspect of the Global Environmental Governance agenda, notably because of the global consequences that its irreversible destruction can cause.

The global concern over the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest, recognized for its pivotal role in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, has significantly influenced regulatory mechanisms within the North-South cooperation framework (SILVA, 2011). Therefore, the present research is relevant in view of the political and economic impact that the issue has raised globally. The possibility of better studying and analyzing the strategic narrative of the European Union - a supranational entity that publicly adopts sustainable values and principles of Global Governance -, faced with Brazil's defence of sovereignty over the Amazon Forest, will help to better understand the conflict of power that surrounds the region. That is, because, throughout the study of political narratives, it is possible to understand how distinct narratives can shape and impact different understandings of reality, without taking a particular one as the absolute truth.

Amidst this landscape, the EU emerges as a key player in the battle against climate change, positioning itself as a leader in sustainable development through adept utilization of political and strategic narratives.

This research aims to answer how and the EU positions itself, through the use of strategic narratives, about the deforestation of the Amazon Brazilian rainforest. From this research question, appears three hypotheses:

H.1) The European Union asserts its global stance on Sustainable Development issues through strategic narratives grounded in the principles of Global Environmental Governance.

H.2) The strategic narrative of the European Union, shaped by its perspective on Global Environmental Governance, is embedded within a discursive arena comprising diverse actors with varying positions and narratives regarding the significance of preserving the Amazon rainforest for the planet.

H.3) Through its strategic narrative rooted in Global Environmental Governance, the European Union endeavours to establish itself as a significant actor amidst converging and diverging discourses on the role of the Amazon rainforest in the pursuit of global Sustainable Development.

The study of narrative has grown in the academic arena through the last decade. With the advance and growth of media, the understanding of the ways humans tend to think and shape its reality through narrative patterns became a tool for the study of human thought and, therefore, for various disciplines of humanities and social sciences. Accordingly, when used strategically, Miskimmon et al (2014) point out that narrative is a communicative tool, which political actors use in an attempt to give meaning to past, present and future, in order to achieve political objectives. It can also be used to articulate how an international actor conceives their understanding of international order; to seek influence in the development of policies worldwide; or even to project their identity in international affairs.

The methodology employed in this research is of a qualitative nature, centring on the analysis of strategic narratives within documents sourced from different EU institutions. Therefore, this study adopts a qualitative approach of document analysis and narrative analysis to delve into the matter. The primary data sources include official documents such as communications, summits, and statements issued by the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Commission. These documents offer valuable insights into the EU's strategic narrative, capturing the essence of its stance on Sustainable Development, Global Environmental Governance, and the protection of the Amazon rainforest.

The qualitative analysis involves a thorough examination of the language, rhetoric, and framing employed in these documents. By scrutinizing the narratives, this research aims to uncover the underlying principles, values, and objectives that shape the EU's perspective on the Amazon rainforest. The qualitative methodology allows for a nuanced exploration of how the EU strategically communicates its role as a leader in sustainable development and its commitment to global environmental governance. Additionally, it enables an examination of how the EU

positions itself within the discursive arena, considering the diverse actors and narratives involved in the complex issue of Amazon rainforest preservation.

Furthermore, this qualitative approach aligns with the broader understanding of narrative as a communicative tool in international affairs. Building on the work of Miskimmon et al. (2014), the analysis acknowledges narrative's role in shaping perceptions, influencing policies, and projecting identities in the realm of global governance. Through a qualitative lens, this research aims to unravel the layers of the EU's strategic narrative, revealing its intentions, motivations, and the discursive interplay within the complex landscape of the Amazon rainforest's global governance.

In examining the European Union's narrative towards the Amazon rainforest within the geopolitical and ecopolitical context, an understanding of its intentions in Global Governance becomes paramount. Consequently, this dissertation unfolds across four theoretical chapters.

The initial chapter endeavours to elucidate the evolution of the EU as a prominent international actor, elucidating the functions of its institutions and delineating how it has emerged as a pivotal force in the pursuit of global sustainable environmental development and forestry protection worldwide.

The second chapter delves into the intricate dynamics of the Amazon, offering an exploration of the Brazilian management and sovereignty narrative from the era of military dictatorship to the present government, spanning the timeline from 1964 to 2023. Within this chapter, the geopolitical significance of the Amazon is examined, shedding light on the myriad actors and voices involved, although acknowledging the inherent complexity of the network of actors and narratives surrounding the forest.

The third chapter unfurls the historical evolution of the EU-Brazil relationship, tracing its trajectory since the establishment of the Strategic Partnership in 2007. This chapter is instrumental in comprehending the role of the Amazon within this relationship and the EU's utilization of the "strategic partnership" as a lever to influence forest preservation.

In the final chapter, the reader is introduced to the concept of strategic narratives, their significance in analysing the issue at hand, and the behaviour of international actors in the Global Governance scenario. This section also includes the examination of the EU strategic narrative towards the protection of the Amazon rainforest from various EU institutions, including the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Commission.



## 2. EUROPE IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

With 27 Member States, a strong unified currency and a major role in world trade and politics, the European Union (EU) is currently one of the most significant actors in the global politics arena. The EU's evolution started over six decades ago, with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to appease the French-German conflict and, with an extended and dynamic process, it is now an international actor that interacts with third countries and international organizations, "in ways which are legally and politically distinguishable from its constitutive Member States" (WESSEL, 2020, p. 60).

At the beginning, the EU was established with a functionalist purpose of promoting economic and political integration, cooperation, and stability among its members. Over the decades, the Union has operated through various treaties and legal agreements that define the organization's powers and functions - from Paris Treaty in 1951 to the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 -, trying to search for a political format that fits into the historical time it is functioning.

In his book "The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union", Luuk Van Middelaar (2009) presents the idea of "three spheres" of purposes in which the European States organized their Union. The first, the "external sphere", is based in geography and history, in which the States decided to organize themselves based on self-interest, power and territorial barriers. The second, the "internal sphere", is a product of the European Community, created in 1951, based on the idea of a future with a peaceful and united Europe, based in treaties and body laws. The third, the "intermediate sphere", is a result of the Community foundation and the crescent understanding that the European States had international common interests. Accordingly to Middelaar idea, when the three spheres are interlinked and act all together, they constitute the "European motor" which was - and still is - responsible for the continuation of the European Union to this day.

From a promise of peace and European community after two world wars, the EU currently emerges as a prominent actor in global affairs, particularly in the areas of security, human rights protection, peace, eradication of poverty, environmental protection, and sustainable development. What was constructed within the European continent now holds a body of external dimension, with relevant actors, principles, instruments, and competences in key policy areas (LARIK; WESSEL, 2012).

For this research, it is of greater importance to understand how the EU came to be a global advocate of sustainable development and has implemented policies and programs worldwide to support it. Specifically, how the EU cooperates for the protection of forests worldwide, including the Amazon rainforest, establishing various programs and initiatives aimed at combating deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management. The EU also engages in dialogue with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote sustainable forest management practices (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019).

This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the EU's evolution, its status as a powerful global actor, and its commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection worldwide. The EU has undergone significant transformations over the years, from the creation of the ECSC to the establishment of the EU as it is known today, and how the EU's commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection has enabled it to take a leading role in global affairs, particularly in the protection of forests worldwide.

## **2.1. European Union history: formation and evolution**

The genesis of community formation in Europe occurred during the post-Second World War era, amid the background of Cold War tensions. During this period, European political elites confronted two major obstacles: the reconstruction of European societies and economies, and the need to guarantee a stable and secure environment that would facilitate the success of the reconstruction efforts (BRETHERTON; VOGLER, 2005).

Notwithstanding the inception of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1950, aimed at integrating the defense capacities of the United States with those of Western Europe, there remained an imperative to actively secure peace among the European states. In light of this, ideas to increase “community-building” were launched in the early 1950s. Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister (1948-1952) presented the project of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which aimed to initiate a process of economic integration that would gradually reconfigure the political landscape of Europe. The idea was to pool strategic resources together - the Franco-German production of coal and steel - to make war between historic rivals “not only unthinkable, but materially impossible” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1950). Schuman’s proposal was that coal and steel resources in Western Europe should be administered by national States and a new supranational authority acting conjointly, with the purpose of gradually eliminating all tariffs in these industries (URWIN, 2007).

This production and relation would be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of other European countries. This High Authority at the time was planned to be composed of independent persons appointed by the governments, with equal representation and with enforceable decisions by the member countries. As a result of Schummers' idea, the ECSC was established by the Treaty of Paris (1951) and signed by "the Six" (France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, and the Netherlands).

The decision to integrate the coal and steel sectors was a strategic move that carried immense weight at the time. The Schumann plan had not only economic pretenses, as it was seen as the first step towards an effective political integration, and as a political conviction that stability and union within Europe rested ultimately in peace between France and West Germany (URWIN, 1992). This was because both coal and steel played a critical role in fueling the military capacity of both countries, making them key drivers of territorial expansion. For instance, the iron deposits in Alsace-Lorraine, a French province, were the subject of territorial exchange with Germany in 1871, 1918, 1940 and 1945. Additionally, the Saar, a German district rich in coal, had its mines controlled by the French in a bid to compensate for the damage caused by Germany to French coal mines during World War I. It is worth denoting that Germany possessed vast reserves of coking coal, which is crucial in steel production, whereas France relied heavily on German coal supplies. This underscored the importance of coal and steel as pivotal components of the dynamic Franco-German relations and rivalries (DEDMAN, 2010).

The crucial question at the time to start Schummers' project was whether Britain would also commit to any European organization. That is due its political prestige during the war and because of its economic impact in the industry: after 1945, British steel production was more than two-thirds of the combined total of the other European members of the future European Economic Community (EEC), and its coal output nearly all of the other West European States (URWIN, 1995).

Although Winston Churchill argued for European integration, arguing that it was imperative to establish a United States of Europe, soon enough the British interest started to disappear from the unity movement. Churchill believed from the beginning that the lead for a united Europe should be taken by France and Germany and, although he had accepted European identity as an ideal, he did not argue that Britain had to be part of that unity, signaling that Britain had its own

dreams and tasks (CHURCHILL, 1946). Soon it was clear that the efforts to build a united Europe with British participation came to an end.

After World War II, France launched the Monnet Plan in 1946 with the primary objective of modernizing and equipping the French economy to compete effectively on the international stage. The plan was also designed to address the technological inferiority of the French economy compared to Germany's. At the time, France had only 0.5 million machine tools, many of which were over two decades old, while Germany had 1.5 million modern tools (DEDMAN, 2010). The Monnet Plan aimed to achieve these objectives by focusing on the rapid recovery of French industries, which needed to rebuild themselves before Germany's economy could recover. Additionally, the plan aimed to replace German goods in both the German and export markets with French products. In doing so, France sought to position itself as a formidable economic power and to strengthen its competitiveness in the global market (LYNCH, 1984). Therefore, as Lynch (1984, p. 242) points out, the Monnet Plan for the French modernizations was based on “the traditional view that French political and economic strength lay in Germany weakness”.

However, by 1948 at the London Conference, France had to deal with the gradual emergence of a new Western German State and the revival of its economy. In this scenario, achieving the conditions required for the Monnet Plan faced a setback. Following the London Conference, Robert Schuman recognized the urgent need for a radical change in French policy towards Germany, one that would be based on a more positive policy of cooperation (DEDMAN, 2010).

For Germany, the political gain in signing the Treaty of Paris (1951) (which established the ECSC) was to win back its recognition as an equal partner, having equal status and removing the limitations and controls imposed over steel and coal after the Great Wars. Dedman (2010, p. 57) explains that “whereas for France the prime motive for ECSC was economic (...), for Germany the motives were political”. Accepting the Schuman Plan and signing the Treaty of Paris was the way for Germany to rehabilitate its nationality as an independent sovereign state.

At the beginning, the functioning of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was founded upon the surrender of sovereignty by the six member states' parliaments over their coal and steel industries to the supranational High Authority. This transfer of power conferred complete executive authority to the High Authority in these sectors. Comprising nine members, the High Authority's mandate spanned a period of nine years, with eight members nominated by the collective government of the six founding states and the ninth member being elected by

the eight. The High Authority possessed the authority to issue binding "decisions," while its "recommendations" carried binding force in terms of objectives but allowed for flexibility in the means of achieving them. "Opinions," on the other hand, held no binding power (TREATY OF PARIS, 1951).

The High Authority benefited from the expertise of a consultative committee composed of between 30 and 51 representatives from various stakeholder groups, including producers, workers, consumers, and dealers. While the High Authority was required to consult this committee on specific matters, it retained the freedom to disregard its advice. The High Authority was accountable to a Parliamentary Assembly, which briefly convened each year to review the Authority's report and could force the entire body to resign through a vote of censure passed by a two-thirds majority (TREATY OF PARIS, 1951).

However, the High Authority was far from being a sovereign body, as it was paralleled as executive by a Special Council of Ministers, which moderated its supranationalism form. The Council was created upon the insistence of the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg) that wanted a body whose purpose would be to watch and defend the national interests of the smaller participants. Therefore, the Council delegates were drawn from the national governments and had the objective to counterbalance the High Authority's supranationalism. Another important institution for further advances in European integration in the future was the Court of Justice. The Court consisted of seven judges from all the national judiciaries and had the task to rule on the legality of any action taken by the High Authority that was the object of complaint by national governments or industrial enterprises (URWIN, 1995).

Following ratification by the six parliaments, the ECSC was formally established in August of 1952, and in 1953 the Common Market commenced operations. The ESCS Treaty of Paris was designated to last for 50 years, and operated successfully for 20 years, with an increase in iron production, new patterns of trade development and greater harmonization of work conditions. There was an early industrialist opposition, most notably in France and Belgium, but soon it was dissipated as the reality showed there was no basis for exaggerated fear of the competitive strength of other producers.

The political impact of the ECSC was very significant, as European states that had spent years at war with each other started to work in a cooperative manner, obeying common rules and paying a common tax (DEDMAN, 2010). Urwin (1995) points to the cause of this broad support

to the ECSC Treaty to the use of vague and ambiguous terms, which could be interpreted in different ways, as it was a mere coalition of interests and a conjunction of specific events.

In 1958, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) faced a challenging situation due to the accumulation of coal surpluses, unsold stocks, and the availability of low-cost coal from the United States, leading to a coal crisis. Actually, the ECSC was meant to be the first of several organizations integrating the economic sector, but “the six” showed little inclination to rush this matter. The sectoral approach of the ECSC has proved to be problematic by the end, as the ECSC still tried to maintain an integration of only one part of complex industrial economies and could not pursue its aims in isolation from other economic segments (URWIN, 1995).

Around the same time, the concept of the European Economic Community (EEC) began to emerge, resulting in a reduction in the political sway of the ECSC. As the EEC gained prominence, the institutions of the ECSC were eventually subsumed into the EEC.

The EEC started to operate under the Treaty of Rome (1957), that established a common market in manufactured goods with a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Euratom, a common market in nuclear materials. With its 248 articles, protocols and appendices, the Treaty of Rome aimed to be more than a common market with provision to remain in force for an unlimited period (TREATY OF ROME, 1957). In fact, the original Treaty of Rome comprised broad declarations pertaining to its overarching objectives and intentions, and the specific operations mechanisms were deferred to subsequent negotiations and agreements. By the end of 1958, it had designed an ambitious program for the economic expansion of Europe, and a common welfare and social policy objectives (DEDMAN, 2010).

The administrative structure of the European Economic Community (EEC) resembled that of the present-day European Union (EU). EEC membership entailed a pledge to uphold the unrestricted movement of both capital and labor, adopt a shared investment policy, and align and streamline social welfare objectives. To facilitate the attainment of these objectives, the EEC established three funds: the European Social Fund, aimed at enhancing employment opportunities and improving workers' living standards; the European Investment Bank, designed to advance economic growth through loans and guarantees; and the European Development Fund, which focused on the associated French overseas territories (TREATY OF ROME, 1957).

There were also two organizations sharing a common Assembly, presently referred to as the European Parliament, and Court of Justice. Additionally, they had a common Council of

Ministers and Commission since 1967, leading to the fusion of the three communities - the ECSC, EEC, and Euratom - into one entity, all functioning under the same institutional setup. An important creation within this Treaty was the Commission of the EEC. With a multifunctional purpose and roles, it acted as the executive civil service. The commissioner's role was to initiate policy (to which the Council had the power to dispose), and act as guardian of the Treaties, ensuring the States compliance to the Treaties rules. The Council and the Commission were supported and supplemented by a consultative committee representing the several national groups: the Economic and Social Committee. The Committee would act as an advisory body, and it would have to be consulted by the Commission and the Council of Ministers on a range of topics and issues (TREATY OF ROME, 1957).

Under the Treaty of Rome, the then called Parliamentary Assembly had 142 memberships, with powers to supervise both the Commission and the Council of Ministers. Although it resembled the present European Parliamentary, the Parliamentary Assembly had limited legislative authority, as it had not a directly elected body. There were, in fact, large areas of responsibility where the Assembly had to be consulted by the Council of Ministers, but its suggestions could be ignored with impunity by the Council (URWIN, 1995).

The duty to interpret the Treaty of Rome and ensure that the EEC institutions and member states were fulfilling their obligations under the treaty was left to the Court of Justice, composed of seven judges, one from each member state plus one other, appointed by the Council of Ministers. The Court had jurisdiction to handle cases arising from Community treaties or from disputes between members (TREATY OF ROME, 1957).

In summary, the Treaty of Rome established the Commission to initiate and implement policies, alongside a Council of Ministers responsible for acting and legislating based on the Commission's proposals. The Parliamentary Assembly and the Economic and Social Committee were primarily advisory bodies, lacking substantial oversight powers, while the Court of Justice had the authority to interpret the treaty's provisions and the EEC's decisions.

The inception of the Rome Treaty marked a significant milestone in the history of the European Economic Community (EEC), as it granted the organization the explicit authority to engage in international trade relations through its Common Commercial Policy, and to enter international accords in conjunction with third nations (TREATY OF ROME, 1957). This development led to the emergence and expansion of a novel international institution, which subsequently gained

jurisdiction in domains including foreign and security policy, environmental policy, and energy policy, among others.

Despite not being a member of the European Economic Community (EEC), Britain played a significant role in the formation of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in conjunction with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland. The EFTA came into existence in 1960, following the signing of the Stockholm Declaration. Unlike the Treaty of Rome, its primary objective was to achieve an immediate economic goal, namely, the reduction and eventual elimination of tariffs on industrial goods within its member states. Notably, the EFTA did not have any political implications and, as such, had a less elaborate institutional framework compared to the EEC (UNEP, 1972).

The EFTA rejected events beyond a free trade postulated by the Treaty of Rome, such as a common external tariff. The Seven members accepted the EFTA as the only alternative that would offer some benefits to its members. This divided Western Europe between “the Six” and “the Seven” (URWIN, 2004).

During the 1960s the EC had made steady and slow progress. Although the EC got to implement some of the provisions of the Treaty of Rome during this time, such as tariffs and the common agricultural policy, by the end of the decade there was a need for a renewed sense of activity and ambition. Considering this, the Hague Summit of 1969 opened a window for a more effective activity of the EC, providing the way to enlargement of the Community and development of policies, especially towards closer political cooperation and economic union (DEDMAN, 2010).

The Hague Summit was a decisive moment in the process of European integration, establishing in the “Communiqué of the meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Member States at The Hague” (1969, p.1) that entering the final stage of the Common Market meant paving a new way for a “united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities in the world of tomorrow and of making a contributing commensurate with its tradition and its mission”.

It was at this Summit that the first steps for a monetary union was planned, establishing that the States “reaffirmed their readiness to further the more rapid progress of the later development needed to strengthen the Community and promote its development into an economic union”, agreeing to work on a plan in stages during 1970 to create a monetary union (FINAL COMUNIQUE OF THE HAGUE SUMMIT, 1969, p. 2).



The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) was initially created as a response by recurrent international crises during the 1960s and 1970s that affected the US dollar and the French franc. However, during the 1970s the EMU initiative did not progress because of the oil price shock of 1973-1975, which led to a global recession and, consequently, to a step back by national governments to experiment with the next stages of the EMU. National protectionism arose, leading to less dynamism by the EEC. At this time, it was denotable how the EEC still showed failures of integration and cohesion, as the energy crises revealed the inability of the EEC to act collectively as a community with a common strategy towards a global problem, highlighting the “rudimentary level of foreign policy coordination or political cooperation” at the time (DEDMAN, 2010, p. 112).

In terms of enlargement Britain finally joined the EEC in 1973, together with Denmark and Ireland, Greece joined in 1981, Spain and Portugal joined in 1986. This cleared the way for further developments to the Single European Act (SEA) in 1986. While it did not introduce procedural changes for political cooperation and coordination of foreign policy, the Single European Act established a main constitutional change to extend qualified majority voting over all internal market legislation. During the 1980s, the EC started to move towards a more united political and monetary union, with enhanced political cooperation between the 12 member States (DEDMAN, 2010).

Regarding environmental, the SEA already specified, in Title VII, that any environmental action undertaken by the Community must prioritize the objectives of conserving, safeguarding, and enhancing environmental quality, as well as ensuring the judicious and rational utilization of natural resources. It is worth noting that the SEA fundamentally adheres to the principle of taking preventive measures and rectifying environmental damage at the source as a top priority. Furthermore, it outlined the actions of both external Community and Member States in relation to environmental protection, emphasizing the importance of cooperating with third countries and relevant international organizations (SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT, 1986).

Influenced by the Brundtland Report (1987), “Our Common Future Together” the SEA was an important step into EU environmental action, which already expressed the need for cooperation with other countries to ensure environmental protection. Although there was no explanation or norms to how the principles should be applied in practice, and to what extent, it paved the road for pressurizing the EC for the application of tighter pollution control standards (WILKINSON, 1992).

The drafting process of what presently constitutes the EU commenced during the Dublin Summit in 1990. After months of discussion, the Maastricht Treaty (1992) transformed and pooled national sovereignty in twelve different policy areas, such as consumer protection, free movement of labor, rights of professionals throughout the EU, social concerns on worker's rights and, for the first time, environmental protection. The Maastricht Treaty, more than a constitution, was a redesign of the EC, rebranding it to what is the EU and establishing as the two main elements cooperation in foreign and security policy and the Monetary Union. By January 1993, the Single Market had already been achieved, together with the common European citizenship.

The EU, under the Treaty of Maastricht, was composed of a European Parliament, a Council, a Commission, a Court of Justice, and a Court of Auditors. The Council and the Commission were assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions, acting as advisors. Moreover, it was created a European Investment Bank which, together with other existing financial institutions and instruments, supported the achievement of the Treaty objectives (EUROPEAN UNION, 1992).

It is important to highlight the continuation of environmental protection into the Maastricht Treaty, based on the precautionary principles, the principle that polluters should pay and that preventive measures should be taken. Under Title XVI, Article 130r, point 2, it was established that the EU should contribute to the following objectives: “preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment; protecting human health; prudent and rational utilization of natural resources; promoting measures at international level to deal with regions or worldwide environmental problems” (EUROPEAN UNION, 1992).

The previous Treaties were written before the rise of global concern towards environmental protection and focused more on the development of its member States. For example, in the Treaty of Rome it was included that the Community should continue to expand and “accelerate raising of the standard of living” (EUROPEAN UNION, 1957). At the time, there was no concern with the needs of future generations, a fundamental of the sustainability principle that permeates the EU actions currently.

With the following of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, the Maastricht Treaty placed, for the first time, environmental protection throughout its territory. In terms of implementation of environmental measures, an amendment made to Article 171 was made to enforce the judgements of the European Court. In this case, if

the Commission considers that a Member State that had not complied with a judgment of the Court, it could recommend a fine payment or penalty payment - the final decision resting with the Court. Another change introduced by the Maastricht Treaty in this matter was implemented in Article 138c, which established temporary committees of inquiry to investigate “contraventions or maladministration in the implementation of the Community law” (EUROPEAN UNION, 1992).

In 15 years, the EU membership more than doubled from 12 states in 1992 to 27 by 2007. Earlier in 1995 Austria, Sweden and Finland joined, and in 2004, 10 states from the Baltic through Central and Eastern Europe to the Mediterranean joined (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus). And, in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined.

The increasing enlargement led to the necessity of review of EU Treaties. After 1992, the next revision happened under the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), with the purpose to reform EU institutions and prepare for the arrival of new members, with amendments, renumbering and consolidation of EU and European Economic Community, as well as more transparent decision-making, increasing democratic aspects. Amendments brought by the Amsterdam Treaty changed several key words and made the role of the Community to ensure sustainable development more clear, presenting a concrete form on how sustainable development should be realized by integrating environmental protection requirements (EUROPEAN UNION, 1997).

The main achievements of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) towards environmental protection were the increase of power of the European Parliament to formulate environmental legislation through the introduction of a procedure of co-decision, under Article 130s, and given prominence to the principle of sustainable development and the integration principle, manifesting the political will to make environmental issues into a more central consideration in future European legislation (BAR; KRAEMER, 1998). It reformulated reference to the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, adopting the internationally-accepted notion of “sustainable development” (DURÁN; MORGERA, 2012).

In four years, the EU reformed its institutions through the Treaty of Nice (2001) so that it could function efficiently after reaching 25 member countries. The main changes focused on the composition of the Commission and redefining the voting system in the Council. Although it did not present any new policies towards environmental protection, it was set that “the High

Contracting Parties are determined to see the European Union play a leading role in promoting environmental protection in the Union and international efforts pursuing the same objective at global level” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2001, p. 78). It becomes clear the upgrade on the environmental narrative, that led to the narrative of the EU positioning itself as leader promoter of environmental matters in global affairs.

The current Treaty of Lisbon (2007), together with the Treaty of Maastrich (1992), stands out from all others, as both result in a complete overhaul of the legal framework and the structure of the European Union. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union and European Community merged into one European Union, with the purpose to make the EU more democratic, more efficient, and better able to address global problems, like climate change and global security, with one voice. Among others, the main institutional changes are based on more power to the European Parliament, a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs, and a new EU diplomatic service (EUROPEAN UNION, 2007). In its Article 9 it disposes the Union’s institutions: (i) the European Parliament, responsible for, jointly with the Council, exercise legislative and budgetary functions, among political control and consultation of the Treaties; (ii) the European Council, responsible for defining general political directions and priorities, without legislative functions; (iii) the Council, which operates together with the European Parliament, carrying out policy-making and coordinating functions as laid down in the Treaties; (iv) the European Commission, responsible for promoting the general interest of the EU, taking initiatives to that end, ensuring the application of the Treaties and of Union Law and executing the budget and manage programmes - concisely, it coordinates, executes and manages functions as disposed in the Treaties -; (v) the Court of Justice of the European Union, which ensures the interpretation and application of the Treaties law; (vi) the European Central Bank, responsible for the maintenance of price stability, among other takas, independent from political interference; (vii) the Court of Auditors, which examines the accounts of all revenue and expenditure of the Union.

Toward environmental protection, the Lisbon Treaty is considered the most significant for the external dimension of the EU environmental policy (DURÁN; MORGERA, 2012). It reiterates the Union’s commitment to sustainable development and a high level of protection of the environment, and a further step is given in Article 174, which provides that the EU will promote measures at international level to deal with regional and worldwide environmental problems, to combat climate change (EUROPEAN UNION, 2007).

Into the chapter of “General Provisions on the Union’s External Action”, the international agenda of the European Union is specified, establishing that the EU shall “foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty”, as well as “help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2007).

It is also important to denote the constitutive EU environmental competence given by the legal framework of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which hold equal legal weight and form the basis of the Union's competencies. Together, these instruments regulate the EU's external relationships with third countries and international organizations.

Following the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, the TEU and the TFEU were consolidated. The TEU, which consists of 55 articles, is regarded as the framework treaty, and outlines the essential legal principles of the European Union. These principles encompass the Union's objectives and aims, the roles of its organs in decision-making, core principles of conduct within the organization, procedures for membership and withdrawal from the Union, and the constitutional rules governing its functioning.

The TEU also contains key provisions pertaining to the EU's external relations, which outline the core legal principles governing all EU actions, including its international relationships, the values and objectives guiding the Union's international relations, the role of EU institutions in pursuing foreign policy, and the relationship between the TEU and the TFEU. By consolidating and integrating these legal frameworks, the European Union has established a solid foundation for the management of its external relations and its role as a global actor.

This study aims to explore the EU's environmental protection policies and their impact on its external actions, as the EU's complexity is fundamental in driving the EU's international potential (GEYER, 2003). As it was shown, the EU's commitment to environmental protection can be traced back to the 1970s when the European Community first recognized the significance of climate change in response to increasing global environmental concerns. Environmental protection and sustainable development have since remained a top priority for the EU, particularly in its external actions, and that is a by-product of the historical evolution of its complex institutions (ZITO, 2005). Therefore, the next topics will focus on presenting the current EU's external environmental action and influence.

## **2.2. European Union External Action**

The European Union (EU) has been defined an entity which interacts with third countries and international organizations in distinguished ways from its Member States, with a “stand alone identity composed of values, interests, and policies which it seeks to define and promote internationally as its own”. This promotion is done through a series of external policy instruments, political, economic, commercial, and financial: the EU is an “umbrella term” for external policies, instruments, and actors, across a range of substantive domains (WESSEL, 2020, p. 60).

The EU’s overarching objectives, according to Article 3(5) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are to foster peace, security, and sustainable development, as well as to promote solidarity and mutual respect among all peoples. Furthermore, the Union endeavors to facilitate free and equitable trade, eradicate poverty, and uphold human rights. It also seeks to adhere strictly to international law, including the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, while continually refining and improving these frameworks. Additionally, in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) it is established that the EU shall seek to develop relations and build partnerships with third countries, promoting multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations.

The key institutions of the EU foreign affairs are the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR). However, the traditional institutions (European Council, Council, Commission, European Parliament, and Court of Justice) also play important roles in EU external relations. In fact, one of the roles of the EU, according to the Council Decision 2010/427/EU of July 2010 is to assist the President of the European Council and the Commission in the exercise of their respective functions in external relations. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is an independent entity within the European Union that operates autonomously from the Commission, with its own legal capacity to fulfill its duties and achieve its goals. The EEAS is subject to the authority of the High Representative (HR) and is responsible for managing the Union Delegations to third countries and international organizations.

The EEAS is important for the traditional institutions of the EU because of its political importance and assistance. For example, since the EEAS does not exercise legislative functions, according to article 15(1) TEU, it cannot participate in ordinary legislative procedure for internal instruments or international agreements. However, the decisions of the European

Council can trigger action at all levels of governance within the EU, leading the proposal of new regulations by the Commission or by the EEAS to an international agreement. It can also lead to non-legal foreign policy activity, such as political dialogue. The institution that will be implementing the strategic vision of the EU Council, depending on the case, can be the EEAS or the HR. Therefore, the Council decisions have an external dimension linked to numerous agendas, such as environmental protection (WESSEL, 2020).

Regarding the EU Commission, according to Article 17(1) of TEU, the Commission is responsible for ensuring the Union's external representation, except those related to common foreign and security policy and other cases specified in the Treaties (TEU and TFEU). Therefore, in addition to the general role of the EU in the decision-making process, the Commission also represents the Union externally. This is of fundamental importance when analyzing the use of discourses and narratives in the global arena, since the opinion perpetrated by the EU Commission can be understood as an expression of opinion of the EU regarding certain subjects.

It is also important to denote the role of the European Parliament (EP) in external relations that, indirectly, can have influence in important matters. According to Article 218(6)(a) of the TFEU, the EP is required to give consent to the Council before the agreement of a wide range of international agreements. It also has the competence to decide on the discharge of the EEAS, providing a degree of political control to the EU external action organization. Nonetheless, it is also regularly consulted by the HR on EU external policy making.

Concisely, EU external relations law refers to the body of legal principles that govern the European Union's actions in the international arena. This body of law encompasses both the internal and external dimensions of the EU's relations with other entities. Internally, it comprises the set of rules that regulate the constitutional and institutional legal framework of the EU, aimed at advancing its interests globally. Externally, it covers the legal principles that govern the EU's interactions and relationships with other actors in the international legal order. What makes this field complex is that the interpretation and application of these legal principles are influenced by the EU's specific aims and objectives, as well as the context of advancing integration and geopolitics. The objective of EU external relations law is to enable the EU and its Member States to exert their influence on the global stage in a coherent and effective manner (WESSEL, 2020).

The EU has gradually developed its external policy and, since the 1980s, it uses a range of multilateral, regional, bilateral and unilateral instruments to exercise power over environmental matters. Moreover, it has increasingly aspired to play a leadership role in international environmental affairs (DURÁN, 2020).

### **1.2.1. European Union External Action in environmental matters**

The EU External Policy towards environmental protection is set out on several principles that guides its law-making and international relations. These principles are mainly presented in Article 191(2) of TFEU: a high level of environmental protection, prevention, precaution, rectification at the source and the polluter pays. Those are applied in the “regional and worldwide environmental problems” according to Article 191(1), which indicates that the EU can also take measures targeting the environment beyond its borders, just as its Member States - limited to the international law imposition on extraterritorial application of domestic environmental measures -.

According to Oberthur and Roche Kelly (2008)., the EU’s aspirations do global climate leadership were strongly influenced by internal factors, such as the rejection of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2005, which led European leaders to focus on issues that they hoped would be better received by citizens. As a consequence, climate change became a central theme for the European integration process and an opportunity to advance with internal and external EU policy (KULOVESI, 2009).

The EU ambitious to act as a leader in the global fight against climate change date back to the early years of international climate change cooperation, when the scientific community collected evidence, around 1970s and 1980s, that climate change intensified because of human activities. In 1988, the European Commission had issued its first communication on climate change, concluding that the European Community should welcome discussions on possible international agreements for the protection of the atmosphere and that it was prepared to make “important contributions” to the negotiations (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1988).

Currently, based on the UN 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 global framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the EU and its Member States agree to assist third developing countries in ways that reflect the principles of equity and of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. This principle, as laid down in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), establishes that States shall



cooperate in global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecosystem in a way that developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development, in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the financial and technological resources they command.

Throughout these principles, the EU aims to take a leadership position in the global fight against climate change. This objective has been pursued through two primary means: firstly, by striving to enhance the multilateral framework for mitigating climate change, and secondly, by setting a positive example with its own internal climate policies and laws. (DURÁN, 2020).

It is important to highlight, here, that the establishment of EU internal climate policies and laws affects third countries, not only by setting a positive example, but also because of extraterritorial effects. Although traditionally the exercise of jurisdiction by a State is limited by its own territory, given the globalization, global trade volumes and the movement of people, an internal European law can have a huge impact in the global sphere (MATA DIZ; ARAÚJO, 2021).

Another way that the EU prioritizes climate change matters in its external relations is using bilateral and inter-regional cooperation. As May Farrell notes, since 1995 a "human rights clause is standard for all EU treaties with third countries and regions". In the same way, inclusion of environmental clauses and policies is nowadays a part of EUs bilateral and inter-regional cooperation (FARREL, 2005, p. 275, apud AFIONIS, STINGER, 2013, p. 50). In fact, this is established by Article 11 of the TFEU, that obliged the EU political institutions to integrate environmental protection requirements into all EU policies and activities.

Kati Kulovesi (2013) has observed how the insertion of sustainable development and environmental cooperation clauses has become a normative practice. Kulovesi argues that the EU is progressively leveraging its political and economic influence to promote its climate change objectives via bilateral and inter-regional external relations. This opinion is shared with other scholars, such as Jan Zielonka (2008, p. 480), that even points to the external action of the EU as imperialist, since it tries to assert political and economic controls through formal annexations: "some regulations on environment or food safety may appear to be mere technicalities, but their adoption often has major economic, if not political, implications for the targeted countries".

Incorporation of environmental clauses in bilateral and inter-regional agreements by the EU is justified by the fact that tackling climate change requires a collective global effort, in

collaboration with partner countries. This was highlighted in the European Commission Communication about the European Green Deal (2019a), the new EU strategy to tackle climate and environmental-related challenges and to transform the EU into a resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050:

The global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation require a global response. The EU will continue to promote and implement ambitious environment, climate and energy policies across the world. It will develop a stronger ‘green deal diplomacy’ focused on convincing and supporting others to take on their share of promoting more sustainable development. By setting a credible example, and following-up with diplomacy, trade policy, development support and other external policies, the EU can be an effective advocate. The Commission and the High Representative will work closely with Member States to mobilize all diplomatic channels both bilateral and multilateral – including the United Nations, the G7, G20, the World Trade Organization and other relevant international fora. (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019a, p. 20)

The EU intention to search for cooperative measures in Global Environmental Governance surpasses a range of environmental themes. To better understand the current EU external action in this matter, it is important to identify the key environmental priorities and instruments that characterize the EU approach.

The combat against climate change has held significant prominence within the environmental priorities of the EU's external action since the 1970s. Presently, the EU shapes its environmental framework in alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As articulated in the Commission Communication titled "Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future: European Action for Sustainability" (2016), the Union's environmental endeavors are strategically directed towards the implementation of circular economy initiatives. The overarching goal is to decouple economic growth from resource utilization and environmental degradation. This commitment finds its basis in the 8th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Union, a guiding document that shapes and coordinates EU environmental policies. The EAP's mandate is to "accelerate the green transition" towards a "climate-neutral, sustainable, non-toxic, resource-efficient, renewable energy-based, resilient, and competitive circular economy that gives back more than it takes" (EUROPEAN UNION, 2022, p. 4).

Aside from climate change mitigation and a circular economy, the 8th EAP set as priority objectives the protection and restoration of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, a zero-pollution environment and minimizing environmental pressures from production and consumption of different economic sectors. In its external action, the EU establishes the coherence necessity between internal and external approaches, as regards “engaging with third countries on climate

and environmental action, encouraging and supporting them to adopt and implement rules” and ensuring that products placed on the Union market fully comply with Union requirements of halting deforestation and land degradation (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2022, p. 13).

An example of the application of multilateral and bilateral relations in this matter is seen through the European Union and Latin America & Caribbean (EU-LAC) relations that, since the first EU-LAC Summit in 1999, has already defined environmental protection as a strategic topic, and a key area in the following action plans. In fact, environmental sustainability and climate change is one of the sectors for support defined in the Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes (MIP) for the Americas and the Caribbean for the period 2021-2027, which states that “the MIP will promote multilateralism notably by supporting multilateral reforms and addressing global challenges, such as health, biodiversity loss and climate change” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2021, p. 4). This initiative is a practical response of the EU intention to “use its diplomatic and financial tools to ensure that green alliances are part of its relations with Africa and other partner countries and regions, particularly in Latin American, Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019a, P. 21).

The EU-LAC cooperation also exemplifies the defined geographic coverage of the EU external policy. The EU divides its financial instruments and cooperation by themes and region. The latter focus on a defined territorial coverage, such as the MIP for the Americas and the Caribbean, as thematic instruments are based on a specific theme and are, in principle, open to all developing countries (DURÁN; MORGERA, 2012). Thematic instruments are implemented based on multiannual strategy papers that are elaborated by the Commission alone, and that reflect the EU’s priorities about certain themes. These are implemented through annual action programmes, such as the Environmental Action Program, which specifies the operations that will be undertaken in matters of environmental protection.

Another way that the EU supports ecological measures worldwide is through trade policy. The EU utilizes trade agreements as a platform to engage with trading partners on climate and environmental matters, in particular regarding enhancing climate change action, implementing a binding commitment to the Paris Agreement. An example is seen during the provisions of the EU-Mercosur trade agreement (EUMETA), finalized by the European Commission in 2019.

The EUMETA is the first large-scale trade agreement of the Southern Common Market, and it covers roughly 25% of world GDP and a market of 780 million consumers. The Agreement, that has been in negotiation terms for the last twenty years, and was signed in 2019, failed to

reach its ratification due to a series of obstacles, due to the opposition of some EU Member States and the European Parliament concerning risks of global implications like deforestation and related climate and biodiversity effects (HAGEMEJER; *et al*, 2021).

As it will be analyzed in the fifth chapter, one of the narratives perpetrated by the EU was that the deregulation and deforestation levels in the Amazon rainforest led to the Union's opposition to close the Association Agreement (GRIEGER, 2020). In that sense, the EU makes it clear its use of trade policy to address harmful practices such as illegal logging and to enhance regulatory cooperation to promote EU standards (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019c).

For Kulovesi (2013) this is the EU response for the modest results of its attempt to seek for international cooperative efforts. There was a disappointing outcome of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 – the Conference ended after a long plenary session without any formal adoption of the Copenhagen Accord – and the EU and its multilateralist approach were pointed as one of the causes for failure by the media (CHARLEMAGNE, 2009). This breach of expectation led to the EU increasingly using its market to guide the international community towards more effective action against climate change. Another way of curbing this disappointment has been through EU internal policies, with which the EU creates an external unity by strengthening the Member States common interest and creating a level global playing field, as it will be presented in the following section.

#### **2.2.1.2. European Union External Action for forestry protection**

The EU committed itself to curb deforestation based on the 2003 Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, with key legislations deriving from that, the FLEGT Regulation (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2005) and the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2010). Both aimed at reducing illegal logging by strengthening legal forest management, improving global environmental governance and impacting in timber trades, as to export timber to Europe the products had to be compliant with the terms of the EUTR. Moreover, Brazil received support from FLEGT for projects related to information, legal reform, timber legality assurance, transparency and monitoring (MULLER, 2021).

One current flagship initiative of the European Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, is the “New EU Forest Strategy for 2030”. The strategy seeks to contribute to the achievement of the EU's biodiversity objectives, mainly the reduction of greenhouse gas

emission to at least 55% by 2030, and climate neutrality by 2050 (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2021).

This focus priority is not new and has been implemented by the EU for more than a decade. It was in 2008 that the Commission launched a Communication “Addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2008). The 2008 Communication presented the importance of forests for climate change and pointed to tropical forests as key components for biodiversity and ecosystem services, especially concerning climate change. It already presented the ambitious objective to halt global forest cover loss by 2030 and to reduce gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020, considering that, at the time, the annual loss amounted to 13 million hectares - an area approximately the size of Greece -, being 96% of the deforestation in tropical regions (FAO, 2005).

In the 2008 Communication the EU already pointed to the need to take a leading role to shape the global response to deforestation and pointed to Central and South America as the main area for action. It also established five several fronts (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2008): (i) strengthening forest governance and institutions at local and national level; (ii) creating an effective policy to reward the value of the services provided by standing forests; (iii) creating internal and external policy that do not disregard the demand side and the responsibility of the consumers; (iv) considering deforestation in international climate negotiations; (v) monitoring forest-protection programmes to ensure policies are based on high-quality information. These front strategies can be implemented in different sectors and policies, such as trade, energy, agriculture, food security and development cooperation, all of which play a significant role in helping to conserve world's forests.

An important initiative under the trade section in the 2008 Communication is the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan. This plan's center-objective is ensuring that exports from timber producing countries are covered by a license attesting that the timber has been harvested legally.

Five years later, the EU already presented itself in “the frontline” of work on combating deforestation and forest degradation at a global level and created the 2013 New EU Forest Strategy. The forest framework review was deemed necessary by the EU because of significant societal and political changes that influenced the number of forest-related policies (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2013).

The 2013 Strategy aimed to ensure consistency between the EU and its Member States policies and commitments on forest-related issues at international level, and its main innovation from the 2008 Communication is based on the program Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD). Additionally, although the policy for a deforestation-free supply chain have been discussed only recently, it was established in 2013, that the Commission would assess the environmental impact of EU consumption of products and raw materials likely to contribute to deforestation and forest degradation outside the EU (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2013).

The EU cooperation in REDD program supports developing countries in improving land-use governance. It is one of the initiatives taken by the EU to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation, and that has been incremented by the REDD+, with the “plus” referring to the role of sustainable management of forests in developing countries. Therefore, the objective of the REDD+ program is to support developing countries in their efforts to improve forest policies and regulations and address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation through REDD+.

Within the European Green Deal, the EU set a new Forest Strategy in 2021. The new Strategy maintains its objective to achieve the EU’s greenhouse gas emission reduction target of at least 55% in 2030. However, the New Strategy is focused only on EU forests, aiming to contribute to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the Goal 15, that sets out a mission to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt land degradation and biodiversity loss.

The current EU action toward the protection and restoration of the world’s forests is laid out in its Communication “Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests”, that specifies the need for the EU to be part of a global alliance to reverse the trend of deforestation (2019c). In the Communication, the EU points to the fact that the EU forest cover has increased over recent decades, on account of practices imposed by the EU Forest Strategy, while the rate of deforestation in other regions, namely in tropical areas, continues at alarming levels (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019c).

The escalating rates of global deforestation and forest degradation find justification in the document due to the rising demand generated by an expanding global population for necessities such as food, feed, bioenergy, timber, and other commodities. This heightened demand exerts increased pressure on land use. Furthermore, the prevalence of inadequate policies, weak governance, and insufficient enforcement mechanisms contributes to this phenomenon.

Notably, as pointed by Pendrill *et al* (2022), 90% of forest loss can be attributed to agriculture, either directly through clearing of forests for agricultural expansion or indirectly through loss of forest as a result of agriculture-related activities. However, in the same analysis is shown that only about a third to half of all land cleared for agriculture is put into productive use.

Building upon the 2013 Forest Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the 7th Environmental Action Program and the European Commission's project "Clean Planet for All", the Communication's objective is to propose a set of new actions and aspirations to step-up EU action in protecting the world's forests. From the understanding that halting deforestation and forest degradation requires putting a particular emphasis on the sustainable production and consumption of agricultural and forest-based products, the Communication proposes a partnership approach with producers and consumer counts, as well as business and civil society (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019c).

The 2018 Communication establishes five priorities to step up EU global action against deforestation and forest degradation. The first priority is to reduce the EU consumption footprint on land and encourage the consumption of products from deforestation-free supply chains. The Union's approach to this was to implement the Directive (EU) 2018/2001 to address the risk of deforestation arising from the increased use of biofuel, promote the use of energy renewable sources and build a sustainability criterion.

Additionally, the EU, through Regulations - especially Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 and Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 - seeks to encourage the consumption of products from deforestation-free supply chains and facilitate the process for all the chain of production. The use of internal policy to curb failed international environmental attempts to curb climate change is exemplified by the Regulation 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council that entered into force on June of 2023. Under the Regulation, any operator or trader who places commodities (soy, beef, palm oil, wood, cocoa, coffee, rubber and other derived products) on the EU market, must be able to prove that the products do not originate from deforestation or forest degradation land.

Although the use of direct extraterritorial jurisdiction and bilateral agreements being the most obvious way of influence of a State in Global Environmental Governance, often a State intention can face conflicts with sovereignty and equality of state principles. In that case, States have found that one way of exerting influence internationally is through domestic legislation that has extraterritorial impact, i.e., that exercise authority even outside its own territory

(MATA DIZ; ARAÚJO, 2021). The adoption of such unilateral governance measures has been notably prominent in the European Union's approach to environmental protection, a phenomenon often referred to as "the Brussels Effect." (BRADFORD, 2012).

Nonetheless, the Commission established some provisions for improving its key action under this first priority: (i) establish a platform for dialogue on deforestation between multi-stakeholder and Member States; (ii) encourage the strengthening of standards and certification schemes that help to identify deforestation-free commodities; (iii) assess additional regulatory measures to ensure a level playing field and a common understanding of deforestation-free supply chain (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019c).

The second priority is to work in partnership with producing countries to reduce pressures on forests and to ensure that the EU development cooperation is deforestation-proof. Since 2010, the EU has invested more than 20 million euros in projects related to the forest industry, i.e, the economy forest-based sector, through the "SWITCH To Green" programmes. It also supported the management of protected areas in 2018, mainly in tropical humid forests, aiming for indigenous community conservation. With the continuation of the EU FLEGT Action Plan, the EU has improved transparency and legal reform in the supported countries. To scale up existing actions and develop new ones, the Commission established that, under this priority, it will: (i) ensure that deforestation is included in political dialogues at country level, to help partner countries to develop national frameworks on sustainable management of forests; (ii) ensure that EU support in partner countries does not contribute to deforestation and forest degradation, and ensure that, when justified, the EU support is accompanied by compensation measures; (iii) help partner countries to implement sustainable forest-based value chains and promote sustainable bio-economies; (iv) develop and implement incentive mechanisms for smallholder farmers to maintain sustainable agriculture practices.

The third EU priority is to strengthen international cooperation to halt deforestation and forest degradation, alongside encouragement for forest restoration. It is pointed out in the Communication that the EU leadership in international cooperation is reflected with its commitment to multilateral action and through the FLEGT Action Plan. With multilateral and bilateral agreements, the EU contributes to designing policies and standards to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, through work with national, regional and intergovernmental organizations. The key actions established by the Commission to improve international cooperation is to strengthen cooperation on policies and actions to halt deforestation in the international fora and to promote trade agreements that include provisions



on the conservation and sustainable management of forests and further encourage trade on deforestation-free products.

The fourth priority is based on financial support for land-use practices. Although the Commission has committed with the support of more than 500 million euros to support forests in partner countries for the period of 2014-2020, it is pointed out in the document that this investment is not sufficient to meet the Communication objectives. To work on attracting new public funding and redirecting the finance support, the EU External Investment Plan (EIP) and Regional Blending Facilities are usually the tools to leverage private funding in different sectors. In addition, the EU supports public funding, through the EU Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth, for example. A key action established for improvement of the EU financial support in this area is to create sustainable mechanisms to catalyze green finance for forests, to leverage and increase funding. The objective is to support producer countries in the conservation of existing forest cover and regeneration of forests, and in creating positive incentives for investments in sustainable forest management and sustainable forest-based value chains. Another key action is to improve company reporting on the impacts that company activities have on deforestation and forest degradation.

Finally, the fifth priority is to support the availability and quality of information access on forest and commodity supply chains, as well as support research and innovation on the matter. This is due to the need for reliable information on forest resources and their condition to effectively construct forest policy. To be able to encourage the consumption of products from deforestation-free supply chains and to create an impact assessment of the EU consumption, it is required better monitoring of trade flows to national, regional and local levels, and better access to information. The Commission key action on this matter is: (i) to establish an EU Observatory on deforestation and forest degradation, to facilitate the access to information; (ii) explore the REDD+ service to strengthen forest-monitoring systems; (iii) improve the work coordination among relevant research institutes; (iv) share innovative EU practice on the circular economy and other relevant areas with other countries.

The present topic presented how the European Union has been committed to the protection and restoration of the world's forests for over a decade, with several flagship initiatives and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and halt deforestation. By positioning itself as a global sustainable leader the EU has implemented various measures to address drivers of deforestation and degradation, including strengthening forest governance, promoting sustainable forest management, and addressing the demand side and the responsibility of

consumers. With the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030, the EU is focused on contributing to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and protecting EU forests while also being part of a global alliance to reverse the trend of deforestation worldwide. The EU's efforts to combat deforestation and forest degradation continue to be critical in mitigating climate change and biodiversity loss.

Towards this goal, the EU faces a specific challenge: the Amazon rainforest, the biggest remaining tropical forest in the world. The majority of the forest resides in Brazilian territory and, throughout the history of the EU-Brazil cooperation, Amazon has been one of the main focus of diplomatic conflicts between Europe and Brazil. To better understand the reasons behind this geopolitical endeavor, it is necessary to, firstly, understand the history of the forest.

### 3. AMAZON RAINFOREST AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

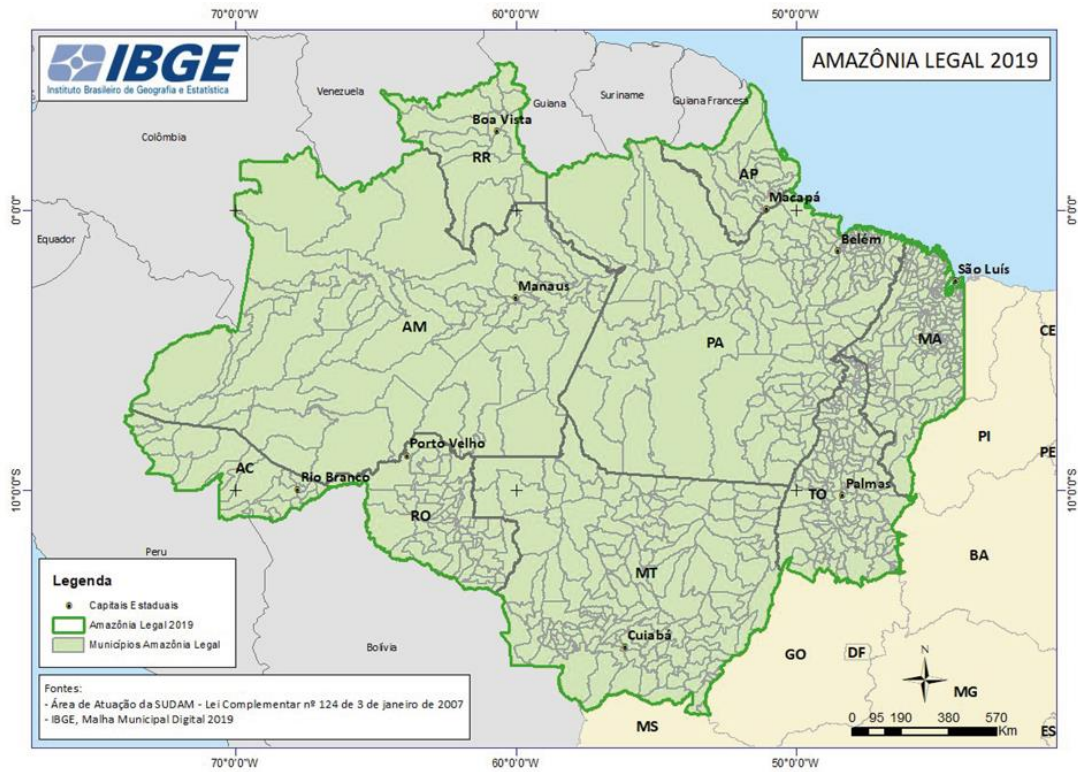
The Amazon rainforest, more than a tropical forest, is a complex social system, divided by nine nations and hundreds of ethnicities, with national and international interests surrounding it. Its story and role in the globalized world are told in a fragmented manner by different voices, such as indigenous communities, civil society, academics, Federal Governments, scientists, NGOs, international organizations, Nation-Estates, etc. For that reason, everything that is studied and talked about the Amazon (or Amazônia) is surrounded by relativism which leads to opinions and propositions about its management being presented without any knowledge of its history and current reality. In Marcio Souza (2019, p. 23) words: “of all the ways that the Amazon suffers, the most slippery is exactly this one of the hasty opinions. At the same time, it is the simplest to overcome”.

Located in the north of South America, the Amazônia comprehends the Amazon basin, which is formed by Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Guiana, Venezuela, Suriname, Ecuador, and France. Brazil holds the biggest part of the forest, 68%; followed by Bolivia, with 10%; Colombia, with 8%; Ecuador, with 2%; Venezuela with 1% and the Guianes', with 1%. In total, it represents 1/20 of the earth's surface, (VIANA, 2001), and is home to 1.8 million different species of plants, animals, and microorganisms (BECKER; STENNER, 2008).

Considering that Brazil holds the more significant part of the Amazônia, and is also the biggest trade partner in South America to the European Union (EU), this research focuses its study on the Brazilian fraction of the Amazon rainforest, specifically the Legal Amazon region. The Legal Amazon region was created by the former Brazilian president, Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945; 1951-1954), through the Law N° 1.806/53, to reunite Amazon regions with similar characteristics and create better policy towards the socio economic development of forest. The region comprises the nine Brazilian states: Pará, Amazonas, Acre, Amapá, Rondônia, Roraima, west side of Maranhão, Mato Grosso and Tocantins (ILLUSTRATION 1).

Amazônia is among the most dense, diverse, and complex terrestrial biomes on the planet. Its physiognomy is characterized by an intense ecosystem, and it cannot be analyzed as a unique entity, although the most extensive coverage is of tropical rainforest. This biome is characterized by many flora species, with deep interrelationships between them and associations with a diverse fauna (SOUZA, 2019).

ILLUSTRATION 1 - 2019 Legal Amazon map by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE



SOURCE: IBGE (IBGE, 2019)

A map of comparison to the total area of the Legal Amazon and European countries shows how big and, consequently, complex, and important is the region (ILLUSTRATION. 2).

## ILLUSTRATION 2 – BRAZILIAN AMAZON – TERRITORIAL COVERAGE

FIGURE 1 BRAZILIAN AMAZON - TERRITORIAL COVERAGE



SOURCE: BNDES, 2009, p. 20

Until a few years ago, the general knowledge was that, besides few indigenous tribes that lived on a small subsistence economy, there was no possible human development into the forest until the arrival of European colonization. However, in the last 20 years, with the advance of Amazon archeology, it was proved that when the Europeans arrived in the 16th century, the Amazônia was already habited by complex hierarchical societies, of high demographic density. For millenniums the Amazonian people developed a culture nominated as “tropical jungle culture” (cultura da selva tropical in Portuguese), with its own power, language, religion, social and economic systems. Therefore, it is important to denote for this research that the Amazônia was not - and still isn't - a demographic empty space, and it is intrinsically intertwined with hundreds of different societies and cultures (SOUZA, 2019).

This understanding of the culture behind the Amazônia is important, since it is a space with a lot of global vision attributed by European colonizers. Since the colonization, the forest is seen by outsiders as a productive unit and an economical frontier, creating an arena of dispute for

control between national power and international interests. Into this arena, the Amazônia is narratively presented today as the “humanity hope” to “solve” the climate and environmental crisis. Indeed, forest protection is important not only for global climate concerns, but also for the conservation of the Amazonian culture. This narrative, however, as it will be shown in this chapter, is permeated with controversy, given the historical “international greed” towards the forest (TOLEDO, 2012; SOUZA, 2019).

The narrative about the Amazônia being a key to solving the climate and environmental crisis internationally is based on its biological richness and in its role in climate regulation. The Amazônia is home to billions of trees in its forests which pump water from the soil and transpire over a thousand liters of water a single day, forming a river of vapor into the air that is greater than the Amazon River itself - twenty billion tons of water is transpired per day by all the trees in the Amazon basin. The evaporated water, combined with the great updraft of air in the region, forms moisture-laden air current, the aerial rivers, bringing humidity and rain to the subtropics, irrigating water basins other than the Amazon region (NOBRE, 2014). Because it returns colossal volumes of water into the atmosphere and its ocean-like characteristics (vastness, wetness, and exposure to wind) it is frequently referred to as the “green-ocean” (WILLIAMS, et al, 2022).

The trees in the forest also have an important role in cleaning the atmosphere from hazardous pollutants (such as ozone). Studies have found that the lower atmosphere over the Amazon contained less ozone than air in the most remote regions on Earth, due to the presence of the biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) that, when evaporated from the leaves, enter the atmosphere and act as “chemical brushes” (NOBRE, 2014).

For decades, the forest also showed to be an important carbon sink due to the absorption of CO<sup>2</sup> from the atmosphere through the process of photosynthesis. That CO<sup>2</sup> is stored in the trees’ trunks, leaves and roots, other than being released into the atmosphere and contributing to the increase of global warming. However, this feature seems to be in decline, because of a number of factors, such as deforestation and climate change, transforming the forest into a carbon source (GATTI, et al, 2021). According to research published by the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) in 2021, over the past 20 years, the entire Amazon biome - not limited only to the Legal Amazon - has been a net carbon sink, removing from the atmosphere of about 1,7 million metric tons of CO<sup>2</sup> equivalent more than it emitted. However, just the Brazilian Legal Amazon emitted 3,6 billion metric tons of CO<sup>2</sup> equivalent more than it sequestered.

Because of its role in climate stability in the global context the Amazon Forest is often represented internationally as the “lungs of the world”, “green hell” or the “environmental hope”. For that reason, the Amazon became a symbol for biodiversity governance and for the way nature is represented in the political and economic spheres. Currently, main environmental discussions go through the management of the South American rainforest, giving the Amazonia an strategic importance in political narratives worldwide (BEZERRA, 2015).

Considering the various voices and political divisions, this chapter will focus on presenting the national management towards the forest, along with the international interest and narrative towards the Amazon Forest. First, it will present the national management and national narrative history since the military dictatorship in Brazil. It was during this time that international interest over the forest became a threat to the eyes of the Brazilian government, which started to occupy the region radically. Secondly, it will be presented how, during the 1980s, with the crescent global concern with environmental regulations, the international interest towards the Amazon came to be based in sustainability and the Amazônia started to be presented as the environmental savior.

### **3.1. History of Brazilian political management of the Amazon rainforest**

The historical analysis of the Amazon in the Brazilian scenario will be presented from the 1950s onwards. This time frame was chosen considering that although studies of the Amazônia have been conducted since the 1800s, the forest was not always a priority in national governance, and it was only during a new phase of development in Brazil during the 1950s that the Amazon began to gain importance in policy planning and the national political narrative (BECKER, 1982). In that context, it is important to delineate, firstly, that the national management history of the Amazonia is intertwined with the international discourses and narratives towards it and the role that the forest played in that context (BEZERRA, 2015).

The prevailing national perspective on forest management has historically presented Amazônia as a reservoir of exploitable resources, accompanied by an emphasis on reinforcing Brazil’s sovereignty in the region. The governmental management of the forest, since the 1930s, was aimed to integrate the region with the rest of the country, with the “March to the West” (*Marcha para o Oeste*, in Portuguese) program of Getúlio Vargas government, and the construction of roads in the region during Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) project of development “Fifty years in Five” (*Cinquenta anos em cinco* in Portuguese). Those programs aimed to fill the “demographic vacuum” of the forest (LIMA; POZZOBON, 2005) with a special rush due to

discourses that presented the Amazônia as a solution for the concern of the crescent global population of regions such China, Japan and some European countries. For example, there is research pointing that the Amazônia was presented to Adolf Hitler as a possible vital space (Lebensraum) for German expansion (RIBEIRO, 2014), and, during the 1930s, there were rumors that Japan was planning on invading the Amazônia, with the aim of transforming it into a remittance hub for surplus Asian populations (MATTO S, 1990 apud TOLEDO, 2012).

Another example of the international interest in the region at the time was seen in 1968, when the “Hudson Report” was disclosed. The project, created by the North American Roberto Panero and the Hudson Institute, proposed a new focus for the Amazon Forest, known as the “Great Lakes Project” or “Amazonian Mediterranean Sea”. Within this new focus, large dams would be constructed, flooding some forest regions to produce electricity, and facilitating hydrographic interconnection, and to connect the Amazon to the oil path in Venezuela. The plan focused exclusively on economic development and ignored how the flooding would affect the environment and the population that lived there (REIS, 2021; SOUZA, 2019).

The rise of international interest towards the forest led the military Brazilian government (installed in 1964), defender of national integrity, to insert the Amazônia in the top list of national priorities. Suddenly, the Brazilian government had to occupy the “demographic emptiness” of the forest to fight against the external danger and the international greed (TOLEDO, 2012). Through the creation of several institutions and programs with integration and occupation objectives, the Amazon region was transformed into an area of agriculture, mining, metallurgy and steel during the military dictatorship (SOUZA, 2019).

### **3.1.1. Military Dictatorship period**

During the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) the Amazônia appeared as one of the points of concern of national security. In addition to concerns regarding international exploitation of the forest, policymakers perceived the unexplored Amazônia as an impediment to progress. In pursuit of a model of capital expansion, they sought to overcome this barrier by establishing road networks for inland penetration, transitioning away from the predominant mode of transportation by sail, and providing incentives for occupation and consequent deforestation. For this end, three lines of intervention were created: colonization projects for the public and private sector; huge agricultural and cattle raising projects, and the insertion of the region in the international market (BEZERRA, 2015).



The military discourse about the security concern of the Amazonia sovereignty can be seen as a contradiction with the incentive to the international investment market in the region. It is paradoxical, as the nationalist military government, fearful of an external invasion in the Amazônia, relied on international resources and investment for its plan of occupying the forest. This endeavor encompassed diverse initiatives, including the funding of regional road infrastructure by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, engagement of multinational corporations in mineral extraction activities during subsequent years, and a direct correlation between timber harvesting and wood consumption by Northern countries (SOUZA, 2019; TOLEDO, 2012).

One of the first international private companies to adhere to fiscal incentives given by the Brazilian government at the time was the King Ranch of Texas, which established a farm of 180 thousand hectares in the state of Pará, which soon followed the concession of 3,5 million hectares to Daniel Ludwig, an American entrepreneur (SOUZA, 2019).

According to André de Paiva Toledo (2012), the justification by the government regarding the perceived international threat to sovereignty in the region can be interpreted as a justification for State-led territorial occupation without due consideration for the rights and well-being of indigenous and local communities. The development project for the Amazônia was based in three main concerns and justifications: the first, was the necessity to occupy the region under a matter of national security; the second relied on solving social and economic problems of the country, that is, to reduce hunger and poverty in the Northeast region. The third would be a consequence of the occupation, that is, to increase the economic development of the South-Central region. Under that narrative, the Amazônia was presented as the solution for all nation problems (TOLEDO, 2012).

This is perceived since 1967, when Marshall Humberto de Alencar Castello Branco, the first president of the military dictatorship (1964-1967), launched Operation Amazon (Operação Amazônia in Portuguese) with the aim to make the regional economy more dynamic and stimulate the Brazilian population to move there. To generate progress with safety, a Superintendence of Development in the Amazon (SUDAM) was created to be in charge of federal action in the Amazon region, and it had as its main financial agency the Bank of Amazonia (BASA in Portuguese) (CARDOSO; MULLER, 1977). During his government, the National Indigenous Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio - FUNAI in Portuguese), was also created, in 1967. Today, the FUNAI main responsibility is to protect and promote indigenous rights in Brazil, creating and monitoring indigenous land, as well as coordinating

policy for protection of the indigenous communities. However, at that time, the foundation was under the responsibility of the Interior Ministry and the National Security Council, and its aim was not to protect and defend the indigenous population, but rather to integrate and assimilate them to the Brazilian scenario, preparing the “savages” for a “modern life” (BEZERRA, 2015).

It was also during the military government that the Manaus Free Trade Zone (Zona Franca de Manaus - ZFM) was created by the Decree n° 288 and gained strength. The project established a tax incentive law for the following 30 years for the implementation of an industrial, commercial and agribusiness area in Manaus (a total of 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>), with the aim to leverage development in the region. This project was important for the region, as the economy went from the exclusivity of extractivism to industrialization, and the ZFM became a geopolitical outpost placed by the Brazilian State on the northern border, in the middle of an extractive environment (BECKER, 2005).

To achieve development in the region, in the 1970s the plan for Amazonian integration was made more viable through the first National Development Plan (PND in Portuguese), implemented for four years (1970-1974). It had three national objectives: to raise nation development, double the income per capita by 1980 and lead the economy to a GDP between 8% and 10% by the end of the Plan (BRASIL, 1971). Although it did not only revolve around the Amazon region, but the forest also became the center of discussions and seen as a solution for a severe drought that happened in preceding years in the Northeast.

The president at the time, Emílio Médici (1969-1974), declared the government intention towards the forest with his famous speech “Under the signal of faith” (Sob o signo da Fé in Portuguese) given in Manaus, at the Extraordinary Meeting of the SUDAM:

I want to say that the initial problem of Amazon is to really know it. And that to get to know it, as necessary, it is imperative to bring it closer and more open, to be able to populate it. Thus, my government's policy in the Amazon is focused primarily on carrying out a gigantic integration effort, with the dual objective of discovery and humanization.

(...)

What cannot be done due to the scarcity of capital can be done with an integrated program of colonization and development, with a minimum of economic resources, capable of rapidly generating wealth, to complement, without inflation, the effort necessary to solve the two problems: the man without land in the Northeast and the land without men in the Amazon. (MÉDICI, 1970, translated)

Within this discourse, one can discern the government's narrative portraying the Amazon as an uninhabited and unclaimed territory, overlooking the presence of numerous indigenous communities and local populations that have long resided in the region. The aim was to present Amazônia as an empty land that held the key to national growth, and with the desire to occupy the land, it led to the construction of the Transamazônica, an interstate highway road connecting the Amazon to the Northeast. The project also focused on selling land along the road to small producers, using long-term credit. The strategy was to seek an economic and cultural integration of the Amazonian region into the Brazilian community, and to occupy and develop the region to absorb the population from other regions (BRASIL, 1971). In other words, it was mainly a colonization program for the region based on the construction of infrastructure. The prediction was that, in ten years, 100 thousand families would install farms along the highway (TOLEDO, 2012).

However, as the first PND project failed gratefully since the military government ignored all criticism towards the program and previous studies regarding its viability were not conducted. Consequently, because of the lack of knowledge about the region and its soil, the agriculture production attempted by the families did not turn out as expected. At the time, the understanding was that the forest soil, because it was the colossal substrate of Amazônia and all its biodiversity, should be extremely fertile. However, the crops selected were not the best suited for the region (SMITH, 1981), and the settlers faced general organization problems, with insufficient resources and absence of a commercial system in the region. From the expected 100 thousand farms installed along the Transamazônica, only 8 thousand succeeded (TOLEDO, 2012). As stated by Emilio Moran (1985), the lack of information and the assumption that the soil was the same as other regions in the country presented the Amazon as a "knowledge frontier" for the rest of the world.

From 1975-1979, the second National Development Plan was implemented, still during military dictatorship. The second PND had a focus in exportation, raising farming and cattle and agrominerals programs in the Amazon, creating a metallurgic and mineral complex in the East Amazon (BRASIL, 1974), with the aim to create economic growth, with export growth of industrialized products and agro-products. The program was still based on the concern of the government in integrating the region to the country and with national security in a continuous colonization process, but this time with fiscal incentives given to private companies that could occupy at least 500,000 hectares of land (MELLO, 2006; BONFIM, 2010).

Therefore, the 1960s and 1970s was marked by a rapid territory occupation with an intense migratory flow, made possible by these governmental incentives. First, attracted by the prospect of land ownership, settlers established themselves as smallholders, squatters, or tenants. Then, as local production was organized, entrepreneurs and companies appropriated the land, evicting its occupants. In other words, appealed by the increased real estate value, resulting from tax incentives and the paving of highways, large agriculture companies started to acquire the lands that at first were given to the migrant families with long-term credit (TOLEDO, 2012).

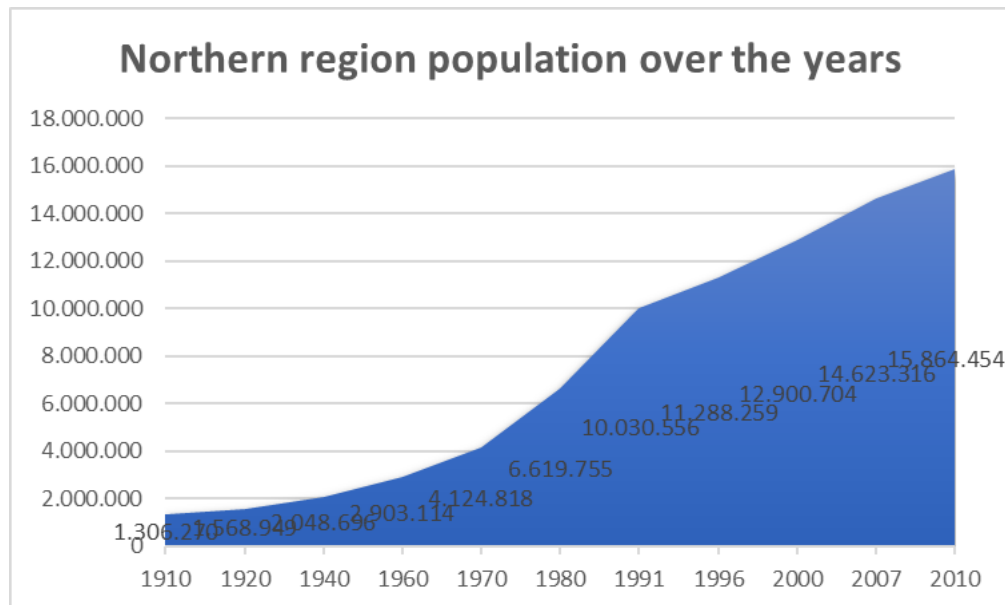
Contrary to the challenges faced by migrant settlers who were enticed by government promises, the rapid development of the region can be attributed to the presence of large corporations and their involvement in agricultural, timber, and mineral extraction projects. The presence of economic activities resulted in a rapid and spontaneous migratory flow, property appreciation and the definitive integration of the Amazon region to the national and international economy. As the government offered tributary deductions for investments and granted portions of the income tax to be applied in the region, public and private interests came together for the economic exploration of the forest (TOLEDO, 2012).

A notable program that triggered a significant influx of migrants to the region during the 1970s was the Agropecuary and Agrominerals Poles Programme in the Amazon (Polamazônia Programme) launched during the administration of Ernesto Geisel (1974-1975). The Programme, managed by the Planning Secretary, the Interior Ministry, the Amazonian Bank and SUDAM, consisted in establishing development regions, with 15 regions centers, each determined for a type of economic activities that would be implemented in that area of the territory - agromineral, agropecuary or wooden extraction -. It is interesting to denote from the Polamazônia project that, despite maintaining the aim of colonizing the region, the official government discourse left the political justification from the 1960s behind, and, from the 1970s onwards, gained a more economic focus. That is perceived by the arrival, within the Polamazônia Programme, of extensive cattle farms that resulted in large scale deforestation (BEZERRA, 2015; TOLEDO, 2012).

It was also during the Geisel government that the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica - TCA) was signed, with the objective of environmental and geographical integration for “brotherhood” between the “neighboring Nations”: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guiana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. The regional integration defended the principles of territorial sovereignty and, at the same time, aimed for the construction of a regional identity against the extra-regional international threat. That is, the territorial auto

determination of Latin American countries would strengthen the region against the “imperialist greed” (JÚNIOR, 2012).

ILLUSTRATION 3 – Northern region population over the years



SOURCE: IPEADATA

The impact of the integration plans and projects that became part of the history of the Amazonia can be seen in the increase of the population. In 1960, there were approximately 2,900,000 habitants living in the Northern region of the country. By 1991, the population number was up to approximately 10,030,500, according to data provided by the Brazilian Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) (ILLUSTRATION 3). Joana Bezerra (2015) points to four structural changes that came from this integration objective: first, was a change in connectivity of telecommunication network, which impacted the national and international connection of the region; the second was regarding the economy, consequences of the extractivism of minerals and durable consumer goods; the third refers to the increase of population, triggering an urbanization process in the region; and, last, the fourth refers to the Amazonian society that, affected by all the last three, was a scenario for social movements during the late 1980s.

In the 1980s during the João Figueiredo government (1979-1985), the last president from the military dictatorship, Brazil was facing a period of inflation and of debt crisis. Because of the increased national debt, environmental destruction got to a new level. In the military government lenses, the debt could only be paid when the profits from the projects installed in Amazônia were reversed to dollars in the external market. However, the execution of those projects required capital that was not available in government treasury, which led the State to

turn itself to international market investment in the region. Consequently, Brazil's external dependency got worse, as well as the environmental degradation in the forest (TOLEDO, 2012).

Simultaneously, it became clear the State management fragility towards the Amazônia. What was once a project for colonization, became a project of attempting to regularize land ownership that got out of governmental hands. It became a runaway situation: the settler that came first and cleared the land, occupied it illegally. Then, the government granted a formal land title in an attempt to regularize the situation. With the increase of land value, the settler, now official landlord, would sell it to the market sector, and would move on to occupy a new area, reinitiating the cycle. As a result, during the 1980s the deforestation rate reached an average of 21,130 km<sup>2</sup> by year (INPE, 2023; TOLEDO, 2012). The national tributary system encouraged deforestation, as it imposed higher taxes on land areas with native vegetation compared to those with pastures or cultivated land (BINSWANGER, 2002).

The military's management approach towards the Amazônia resulted in severe environmental degradation and a significant decline in soil fertility, largely attributed to rampant deforestation. The policies and practices implemented under the military governance led to far-reaching consequences for the local ecosystem, with an emphasis on resource extraction and economic development without adequate consideration for environmental conservation, which contributed to alarming environmental degradation.

Although there was international criticism towards human rights protection in the country, there was no space for social debates or popular demonstrations against the government policy towards the Amazonian region. During the dictatorship, the major concern of the National Security Doctrine was the fight against communism, based on capitalist-nationalism ideals, which led to military repression to all that could be understood as subversive and a threat to peace, family and nation property. In a social scope, the local population and indigenous were systematically expelled from their space. In the work of Shelton Davis (1977), "Victims of the Miracle" (Vítimas do Milagre, in Portuguese), the author shows the close complicity between State agencies and multinational economic groups in the composition of the development model applied in the Amazon, which systematically expropriated resources from indigenous peoples.

The indigenous communities hold a intertwined social and cultural relation with the land and, with the economic occupation of the forest, their cultural identities were neglected, setting them aside to social marginalization which persists to this day. In a research made by the National Truth Committee (Comissão Nacional da Verdade in Portuguese) - created to examine human

rights violations perpetrated in the context of the dictatorship - it was estimated that at least 8.350 indigenous were killed because of governmental action or omission at the time of the military government, and entire ethnicities were extinct (COMISSÃO NACIONAL DA VERDADE, 2011).

Notwithstanding, all criticism about humanitarian and environmental matters were dismissed as an international conspiracy against Brazil's sovereignty over the forest, which did not correspond to reality, as the international arguments never questioned Brazilian sovereignty and only pointed to the nature of governmental acts (TOLEDO, 2012). It is possible to denote how, along with the development rush to occupy the region, it emerged during the military dictatorship an “anti-internationalization” narrative against international interests in the country, which were used to ratify the government posture towards the Amazon Forest management (DE SARTRE; TARAVELLA, 2009).

Nationally, the perception that dominated the Amazon region during the military period was the one that presented the forest as a resource frontier, as a place for settlement and as a source of resource to be exploited in a way that reinforced the sovereignty of the country and its economic development (BEZERRA, 2015). In summary, through a series of plans such as Amazon Operation, National Integration Plan and Polamazônia, the military government aimed to develop infrastructure; allocate fiscal incentives; subsidized credit lines to attract business interests to the region and, consequently, colonize it; and facilitate the implantation of large-scale agri-business, mining, and forestry projects (ALBERT, 1992). As a result, mineral and wood contraband, as well as biopiracy, arises; the Amazon became a route of drug trafficking and the market interests led to land-related conflicts, as well as a disorderly occupation of the region (TOLEDO, 2012).

The beginning of the 1980s and the final years of the military dictatorship represents a landmark in the change of national environmental governance. Throughout the decade, the geopolitical concern of the military for the security of the region remained as a parameter for Brazilian development policy in Amazônia (ALBERT, 1992). However, following the international environmental concern that arose in 1972 with the Rio Summit, in 1981 was edited the National Environmental Policy Law (N. 6938/81), which established concepts, principles, tools and mechanisms for formulation and application of environmental guidelines. The Law N. 9683/81 created the National Environmental System (SISNAMA in Portuguese), responsible for the articulation of environmental entities at the federal, state, and municipal level. The law also

adopted the polluter-pays principle, to identify responsibility and establish obligation for those that cause environmental loss (BRASIL, 1981).

The beginning of the 1980s marked a new State attitude towards the Amazon Forest management. Given the international pressure and narrative, exerted mainly by developed countries, international financial institutions such as the World Bank incorporated clauses aimed at safeguarding the environment and human rights. With the re-democratization of Brazil initiated in 1985, the management of the forest started to be influenced by international environmental concerns that gained force during the 1970s, as well by the public opinion.

### **3.1.2. New Republic period**

The Brazilian constitutionalization of environmental protection followed the international trend of the emergence and consolidation of environmental law. The Federal Constitution of 1988, known as “Citizen Constitution”, played a pivotal role in incorporating the environment into Brazilian policy. As a result of a range of national and international transformations, the Constitution established a dedicated chapter for environmental protection, which Professor José Afonso da Silva (2004) considered to be one of the most important and advanced aspects of the 1988 Constitution.

However, it is important to highlight that the Constitution addresses the broad issue of predatory exploitation of natural resources, embodying a concept of “constitutional ecological opulence”, as termed by Brazilian jurist Antônio Herman de Vasconcelos e Benjamin (2005, p. 7). This means that environmental protection extends beyond a single chapter and represents a constitutional framework that directly or indirectly addresses the management of environmental resources.

Thus, although Article 225 is the main core of environmental protection in the 1988 Constitution, which states that all individuals have a right to a clean and safe environment, the Constitution has scattered provisions that legitimize environmental protection and the socio-environmental function of property. Therefore, as Benjamin points out (2005), beside the explicit environmental protection imposed in this article, there are implicitly rights, duties and environmental principles that can be derived through norm interpretation. This includes the general duty not to degrade and the principles of primacy of the environment and limited exploitability. Therefore, the environmental character of certain rights and principles is sometimes direct (e.g., the right to an ecologically balanced environment or the polluter-pay



principle), while in other cases, it is derived or indirect. These derived or indirect elements, although not originally concerned with the environment, through interpretation end up safeguarding environmental values, such as the right to life, the right to health, the right to property with social function and the rights of indigenous people, to mention just a few examples.

During the rewriting process of Brazil's constitution, the "internationalization" narrative of the Amazon was still seen with concern. During the constitution debate in the Brazilian Congress, a secret document surfaced in public media - written in German in 1981 and translated in Portuguese in 1987 -, which outlined that the international community was orchestrating a conspiracy to take over the Brazilian Amazon. The military attempted to use the document as ammunition to appeal to the politicians' traditional sense of nationalism (PERRUCCI, 1999). As a result, the Brazilian Constitution introduced constraints on foreign land ownership within the nation, with a notable emphasis on the Amazon region, where foreign capital was instrumental in acquiring mining rights. Nonetheless, in Chapter 8, it recognizes indigenous communities' rights to inhabit their ancestral lands securely, thereby instigating the process of land demarcation and catalyzing a discourse involving international indigenous collectives and the nation-state. This chapter's transnational dimension, however, undergoes a tempering influence in Chapter 2, Article 20, which explicitly designates lands historically inhabited by indigenous groups as the rightful domain of the Union. Consequently, indigenous communities are constitutionally precluded from asserting sovereign entitlements over their territories.

Furthermore, the Constitution designates the nation's borderlands as pivotal to national security and thus subjects them to military jurisdiction, especially during periods of national crises. The complementary influence of these two chapters (Chapters 2 and 8) is two-fold: one channeling transnational elements by fortifying the international safeguard of the Amazon, and the other advancing state-centric nationalism by consolidating sovereign dominion over the Amazon within the purview of the Brazilian government (PERRUCCI, 1999).

As a direct response to the constitutional environmental protection and international pressure, it was also in 1988, during the administration of José Sarney (1985-1990), that "Our Nature Programme" was launched, aiming to reduce the environmental degradation in Amazônia. Within the Programme, conservation units were created, and the identification and demarcation of indigenous land arose (DE MELLO, 2006). That was a direct result of the protection of indigenous communities by the Constitution of 1988, which started to recognize indigenous

rights to preserve their culture and identity - which is directly connected to their land - (BRASIL, 1988).

Today, the understanding that the protection of indigenous right to land is intrinsically linked to environmental protection is more well-established in the environmental law and human rights field. Indigenous people physically occupy 404 million hectares of land in Latin America and the Caribe and, of these 404 million hectares, 237 million (almost 60 percent) are in the Amazon basin (RAISG, 2019). That is an area larger than France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway and Spain combined. Forests cover more than 80 percent of the area indigenous people occupy (330 million hectares) and almost half (45 percent) of the intact forests in the Amazon Basin are in indigenous territories (FAO, 2021).

According to a study made by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, there is six factors that explain why the forests in indigenous territories are more preserved than in non-indigenous territories: (i) cultural factors and traditional knowledge; (ii) recognition of collective territorial rights; (iii) forest incentive policies; (iv) land use restrictions; (v) limited accessibility and low profitability of agriculture; (vi) limited access to capital and labor (2021, p. 33). Furthermore, the Interamerican Court of Human Rights already established the obligation of States, under the American Convention of Human Rights (1968), to protect the ancestral territory of indigenous communities, specially given their cultural and spiritual connection to their land (CORTEIDH, 2012).

For this reason, the protection of indigenous rights in Brazilian legal order goes alongside with environmental protection and, more specifically, the protection of the Amazon rainforest. The recognition of indigenous rights in the political history of Brazil not only serves to empower and respect the autonomy of these communities, but also serves as a fundamental pillar in the national governance towards the protection of the Amazônia.

According to the Constitution of 1988, the responsibility to protect the environment is common and the parts are jointly liable, that is, municipalities, states and the federal union have common administrative competences, with federal union acting in broader terms, establishing general laws, states focusing on regional interest and municipalities focusing on local interests (BRASIL, 1988). At a federal level, the Environment Ministry (MMA - Ministério do Meio Ambiente, in Portuguese) has the key role to plan, coordinate, supervise and control the implementation of the federal environmental policy. It is the MMA responsibility to set guidelines for a sustainable use of the environment in Brazil, respecting the independence of

local governments. To assist its governance, in 1989, the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA in Portuguese) was created, as a federal agency under the Ministry of Environment, by Law N° 7.732/89. Its main purpose is to exercise the environmental police role and implement proceedings of the national policies for environmental protection and quality control. Another important mechanism created with the re-democratization is the national system of conservation units (SNUC in Portuguese): from 1970 to 1990, 22 national parks, 20 biological reserves and 25 ecological stations were created (BEZERRA, 2015).

Also in 1988, the Brazilian Forest Satellite Monitoring Programme (PRODES in Portuguese) was launched, a project of satellite monitoring of clear-cut deforestation in the Legal Amazon, producing annual deforestation rates in the region. The data is used for proposing public policies and for evaluating the effectiveness of their implementation, and is used in Intergovernmental agreements, such as the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, the National Inventory Report on Greenhouse Gas Emission and monetary donations by the Amazon Fund.

These instances exemplify early environmental protection policies within the initial years of the New Republic, arising because of the global impetus towards sustainable development and the tenets laid out in the Constitution of 1988. Notably, during Sarney's administration, the Amazon rainforest assumed a central role, prompting the implementation of various strategies aimed at bolstering federal engagement in the region. Concurrently, the notion of resisting the international intervention in the Amazon persisted as a recurrent theme within the governmental concern. In a discourse made by Sarney in a reunion of the presidents of countries in the Amazon region, in Manaus, May 6th 1989, it is possible to denote the continuous concern over losing Brazil sovereignty over the region:

For our countries, the Amazon was a fundamental part of our national identity. It cost blood, struggle, tenacity, and heroism of our ancestors. It is a unique characteristic of our geographies. The Amazon has been the object of universal fascination. Its mysteries, vastness, and mythical dimensions have captivated imaginations around the world. And, we cannot deny, also, greed. Since the early days of the political configuration of South America, the Amazon has been a target of ambition. The thesis of its internationalization is not new and will not disappear. It emerges and resurfaces, taking on stronger or weaker contours depending on our ability to react. If we falter, if we lack the determination to preserve the Amazon and maintain its sovereignty, it will be destroyed like all the lands that fell under the action and force of empires. (BRASIL, 1989, p. 82, translated)

In this discourse, president Sarney highlights several instances during the 19th and 20th century where there were international efforts to internationalize Amazônia, as well as views of certain

international politicians advocating for increased presence of external industries in the region. With regard to Amazônia being listed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO and the crescent international narrative, that Sarney refers to as “symbolic” and “idealist”. For Sarney, the concern of the international environmental movement was losing sovereignty over Amazônia, and the forest was a non-negotiable question of territorial security. Sarney’s policy towards the forest can be characterized as a “dual-strategy” doctrine. On the one hand, it attempted to pacify the international concerns and narratives towards the forest with environmental protection initiatives, while at the same time, it continued to worry about the international interest in the region and, consequently, to allow for the military to step up its presence in the region (PERRUCCI, 1999).

In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the debate regarding the internationalization of the Amazon took on international dimensions due to the emergence of global environmental threats, particularly global warming. In the same context, neoliberalism was advancing, and Brazil was undergoing a shift in the framework of its foreign policy, breaking away from the military period. Henceforth, the nation, after an extended epoch characterized by an authoritarian military governance intertwined with a bureaucratic framework and a sheltered economic milieu, embarked upon a comprehensive endeavor of institutional restructuring during the 1990s. This transformative process transcended the economic domain, encompassing a myriad of public policy domains as well.

Therefore, in response to the adverse international reception of its approach to Amazon management, the Brazilian government undertook measures to mitigate the fallout within the global political landscape. This involved the mobilization of military forces and a heightened deployment in the Amazon region, as well as an expansion of both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement, aimed at fostering regional integration and cooperation. According to Shignoli Miyamoto (2009, p. 86), “the behavior adopted by the Brazilian government was justified, primarily due to the existence of numerous (international) proposals advocating the need to adopt limited, or shared sovereignty over Amazonian resources”.

In the context of the Amazon rainforest, this scenario assumed a paradoxical facet. Despite the State’s persistent narrative asserting its encompassment of all political and economic aspects within the region, its efficacy in shielding against external influences progressively waned, thereby exacerbating external encroachments upon the forest’s socio-political dynamics. This led to a diplomatic position in which Brazil engaged more with Southern countries, with the aspiration to establish itself as a regional leader in South America. This was a strategy for the

country's international engagement, which led to a closer alignment with South American nations, in addition to Mercosur. Brazilian diplomacy then sought to foster collaboration with Amazonian countries, aiming to consolidate the project of regional integration. As a result, Amazônia became an instrument of significant relevance for Brazil's foreign objectives during this period (SANTOS, 2014).

During the brief government of Sarney's successor, president Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992), considerable changes were implemented towards the management of Amazônia, as Collor toned down the nationalistic narrative and sought to build Brazil's image as an environmental protector. There were three sets of environmental reforms that constitute the main difference between Sarney and Collor governments, according to Sjur Kasa (1994): changes in (i) environmental surveillance and inspection; (ii) in policies to protect the indigenous populations; and (iii) in Brazil's positions on international environmental cooperation. During the Collor government, there was an increase of IBAMA inspections in Amazônia and the distribution of fines for environmental degradation. There was also substantial difference on the recognition of indigenous reservation, specially the Yanomami reservation in Roraima, in territory of Legal Amazon. And, in contrast to the former government, Collor government was open to external cooperation for environmental protection (KASA, 1994).

Hence, prior to the projects led by President Collor, the international concerns regarding the significance of the Amazônia for global environmental issues were constructed as challenges to Brazil's sovereignty over the region. International cooperation was seen as a facade for territorial encroachment and external pressure was regarded as an international conspiracy aimed at impeding Brazil's economic development. Simultaneously, Amazônia was viewed as one of the resources that had the potential to propel Brazil into the realm of an economic world power (KASA, 1994).

The search for new meaning in relations with Amazonian countries brought a redirection of Brazilian foreign policy, with repercussions on the country's geopolitics in the 1990s. The Itamar Franco government (1992-1994) shifted its focus to multilateral forums, in which Brazil played a predominant role, allowing for greater international presence, and regional integration. The latter emphasized Mercosur and other South American countries for the integration project. An emblematic project of this time was the Amazon Initiative (Iniciativa Amazônia in Portuguese), a hallmark project designed with the primary aim of forging a free trade zone between Brazil and neighboring Amazonian countries. The initiative sought to channel

investments into cooperative projects and regional security enhancement. This strategic move epitomized the Brazilian's government's proactive approach to cultivate a positive agenda with its neighbors, through cooperative measures intertwined with bolstering regional stability (SILVA, 2002).

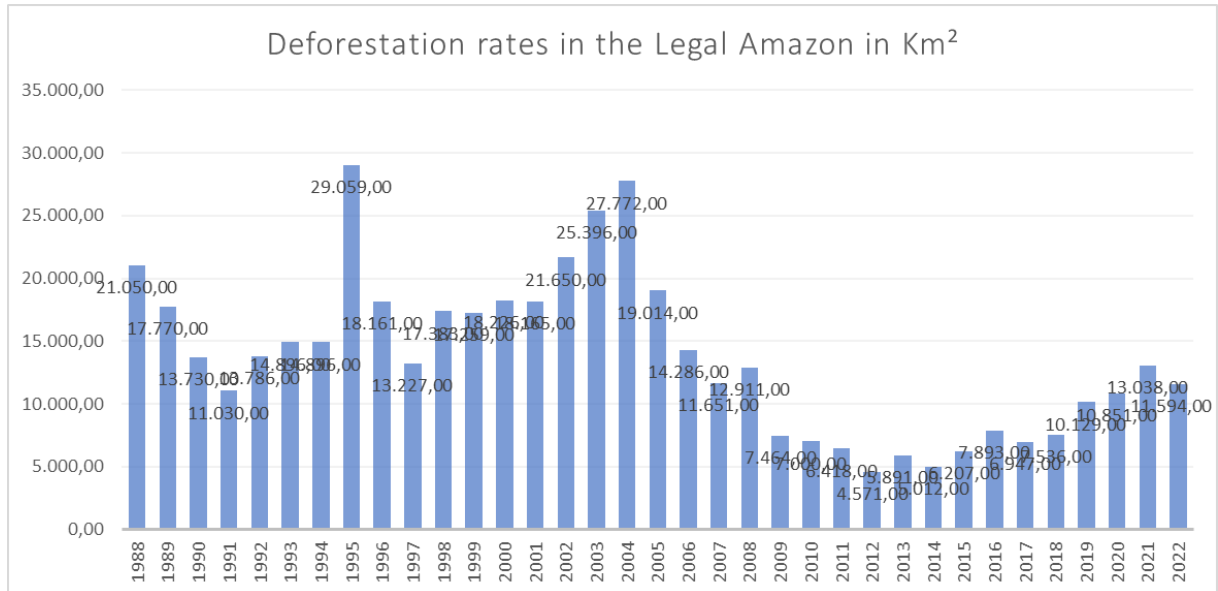
Simultaneously, a global narrative emerged advocating for a concept of "shared sovereignty" and "humanitarian intervention" concerning the Amazônia, as a direct response to escalating environmental degradation and the concomitant violation of human rights in the country. In August of 1993, international attention became acutely focused on the region following a heinous incident wherein illegal miners perpetrated a gruesome massacre of Yanomami men, women, and children from the Haximu community in the state of Roraima. Merely five years earlier, in 1988, another tragedy had unfolded—a massacre of indigenous individuals belonging to the Ticuna community, driven by territorial disputes with unlawful loggers and miners operating within the area. Both of these instances garnered substantial coverage from global media outlets, simultaneously shedding light on the extent of environmental despoliation within the Amazônia. These events consequently furnished a basis for international proponents to substantiate potential intervention in the region on the grounds of safeguarding both the environment and human rights (HIRST; PINHEIRO, 1995).

Brazilian foreign policy had become more ambitious in its objectives and more assertive in its methods, aiming to expand its roster of international partners while securing access to new investments, technologies, and markets. Thus, in the 1990s, Brazil sought to emerge prominently on the global stage, leveraging its abundant biodiversity and its impacts on the planetary environment. In this context, the Amazon region became an extensive arena for the implementation of programs, projects, and research focused on nature conservation and sustainable practices. Paradoxically, it was also a period marked by the highest level of deforestation in the Legal Amazon, in 1995 (see figure 4), together with international projects created to protect and implement a sustainable form of exploitation of the Amazon.

For example, in 1992 the Pilot Program for Tropical Forests Protection (PPG-7) was launched during the Rio Summit, a Brazilian partnership with the seven countries that compose the G7 cupule (France, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada) and from the European Commission. The Program, financed with 428 million dollars, aimed to help Brazil with four objectives: the creation of national policy focused on the management of natural resources; implement conservation areas, to regulate the use of land in the forest; finance

research centers about the ecosystem of the forest; and encourage projects to promote sustainable development in the region (WORLD BANK, 2005).

ILLUSTRATION 4 – Deforestation rates in the Legal Amazon in Km<sup>2</sup>



SOURCE: INPE, 2023,

Another example is the Brazil in Action Programme (Brasil em Ação in Portuguese), launched under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003), from 1996-1999, to reinstate the territorial planning policy, followed by the Forward Brazil (Avança Brasil in Portuguese), from 2000-2003. Both plans were based on an exogenous vision of development, focused on the exterior with the aim of inserting Brazil as a competitor in the international arena, without taking into consideration the particularities of the region (BEZERRA, 2015).

The Forward Brazil programme, for example, had as one of its great axis the construction of road works in the Amazon region, aimed to diminish the cost of freight for crop production, especially soy. However, the benefits of the programme were mainly aimed at grain producers and it excluded the local population, as the divisions imposed by the Programme did not take into consideration the official division of the regions and communities. Because the main focus of the programme was the export sector and investment, only big producers benefited from it (BEZERRA, 2015). The economic return and the Plano Real explains the peak level of deforestation in 1995, that it was mainly caused by the conversion of the forest into pasture and temporary crops, in addition with a decrease in the value of land in the North region of Brazil at the time (FEARNSIDE, 2005).

It is possible to denote that during Fernando Henrique's government, Amazônia was still internally treated as a resource frontier, an area to be exploited for the development of Brazil. It differed from the old military politics because it maintained a neoliberal globalist vision that was sovereign in the central power. Although, some aspects of the old politics were maintained, since it benefited the economic sectors that were in dispute for the international market (VIANA, 2001).

The principle of sovereignty in relation to the forest persisted as an integral component of the government's discourse on forest management during this time. This stance subsequently led to the establishment of security initiatives within the region during Fernando Henrique's government, most notably the Amazon Protection System (Sistema de Proteção da Amazônia, SIPAM) and the Amazon Surveillance System (Sistema de Vigilância da Amazônia, SIVAM), both instituted in 1993. These endeavors were formulated in response to the United States' aspirations to establish military bases within the Brazilian Amazon, ostensibly to combat the encroachment of narco-trafficking and the tracking of unidentified aerial phenomena. The core essence of these projects lay in the deployment of surveillance radars strategically positioned to oversee vital zones within the Amazon territory (SANTOS, 2014).

During this time, the national administration started to be more influenced by international pressure and started to be more open to regional cooperation with other Amazonian countries. To strengthen regional cooperation, the prior Amazon Cooperation Treaty came to be the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in 1998, with a Permanent Secretary (PS) installed in Brasília in 2003. The ACTO aims to facilitate the cooperation between the Amazonian countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guiana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela) in order to be a permanent forum for cooperation, exchange and knowledge and to promote regional cooperation actions that result in the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of the Amazon, accordingly to the principle of sustainable development (OTCA, 2010).

Following the aim to ensure the sustainable development of the forest, in 2003 the National Commission on Biodiversity (CONABIO in Portuguese) and the National Forest Commission (CONAFLOR in Portuguese) were established. The aim was to ensure and promote the commitments signed in the Biodiversity Convention and to identify research areas for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity components (IPEA, 2011).



Another national project initiated in the beginning of the 2000s, especially during the government of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) was the Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS in Portuguese) and the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAM, in Portuguese). The aim of the PAS plan is to stimulate a new development model in the region, within five specific objectives: to enable sustainable production activities; to strengthen citizenship and social inclusion; to implement and maintain infrastructure repair works; to establish a new pattern of credit in the Amazon; and to promote environmental management and land organization (BRASIL, 2008).

Since the redemocratization, Brazil's governance towards the forest aimed to promote sustainable development in the Amazon region, while using the forest to develop the national economy, protect national sovereignty over the forest and redefine its role in the international arena. The forest was no longer the same as it was during the 1960s: it gained connectivity, which allowed the region to connect with the rest of the country and globally; its structure altered given the industrialization and urbanization; and it gained a new scope of political interest, given the social diversification and political changes that opened the participation to civil society in environmental policy discussions (BECKER, 2004).

During the first and second mandate of the president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2006 and 2007-2010) Brazil participated more actively in the international sphere in order to mitigate climate change. To do so, the plan was to reduce the high levels of deforestation in the country, and in 2010 the country sent his Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA), as obligatory goals linked to the Kyoto Protocol (1997). One of the main goals of the NAMA was the reduction of deforestation in the Amazon Forest by 80% until 2020, among others. To achieve this, in 2009 Brazil launched its National Policy on Climate Change (PNMC, in Portuguese), through Law N° 12.187/2009, which primarily focused on combating deforestation. Reduction goals range from 36.1% to 38.9% in carbon dioxide emissions emitted by Brazil by 2020 (BRASIL, 2009).

Through the establishment of these voluntary objectives, President Lula showcased Brazil's proactive stance as a key participant in international negotiations. In striving for this position, the nation actively sought alignment with influential global stakeholders. This marks a notable departure from Brazil's preceding diplomatic strategy, which had not previously exhibited such a pronounced dedication to curtailing emissions that contribute to climate change. This shift stands in contrast to the historical posture of adhering to the "polluter pays" principle, a core tenet outlined in the Kyoto Protocol and defended by Lula.

Concerning the protection of the Amazon, in the first years of Lula's government the deforestation reached a concerning level of 2,7 million hectares, the second highest level in history (see fig. 1.3), which led to strategy projects by the Environment Minister. Together with the Federal Government, a coordinated action with 13 Ministries, entitled Deforestation Control and Prevention Plan in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm) was created with other ministers, investing US\$ 50 million per year, from 2003 to 2008, to fight deforestation in the Amazônia. The PPCDAm, coordinated by the Head of the Civil House Office, aimed to develop several coordinated actions to reduce the rate of deforestation. The actions were organized into three strategic activities: (1) territorial planning; (2) monitoring and control; and (3) promotion of sustainable productive activities (BRASIL, 2004). In 2005 the results were already evident, and by 2010 there was a 77% reduction in the deforestation levels.

Lula's first years of government were mainly guided by four pillars, regarding environmental protection: i) sustainable development promotion, in environmental, social and economic areas; ii) social participation and collaboration in public policy; iii) strengthening of the National System of Environment (Sistema Nacional de Meio Ambiente, SISNAMA), with the environmental governance shared between federal and local governments; iv) involvement of different public sectors, applying environmental concerns through transversality in all ministries agendas and public sectors (KAGEYAMA; SANTOS, 2011; BRASIL, 2004). In fact, it can be said that during Lula's government the idea of Global Environmental Governance was applied, since it started to be a concern in Brazil's external agenda and nationally, through different sectors.

A main example of this more cooperative instance was the creation of the Amazon Fund in 2008, a mechanism proposed by the Brazilian government during the 12th Conference of Parties in Nairobi (2006) under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) framework. Created by the Decree nº 657/08, it incentivizes voluntary financial contribution to the protection of the rainforest, investing in actions of prevention, monitoring and combating deforestation, and promoting the sustainable use of the Legal Amazon. The Amazon Fund is an initiative to encourage international cooperation and participation in the sustainability of the Amazônia, without prejudice to Brazilian sovereignty. The donors can be any individual, company or institution, including foreign governments, interested in voluntarily contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions resulting from deforestation, and they receive a guarantee, given by external auditors, that the donation will be applied to projects that contribute to the reduction of future emissions. They also benefit from a receipt of a diploma

and a reference to the name and value of the contribution in the list of annual donors in the Amazon Fund Activity Report, and can participate in the annual meeting of Amazon Fund donors, in which performance and reports are presented (BRAZIL, 2008).

The Amazon Fund is an example of a tool into the Global Environmental Governance scenario, i.e., increasing segmentation and cooperation through all types of international actors (companies, organizations, civil society, governments, etc.) across levels and functional spheres of the State-led governance. In 2009, a donation agreement was signed by Norway to finance projects that fight deforestation until 2015, with the first donation to the Fund being of approximately US\$ 107 millions.

However, even with more open cooperation on sustainability matters, the concern with the “internationalization” of the Amazônia still preoccupied Brazilian politicians during Lula’s government. In April of 2005 the Federal Senate convened a public audience titled “The Internationalization of the Amazon: Real Risk, or Unfounded Fear”, during which examples of the international greed towards the forest were presented. One of the examples involved declarations made by the former European Union Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, advocating that the Amazon should not be regarded as a “nation asset”, but rather as a matter of “collective governance” (AGÊNCIA SENADO, 2005). Although there was not a crisis or tangible threat concerning the sovereignty over the Amazônia, the narrative against the international interest regarding the forest was still present. During the XX National Forum in 2008, Lula gave the message to the international community: “the world needs to understand that the Brazilian Amazon has an owner. The owners of the Amazon are the Brazilian people: they are the indigenous, the rubber tappers, the fishermen. But so are we”. Furthermore, he expressed amusement about the international cooperation regarding the Forest: “it is very amusing that the countries responsible for 70% of the planet's pollution now keep an eye on the Amazon in South America, as if the responsibility were solely ours to do what they did not do throughout the entire last century” (BRASIL, 2008, translated).

During Dilma Rousseff’s administration (2011-2016), following Lula’s government, Brazil witnessed substantial transformations in its approach to forest conservation. Notably, these transformations were most evident in the realm of fiscal policy, with significant reductions in funding allocated to initiatives that were established during Lula’s presidency. The budgetary allocation for the PPCDAm program experienced a 70% reduction during this period and, consequently, there was an increase of 10% in deforestation in federal environmental protection areas. (INFOAMAZONIA, 2015)

In 2012, the new Forestry Code (Federal Law N° 12.651/2012) was criticized for promoting an increase in areas used for rural production and, at the same time, reducing protected areas (WWF, 2011; Greenpeace, 2012). This would imply the advancement of pasture areas and, consequently, increase the cattle farms in the Amazon region. Another critical point during Dilma's government was the construction of hydroelectric power plants in the Amazon region, such as Jirau, Santo Antônio and Belo Monte.

While considered sources of clean and renewable energy, as well as drivers of regional development and national integration, the construction of hydroelectric power plants in the Amazon region has been subject of criticism and protests from social movements, environmentalists, indigenous and traditional communities. They denounce the neo-developmental model promoted by the Brazilian government, linked to international markets, which encroaches on natural resources and territories (CORRÊA, 2016). In fact, the socio-environmental impacts are immeasurable and range from a loss of vegetation to harm to the quality of life and health of the local population. For the indigenous communities, the dams cause loss of fish and other river resources, among the proliferation of insects and the methylation of mercury, which is toxic. The loss of vegetation can occur not only due to direct flooding but also due to deforestation by displaced residents, investors attracted to the area and agribusiness facilitated by the waterways associated with the dams (FEARNSIDE, 2015).

In parallel, during Dilma's government, Rio +20, took place in Brazil in 2012, aimed to "renew the political commitment to sustainable development through assessments of progress and existing gaps regarding decisions adopted by the main summits addressing the subject, as well as the discussion of new and emerging issues" (UNCSD, 2012).

With the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Michel Temer (2016-2018) becomes the president of Brazil to finish her mandate. Although he was in the presidency for only two years, his government was heavily criticized by environmentalists for his alignment with conservative politicians known as "ruralists" - politicians linked to the production of agricultural commodities or financed by agribusiness groups in Brazil - and the approval of measures that go against the reduction on deforestation. For example, during his mandate, the Senate approved the PEC 65, in 2016, which guarantees freedom to build with only a previous study of environmental impact and with no need to ensure an environmental license. In addition, Constitutional Amendment 65 (PEC 65) reduced the public prosecutor's power to supervise constructions and to only apply administrative punitive measures. Another measure was the Constitutional Amendment 241 (PEC 241) that established a cap for public investment growth

over a 20 year period, thus limiting the public spending with social and environmental projects, and affecting the Environment Ministerie (MMA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology, Innovation and Communication, which is committed to research in the areas of biodiversity, conservation and sustainability (CROUZEILLES et al, 2017; ).

In addition, the Norwegian government announced that it would reduce its aid to the Amazon Fund if the deforestation continued to rise. The investment made Norway carried out 89 direct actions to prevent, monitor and combat deforestation in order to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the Legal Amazon (KILPATRICK, 2017).

The environmental crisis aggravated with the following government of Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019-2022), a far-right politician with a military background. Since the beginning of his mandate, Bolsonaro made constant attacks against social and environmental bodies and entities, in addition to narratives against the performance of public servants and environmental law. The environmental policy subversion during Bolsonaro's government is a complex and extensive discussion. During his mandate, different strategies were implemented to mine environmental protection to benefit the ruralists: legislative, normative and administrative, attack on institutions and the Constitution, and restriction of civil's rights and society's participation in the policy process. Furthermore, there have been reports of intimidation and harassment directed towards NGOs and employees of institutions dedicated to environmental protection (OBSERVATÓRIO DO CLIMA, 2023).

Because of the extensiveness of attacks against different environmental policies, programs, institutions and projects, this research will present the main ones that directly affected the Amazon rainforest and Brazil's external relations. However, it is important to denote how each of these different policies, discourses and narrative affected indirectly the protection of the Amazônia and the international political image of Brazil, especially with European countries. The basis of Bolsonaro's foreign policy is based on an "anti-globalism" discourse, nearly conspiratorial that points to a global ideology - identified with the United Nations and the European Union - that advances a "cultural Marxist" agenda, which includes women's and LGBT rights, gun control, the right to abortion, secularism and environmentalism (CASARÕES, FLEMES, 2019).

Bolsonaro appointed Ricardo Salles to occupy the head seat as the Minister of the Environment, the former Secretary of Environmental Affairs for the state of São Paulo who had been convicted of environmental fraud. An emblematic statement made by Ricardo Salles in a

Ministry Meeting with the President in 2020 serves as an illustrative example of the environmental policy underpinning the Bolsonaro environmental administration: “(...) we need to make an effort here while we’re in this moment of tranquility in terms of media coverage because they’re only talking about COVID, and we can slowly push through changes and overhaul regulations while simplifying rules” (BBC NEWS BRASIL, 2020, translated).

As soon as he was nominated, in the first month of Bolsonaro mandate in 2019, Salles chose to discontinue the existing agreements and contracts among the Environment Ministry and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for 90 days. He also determined that an investigation should be made about international financial transfers on the Fundo Amazônia (Amazon Fund) and Fundo do Clima (Climate Fund) (GIRARDI, 2019). The Amazon Fund had Norway and Germany as the main donors at the time, and the Fund held approximately R\$ 3,4 billion (USD 840 million at the time).

A few months later the investigation began, in May of 2019, Salles said to the press that he had examined 25% of the contracts of the Amazon Fund, and had verified inconsistencies in 100% of the projects related to NGOs. However, he gave no information about how the analysis was made (FIGUEIREDO, 2019). On a Declaration, the Norway Embassy informed to be satisfied with the “robust structure” of governance of the Amazon Fund, and pointed that back in 2018, the Court of Auditors of Brazil concluded after a investigation that “(...) in general, the resources of the Amazon Fund are being used properly and contributing to the objectives for which it was established” (NORWAY EMBASSY, 2019).

Later on, during a public audience at the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, Salles defended a new economic framework for the Amazon protection, based on “national sovereignty”, and evaluated the Amazon Fund as “inexpressive in relation to the needs of the region”, and that it was time to reflect if it’s of Brazil interest to suffer international interference (AGÊNCIA DA CÂMARA DOS DEPUTADOS FEDERAIS, 2019).

This conflict and the narratives perpetrated by the Brazilian Government towards the management of the Amazon Fund is an factual example of the perpetration of the “anti-internalization” actions and narrative to this day. It is clear here the conflict between the defense of Global Environmental Governance by Norway and Germany, defending a global action towards the fight against deforestation, and the Brazilian praise of the country's sovereignty over the Amazon.

Because of the increasing devastation of the Amazônia forest and the dismantling of environmental policy in Brazil, environmental concerns became a central political issue for the ratification of the European Union-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The French President Emmanuel Macron (2017-today) together with the Irish leader Leo Varadkar (2017-2020), threatened to vote against the trade deal unless Brazil took its environmental obligations more seriously (MORGAN, 2019). Following this same logic and other critical statements from several European governments and parliaments in response to President Bolsonaro's environmental policy (DW, 2019), the European Parliament symbolically rejected the EU-Mercosur FTA, declaring "that the EU-Mercosur agreement cannot be ratified as it stands" (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2020, paragraph 36).

Presently, Brazil is embarking on the initial year of President Lula's return to office of the term spanning 2023 to 2027. The government's Pluriannual Plan (PPA) highlights the combat against deforestation and initiatives to address climate change as one of its six key priorities. The overarching goal is to significantly reduce the deforestation rate from 11,594 km<sup>2</sup> per year to 2,319 km<sup>2</sup> by the conclusion of the 2027 term (fig. 5), and to align the environmental agenda with the development of the country, ensuring the consolidation of the green economy in the country. Although the PPA does not specify the projects and specific measures taken to ensure this goal, it presents that the environmental agenda is contemplated in 44 different programs and in 108 specific objectives of the government plan (BRASIL, 2023, p. 125). In fact, the policy on economic development and socio-environmental sustainability presented several fronts, some of which will impact directly the protection of the Amazônia if it actually receives governmental investment: "protection and recovery of biodiversity, combating deforestation and fires (p. 169); "investment in sustainable agriculture" (p. 171); "land governance, agrarian reform, and regularization of quilombola territories and traditional communities" (p. 175); "economic policy for sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic growth and development (p. 179); "safe and sustainable mining (p. 194); among others that will indirectly affect the environmental policy and culture in the country.

#### ILLUSTRATION 5 – Annual Deforestation in the Amazon biome (in Km<sup>2</sup>)



SOURCE: PRODES, TerraBrasilis.

As it was presented in this chapter the history of the Amazônia management is marked with a clash between policies that focus on conservation and policies that focus on economic development, and was always permeated with different regional, national, and international interests. This results in a combined action of global, national and regional, with contradictory policies (environmental protection and economic development) that expresses itself in a “power game” (BECKER, 2004).

Since the military dictatorship, the Amazônia has been the target of conflicting public policies from different governments. The forest is historically presented as a natural and as a resource frontier and, at the same time, a place to be conserved and a place to be explored. This inconsistency hampers an integrated and efficient governance and management of the region. Moreover, the insertion of the Amazônia in the international scenario reproduces this incoherence as conflicting discourses and policies prevent management of the region that has as its main objective the union between conservation and economic activity (BEZERRA, 2018).

### 3.2. Geopolitics of Amazon rainforest

As denoted by the Brazilian national management towards the forest, the Amazônia management has been a concern for not only national economic development, but also to international actors. The history of the Amazônia national management is important because it led to a new organization in the political society and, consequently, in the actors that influence and signify the region, creating conflicts of perception on how the forest should be managed.

During the 1980s, international attention for the Brazilian Amazon gradually increased as global warming became an important political issue. Rising concern over global warming through the global political arena led to demands for national and international measures to



reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses and started a question of which sources and countries are accountable for which part of the emissions. Given the high numbers of deforestation in the Amazônia published in 1988, studies of how much deforestation contributes to global warming were led, concluding that the total contribution of deforestation to global warming had been estimated at 14% (UN, 1990).

Moreover, The Amazon region stands out for its abundant biodiversity and a diverse range of minerals. Consequently, it attracts global attention and interest as a source of raw materials for industrial, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and research purposes.

Since the 1980s, influenced by banks and international agencies, the policy towards Amazônia started to have a more preservationist tone. However, at the same time, foreign proprietors of Brazilian companies and foreign enterprises continued to operate in the forest. European, US and Japanese firms were (and still are) very influential in mineral exploration in the region (KOLK, 1996). This situation leads to a revival of North-South conflict, with developing countries resenting the international interest in the tropical forests, expressing fears that the environmentalist discourse was only being used as a pretext by the North to prevent the South from “developing” and to infringe on national sovereignty (KOLK, 1998). This influence is associated with a new geopolitical format that no longer aims at the direct appropriation of territories, but rather the power to influence the decision of States on their use (BECKER, 2004; NYE, 1990).

For years the Amazon rainforest has been perceived internationally as a gigantic area that has to be preserved for the good and survival of humankind. Just recently the role of the environment has been reevaluated in two different logics, in the vision of Bertha K. Becker (2005): the first is a civilization or cultural one, which has a legitimate concern with the environment regarding the protection of life. The second logic is based on accumulation and perceives nature as a scarce resource and as a store of value for the realization of future capital, fundamentally with regard to the use of biodiversity conditioned by the advancement of technology.

For both logics, the Amazon, and the environment itself are valued exponentially in the global arena. Consequently, a relativization of power and network, together with globalization, changes the vision on State frontiers and lead to a dispute between the world powers over the stocks of environmental and biodiverse wealth, since the distribution of technology and resources is unevenly distributed through the globe: while advanced technologies are developed

in centers of power, natural reserves are in peripheral countries. And, in the contemporary world, there are three great natural treasures: Antarctica, which is a space divided between great powers; the seabed, which is rich in minerals and plants, and are not legally regulated; and the Amazon, a region that is under the sovereignty of national states (BECKER, 2004).

Hence, the significance of the rainforest in the global context is established by its repository of strategic resources, referred to internationally as “natural capital” or “intangible capital” (BECKER, 2004). In the 21st century, the Amazônia emerges as a focal point within a novel structure in the international market, characterized as the “commodification of nature”. Consequently, it necessitates administrative and political interventions to secure the region’s sovereignty and safeguard its natural resources. This leads to a complex situation to the environmental control of the forest in Brazil, generating concerns from different international and national actors regarding its management (AMIN, 2015).

As highlighted by Becker (2005), Amazônia assumes a role as a frontier of natural capital in the contemporary global arena, given its rich biodiversity, its mineral abundance, and the fact that it retains a great percentage of the global freshwater given its extended hydrographic network. This results in a strategic geographic position for the forest, which leads to two main international projects that enter in conflict with one another: the first is the international project for the region and the second is a continental, South American one.

The international project has as main actors the environmentalist movement, composed particularly by international and national NGOs, along with international cooperation in technical, financial and scientific projects, with a narrative that portrays the forest as a huge environmental conservation unit for the good of humankind. Through this, it aims to establish a strong international presence in the region that is fundamental to the development of science and technology in Brazil.

The geopolitics of the Amazon Rainforest are intricately entwined with global environmental governance, with the United Nations (UN) playing a central role in addressing the critical issue of forest conservation and management. Rooted in the 'Rio Declaration' on Environment and Development, a pivotal milestone emerged from the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Brazil. This event saw the simultaneous opening for signature of three key conventions linked to the 'Rio Declaration': the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). These conventions, along with additional instruments such as the Non-

legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on Management, Conservation, and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles), and Agenda 21's Chapter 11, collectively establish a comprehensive framework for addressing environmental challenges associated with Amazônia.

Particularly noteworthy is the ongoing discourse within the context of the CBD, focusing on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. These discussions directly engage with the issues illuminated in this research, demonstrating the ongoing commitment of the international community to tackle environmental concerns. Furthermore, the UN Decade of Restoration (2020-2030) represents a significant initiative aimed at bridging the gap between nature conservation and economic development. This initiative, emphasizing activities such as native forest plantations, sustainable agriculture, and biofuel cultivation on previously deforested and now fallow land, underscores the UN's proactive efforts to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the Amazon Rainforest while fostering sustainable development on a global scale.

Another noteworthy international initiative is the "Year of Landscape Restoration," a World Bank-administered grant funded by the Global Environmental Facility for the Amazon Sustainable Landscape regional program. This initiative, valued at US\$ 434 million for Brazil, spans a five-year period and is designed to increase the extent of legally protected areas while enhancing the management of these designated zones.

Additionally, the REDD+ mechanism stands out as a crucial instrument financing anti-deforestation effort, notably supporting projects such as PAS. Remarkably, REDD+ played a pivotal role in replenishing the Amazon Fund. Various international donors have actively contributed to research, publications, and monitoring programs within the forest. Notable contributors include Friedrich Herbert Stiftung, KfW, GIZ, WWF International, DFID, SIDA, USAID, the Moore Foundation, the Oak Foundation, Conservation International, Rainforest Action, TRAFFIC, and numerous others. Their support underscores the collaborative global effort to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable practices in the Amazon region (MULLER, 2021).

The critical point on this matter is the informational control, as in various projects Brazil participates in only a certain percentage of the investigations, excluding local populations and ignoring internal concerns over sovereignty and biopiracy. Becker (2005) calls attention to the fact that, since the 1980s as it starts a valorization of nature and the Amazônia, there is also a relativization of power and the State frontiers, which lead to discussions about shared

sovereignty over the forest. This is a problem between private property and community property, between global and local use (SHIVA, 2001).

Ribeiro (2006), commenting on the results of the International Seminar on the Environment, Poverty and Development of the Amazon (SINDAMAZÔNIA), in 1992, emphasized this concern:

**All studies emphasize a problem of high geopolitical significance for the Amazon: Brazil's inability to formulate a policy for the control and management of the region's biodiversity, whether due to a lack of financial resources or a shortage of qualified technical and scientific personnel.** All insist on the indispensability of cooperation from wealthy countries, both in terms of providing financial resources and qualified personnel. While there has been some such assistance, it is evidently insufficient for such a colossal task. **Moreover, the financial resources that wealthy countries generally offer are often directed towards their own scientists working in the region, guiding the application of these resources to programs and projects of their immediate interest. This naturally gives rise to serious and, in principle, unacceptable geopolitical problems.** (RIBEIRO, 2006, p. 240, translated, emphasis added).

In the pre-1980s era, international financial investment in the Amazônia primarily sought to fund infrastructure and production projects within the region. However, the contemporary emphasis has shifted towards providing financial support for initiatives and research focused on safeguarding the Amazonian biome. In the backdrop of escalating global power disputes, there is a heightened exertion of pressure on Amazonian nations, particularly Brazil, to assert control over decision-making processes within their territories. This control is made with temporary alliances to act in specific spaces and to tackle specific questions, depending on the interest of the foreign State. This is perceived by civil alliances of international cooperation and bilateral projects (BECKER, 2004).

This became evident by the deliberations surrounding the ratification of the European Union-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement in recent years. While the Agreement is fraught with various potentials of concern and contention, the predominant focus in the discourse of political leaders and institutions has been the environmental apprehensions pertaining to the management of the Amazon in Brazil.

While the narrative of international cooperation can be wielded as a form of soft power to influence nations, it concurrently serves as a channel for dialogue, diplomacy and collaboration between States and other international civil actors. Consequently, it can function as a potent instrument for fostering positive changes in forestry management practices.

The second international project in the Amazônia focuses on its transnational level, on the integration of South America through the Pan-Amazonian countries. This project has a great geopolitical importance, as the union of Amazonian countries can strengthen Mercosur and, consequently, build counterpoints with the European Union. In addition, it can also improve collaboration for the use of water and biodiversity, as well as help contain the narcotraffic in the region (BECKER, 2005). To achieve this, it would be necessary to rescue the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty (TCA) and revisit it with a new interpretation to integrate energy exchange, internet diffusion, multimodal transport and incentivize the production of science and technology in the region.

For Becker (2005), what the projects in the region overlook is the fact that Amazônia is, today, a region with its own dynamic: with almost 30 million habitants, the civil society is now a major important actor to the regions' governance. Together with the state and municipal government, NGOs, loggers, enterprises and foreign States, the forest is permeated with different voices of influence, and all of them ask for a stronger presence of the Brazilian State in the region, although each for a different objective.

The TCA exhibits broad dispositions but lacks practical enforceability, limiting its scope to the participation of South American and Pan-Amazonic countries. As noted by Beatriz S. Costa, Christiane C. Assis, and José A. L. Sampaio (2020), despite the primary relevance of Amazonian issues to the countries within its bounds, safeguarding this crucial biome should be of global concern. Given its transconstitutional nature, the associated challenges may necessitate the involvement of national, international, supranational, and transnational judicial entities.

The Amazônia is a discursive field in which different cultural, social, economic and political perspectives compete, transforming it into an arena of tension that involves narratives and power relations. This is mostly represented by the global concern over climate change and biodiversity preservation on one hand, and social justice issues and sovereignty issues on the other. The Amazônia is then, cut off from its historical, local, and regional contexts, and often projected into the global arena as a mere ecosystem, turning invisible its historical patterns of policies in the region and its complex relations, to fit into technical abstractions and definitions according to global patterns (ZHOURI, 2004). Therefore,

(...) It is necessary to take care to respect the differences not only among countries but especially among the Amazonian peoples. Each people has internal rules that need to be respected, under the risk of imposing external normative orders that self-declare

as superior, contrary to the proposal of transconstitutionalism. (SOUZA COSTA; ASSIS; SAMPAIO, 2020, p. 26, translated)

A central element of the ongoing discourse within the intricate relationship between the EU and Brazil pertains to the multifaceted dimensions of Amazonia management. Unquestionably, one of the contemporary and crucial foundations influencing the dynamics between these entities is the administration of the Amazon rainforest. This pivotal aspect has emerged as a focal point, revealing a profound dichotomy in perspectives concerning environmental obligations and responsibilities. The nuanced interpretations and diverse priorities held by the EU and Brazil regarding rainforest management often lead to diplomatic conflicts, highlighting the intricate nature of their engagement.

As the subsequent chapter unfolds, these diplomatic tensions will be thoroughly examined and analyzed, shedding light on the divergent perspectives that contribute to the ongoing dialogue and negotiation between the EU and Brazil. Delving into the intricacies of these conflicts will illuminate the challenges inherent in reconciling disparate environmental priorities and navigating the diplomatic landscape, providing valuable insights into the ongoing evolution of their relationship, particularly in the context of rainforest governance.

#### 4. EUROPEAN UNION-BRAZIL RELATIONS

Brazil maintains diplomatic relations with the European Communities since the 1960s, through cooperation with the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and, during the 1970s, the European Economic Community (EEC). Since then, there always has been some level of trade relation with fluctuations, although the European interest in Brazil was low given the political and economic instability of the country and the lack of formal competencies of the ECC's (LAZAROU, 2011).

While it would be conceivable to delve into the historical context of European and Brazilian relations dating back to the 1500s, marked by the commencement of Portuguese colonization and the extraction of natural resources for export to European powers, this chapter will exclusively concentrate on the interactions involving the European Union (EU). Thus, the investigation into the history and progression of EU-Brazil Relations (topic 3.1), the influence of the environment in this trajectory (3.2), and collaborative efforts for the protection of the Amazon rainforest (3.3) will commence in 2007 with the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty, defining the contemporary EU, and extend to the current year, 2023.

To comprehend the context and substance of what EU-Brazil relations has evolved to be, it is necessary to understand Europe's search for an international role in the past decades, as it was presented in the first chapter. The construction of EU's external action and relations with other international actors leads to a unique way of constructing international relations, through the creation of Strategic Partnerships and Trade Agreements.

The ambition of the EU to construct a foreign policy promoting "its own model" of regional integration gave emphasis to inter-regionalism. Accordingly, as a normative power, the norms and values of the EU are promoted and diffused through its agreements and relations with third states, setting the EU foreign policy as a distinctive set of principles (HILL; WALLACE, 1996) such as the rule of law, peace and development, cooperation, promotion of diplomacy, and promotion of human rights (MANNERS, 2002).

In this sense, in 2016 the EU launched its Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy to determine how the EU will engage with the rest of the world. This global strategy aims to make the EU more effective in confronting various challenges, such as energy security, migration, violence, hybrid threats and climate change. In the document, it is emphasized the necessity to promote regional organizations and processes with more coherent policies, as a means towards

strengthening global governance, based on ensuring human rights, sustainable development and “lasting access to the global commons” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2016, p. 10).

Additionally, the EU, through mirroring security sector reform efforts, energy and environmental sector policies, aim to assist partner countries along a path of energy transition and climate action. Hence, it is the EU's objective to encourage better regulation and climate change mitigation and adaptation in its partner countries, such as Brazil. To do that, it is established that the EU “will lead by example by implementing its commitments on sustainable development and climate change” (EUROPEAN UNION, 2016, p. 40).

The EU institutional cooperation is under the purview of the European Commission (EC) and is implemented through the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is responsible for laying out policy and strategy guidelines for regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation programming. The EU sets priorities for each country, considering the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) prepared by EEAS and based in consultation with the relevant government and civil society, as the basis for the bilateral programming. Then, the EC uses the CSP to formally establish a Memorandum of Understanding, with each government of the region setting out multiannual cooperation programming and the funding that would be needed to meet each party's commitments, including the sectors in which the funds would be implemented (DURÁN LIMA et al, 2014).

It is also important to highlight that, although the present research focuses on the relation between the EU and Brazil, there are several EU's regional and subregional frameworks that affect Brazil and its environmental protection. For example, the legal and political regional framework between the EU and the Latin American (LA) which is based on a multi-layered and flexible approach, with political engagement between the two regions, with individual LA countries, with sub-regions and in multilateral arenas.

In the European Commission “Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: A New Agenda Relations Between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean” from 2023, the EU points to the LA as a region of unique potential to achieving global climate and environmental objectives, such as the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The document states that, to meet these objectives, the EU and LAC should strengthen their partnership on the green transition, increasing dialogue and cooperation on policies and regulatory frameworks, and through the implementation of trade agreements and promoting



relations with regional organizations. As an example, the document cites the project Amazon Fund from Brazil to tackle deforestation and pollution (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2023).

#### **4.1. History and Evolution of EU-Brazil Relations**

The European Union relation with Brazil is categorized by the EU as a “strategic partnership”, a term that first appeared in 1998, in relation to Russia, as a response to the financial crisis that the country was in at that time. In response, EU leaders stated that they considered Russia a strategic partner and were, therefore, willing to support the country to overcome its problems (CIHELKOVÁ, et al, 2020). Since then, the EU has constructed ten strategic partnerships - i.e., based on documents that cite explicitly the intention of a strategic partnership -, established between 2003 and 2010, following the adoption of the EU Security Strategy: China in 2003, India in 2004, Brazil and South Africa in 2007, Mexico in 2008, South Korea in 2010, Canada in 2016 and Japan in 2018. The EU also established strategic partnerships with several regional and international organizations, including Africa and the African Union, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean – the Community of Latin Americas and Caribbean States (CELAC), the United Nations and NATO.

The EU category of “strategic partnership” has different meanings depending on the legal basis on which the partnership is built. From an International Law perspective, it is a non-contractual or contractual relation between the EU and individual nation states, groups of countries or international organizations, which envisage mutual participation to achieve shared interests, on the premise that all actors have obligations and rights (CIHELKOVÁ, et al, 2020).

However, the EU does not define in its documents the specified nature of a strategic partnership. Due to the lack of information and inconsistency, various scholars evaluate it as unclear, imperfect and elusive (SAUTENET, 2008; PAŁŁASZ, 2015; MAHER, 2016). Analyzing the practical approach towards it, Pałasz (2015) highlighted three common elements of EU strategic partnerships: (i) the promotion of trade and investment; (ii) the promotion of multilateralism and international cooperation; (iii) and the sharing of burdens in security affairs.

Cihelková et al. (2020), points to the fact that all the strategic partners of the EU are either major world economic players or countries with a high rate of economic growth and political ambitions. Therefore, the strategic partners have some level of power to directly affect the prosperity and security of the EU, or because they play a central role in global governance (USA, Japan, South Korea, Russia and China) or because they have the potential to influence

the EU as their political and economic importance grows (Brazil, Mexico, India and South Africa). Therefore, this categorization by the EU fulfills the function to promote the international position of the EU.

The search for a strategy towards Brazil began before the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), when the European Community (EC) elaborated a Country Strategy Paper (CSP) in 1998, a first attempt to define a strategy for the cooperation with Brazil. In 2001, the European Commission made a second CSP, aimed to provide a strategic framework for the EU cooperation with Brazil during the period of 2001-2006. The analysis concluded that there were three priority areas where EC response strategy cooperation should concentrate: economic reform; social development and; the environment, based on the principle of shared responsibility (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001, p.3).

It is important to highlight that until the mid-2000s, the EU was not concerned about negotiating with Brazil too deeply. That is because the foreign policy of the EU at the time targeted regions, rather than states, as its partners (with exception to neighboring countries and the USA). Thus, in the first decade after the EU creation, it was Mercosur and not Brazil which received increased attention. Since its creation in 1991, the EU was interested in approaching the bloc for cooperation and, although the first agreement between the European Community and Mercosur focused on administrative cooperation, the underlying motives were economical, as South America was perceived as a “new growth center of worldwide importance and one of strategic importance to Europe” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1994, p. 12). On this basis, while since 1992 the European Community already had signed a Framework Cooperation Agreement with Brazil, it was mainly the 1995 EU-Mercosur Framework Agreement which governed the relations with the region and with Brazil, as part of South America (LAZAROU, 2011).

During 2001-2006, the EC cooperation with Brazil amounted to 210 million euros in terms of implementation of projects, and the sector where most financial resources were allocated was the environment with 80 million euros, mainly in the framework of the PPG7 programme. The social field was another priority under this strategy plan, focusing on the fight against poverty, with 12,6 million euros, and in projects for improving living conditions of underprivileged communities in urban areas of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Another focus for cooperation was the support for European NGOs to pursue active development projects in Brazil, with a support of 43 million euros (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001).

In the field of environment, until 2001 European funding commitments had totaled over 350 million euros, with 60 million euros being administered by the World Bank through a RainForest Trust Fund - over 80% of the contributions came from the EU, with Germany, the European Commission, the UK, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands -. In fact, EU member states were, at that time, the first providers of bilateral cooperation with Brazil, together with the European Investment Bank (EIB) had committed 13 loans in favour of Brazilian borrowers, with a total amount of 677 million euros from 1997 to 2001, mainly to projects in the field of infrastructure, the automobile industry, the energy sector, the telecommunication sector and the financial sector - all in support of the private sector (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001).

The 2001-2006 CSP formulated recommendations, considering four general lessons from past experiences to be taken in account by the EU. The first was a call for realism-cooperation with Brazil's geographical dimension and population size, which leads to far from simple contrasts or contradictions. The second was a need to develop genuine partnership with the Brazilian government and society. The third was to create more clear procedures, as a major challenge was the range of existing procedural bottlenecks in both the EC and Brazil. The fourth and last recommendation pointed out was to consider the regional dimension, i.e., coordinate needs that take place between the EC cooperation policies at the regional level and at the bilateral level within Mercosul (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001).

Considering these critical insights, the document proposed recommendations to enhance relations between the European Community and Brazil during the period from 2001 to 2006. The analysis highlights the challenges faced by the conventional bilateral approach in economic cooperation, emphasizing the need for a financial framework convention. In response, the recommendation was to redirect efforts towards projects engaging civil society, particularly the business community. Evaluations of social cooperation revealed positive outcomes stemming from technical assistance and projects supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The exchange of experiences in this realm yielded sustainable local follow-up actions, presenting opportunities for enhanced synergies with Member States' cooperation activities. This positive trend suggests that further emphasis on these cooperative models would contribute to continued success in social initiatives between the EC and Brazil.

In the domain of science and research, the document acknowledges the participation of Brazilian institutions in programs aligned with national capacities and needs. Collaborations resulting from these engagements played a pivotal role in the modernization of Brazil and its economy. The ongoing negotiations for a science and technology cooperation agreement are

anticipated to amplify these efforts, signifying a strategic avenue for advancing scientific collaboration.

Furthermore, the document addresses ongoing European concerns regarding the Amazon forest in the context of the climate change debate. The success of the PPG7, which aligns with EU policy priorities and global commitments while promoting sustainable economic alternatives, is highlighted. The recommendation includes advocating for substantial EC funding for the second phase of the PPG7, underscoring its proven effectiveness. Moreover, the document suggests seizing opportunities to expand environmental cooperation beyond the PPG7, aiming to address additional ecological concerns in Brazil.

This 2001-2006 CSP was revised, making space for a second CSP that provided a framework for the EU cooperation with Brazil during the period 2007 to 2013, made through a consultation process involving stakeholders representing the State and civil society actors. The European Community already had a range of projects with Brazil in many different sectors, but, as affirmed in the CSP, the experiences showed “limits of the traditional cooperation model” and led to a necessity on envisaging “bilateral cooperation in different terms” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007, p. 3). Recognizing the failed implementation of the Commission’s 2001-2006 CSP for Brazil, the former EU Commission’s President Jose Manuel Durrao Barroso visited Brazil with the aim to give new momentum to bilateral relations (LAZAROU, 2011).

On an overview of past and ongoing European Community cooperation with Brazil, it was stated that close to 64 million euros were allocated to the bilateral cooperation during 2002-2006, before a cooperation strategy. Approximately 20,3% (13 million) of this budget had been allocated to projects on tax and public administration reforms and human rights. After the initiation of a cooperation strategy in 2002, an additional 51 million euros were allocated to three priority sectors: economic reform (with 47% of the budget); social development (with 21% of the budget) and the environment (with only 9% of the budget) (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007).

The implementation of the 2001-2006 CSP was hampered by severe administrative constraints arising from conflicts between the EU’s and Brazil’s legal and regulatory frameworks for the management of bilateral cooperation projects. In 2004 there was a change in procedure for managing projects financed by external sources, that had to be signed after consultations with different agencies and the projects have entered in the Multi-annual Plan (PPA) and in the annual budget. Therefore, during the first half of the programming period, the European Union

Delegation in Brazil focused on overcoming regulatory incompatibilities, which led to a delay on the implementation of the new projects. Projects on tax and public administration reform, human rights, economic cooperation, social development, and environmental conservation only started in 2005. It was stated in the document that the involvement with Brazil civil society and private-sector entities, such as NGOs, universities, companies, etc., had produced good results in partnerships with European entities. However, cooperation involving public bodies faced operational difficulties due to procedural changes (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007).

As a result of Brazil's political, social, and economic analysis, in the 2007-2013 CSP the EU considered Brazil to be an established democracy with limitations likely to have a negative impact on governance, human rights and public security. Therefore, the main question regarding the EU-Brazil cooperation is how to use limited resources in the most effective way possible, maximizing impact and producing an adequate response to Brazil's development challenges. In this sense, the EU pointed that the way is to concentrate resources on defined focal areas, to seek maximum coherence with other development aid instruments or programs with other donors and support measures and activities leading to better governance and policy-making (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007).

The expectation of Brazil becoming one of the EU strategic partners was, in many ways, a natural result of the already existing relation between both. The EU was already Brazil's biggest trade partner, and Brazil the single biggest exporter of agricultural products to the EU. Moreover, Brazil is also a key factor for the EU's ongoing negotiations for a free trade agreement with Mercosur, a fact pointed out by the EU since the CSP in 2001. The establishment of such link with Brazil also became more important given that as Brazil was rising in importance in the geopolitical game, it was aligning with other global actors, the USA, Russia and China, while the EU remained without a strategic partner in South America (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007a).

After a year of Barroso's visit, the Commission launched a Communication to the Council and the European Parliament entitled "Towards an EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership", pointing out that Brazil had become a significant global player and emerged as a key interlocutor for the EU. The document carries a proposal to the Council and the Parliament to serve as a basis for the formulation of the EU's proposal to Brazil at the first EU-Brazil Summit in Lisbon. The document lists ten areas and cooperation sectors at global, regional and bilateral levels to delineate the partnership: strengthen multilateralism; raising human rights standards, fostering democracy and governance; achieving the Millennium Development Goals and promoting

regional and social development; protecting the environment; strengthen energy cooperation; enhance Latin America stability and prosperity; advance the Mercosur agenda; reinforce trade and economic relations; justice, freedom and security; bring people together (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007a).

A few months later, the first EU-Brazil Summit was held in Lisbon in 2007, in which a comprehensive strategic partnership was established, implementing an Action Plan and the modus operandi of the initiative. It consists of holding high-level annual dialogues at regular Summits and ministerial meetings, that would address global challenges and crises, and maintain a common position between the parties.

From each Summit, a Joint Statement was elaborated until 2014, totalizing 7 Joint Statements. Looking at each of them, it is possible to trace the continuity in the development of EU-Brazil relations, and the relations with global developments. The main common points in all of them are the promotion of international law principles, such as democracy, rule of law and good governance, and the common concern between all of them is tackling climate change, energy security and sustainable development. In the area of global governance, it is highlighted in each document that both parties dedicate themselves to build a moral balanced multilateral system and follow international rules related to trade, security, human rights and the environment (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2007; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2008; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2009; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2010; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2011; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2012; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2013; COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2014).

It is interesting how, among the recurrence of these themes, there is a change of focus to each document. The First Joint Statement (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2007) is short, and welcomes the establishment of the Strategic Partnership, using a more general language. The subsequent Joint Statement, from 2008, has a more economical tone, referencing the global economic crisis and the need to restore market confidence, promoting global economic growth (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2008).

The Third Joint Statement focused on environmental related themes, specially on climate change topics, as it was previous to the preparation for the Copenhagen Conference. It also cites some of the global crises that were undergoing at the time, such as the violation of constitutional order in Honduras and the Israel-Palestine conflict (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

2009). The Fourth Joint Statement is more succinct and includes mediation of Brazil and Turkey on the Iranian nuclear situation and the crisis of Lybia and Syria.

The Fifth and Sixth Joint Statement focus more on the role of academic research, technology and innovation to generate sustainable growth, increase productivity and employability. In both, the cooperation in science and technology gains more attention. The Seventh Summit, one the longest and most dense, emphasizes security and peace, calling for the convergence of Brazilian and European positions on international events.

The last Summit and Joint Statement was in 2014, during Dilma Rousseff's government. The initiative of having yearly Summits was put on hold when the annual summit did not occur in 2015, and the Third Joint Action Plan (scheduled for 2015 and lasting until 2017) (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2014), was postponed without setting a new date. This stagnation reflects the political crisis both parties were living in the moment: while the EU was elaborating the annexation of Crimea, dealing with Brexit and the migration crisis, Brazil was enduring a political-institutional, economic, and social crisis with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), mass manifestation and the subsequent arrival of Jair Bolsonaro government (2019-2022) (SILVA; VOLPATO, 2022).

Nonetheless, there exists scholarly discord regarding the factors contributing to the deterioration of Brazil-EU relations. Gratius (2018) attributes this decline to severe domestic crises experienced by both parties, prompting shifts in foreign policy approaches. In contrast, Blanco and Luciano (2018) ascribe the suspension of Summits to Brazil's actions. Through interviews with European diplomats, they identified irregularities and a lack of diplomatic consistency on the part of Brazil, posing challenges to the maintenance of a robust connection and compromising the advancement of the strategic partnership.

Some studies mention some expected results that were not achieved by the initiative. Specially concerning the implementation of international norms and rules, the framing of debates and the understanding of some concepts. Znojek (2012) point out that, although both partners agree on the importance of multilateralism, they understand the notion differently. The EU understands it as strengthening global governance and building a multipolar order based on international law and rules negotiated on an equal basis, with human rights and individual freedoms as universal and indivisible values. While Brazil's approaches to multilateralism are led by more "pragmatic values", i.e., whilst also highlighting the importance of human rights, they underline the importance of non-interference, non-intervention principles and sovereignty. This

divergence in positions should be understood in a broader context, considering the different identities, history and different positions in geopolitics.

The interruption of the EU-Brazil yearly summits led to a relative paralysis of the Strategic Partnership. However, there has been continuous dialogue between the parties, with projects that facilitate the exchange of experience, knowledge and diplomacy in the search for solutions to global problems. As defended by Silva and Volpato (2022), the Strategic Partnership represented a qualitative leap in EU-Brazil relations, since it changed the terms of engagement by formulating an institutional framework that increases the bilateral relations between them. Its paralysis does not mean that the EU-Brazil relations are interrupted, but altered. Moreover, international cooperation does not imply harmony throughout all times, but the identification of common interests and adjustments of behavior through dialogue.

Currently, it is possible to affirm that Brazil and the European Union have a multifaceted relation, with a practical character, high complexity and collaboration in various topics, such as politics, trade, fight against terrorism, cybercrime, irregular immigration, energy and climate. There is close to thirty sectoral discussions in progress in different areas, with funding provided mainly through subsidies for projects and programs, within the framework of several theme mechanisms, such as: the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Partnership Instrument (PI), the Stability and Peace Instrument (SPI), among others (IBAÑEZ, 2021; MATA DIZ, 2020).

EU cooperation towards Brazil also covers other areas of mutual interest, such as academics, with programs under the project Erasmus and the funding of several Jean Monnet Centers of Excellence, an initiative to incentivize and fund research about European Studies in Brazil. Moreover, Brazilian organizations actively participate in the Partnerships for Sustainable Cities program that enhance municipal management to achieve sustainable development goals and deal with climate change (IBAÑEZ, 2021; MATA DIZ, 2020).

One of the most important facets of EU cooperation in Brazil today is the “Europe Team” initiative, which brings together the EU, its Member States and their diplomatic network, finance institutions and organizations, strengthening coordination, coherence and actions to scale up European impact in the global arena (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 2021). In Brazil, the initiative has two major focuses: Digital Transformation and Green Deal.

The first is aligned with the objectives of the “international partnerships for the digital decade” introduced in the Communication “2030 Digital Compass” by the European Commission. The



aim is to promote the international outreach of EU Digital Single Market with emphasis on global convergence on cross-cutting themes that reflect EU values (such as personal data protection or artificial intelligence regulation) and promote business partnerships, involving industrial cooperation on digital technologies (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019).

The second priority, called Green Deal as it is based on the European project and document that holds the name, is focused on environmental sustainability and inclusive economic development. The framework of the project is divided in two sub-initiatives, one focused on cooperation to develop Sustainable and Smart Cities, supporting Brazil to promote inclusive and integrated urban development. The other, focused on Tropical Forests, has the objective to promote sustainable use of natural resources, inclusive development and nature conservation in the tropical biome, with an initial focus on the Amazon rainforest (GLOBAL GATEWAY, 2020).

In essence, these cooperative endeavors underscore the EU's commitment to addressing contemporary global challenges, aligning its priorities with Brazil's developmental objectives. As the EU and Brazil continue to navigate the intricate landscape of collaboration, the momentum generated by initiatives such as the "Europe Team" serves as a foundation for comprehensive and mutually beneficial engagement. Looking ahead, it becomes imperative to explore the implications and opportunities arising from the EU-Mercosur agreement, a significant geopolitical development with far-reaching implications for trade, politics, and environmental sustainability. The dynamic nature of EU-Brazil relations, as exemplified by the current initiatives, sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the evolving partnership and its broader regional ramifications within the context of the EU-Mercosur agreement.

#### **4.2 EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement**

As stated previously, the EU strategy policy towards Latin America was directly linked to Mercosur until the late 90s. The interest towards Mercosur began right after Portugal and Spain were incorporated as members of the EU in 1986, as both countries already had strong relations with their former Latin America colonies (ARANA, 2017). The same day that both Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Ascension in Madrid on 12 June 1985, the EU also finalized the "Joint Declaration of Intent on the Development and Intensification of Relations with the Countries of Latin America" (EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, 1985). The negotiations between the EU and the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) began with the search for an opportunity

to pursue an inter-regional agreement and to promote the EU's model, foreign policy and values.

The EU-Mercosur relations also is, in some measure, the EU-Brazil relations, since Brazil is the biggest country in Mercosur and the main Latin America exporter of common goods to the EU. The interregional negotiations were always overshadowed by internal problems and challenges in both regions, which made it difficult to achieve a unified position on either side regarding trade liberalization.

Since the beginning of negotiations in 1999, the issue of dispute was the opening of Mercosur to industrial imports, demanded by the EU, which was primarily rejected by Brazil, and the opening of the EU market for agricultural products from Mercosur, with limited import quotas for key products. Since then, the negotiations went through ups and downs facing different obstacles on the way to achieve free trade agreements (NOLTE, RIBEIRO, 2021).

In 2016, the negotiation process resumed and, in 2019, both sides reached an agreement on the content of the Free Trade part of the Agreement. The resumption of the FTA negotiation took place in a favorable environment, with the overcoming of commodities inflation and governments with liberal economic agendas in Argentina and Brazil (SANAHUJA, RODRÍGUEZ, 2019; MARIANO, MARIANO, 2020). On the European side, after signing the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada in 2016 and FTA negotiations with Japan - which entered into force in 2019 -, the Mercosur agreement is seen as the missing link in the chain of FTAs with Latin America, complementary to the agreements signed with the Andean Community, Central America, Chile, and Mexico. The EU Commission also wanted the negotiations to conclude, ideally, before 2018, to position against the protectionism of Donald Trump's government in the USA and to defend its position as Mercosur leading trading partner - position taken by China in 2017 - (NOLTE, RIBEIRO, 2021). Nonetheless, for the EU the conclusion of the FTA with Mercosur it is also about soft strategy, a way to reposition itself as a rule maker and central actor in the global order in the face of globalization crisis and against the protectionist tendencies in the US. In a document explaining the content of the EU-Mercosur Agreement, the EU Commission points out that the agreement is also about setting international standards and disseminating EU norms (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019d).

Therefore, for a short period the EU and Mercosur perceived a congruence of interests to conclude the negotiations. On the Brazilian side, the agreement had been negotiated, since

2016, by Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and Michel Temer (2017-2018). In 2019, counterparts welcomed the successful conclusion of negotiations at the G20 Summit in June 2019, during the Jair Bolsonaro government (2019-2022).

In a “In-Depth Analysis” made by Andrés Malamud (2022) about the Political Dialogue and Cooperation pillar of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, the author points Brazil as a “dealmaker or deal breaker” (p. 15). Because Brazil accounts for 80% of Mercosur’s population and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with a strong agribusiness sector and industrial lobby and its coverage of 60% of the Amazon rainforest, the country is one of the main keys to estimate the prospects of the Agreement (MALAMUD, 2022; GÓMEZ RAMÍREZ, 2021).

Nevertheless, as President Bolsonaro entered office with a liberal economic agenda, an “anti-internationalization” narrative, the dismantling of national environmental law, attack against democracy and human rights and a negative international image - with diplomatic conflicts against European leaders -, the ratification of the Agreement encountered some difficulties. The French government positioned itself against the ratification of the Agreement, expressing concern that a deal could go against health and environmental standards, as well as negatively affect France’s agricultural sector (NOLTE; RIBEIRO, 2021).

While there are multiple reasons warranting cautious consideration before ratification, the global focus has predominantly homed in on Brazil’s feature to adhere to environmental obligations. During the G-7 Summit in Biarritz in August 2019, just a few weeks after the negotiations were concluded, Emmanuel Macron, the French President (2017-today) threatened to veto the agreement if Brazil failed to fulfill its environmental obligations. A year later, the European Parliament positioned itself against the ratification:

(The EP) considers that the association agreement between the EU and Mercosur represents the largest ‘bloc to bloc’ deal of its kind and has the potential to create a mutually beneficial open market area encompassing approximately 800 million citizens; points out that this agreement, like all EU trade agreements, must ensure fair competition and guarantee that European production standards and methods are upheld; points out that the agreement contains a binding chapter on sustainable development that must be applied, implemented and fully assessed, as well as specific commitments on labor rights and environmental protection, including the implementation of the Paris climate agreement and the relevant implementing rules; emphasizes that the EU-Mercosur agreement cannot be ratified as it stands. (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2019, p.12)

Although the vote was symbolic, it followed critical statements from several European leaders - from France, Ireland, Austria, Wallon (region of Belgium), Germany, Luxembourg - in response to Bolsonaro’s environmental policy and wildfires in the Amazon rainforest.

Moreover, there is a concern that the expansion of beef, soya and sugar cane productions, a consequence of the decrease in import quotas and import tariffs for agricultural products, will lead to the increase of deforestation in South America (KARATEPE; SCHERRER; TIZOT, 2020).

France is one of the countries that strongly disapprove of the degradations in the region, leading and influencing other European countries, as well as public and private entities, due to the non-incorporation of environmental commitments by the countries of the Mercosur-European Union Agreement. The French opinion is particularly interesting in this matter, as despite its rhetoric emphasizing increased environmental protection, the French Guiana, an overseas French territory, is situated within the Amazon region. This implies that France, albeit indirectly, holds sway over decisions impacting this area. Consequently, the preservation of the Amazon hinges on tangible actions and initiatives taken by France, despite its prominent role in criticizing the region's degradation.

Despite the criticisms from France, the nation has not exemplified environmental leadership concerning the conservation efforts in French Guiana. President Emmanuel Macron faced allegations from the Customary Grand Council of Amerindian Peoples for granting a 360,000-hectare forest concession to multinational mining corporations in French Guiana.

President Macron defended his actions by asserting that the contract mandated tree plantation. However, it is known that this did not effectively replace the original forests, as the latter necessitate thousands of millennia for regeneration. Moreover, despite the French government's explicit aim to curb illegal activities, this scenario remains a source of diplomatic discomfort for France (SOUZA COSTA; PEREIRA; MATA DIZ, 2022).

On both sides, civil society has mobilized against the agreement. In Europe, a coalition “Stop EU-Mercosur” was organized, comprising over 400 civil society organizations and social movements from Europe and South America. In Brazil, 34 NGOs are part of this Alliance, and a Brazilian Front was formed against the Agreement nationally, composed of 120 NGOs. Civil society in Brazil criticize the Agreement, defining it to be “neocolonial” and that it “would threaten Brazilian Development” (FOSCB, 2020).

The Agreement has a chapter on “Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD), which commits the contracting parties to the sustainability of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Paris Agreement. In addition, the Sustainability Impact Assessment made by the EU Commission discusses the importance of the rules for Mercosur countries to comply with the

articles in the TSD chapter (articles 2, 4, 5). However, it does not elaborate on by which way the chapter will be enforced (KARATEPE; SCHERRER; TIZOT, 2020).

In the beginning of 2023, the EU presented an additional instrument to address the environmental concerns in the Agreement (EUROPEAN UNION, 2023). The document was not well received by Mercosur, as it included sanctions for alleged non-compliance, such as the limitation of Brazilian products or the suspension of quotas. President Lula called the document as “inadmissible”, “offensive” and a “threat”, while discoursing in the Summit for a New Global Financial Compact (CNN BRASIL, 2023).

Some authors defend that blaming the Agreement for contributing to Amazon deforestation is an overestimation of its potential impact (GRIEGER, 2020; NOLTE; RIBEIRO, 2021; MALAMUD, 2021). As defended by Malamud (2021), “not engaging with Mercosur will not solve deforestation and will give more space to other global actors to set their agenda with less attention to sustainability”, such as China, which already occupies the position of biggest trade partner to Latin America. Not signing the EU-Mercosur Agreement will not reduce the already existent rate of deforestation in the forest and will deprive the EU of leverage against Brazil to protect the forest (NOLTE; RIBEIRO, 2021).

Anticipating the signing of the EU-Mercosur Agreement proves challenging, contingent upon various factors and a convergence of opportune political, economic, and geopolitical conditions between the two blocs. A crucial consideration involves formulating a shared agenda that accommodates the divergent characteristics of the blocs and devising adaptable methodologies that incorporate this diversity. Consequently, both parties should aspire to establish an agenda that comprehensively encompasses all activities emanating from the Agreement (SOUZA COSTA; PEREIRA; MATA DIZ, 2022).

Beyond making an estimation of provisions and criticism towards the Agreement, what this chapter intended to highlight was the importance of the Agreement to the relations between Europe and Brazil, and vice-versa. In the words of the former EU Ambassador in Brazil, Ignacio Ibañez:

This instrument will consolidate the strategic partnership between the EU and Brazil at the political and economic level, and create important opportunities in sustainable growth for both parties. The Association Agreement will not only accrue economic benefits to the countries involved, but will signal to the world that in an environment of uncertainty the road must be travelled by means of partnership, cooperation and coordination between our largest existing economic blocs (IBAÑEZ, 2021, p. 43).

The significance of Brazil in the Agreement between the EU-Mercosur is multifaceted and pivotal to the overall success and impact of this diplomatic and economic alliance. Brazil holds a prominent position in South America, contributing significantly to its economic prowess and geopolitical influence. The sheer size of Brazil's economy, coupled with its abundant natural resources and the sovereignty over 60% of the Amazon rainforest positions the country as a critical player in the dynamics between the negotiations for the EU-Mercosur FTA.

Given the increasing concern over climate change and biodiversity loss, Brazil's commitment to sustainable practices and its role as a custodian of the Amazon rainforest carry immense weight in the ratification of the Agreement. If both parties align preferences and recalibrate its objectives, the FTA might be a platform for more profound collaborative efforts between the EU and Brazil to address environmental issues, with responsible resource management and biodiversity conservation.

#### **4.3 Environment in EU-Brazil relations**

Since the beginning of this century, the European Union (EU) has undergone a notable shift towards environmental consciousness, evident in evolving norms, narratives, and the policies of both the European Parliament and member state governments (NOLTE; SARAIVA, 2021). This transformative green trajectory within the EU has coincided with a broader global trend wherein international politics have become increasingly attuned to environmental issues. Consequently, this paradigmatic shift has elevated environmental considerations to a central position within the dynamics of EU-Brazil relations. As the EU embraces a greener ethos across its institutions and member states, the shared commitment to environmental sustainability has emerged as a focal point, shaping, and influencing the diplomatic discourse between the EU and Brazil.

As underscored in the European Commission's Country Strategy Paper (2007-2013) for Brazil, environmental conservation has been a focal point of cooperation since the beginning of the bilateral relation, particularly the preservation of the Amazon rainforest. The I Summit EU-Brazil Joint Statement mentioned it briefly, stating that "both sides agree to enhance their dialogue on environment and sustainable development" (2007, p. 2), and reiterated their commitment to strengthen the multilateral climate change regime, strengthening cooperation on issues such as water resources managements and forests.

The Summits and its Joint Communications will be analyzed in more depth in the fourth chapter through a documentation analysis, outlining how the EU expressed itself towards environmental protection and the Amazon rainforest in the basilar documents of its strategic partnership with Brazil.

The seven Joint Statements released from 2001 to 2007 and can be summarized as it follows: (i) I EU-Brazil Summit, Lisbon, 2007: strengthen the multilateral climate change regime; improve energy efficiency; invest in renewable energies; (ii) II EU-Brazil Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 2008: curb climate change; reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss; invest in renewable energies. (iii) III EU-Brazil Summit, Stockholm, 2009: strengthen the multilateral climate change regime; reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; invest in low-carbon economy; continue with high-level meetings to follow with Copenhagen Conference; renewable energies; preparation for the Rio+20; (iv) IV EU-Brazil Summit, Brasília, 2010: preparation for the Rio+20; alignment for the COP16 of the UNFCCC with a view to obtain an effective binding outcome; invest in renewable energies; direct efforts for combating biodiversity loss.; (v) V EU-Brazil Summit, Brussels, 2011: preparation for the Rio+20; advance in international cooperation in response to climate change; invest in renewable energies and biodiversity.; (vi) VI EU-Brazil Summit, Brasília, 2013: deepen the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; protect the Amazon biome and biodiversity; following with the Rio+20 commitments; guarantee universal access to all forms of energy; invest in renewable energies and biofuels; revisit emissions of the aviation sector; guarantee good practices concerning the safety of oil exploitation; (vii) VII EU-Brazil Summit, Brussels, 2014: continue with greater international cooperation in response to climate change; cooperate for sustainable development; invest in renewable energies.

It can be pointed out as a EU recurrent *modus operandi* expressing in generalized manner environmental concerns and potential measures without explicit specifications of corresponding programs, investments, or financial resources for each identified objective. Even on the basilar document of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership this can be identified, as the main actions taken by the EU on environmental protection is presented as it follows:

The EU should develop and reinforce our Environmental Policy dialogue with Brazil on topics such as climate change, water management, bio-diversity and deforestation, including the role of indigenous people so that we better understand each other's positions, thereby enhancing our collective influence in these areas.

The EU should work with Brazil in international fora to advance climate change and deforestation discussions with a view to reaching agreement for a global post-2012 framework.

Closer co-operation should also be envisaged towards implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and achieving the biodiversity 2010 target as well as on other key global concerns, such as addressing mercury pollution. (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007a, p. 7)

This pattern observed reflects a strategic flexibility, allowing for adaptability in response to evolving circumstances and ensuring that the subsequent phases of diplomatic engagement can refine the operational aspects of the collaborative environmental agenda.

With this criticism, it is not intended to point out that EU-Brazil efforts towards environmental protection and to curb climate change are not persecuted. The task of building alliances that aim at cooperative international solutions is of capital importance, and the issue of cooperation between EU and Brazil is highly relevant.

The results of this partnership could be seen during the Durban (2011) and Doha (2012) meetings of the UNFCCC process, when both worked to bridge the gaps between the advanced climate policy countries and the conservative, developing countries. On both occasions, Brazil helped to secure diplomatic advances to extend the Kyoto Protocol and work towards inclusive mechanisms by 2015 (EMERSON; FLORES, 2013).

If both parties share the same multilateral perspective and view on environmental protection, what prevents them from achieving its environmental objectives through multilateralism? The EU could use its technical expertise, access to technology and financial means to concretely help Brazil curb deforestation, and Brazil could help the EU facilitate access to more renewable energy pathways. Despite this potential, although some joint actions and project finance are currently being undertaken, it seems that from the past decade it has been the main concern in diplomatic discussions between them.

According to Gratius (2012), Brazil and the European Union (EU) share common values but exhibit divergence in their policy stances, particularly evident in the context of climate change mitigation. The primary impediment stems from disparate North-South power strategies, notably observed in their respective approaches to combating climate change. Brazil, aligned with the G-77 and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), operates within a collective framework. In contrast, the EU positions itself as a solitary entity, assuming a leadership role in international environmental governance (SILVA; VOLPATO, 2022).

Despite their shared commitment to implementing the Kyoto Protocol and addressing climate change on a global scale, Brazil and the EU originate from contrasting starting points. Brazil identifies deforestation as the primary source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while the EU emissions come



from the use of fossil fuels. This foundational disparity has profound implications for their collaborative efforts. The EU advocates for legally binding commitments to reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation, a stance exemplified by the leaked side letter related to the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. Conversely, Brazil leans towards voluntary commitments, leading to a lack of consensus on the methods and responsibilities associated with reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and mitigating the greenhouse effect (GRATIUS, 2012). This discord underscores the ongoing challenge in reconciling divergent approaches and achieving a unified strategy in their joint efforts to combat climate change.

An additional pivotal point of divergence between the EU and Brazil is in their contrasting perspectives on sovereignty, particularly concerning the Amazon rainforest. The EU asserts a stance advocating global responsibility for the protection of the Amazon, underscoring the interconnectedness of environmental challenges and the need for collaborative international efforts. This viewpoint reflects the EU's commitment to addressing global environmental issues as shared responsibilities that transcend national boundaries (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019). In contrast, Brazil has historically maintained a more conservative discourse on sovereignty in relation to the Amazon, expressing reservations about external interference and concerns regarding potential neocolonialist undertones (SILVA; VOLPATO, 2022).

This divergence in perspectives on sovereignty not only highlights the intricacies of the EU-Brazil relationship but also underscores the need for nuanced dialogue and mutual understanding to bridge the gaps and foster effective collaboration in addressing the environmental challenges faced by the Amazon rainforest.

In the face of collaborative challenges at the governmental level, exacerbated by internal political crises in Brazil over the past decade, the EU has exhibited a strategic shift towards engaging in multilateral projects. This change in focus involves the financial backing of environmental initiatives led by civil organizations in Brazil. An example is the EU's role as a strategic partner for the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), providing financial support and contributing to projects aimed at rehabilitating productive areas. Similarly, collaborations with the Ambientalist Group of Bahia (GAMBÁ) have been established, particularly in initiatives pertaining to climate resilience. Additionally, partnerships with the Brazilian Association of Municipalities (ABM) have been forged to promote sustainability projects across cities in Brazil.

While several other projects across the country benefit from EU support, it proves challenging to precisely quantify the number and nature of these multilateral projects. Regrettably, in another instance of transparency shortcomings, the EU has refrained from disclosing such information through its primary communication channels—its website and Instagram account (@uenobrasil). This lack of transparency poses a notable challenge in comprehensively assessing the scope and impact of the EU's multilateral environmental initiatives in Brazil.

With Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's return to the Brazilian presidency from 2023 to 2027, a revival of bilateral dialogue and cooperation between Brazil and the European Union (EU) in the realm of environmental protection is expected. During the 2023 Summit between the EU, Latin America, and the Caribbean (EU-CELAC) held in Brussels, Lula emphasized the EU as an exemplar of "democratic construction", asserting that its legacy serves as evidence that both parties can overcome profound differences with political determination towards peace (BRASIL, 2023).

Addressing the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement and the defense of environmental values, Lula underscored its prioritization and environmental defense as a common value. However, he emphasized the necessity for such collaboration to be rooted in mutual trust rather than protectionism or threats directed at Brazil. Expressing specific regard for the Amazon rainforest, he stated, "Protecting the Amazon is an obligation. We will eliminate its deforestation by 2030. But the rainforest cannot be seen just as an ecological sanctuary." (BRASIL, 2023, translated). This statement reflects Lula's nuanced perspective on the Amazon, recognizing its ecological significance while also emphasizing its multifaceted role beyond being a mere ecological sanctuary for Europe.

As Lula steers Brazil's environmental policies during his presidential tenure, these pronouncements set the tone for the renewed and strengthened environmental collaboration between Brazil and the EU but also underscore the distinct discourse surrounding environmental protection, particularly concerning the Amazon rainforest. The divergent discourses between Brazil and the EU underscore the complexities in reconciling environmental priorities, reflecting broader global debates on the conservation and sustainable management of crucial ecosystems like the Amazon.

## **5. NARRATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL GEOPOLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW**

The studies of communication importance in social science are not new and, for centuries, the ways in which individuals and groups exchange information and meaning, and the impact of these exchanges on society, has been subject to research analysis. The function of communication sheds light on the processes by which individuals and groups come to understand and make sense of the world, and how they interact and negotiate their differences.

Communication can help to explain how individuals form and maintain relationships, influence each other, and participate in social institutions and, therefore, communication is one of the keys to better understand the root for social systems and structures. Consequently, it is relevant in today's highly connected world to further study the use of communication in political scenarios. In this research, this study focuses on the international arena, where communication between nations and international organizations is often used to negotiate and resolve conflicts, build alliances, and establish rules and norms for global cooperation.

In this field, the study of discourse used to construct meaning and shape perceptions is overall important and is often used to analyze power relationships. According to Manuel Castells (2009), power relies on the control of communication and, therefore, the most fundamental form of power lies in the ability to shape the human mind. This can be done through coercion, but not only, as it is not sufficient to stabilize domination. The ability to build consent is also essential to enforce the rules that govern the institutions and organizations of society, which is a result of processes of compromise between conflicting social and political actors who mobilize their interests and values through communication. The point of Castell's analysis is that communication changes how power works.

One of the ways that communication can change power relations in the field of International Relations and International Public Law, is using narratives. Accordingly, to Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle (2013), the way narratives are formed and projected in a communication environment explains major dynamics in international affairs. That is because narratives are central to human relations and, consequently, can be used to shape the behavior of others, in a strategic manner.

As communication and discourse is an intricate part of geopolitics, it is also an intricate part of International Public Law and, specially, of International Environmental Governance. Environmental problems are dynamic and environmental changes appear sudden, which leads

to difficulties by law-makers to design and create effective environmental laws, internationally or nationally. It is in this changeable and discordant setting that environmental discourses and narratives contribute to legal responses or present legal opportunities or obstacles.

While the concept of discourse and narrative is more familiar to political and State scientists than lawyers, it resonates with the public and international law sphere, especially considering that legal outcomes are usually drawn from policy and cultural behavior. As articulated by Blomley (1988), the law has an instrumental or policy nature as well as an ideological or moral imperative.

Legal-policy decisions are not only driven by scientific studies, principles, adaption of legal doctrine or the need to respond to an impending disaster. Rather, considering that global environmental problems have no simple solutions, legal environmental decisions may be based or shared on global understandings of the problem, or motivated by geopolitical dominant perceptions or interpretations of the law, influenced around a particular environmental discourse and/or narrative (JESSUP; RUBESTEIN, 2012).

At this point, it is important to differentiate narrative and discourse. Both are means of communication, and both can shape our understanding of the world and influence our participation in social and political processes. However, Shenhav (2006) sets out two strategies for defining the concept of narrative. First, narratives need to have a time sequence. In the words of Prince (1982, p. 4), narrative is “the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other”. Second, Shenhav points out other characteristics added to this basic idea of chronological narrative, such as causality, resolution, and the idea of “non randomness” - i.e, that events are connected in a nonrandom way -.

For Miskimmon et al (2014), a narrative entails an initial situation or order, a problem that disrupts that order, and a resolution that tries to reestablish that order. Moreover, a narrative structure embraces the existence of actors; events, plot, and time; and a setting or space. The actors are central to the meaning of a narrative, as they are the ones to frame their own character and others, by selecting and highlighting some facets of their history of actions to promote a particular interpretation of the issue. Nonetheless, the theme of the given narrative - the issue - can be framed by various actors in different ways. Narratives also carry an implicit sense of time and space. That is, they have an interpretation of the beginning, middle and end of a given issue, for example. This definition is more complete, as it allows a way to identify actors and

actions, while still recognizing the importance of temporality, as in IR, actors usually carry long-term narratives about themselves and about the international system (MISKIMMON, ET AL, 2013).

Discourse, on other hand, does not feature a transformation that takes actors from a *status quo* to another, as narratives do. Miskimmon et al (2013) defines discourse as the “raw material of communication”, that is, bodies of knowledge about science, law, history, and theology that actors plot into given narratives. Hence, discourses have an embedded sense of historicity in their construction (KRZYZANOWSKI, et al., 2009), and discourse analysis can explain why and how certain ideas come to have significant power in shaping political practices (Nițoiu, 2013).

Therefore, discourses have a structuring effect upon the use of narratives. As Cristian Nițoiu (2013, p. 242) identified, “narratives are the result of the overlapping of various discourses” and can provide a clearer picture of the processes behind the influence of discourses on political reality. Accordingly, only the discourses that are institutionalized through social, historical, and political practice come to be part of a narrative.

Into the political science field, Shaul R. Shenhav (2006) points out that the examination of different political discourse as different narrative patterns has grown as a tool because it involves the consideration of different discourses that exist to maintain and formulate worldviews. Therefore, one can argue that narratives play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of political reality, and thus, political behavior (PATTERSON; MONROE, 1998). These narratives serve to comprehend and make sense of the political events that occur around the globe. As a result, they play a significant part in the formation of political behavior and, consequently, law-making process.

Essentially, a narrative differs from discourse as it is used according to the narrator’s perspective, suggesting how the speaker’s make sense of certain events or of the commonplace. Therefore, a narrative can reveal the speaker’s sense of self, since it is in the center of the narrative as an active agent (PATTERSON; MONROE, 1998).

In the international political field, narratives are dynamic, and a social product based on State interactions both within their own society and with external parties. In their seminal work "Forging the World: Strategic Narratives and International Relations," Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2017) present a detailed examination of the application of narrative research in the field of International Relations (IR). Their concept of "strategic narratives"

centers on the ways in which these narratives are formed, projected, and received. The authors delve into the process of narrative formation, specifically examining the role of political actors in constructing such narratives. This leads to an analysis of the projection and contestation of narratives within the global public sphere and, consequently, how these narratives are received and understood by individual actors and states in IR and Global Governance.

Therefore, strategic narratives are representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political actors attempt to give meaning to a certain issue to achieve political objectives. The creation of strategic narratives by political actors can be used to construct a shared meaning of the past, present and future of international events and, with this, political actors can then “extend their influence, manage expectations and change the discursive environment in which they operate” (MISKIMMON; et al, 2013, p. 3).

As understood by Castell, power is managed using communication. In this sense, strategic narratives can be understood as a tool of soft power. According to Joseph Nye (1990), soft power lies in a country’s attractiveness and comes from three basilar resources: culture, political values, and foreign policies. When the culture and political values are attractive in the global sphere, and the foreign policies are seen as legitimate and having moral authority, the State is attractive in the global scenario and, therefore, is capable of getting other international actors to want what it wants.

Here, it is important to differentiate soft power from hard power, since the latter rests on direct inducements and/or threats, i.e., direct forms of coercion. With soft power, the intention is to get the outcome one wants by attracting others to it, shaping the preferences of others to want what one wants. And that is done through what Nye refers to as the “States assets”: culture, values, and policies (NYE, 2008).

However, since Nye’s first theorization on soft power, in 1990, global communication has become more complex, changing relationships and ways of publicizing State assets. More recently, Nye argued that international affairs have become a matter of whose story wins, and affirmed that a “good narrative is a great source of soft power” (NYE, 2008, p. 73).

That is because the State assets - culture, political values, and foreign policies - can be promoted in a certain way for a given purpose and channeled through public diplomacy between government and the public). In other words, strategic narratives can be used to develop personal narratives about those assets with the intention to directly address the formation, projection, and reception of ideas in the international system (ROSELLE, et all, 2014).

The utilization of narrative in qualitative methodology is a well-established practice. However, determining the effects and underlying reasons behind a narrative can present a challenge. This is because the true intention behind a political narrative is not always evident, and researchers must take into consideration various factors to gain a deeper understanding of the strategy behind a given narrative. Additionally, political actors themselves may not have a clear strategy or defined goals. The difficulty in analyzing narratives in the realm of international relations is also rooted in the complexity of establishing clear cause-effect relationships within a global and historical context, which may necessitate oversimplifying connections to demonstrate the influence of a narrative (MISKIMMON, et al, 2017).

Although narratives cannot capture the political reality, this does not mean that all narratives are equally true or equally false, they are constructed based on a certain political perspective (SHENHAV, 2006). This is of paramount importance when analyzing political discourses on a democratic scope and, specifically, when analyzing political discourses and actions taken through Global Governance, since it embraces different positions from different actors. In this way, the theme of the narrative itself can be framed by various actors in certain ways and, consequently, contribute to the construction of a shared meaning about certain events.

As mentioned, a narrative structure embraces the existence of actors; events, plot, and time; and a setting or space (MISKIMMON, et al, 2014). In this study, the EU itself is the principal *actor*, which it is divided into different EU actors, such as the EU parliament, European Council, European Commission, European External Action Service, and individual EU member states with their own governments.

The EU foreign policy towards global environmental protection and sustainable development is the *action* taken by these actors, which take forms of set of norms and appointments to partner States - in this study specifically, to Brazil -. These actions are taken in several international *settings*, such as the Paris Agreement, Agenda 21, Agenda 2030 and the European Green Deal, which are complemented and permeated by principles of International Public Law, such as the principle of sustainable development, common goods, the principle of precaution, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, among others.

In addition to this broader setting, the foreign policies of the European Union concerning its relations with Brazil (the Strategic Partnership between the two actors) and its attempts to diminish deforestation rates around the globe, are of paramount importance. All these settings shape a space where the world is understood as one that “grows through interdependence and

globalization, with prospects for cooperation in pursuit of common goals” (ROSELLE; et al 2014, p. 75).

The *conflict* or *action* presents itself when the EU, which portrays itself as the leader in the search for global sustainable development and environmental protection, expresses its concern about the way that Brazil has been managing the Amazon rainforest, and the consequential increase of deforestation in the region. The conflict in this matter arises from the fact that Brazilian authorities and society are distrustful of European interests in the region, and therefore do not receive the narrative from the EU well. This also highlights the importance of temporality in a narrative.

This European narrative is future-oriented, with a clear cause-effect element. The *solution* of the conflict, given by the EU, would guarantee a better world for future generations, decreasing global climate change and protecting the diverse fauna and flora in the region.

Miskimmon et al (2013) argues that strategic narratives come in three main forms, that are inextricably linked. The first, is strategic narratives about the international system, articulating how the principal actor conceives their understanding of international order. An example would include narratives from different countries about the Cold War.

The second is on narratives employed by political actors seeking to influence the development of policies. Here, the narrative set out why a policy is needed and desirable, and how it would be successfully implemented.

The third is about strategic narratives of identity, which is how a political actor seeks to project their identity in international affairs. These define the story of a political actor, which leads to better understanding what values and goals it has and, consequently, the possible terms of policy.

As defended by Miskimmon et al (2013), an actor able to align the three main forms of narrative has a greater chance of influence in the Global Governance scenario. Therefore, what this dissertation proposes to study is the strategic narratives utilized by the European Union, concerning global sustainable development and the protection of tropical forests worldwide, to be an actor of influence in the Global Environmental Governance scenario towards the protection of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest.

Within this chapter, the examination will delve into the European Union's deployment of strategic narratives, both domestically and internationally. More precisely, the focus will be on



scrutinizing the manner in which the EU employs strategic narratives on the global stage concerning Sustainable Development and Global Environmental Governance.

### **5.1. The use of Narratives by the EU**

During the last 70 years, the European Union evolved into one of the most complex bodies of international law and international organization in the world, a supranational actor of international standing (JUPILLE; CAPORASO, 1998), that drove it to an upstanding international position on today's Global Governance scenario. Its institutional design, although inherited from the 1950's and created in the shadow of two violent world wars, still can position the EU as an important voice on the global political and economic scenario - now based on the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. The idea of Soft Power, as explained above, could explain how the EU grew to be an international standard, despite the lack of use of formal hard power capabilities (MISKIMMON, et al, 2013).

As it is decoupled from the notion of nation state, the European project had to rely on creating and distributing multiple narratives throughout the public sphere to legitimize the European project. Internally, the EU had to search for historical, cultural, and social patterns of unity between European people, so that the political elite could claim the EU as a step further in Europe's development. And, externally, the EU self-representational narrative focuses on the positive roles that the EU can assume in the international system (NIȚOIU, 2013).

Nonetheless, the construction of the European Union had to rely on narratives for internal and external legitimacy. Internally, ever since the European Community (EC) was established, questions concerning its legitimacy arose, as nation state narratives towards national identities are an expression of a certain social and political reality which are historically constructed. That is, the idea of national identity emerges from a shared history, and is, thus, deeply rooted in common experience. Although Europe became more integrated after the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), for the European project to have cohesion, narratives had to be created and distributed throughout the public sphere to create an "European identity" (FUCHS, 2011). As presented by Luuk Van Middelaar (2017), it is not enough for the community of partners to be real; it also needs to be perceived that way. This paradigm is useful, since the collective identity construction in Europe could measure the degree to which people start to trust its institutions and identify with Europe (in political or cultural terms) (KOHLLI, 2000; EDER, 2009).

In the Treaty of Maastricht, there wasn't at the beginning a concern for the creation of an identity as a European citizen, as the document only refers to political authorities:

His majesty the King of the Belgians, her majesty the Queen of Denmark, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, the President of the Hellenic Republic, his majesty the King of Spain, the President of the French Republic, the President of Ireland, the President of the Italian Republic, His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, her majesty the Queen of the Netherlands, the President of the Portuguese Republic, her majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, RESOLVED to mark a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities (...) (EUROPEAN UNION, 1992).

Only years later, in a declaration that government leaders drafted in 2007 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding treaty, did it read “We, the citizens of the European Union, are united in our diversity for the sake of our happiness”. As Luuk Van Middelaar (2017, p. 362) wrote, “the notion of ‘we’ can gain credibility by referring to the idea of ‘our people’, ‘our interest’, or ‘our own decisions’”.

This outcome was the result of the political leaders' perception that the populace needed to perceive themselves as “European”. Citizenship cohesion throughout a collective identity started to be a project for the function of the EU, not only with the creation of flags and symbols, but using narrative. Klaus Eder (2009) identified three modes of narratives in Europe for constructing this collective identity. The first is based on a successful process of unification, based on how the EU is the result of an integration process as a successful economic and political project that leads to a rich, yet socially responsible continent (and more recently, also environmentally responsible). This narrative is often based in the Common Market and Social Europe, and how the EU is the result of a successful process which transformed “war into wealth and freedom” and it is an “actor with a clear role in the world” (2009, p. 11).

The second emerges from the shared memory of a violent past in Europe, which holds high emotional value and in which the EU is the result of a search for global peace after centuries of war. This story is mainly defined by the “cultural heritage” of Europe and defining what is considered “european values”, which are opposed to “eastern values”, “american values” or “oriental values”, for instance.

Finally, there is the narrative that relates the EU as an experiment in hybrid collective identity, as a diversity union and a new social bond between nations. As Eder (2009) points out, the latter is a story in the making, and it is almost directly opposed to the second narrative, since this idea of “European self” and “European culture” never existed. Europe has many different cultures

that coexist, including the culture of “others” that was added through the course of migration movements to the continent over the years. Therefore, it is considered an “open story”, as the clash of cultures still happens, yet under different conditions.

According to Eder (2009) theory, the three types of narrative are incompatible, as they do not coincide in terms of constructing a clear boundary of what is to be “European”. Thus, European identity emerges as something with varying boundaries, depending on the type of narrative that is used. Therefore, the construction of a European identity is a continuous process, facilitated by a dynamic of multiple narratives, which culminate in a form of collective identity that is constantly evolving.

The utilization of narrative in the formation of the European Union is an exemplification of how narrative is employed to ensure the prosperity of the European project internally. This example sheds light on the potential of narratives as a means of socio-political construction, particularly to the construction of collective identity and the idea of “belonging”. It is possible that, through this narrative, the EU seeks to leverage influence worldwide, in an attempt to convince the world to adhere to the “European values” and to position the EU as an “force for good” in the world (MISKIMMON, et al, 2013). The following section will illustrate how the European Union employs narratives in its interactions in foreign affairs.

## **5.2. Strategic Narratives of the EU**

There is some debate about how the EU perseveres in the global political scenario. Ian Manners (2002) advocates that the EU’s external behavior is founded on a set of core values that are inscribed into its treaties, acting as a “normative power”. The “Normative Power Europe” (NPE) thesis advocates that the EU’s action on the global governance scenario is based on a setting of standards that are considered “normal” in world politics, and that this idea of normality is mainly defined by EU’s “core” norms globally.

Manners identifies five core norms that comprise EU’s community and political actions globally: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. Added to these five core norms, Manners suggest four “minor” norms within the constitution and practices of the EU: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, good governance and sustainable development.

In fact, these values are explicitly shown in the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which, in its second article, presents a general provision about EU foreign policy:

In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to **peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law**, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter. (EUROPEAN UNION, 2007).

Through this European narrative about the EU values, it is possible to link the international position of the EU to its use of strategic narrative. In fact, Manners do suggest that EU's normative power stems from six factors, shaping norm diffusion in IR: (i) *contagion*, through an unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors; (ii) *informational diffusion*, as the result of a range of strategic communications; (iii) *procedural diffusion*, which involve the institutionalization of the relationship between the EU and a third party; (iii) *transference*, when the diffusion takes place with the exchange of goods, trade, aid or technical assistance with third parties; (iv) *over diffusion*, which occurs as a result of the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations; (v) *cultural filter*, based on the interplay between the construction of knowledge and the creation of social and political identity.

Through Manner's thesis, it is possible to observe that the actions of the EU in the global scenario are guided by a set of norms and principles, which reflect the EU's normative identity. And, especially through informational diffusion and cultural filters, it is possible for an international political actor to establish the terrain on which policy discussions take place. Subsequently, as the arguments of Miskimmon (2013) and Roselle (2014) shown, this can be done using strategic narratives.

Cristian Nițoiu (2013) wrote about how the EU constructed different narratives concerning its role in the global scenario and mapped some influences on policy outcomes derived by EU narratives. One of the narratives presented is regarding the EU ability to foster global peace, and it is based on the idea that after successfully maintaining the peace within the continent for over 70 years, the EU has the duty to share the lessons and help other States to abolish practices that could lead to war (STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, 2022).

As the European Commission ex-president Barroso presented (2005): "having stumbled across such a successful formula for spreading peace and stability in our own continent, it is only natural to offer our know-how and experience to encourage peace and stability elsewhere in the world". This "actor for global peace" narrative is directly linked to the narrative that bases the

European identity internally. As the EU managed to create an identity based on solidarity between its states and nations, and on the respect for peace, democracy and human rights, it positions itself as an “unique international actor” that has a duty to promote peace worldwide. This narrative asserts that the EU, owing to its adherence to distinct European values, possesses the capacity to effectively contribute towards the restoration of global peace, setting it apart from other nation-states.

Nițoiu also recognized the EU narrative as the promoter of well-being for people around the world. This narrative is also linked on the self-established commitment of the EU to tackle the increase of climate change through its external relations. Climate change has been framed as a threat to the well-being of people around the world due to its economic and social impact (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2009), and the EU official narrative puts the blame on other world powers like the United States (US) or China for their unwillingness to make environmental concessions. Nițoiu highlights the way the European narrative has been crafted in opposition to the actions of the US, emphasizing, for example, the EU’s willingness to participate in multilateralism and to engage with matters considered “low politics”, secondary to “hard” issues in international politics, such as economics and security.

In the context of this narrative, the lack of progress in environmental policy - exemplified by the unsuccessful outcome of the Copenhagen Conference of 2009 - is validated through the attribution of blame to specific parties, notably the US and China, who are deemed resistant to complying with the rigorous environmental standards proposed by the EU (NIȚOIU, 2013).

The narrative concerning the EU as a leader of sustainable development worldwide is inextricably linked to this idea of acting as a promoter of well-being for people around the world. This narrative serves to cultivate a distinct identity for the EU and shapes the perception of itself in the broader international system and in the domain of Global Environmental Governance.

According to Miskimmon et al (2013), to gain a deeper comprehension of the strategic use of narratives by a political actor, it is necessary to conduct an examination encompassing the formation, projection and reception of its strategic narrative. Analysis of the role of narratives in international politics requires attention, as political actors select their discourses to try to create the intended meaning to the political past, present and future.

The study of formation of a strategic narrative entails the analysis of objectives and modes of communication of the actor. It is difficult to have certainty to what is the final goal of a global

actor with the use of a strategic narrative, as the goal could not even be determined by the actor itself (MISKIMMON, et al, 2013).

The projection of a strategic narrative concerns the type of media environment in which the narrative is constructed. This is relevant to the construction of strategic narratives, considering that from different media environments, there are different reaches of increased communication, increased transparency, increased interactivity, etc (MISKIMMON, et al, 2013). As the media environment has become more complex and, considering the era of communication power described by Castells, the new media environment has affected sovereignty, with the formation of new regional alliances and new geopolitics, all of which remap the informational space.

This happens because, in this new media environment, marked by the rapid proliferation of digital technologies, State actors have to adapt to the development of overlapping local, national and transnational circulation of competing narratives. To analyze the reception of a narrative is to identify the effect or impact of a narrative on audience, which requires an analysis of their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors before the narrative reached them as well as afterward (MISKIMMON, et al, 2013).

As Miskimmon et al (2013, p. 18) explains, “(...) audiences are not a blank slate for narratives to be projected onto (...)”, since the political and cultural context in which the narrative is projected can shape the way the narrative is perceived. Considering that the EU environmental narrative towards the protection of the Amazon rainforest affects different actors (Brazilian Federal government, civil society, NGOs, international actors, among others) and that their reception varies along time, this research will not delve into the examination of the reception of the EU strategic narrative towards the Amazon.

This research examines the European Union’s strategic narrative of portraying itself as a global leader of sustainable development, facing the Amazon rainforest environmental crisis and increasing deforestation. The analysis will explore the formation of this narrative in the context of the evolution of global environmental politics and Global Environmental Governance, and the role of the EU within it. Therefore, it will be analyzed the formation of this narrative and its projection in some selected official EU documents.

### **5.2.1 Formation: the EU global narrative of environmental protector**

To comprehend the EU's adoption of its strategic narrative as a leader for sustainable development and environmental protection, it is imperative to first delve into the evolution of global environmental politics. This analytical framework will facilitate an understanding of how the global political community came to prioritize environmental concerns and incorporate them into International Public Law. Furthermore, it will shed light on the rationale behind the European Union's utilization of environmental issues as a strategic narrative in its pursuit of influence regarding the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest.

The post-World War II period witnessed a rapid escalation in global industrialization, particularly in the West, as nations sought to reconstruct and revitalize their economies. In this new post-war economic order, the United States emerged as the preeminent global economic superpower, wielding considerable influence in shaping the global economic architecture. The United States' emphasis on market expansion, trade liberalization, and the adoption of a laissez-faire approach to economic policymaking, which facilitated swift industrialization, served as the template for the rest of the world to follow.

In line with this paradigm, countries across the globe embarked on plans to modernize their economies, ushering in an era of rapid industrialization. Governments provided financial incentives to businesses to invest in new production technologies, and regulatory frameworks were reformed to facilitate the growth of new industries. The scale of this industrialization was vast, with new factories, assembly lines, and production facilities sprouting up across the world to meet the growing demand for goods.

This economic transformation also led to significant changes in society, as traditional agriculture-based economies gave way to urban centers that prioritized industrial production. This shift resulted in the growth of new urban centers that prioritized industrial production. This shift resulted in the growth of new urban areas and the rapid expansion of existing cities. Furthermore, the demand for labor to sustain industrial production led to a migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. This phenomenon fundamentally altered the demographic and social fabric of societies across the world.

The increased use of fossil fuels, the growth of heavy industry, and the extensive use of synthetic materials led to significant environmental degradation and pollution, which had significant long-term impacts on the planet. Overall, the post-World War II era was characterized by rapid industrialization, which brought significant economic, social, and environmental changes to societies across the globe.

Simultaneously, a host of global organizations emerged in a concerted effort to establish worldwide stability and facilitate progress in the aftermath of Europe's ruinous state. The year 1945 saw the formation of the United Nations, while in 1944, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Association was established as a subsidiary of the World Bank, which was itself founded that same year, along with the International Monetary Fund. The World Health Organization, on the other hand, came into being in 1948, completing this cohort of international institutions (CHRISTOFF; ECKERSLEY, 2013).

The modern global concern with ecological impacts and risks had its transformational moment from the early 1960s to the early 1970s. This period marks the beginning of the emergence of ecological limits to human progress. This development in the post war era indicates the emergence of a wider global outlook towards collaboration, which in turn gave rise to a proliferation of literary works and analytical reports that castigated unbridled industrialization and expressed apprehension over the predicament of humanity. Consequently, these works instigated a global discourse on the constraints of the planet Earth and the escalating pace of technological and industrial advancement.

A commonly regarded catalyst for widespread public awareness of the environmental impacts of industrialization was Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring", launched in 1962. Carson's book ignited the environmental movement and brought attention to the devastating impact of chemical pesticides on the natural world. The book describes the widespread use of pesticides and their detrimental effects on wildlife, including birds and fish, as well as the potential human health risks associated with exposure to these chemicals. Carson argued that the indiscriminate use of pesticides had created a "silent spring" in which the birds no longer sang, and the natural balance of ecosystems had been disrupted. She criticized the powerful chemical industry for downplaying the risks of their products and called for increased regulation and a more cautious approach to the use of chemicals in agriculture and industry (CARSON, 2015).

The book's impact was significant, leading to a nationwide ban on the pesticide and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States. It also inspired a generation of environmental activists and helped raise awareness of the need to protect the natural world from human activities (CHRISTOFF; ECKERSLEY, 2013).

The further amplified concern in the West about poorly regulated industrial practices and pollution led to crescent protests. In 1970, a group of industrialists called the Club of Rome, started by Aurelio Peccei, the Vice President of Fiat and Olivetti, together with Alexander King,



sponsored the report “The Limits to Growth”, published in 1972. The report, that sold twelve million copies in more than thirty translations at the time, presented the results of a computer model - called World3 - that ran three different scenarios and showed that even considering optimistic assumptions regarding advances in technology, the world would encounter the planetary limits in the 21st century, leading to the collapse of world population and economic systems (MEADOWS, et al, 1972).

The notion of limits posed a challenge to the long-standing economic development narrative that had prevailed for centuries. In the early 1970s, the discourse of imposing limits to economic growth played a crucial role in catalyzing the contemporary environmental movement, as it brought to the fore the global ramifications of unchecked exponential growth in population, resource and energy consumption, and pollution (CHRISTOFF; ECKERSLEY, 2013).

At a global level, Europe was influenced by the signing of various environmental treaties in the realm of Global Environmental Governance, which, at the time, was mainly being organized by the United Nations, that has increasingly played an active role in promoting environmental protection since the 1970s. This role included facilitating five major environmental summits, with the first being the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, which led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). However, the most notable of these summits was the “Earth-Summit”, formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The Earth-Summit was the hallmark of international environmental concern, normative development, and institutional innovation. Not only did it serve as the platform for the final negotiation and signing of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), but it also produced the United Nations Declaration of Environment and Development (the “Rio Declaration”), which set out principles for sustainable development and the Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action for achieving sustainable development.

Another important international document to environmental politics is the “Brundtland Report” (1987), a report from the World Commission on Environment and Development. The report developed guiding principles for sustainable development as it is generally understood today. The Brundtland Report stated that critical global environmental problems were primarily the result of the enormous poverty of the South and the non-sustainable patterns and production in

the North. Its description of sustainable development became widely recognized worldwide as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

In 1972, the Britain magazine “The Ecologist” published a report titled “A Blueprint for Survival”, just prior to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The report took a more confrontational stance toward industrial society and economic growth, arguing that these were the products of unreflective institutions driven by capitalist enterprises. According to the report, the fate of liberal democratic governments hinged on their ability to generate economic growth to prevent social crises, which contrasted with a “no-growth” economy that would have minimal impact on ecosystems. This report introduced the key components of a new political ideology that led to the formation of the world’s first green parties in Tasmania, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in 1973 (CHRISTOFF; ECKERSLEY, 2013).

The emergence of green parties throughout Europe during the 1980s marked a new form of political movement, with new issues on the political agenda. The first one was created in the United Kingdom, by the editor of The Ecologist, Edward Goldsmith. Originally called “People”, it changed its name to the “Ecology Party” in 1975 and then to “Green Party” in 1985. The rise of this party illustrates the conjuncture of forces in which Green groups decided that it was necessary to take decisions for future action through political action and to form a new philosophy of life towards a new style of society. During the 1970s, the UK Ecology Party stood as the solitary national Green party in Europe, while the significance of a political party committed to environmentalism was undervalued by a majority of political scientists and observers. Environmentalist concerns and proposals were regarded by politicians as transient issues that would eventually be supplanted by new concerns, thus minimizing their significance (RICHARDSON, 1995).

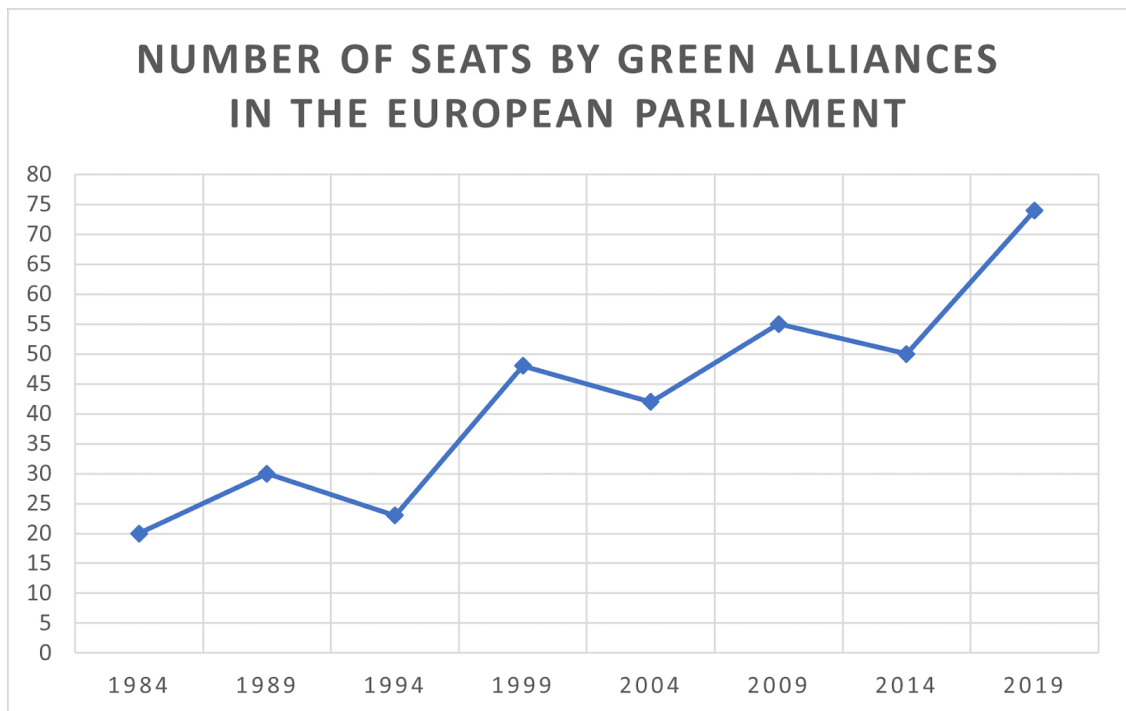
In 1979, when the first direct elections to the European Parliament were held, the participation of green parties was limited to only Belgium and the UK. The emergence and evolution of green parties in Europe is inextricably linked with the election process of the European Parliament, as the results of the 1979 European elections served as a catalyst for the establishment of national green parties. Given that green parties did not necessarily have a strong presence in their respective national party systems, the European elections became a crucial focal point for their development. It is noteworthy that green parties have had a continuous presence in the

European Parliament since 1984, and they tend to perform better in European elections compared to national ones (RüDIG, 2019).

This led to attempts, between Members of the European Parliaments (MEPs), to coordinate green efforts since 1979, with the first partnership being the European Green Party (EGP) in 2004. The EGP made its debut in the European Parliament elections in 1979, and it secured representation in 1984 as part of the “Rainbow Alliance”, a broader and more diverse political grouping. Following the 1989 elections, the Greens established their own parliamentary group, known as The Green Group in the European Parliament (GGEP). Although the number of Green MEPs decreased in 1994 elections, they joined the European Radical Alliance, and a successful outcome in 1999 enabled them to form a combined group with the European Free Alliance, which included regionalist parties as members (GGEP/EFA). This group continues to be the current parliamentary group.

Over time, the loose alliance of the early years has evolved into a more defined structure, enabling its 34 members to articulate their political views through common policy documents. In Table 1, it is possible to see the rise of seats won in European elections by green parties, since 1979 to 2014.

TABLE 1 – Number of Seats by Green Alliances in the European Parliament



SOURCE: EUROPEANPARLIAMENT, 2023

During the 1980s, the political conditions for green parties in Europe continued to be favorable. This could be explained by the boost of the peace movement, and by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986, that led to a revival of anti-nuclear protests in many Western European countries. Also, the threat of a hole in the ozone layer was detected in 1985, which led to the rise of global environmental issues, creating a political agenda on which the environment was placed highly (RÜDIG, 2019).

Nonetheless, the EU environment emerged in response to the growing global concern over environmental issues. This can be traced back to the European Council held in Paris in 1972, which followed the first United Nations conference on the environment. During this meeting, the Heads of State or Government recognized the need for a Community environment policy to complement economic expansion and called for an action program. The introduction of the “Environment Title” in the Single European Act of 1987 marked a significant milestone, providing the first legal foundation for a common environmental policy. Its objective included the preservation of environmental quality, the protection of human health, and the promotion of rational use of natural resources.

Successive revisions to the EU treaties have reaffirmed the Community’s commitment to environmental protection and have reinforced the role of the European Parliament in shaping environmental policy. The Treaty of Maastricht (1993) marked the environment as an official EU policy area and introduced the codecision procedure, which gave the European Parliament equal say with the Council of the EU in adopting legislation. The treaty also established qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU in adoption legislation. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) introduced a new provision that required environmental protection to be integrated into all EU sectoral policies to promote sustainable development. The Treaty of Lisbon (2007) specially listed “combating climate change” and promoting sustainable development in relations with third countries and policy goals. Additionally, the Treaty of Lisbon granted the EU legal personality, which allowed it to conclude international agreements.

The integration of environmental considerations into various EU policy areas has emerged as a crucial concept in European politics since its inception, originating from a proposal made during the European Council held in Cardiff in 1998. In recent years, notable advances have been made towards environmental policy integration, particularly in the energy sector, as evidenced by the simultaneous progress of the EU’s climate and energy package and the roadmap for transitioning towards a competitive low-carb economy by 2050. Finally, in December 2019, the

Commission launched the European Green Deal, which should help to focus EU policies on making Europe the first climate-neutral continent in the world.

It is noticeable how, following the global interest and concern in environmental protection, the EU took the position of a leading player in global environmental politics. Since 1987, policies to ensure a high level of environmental protection became one of the fastest-growing areas of EU legislation, and the Stockholm Conference in 1972 is often seen as a seminal moment in this process, as it directly related to the beginning of the European Community environmental action and, also, to the creation of environment ministries in several member states (VOGLER, 2005).

During the 1970s, the United States sought to assert its position as a leader in environmental policy by taking stands on various issues, such as fisheries and preservation of the stratospheric ozone layer. Nevertheless, by the early 1990s, the US had relinquished this position, evidenced by its refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and subsequent unfavorable stances towards other multilateral agreements like the Convention on Biodiversity. This shift presented the European Union with both a challenge and an opportunity to grow in the area of international environmental cooperation without strong competitors (VOGLER, 2005).

Currently, the EU is signatory of several multiple environmental agreements, ranging from regional conventions on seas and watercourses to global agreements, such as the conventions on Stratospheric Ozone, on Biodiversity (CBD) and Desertification, and, of course, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. The EU's environmental influence is seen by the sustainable requirements that it makes of applicants and potential applicants, alongside long-standing involvement in regional agreements. Since the 2001 Goteborg Conclusions, all agreements with third countries are required to have sustainable development as an objective. However, as Vogler (2005, p. 2) pointed out: "the extent to which the impact of any and all of the Union's recent cooperation and association agreements extends beyond the rhetoric of sustainability is open to question".

As it is seen, the EU has significantly enhanced, over time, its coordination for coherence and unity in international environmental diplomacy and governance. The EU adopted a diplomatic leadership narrative to the advance of environmental protection worldwide, giving greater emphasis on coalition and multilateral agreements, especially with least developed countries and developing allies. This has been confirmed by the 2019 European Green Deal, which reconfirmed the focus on supporting alliance-building with Africa and Latin America

(EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2019). In this sense, the EU clearly articulates its will to influence global environmental politics, playing a leading role on environmental matters. This desire was first articulated by the Heads of State in 1988: “The European Council considers that protection of the environment is a matter of vital significance to the Community and the Member States (...) including at international level (...)” (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 1988, p. 7). Since then, this environmental strategic narrative has been maintained by the European Union in its global relations.

As explained by Schunz (2017), strategizing in international relations represents a complex endeavor that considers the intricacies of the world and situates an agent within the vast dynamic global landscape by crafting a comprehensive vision and contemplating long-term outcomes. The centrality of strategy to foreign policy is evidenced through the analysis of various contexts, such as those within the EU and environmental contexts. For example, EU foreign policy has been depicted as the area of European politics that “is directed at the external environment with the objective of influencing that environment and the behavior of other actors within it, in order to pursue interests, values and goals” (DELREUX; KEUKELEIRE, 2014, p.1). One of “means” that the EU relies on to attain its strategic ends, as it was shown previously, is using strategic narrative.

The aim of this topic was to examine how the European Union embraced the sustainable leadership narrative in its foreign policy by adopting a strategic narrative. This study begins by providing a historical overview of the global environmental issue, emphasizing its significance in the international arena. Furthermore, it analyzed how the EU has become involved in this issue, adopting a proactive stance and narrative towards the protection of the environment on a global scale. It was shown that the environmental concern in Europe initially originated at the national level, particularly in the United Kingdom, which influenced national parliaments. Subsequently, the EU integrated this concern into its Parliament, its treaties and foreign affairs. The next topic will provide the reader an analysis of different European documents that reflect this strategic narrative perpetrated by the EU currently.

### **5.3. Projection of EU environmental strategic narrative**

The analysis of the strategic narrative of the European Union (EU) will be conducted by various sources of content, regarding different European organizations. First, the content of the European Parliament, one of its seven institutions, responsible for the legislative power of the

EU. The European Parliament (EP) positions its role not only in promoting democratic decision-making in Europe, but also standing for the defense of European values across the globe.

Throughout research in the European Parliament Plenary Sitting it is possible to access debates and speeches of the Members of the European Parliaments (MEPs) in their original language, as well as agendas, questions, votes, minutes, texts adopted and questions and Union acts. Therefore, for a better delimitation of documents to be analyzed, a research was made in the Debates section of the EP Plenary, during the Parliamentary term of 2019-2024, through the keyword “Amazonia”. The search resulted in fourteen documents, of which the first three, in order of “most relevant”, were selected, entitled: (i) The situation of indigenous and environmental defenders in Brazil, including the killing of Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira, from 6 of July of 2022 (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2022); (ii) Amazon forest fires (debate), from 17 of September of 2019 (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2019); (iii) Land grabbing and deforestation in the Amazonas (debate), from 19 of June of 2020 (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2020).

Secondly, European Council documents will be analyzed. The documents selected were the Joint Statements made after the seven EU-Brazil Summits from 2007 to 2014. In addition, it was selected a Speech by EU Council President, Donald Tusk, at the meeting on the action for the Amazon rainforest in 2019.

Finally, to encapsulate the narrative of the European Commission, given the multifarious roles encompassed by the European Commission, ranging from overseeing numerous programs and initiatives to issuing statements, managing college members, and facilitating project financing, the research opted for a focused delimitation by scrutinizing outcomes within the purview of its press corner. The search was undertaken of the keywords "Brazil," "Amazon," and "Forest," specifically filtering for instances involving the participation of EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen. A noteworthy outcome presented was a statement delivered by President Von der Leyen during a joint press conference with Brazilian President Lula da Silva, on June 12, 2023, in which she welcomes the new government and presented the Global Gateway project as a new initiative for investment to protect the Amazon rainforest.

The analytical operators employed to impart coherence to the EU’s narrative will be informed by the connection established between Manners' (2002) delineation of the six factors constituting EU normative power and the conceptualization of strategic narrative put forth by Miskimmon et al. (2013). In other words, this analysis aims to elucidate which facet of the EU's

power diffusion in the global arena can be discerned through the narratives articulated by various EU institutions.

### **5.3.1. EU Council Narrative**

The I Joint Statement published after the EU-Brazil Summit in Lisbon (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2007), 4 July 2007, focused on advertising the launching of the strategic partnership between the parties. Briefly, under the objectives of addressing global challenges together, their commitment to strengthening the multilateral climate change regime is reiterated. It underlines that both parties shared the same values and, therefore, both strive for an “ambitious agreement” on the Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as to further its actions towards the UNFCCC, “including incentives for developing countries to take measurable, reportable and verifiable measures” of different kinds. The I Joint Statement did not specify or detailed measures and paths for environmental cooperation and, regarding forestry protection, it only mentioned the objective to “strengthen cooperation on issues such as water resource managements and forests” (EU COUNCIL, 2007, p. 4).

The II Joint Statement of 2008, regarding the EU-Brazil Summit in Rio de Janeiro, provides more depth in the cooperation for sustainable development and the protection of the Amazon rainforest. Moreover, it establishes the Joint Action that will be taken by the EU-Brazil in its strategy to enhance the environmental partnership. Generally, the document cites the need to achieve full, effective and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan of 2007. It is highlighted on the document the “need for all developed countries to take the lead by committing to ambitious and legally binding emission reduction targets” and that developing countries to “take appropriate mitigation actions in the context of sustainable development, support and enabled by technology, financing and capacity building” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2008, p. 27).

Specifically on the Joint Action Plan to tackle forest issues, the text presents that Brazil and the EU “agree to promote sustainable forest management at all levels” and to “exchange experiences on best practices and measures to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other biological resources”. Based on the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Action points out the support to traditional forest-related knowledge with the prior consent of the “holders of such knowledge”, promoting the “fair and equitable sharing of benefit from their utilization” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2008, p. 27).



In relation to biodiversity, it is “reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual effort” to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the principles set out in the Rio Declaration. And it is agreed that the meetings of the “Dialogue on the Environment Dimension of Sustainable Development and Climate Change” would take place at the level of senior officials, simultaneously with technical level discussions (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2008, p. 28).

The document points to 15 decisions made by the EU and Brazil on this matter, none of which cites the Amazon rainforest directly, mentioning only forestry protection. All the 15 decisions are set out on a generalized tone, using expressions such as “deepen”, “strengthen”, “advance”, “exchange”, “work towards”, etc., but without specifying the measures that will be undertaken, politically or financially, to achieve these objectives.

The III Joint Statement, emanating from the EU-Brazil Stockholm Summit in 2009, adheres to a similar generalized narrative found in its predecessors. However, it presented a brief focal point pertaining to the implementation of the Joint Action Plan outlined in the preceding Statement, in which it presents the following:

High Level Dialogue on the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development and Climate Change held in Brazil on 30 April 2009 which allowed a wide exchange of views on key international environmental issues and a constructive discussion on the respective policy approaches (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2009, p. 9).

Despite the significance of this dialogue, the Joint Statement fails to elucidate the content of the discussions or provide further information on the policy approaches deliberated. Through a comprehensive search on the official websites of the European Union External Action, the Brazilian government and Google it was possible to denote that the result of this Dialogue was not published by the EU or the Brazilian government.

The same is perceived in the IV EU-Brazil Joint Statement Summit, held in Brasília in 2010. It is documented that the “leaders (...) expressed satisfaction with the positive implementation of the Brazil-EU Joint Action Plan (...) as well as with the results of the bilateral High Level Political Dialogue” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2010). However, it does not mention what implementations were made and the results achieved.

The IV Statement mentions a Brazil-EU Joint Commission for the first time as the main mechanism of implementation of the Joint Action Plan, as well as the holding in Madrid, on 15 February 2010, of the fourth meeting of the High Level Political Dialogue. However, neither the EU or Brazil government published any official documents or press releases about the

Commission or any of the four meetings held for Political Dialogue. The IV Statement reiterates the compromise of both parties to international environmental agreements and principles and does not cite the Amazon rainforest.

The V EU-Brazil Summit, convened in Brussels in 2011, marked the introduction of a new Joint Action Plan spanning the period from 2012 to 2014. Specifically addressing the promotion of an environmental partnership for sustainable development, the updated Joint Action Plan exhibited minimal alterations. Remarkably, the text largely retained its original content, incorporating only a few additions or corrections to align with emerging international agreements. It is noteworthy, however, that Brazil and the EU committed to “explore opportunities for triangular cooperation with Member States for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (TCA) on issues of interest for the sustainable development of the Amazon region” under this Joint Action Plan (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2011, p. 16).

This preservation of the generalized language observed in the inaugural Joint Action Plan of 2009 suggests a continuity in the overarching narrative and objectives of the environmental partnership between the European Union and Brazil, but also points to a lack of specific details regarding corresponding programs, investments, or financial resources for each initiative. This broad generalization implies a commitment to outlined environmental objectives in both action plans without furnishing a detailed implementation roadmap. Consequently, it allows for subsequent discussions on the specific mechanisms, investments, and financial allocations necessary for successful execution but, regrettably, no direction is provided of future documentations or projects.

The VI Joint Statement of the EU-Brazil Summit in Brasília, 2013, cites the deforestation in the Amazon biome directly for the first time:

They emphasized the significant and consistent reduction in the deforestation rate in the Amazon biome achieved in Brazil. They expressed their support to further EU-Brazil technical cooperation with the view to replicate and scale up these achievements in other biomes and other countries (...) (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2013, p. 3)

The most recent VII EU-Brazil Summit, conducted in Brussels in 2014, follows a succinct pattern, largely reiterating the established narrative dating back to the initial I Joint Statement in 2007. Noteworthy is the repetition of content, with only presents minimal deviations to reference more recent international environmental agreements, such as the Rio Convention.

Upon analysis of these documents, it becomes apparent that, instead of serving as platforms for comprehensive publicization and elucidation of the strategic partnership between the EU and Brazil, particularly in the realm of environmental cooperation, the Joint Statements primarily function as instruments affirming the alignment of both parties with international obligations stipulated by various environmental conventions. Unfortunately, the documents fall short in specifying the pathways and concrete measures that will be implemented to fulfil these commitments.

Despite the acknowledged importance of Amazon rainforest protection under the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership, any more detailed documentation on the measures taken remains undisclosed to the public. The dearth of comprehensive details in official documents, compounded by the lack of following documents on environmental cooperation between the involved parties, has profound implications for transparency. This deficit impedes a holistic understanding of the EU's environmental cooperation with Brazil, posing challenges for civil society, policymakers, and academics seeking to engage meaningfully with this subject.

The beginning of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership and the I EU-Brazil Summit coincide with the same year of the Treaty of Lisbon, which, as pointed out by Dúran and Mergera (2012) and as presented in the first chapter, is the most significant for the external dimension of the EU environmental policy. In its article 174, it is established that the EU will promote measures at international level to deal with worldwide environmental problems to combat climate change.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the European Union has actively endeavored to take a leadership role in the global battle against climate change since the 1980s. This commitment is demonstrated through its participation in multilateral negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and bilateral engagements where the EU incorporates clauses compelling its partners to adhere to international environmental commitments.

In 2008, the European Commission further underscored its dedication to addressing environmental challenges by launching a Communication on "Addressing the Challenges of Deforestation and Forest Degradation to Tackle Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss" (European Commission, 2008). This communication emphasized the significance of tropical forests and advocated for a global response to combat deforestation. Despite these initiatives, the EU's Joint Statements with Brazil, a key partner, do not explicitly present the established commitments pertaining to deforestation as outlined in the EU FLEGT (Forest Law

Enforcement, Governance, and Trade) Action Plan of 2003. Although the EU FLEGT Action Plan stated that the European Commission would integrate deforestation concerns into political dialogues with third countries, the specific commitments resulting from these dialogues are notably absent from the official Joint Statements with Brazil. It is possible that, diplomatically, the discussions over this issue were not possible given Brazil and EU differences on its narratives towards forestry management.

It seems that, while the EU, under the Treaty of Lisbon and on several occasions positions itself as a leader to curb climate change and face the challenges of forestry degradation, it did not made use of an important channel of communication through the Joint Statements to present how and when it would cooperate with Brazil to curb the deforestation in Amazon rainforest. It can be pointed out as a EU recurrent *modus operandi* to express generalized environmental concerns and potential measures without explicit specifications of corresponding programs, investments, or financial resources for each identified objective. Even on the basilar document of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership this can be identified, as the main actions taken by the EU on environmental protection is presented as it follows:

The EU should develop and reinforce our Environmental Policy dialogue with Brazil on topics such as climate change, water management, bio-diversity and deforestation, including the role of indigenous people so that we better understand each other's positions, thereby enhancing our collective influence in these areas.

The EU should work with Brazil in international fora to advance climate change and deforestation discussions with a view to reaching agreement for a global post-2012 framework.

Closer co-operation should also be envisaged towards implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and achieving the biodiversity 2010 target as well as on other key global concerns, such as addressing mercury pollution. (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007a, p. 7)

This pattern observed reflects a strategic flexibility, allowing for adaptability in response to evolving circumstances and ensuring that the subsequent phases of diplomatic engagement can refine the operational aspects of the collaborative environmental agenda.

With this criticism, it is not intended to point out that EU-Brazil efforts towards environmental protection and to curb climate change are not persecuted. The task of building alliances that aim at cooperative international solutions is of capital importance, and the issue of cooperation between EU and Brazil is highly relevant.

As emphasized by Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2013), the manner in which narratives unfold within a communicative context holds significant implications for the dynamics of international affairs. Hence, the decision to refrain from explicitly detailing or

publicizing the nature of the European Union's cooperation in safeguarding the Amazon rainforest through its strategic partnership can be attributed to a historical discord between the involved parties on this matter. Given that the narrative of the EU-Brazil relationship is characterized by a discordant discourse regarding the true intentions of the EU in establishing a presence in the Amazon region, the deliberate choice to avoid a more focused narrative on forest protection can itself be regarded as a strategic narrative. It is essential to recognize that, logically, the significance lies not only in what and how information is narrated but also in what remains unspoken.

It is conceivable that diplomatic constraints may have hindered discussions on the issue during the Summits. As highlighted by Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2013), the way narratives are projected in a communication environment holds significant implications for the dynamics of international affairs. Consequently, as Brazil frequently points to the influence of unsustainable exploitation of the North for the Amazon deforestation, the decision to refrain from specifying or providing more detailed public disclosure on how the EU would contribute through the strategic partnership to the protection of the Amazon rainforest can be perceived as a more cautious narrative and approach in the official document of the Strategic Partnership.

The lack of specificity in these official documents relegates the topic to more generalized and broader EU communications and/or discourses in international forums. A notable instance is evident in a speech delivered by the EU Council President, Donald Tusk, during a meeting focused on action for the Amazon on September 23, 2019. In this discourse, the EU's stance on environmental protection towards the forest becomes elucidated. Addressing the 2019 wildfires in the Amazon rainforest, Tusk articulates:

Europe is deeply moved by the magnitude of this calamity and its global and long-term consequences. We do not want to lecture anyone, we have no right to do so, as our own history is to a large extent a history of deforestation for land use and industry. But this is why we feel even more co-responsible for saving forests - on our continent and all around the world. We want to help everyone who is ready to save forests, because those who save forests save humankind. (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 2019, n.p)

Simultaneously, Tusk (EUROPENA COUNCIL, 2009, n.p) cautiously states the Brazilian sovereignty over the forest: “Because these are your forests, which doesn’t release anybody from the obligation to help you. And Europe wants to help”. Pointing to programmes related to forests and land use in the Amazon basin, amounting to more than 190 million euros in investment, Tusk finalizes his discourse by stating that “this is just the beginning of our engagement, I can promise you that”.

In this narrative, the construction of its strategy appears more clearly. This narrative appears in the form of identity, as presented by Miskimmon et al (2013) strategic narrative theory, in which the political actor seeks to project their identity in international affairs. Basing itself on the intricate history between the countries, one that emerged from the exploitation of developing countries resources for development, this narrative seeks to declare the EU own responsibility as one of the actors responsible for deforestation worldwide.

By adopting this cautious stance and narrative, it becomes evident how the EU perspective on environmental protection has evolved over the years. As discussed in Chapter 2, the history of the Amazon region is characterized by international interests and exploitation, resulting in a sense of distrust by the Brazilian government towards international cooperation for its protection. Through aligning its narrative with that of its partners, the EU appears to strategically utilize narrative to present its “assets”, according to Nyes theory of soft power: culture, values, and policies.

Categorizing this narrative within Manners' (2002) framework of the six factors shaping the EU's normative power in the international arena, it becomes evident that the discourse articulated by the EU Council President aligns with the concept of a "contagious" and “transference”, while the narrative presented in the official documents of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership take a “procedural” format.

The narrative discernible within the EU-Brazil Joint Statements and Joint Action Plans can be categorized as primarily procedural as it centres on the institutionalization of the EU-Brazil relationship, and is characterized by the use of broad and generalized language. While expressing intentions toward environmental protection and addressing climate change, this narrative falls short in delineating the specific mechanisms through which this partnership aims to combat deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. It appears to be an strategic narrative of more symbolical value that seeks only to present to the world the proximity of the EU and Brazil in the international political scenario, as well as establishing that both parties respect the principles of international law, but without specifying the means to use *de facto* the strategic partnership to achieve it.

In essence, Tusk narrative in a public discourse disseminates ideas from the EU to other political actors, emphasizing how the EU can play a pivotal role in addressing the challenge of deforestation in the region while positioning itself as a virtuous example. Notably, this narrative acknowledges the EU's historical contribution to deforestation and adopts a cautious approach

in addressing the subject, seeking to not offend Brazil's sovereignty or, even, other important actors in the Amazonia. This strategic narrative approach enables the EU to draw closer to its goal of assuming a leadership role in the environmental protection landscape, as it enhances the attractiveness of the EU in its foreign policy and, consequently, its means to influence other international actors.

Simultaneously, the discourse also manifests elements of "transference diffusion," as evident in Tusk's presentation of EU investments, suggesting a "carrot and stick" approach to the EU's influence on deforestation matters. This narrative reveals how the EU strategically situates itself and leverages its power in global politics as a pivotal avenue for ensuring the protection of the Amazon rainforest, in collaboration with Brazil and other Amazonian countries. By extending offers of technical and financial assistance to external parties, the EU aims to establish a role in the management of the rainforest. This strategic engagement is driven by the expectation that active involvement in rainforest governance will not only facilitate environmental protection but also serve to augment the EU's influence and power in the Amazonian region.

### **5.3.2. EU Parliament debate.**

In 6 of July of 2022, the Plenary of the European Parliament held a debate, in Brussels, on the "the situation of indigenous and environmental defenders in Brazil, including the killing of Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira" (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2022). This debate intention was to achieve six motions for resolutions about indigenous right defenders and environmentalists in Brazil, after the assassination of the environmentalist and journalists Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips in the Amazon Forest. Their death received international attention, as both were working on a project about deforestation and indigenous communities in the Amazon rainforest and were victims of the undergoing violence in the region (WATSON; CRUZ, 2022).

During the debate, Brazil's lack of protection towards environmental and human rights defenders, as well as the "verbal attacks" of President Jair Bolsonaro were criticized. In resume, the Member of the European Parliament (MEPs) requested that the EU pressure Brazil to follow its international obligations towards environmental and indigenous rights protection, as well as to not vote on laws that could further weaken forest protection worldwide.

This debate showed a distinct tone over the EU position towards the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. Most of the MEPs that participated on the debate called for a more stronger

EU position and action towards the environmental emergence undergoing in Brazil during Bolsonaro's government. In the words of the MEP Jordi Cañas, as presented in the debate:

We need political instruments to effectively combat and take action in the fight for the rights of indigenous peoples. Resolutions do not extinguish forest fires in the Amazon, nor do they prevent the murders of environmental activists. I am sorry, resolutions are not effective for that; they are used more for propaganda. What can we do? Utilize political instruments. And what is the political instrument we have, where a solid framework is offered to address issues related to indigenous peoples? I'll tell you: in the Agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2020, translated)

The discourse advocating the utilization of the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement as a political instrument for safeguarding the Amazon rainforest not only underscores the envisioned role of the EU as a Normative Power, as outlined by Manners (2002), but also positions the EU as a distinctive political entity on the international stage. By championing the EU's significance in the protection of the Amazon rainforest, MEPs call for a more assertive stance from the EU Council and Commission. They urge the EU to undertake all necessary initiatives to ensure the safeguarding of what was referred to in the debate as "a fundamental good for all humanity" and "the lungs of the world" (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2020).

It is interesting to denote how the deaths of the Brazilian Bruno Pereira and the English Dom Phillip, led to a debate on the European Parliament about the role of the EU into this matter. The debate, per se, as a strategic narrative, already calls attention for how the EU perceives itself on environmental global governance and sheds light on how it conceives the international order. Moreover, it is also a narrative that seeks to influence the development of policies, as it calls for more strict environmental regulations through the EU-Mercosur Agreement.

This arguments also appeared in another debate, this time held in the Plenary in Strasbourg in 17 of september of 2019, aimed to discuss the "Amazon forest fires" during the Jair Bolsonaro government. Initiating the debate, Tytti Tuppurainen, President-in-Office of the Council, stated that the forest fires in the Amazon region were an urgent global crisis, which requires an effective international response and that the EU was ready to support the Amazonian countries and Brazilian government.

After her declaration, Karmenu Vella, serving as the Commission's representative in the European Parliament, asserted that the European Commission was actively contributing to addressing the situation. Vella highlighted that the EU had allocated substantial funding, amounting to 128 million euros, towards development projects associated with forest and land



use in the Amazon Basin. Additionally, plans were underway for new actions with a proposed budget of 28 million euros.

It is noteworthy that in this debate, the narrative conflict between the EU and Brazil positions on multilateralism appeared to be a focal point of discussion. In the words of the MEP, Mairead McGuinness:

**It really is a question of how globally we can work together because no nation on its own can solve this problem. But at a time when nations want to be sovereign, is it possible for multilateralism to be strengthened rather than weakened?** And pointing the finger at countries doesn't help. We have to show where the failings are but also acknowledge where progress has been made. So to Brazil, for example, there is action recently around the Leticia Pact with seven other South American countries, Operation Law and Order Guarantee and Operation Green Brazil, but this comes after pressure from the international community. We will all suffer if the Amazon dies and it is already under threat. (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2019, emphasis added).

This position of a MEP represents the historical struggle of the EU to achieve its position of influence towards the Amazon rainforest. As discussed in chapter 4, specifically on 4.1 on the history and evolution of Brazil-EU relations, although Brazil supports the importance of multilateralism, it highlights the importance of non-interference and frequently criticizes the EU for its neocolonial positions towards the forest.

The EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement was cited repeatedly by MEPs as the main and best instrument for the protection of the Amazon rainforest. However, it is interesting to denote that several times the EP President cut off the speaker as a MEP started to defend the Agreement as an instrument to protect the forest. Although it did not follow with a justification for the action, in the EP President closing statement it was defended that a debate on the environmental impact of the Agreement should be honest and based on facts.

The use of the Agreement as an instrument of coercion to protect the Amazon goes in conflict with the high-level debates that led to the non-ratification of the EU-Mercosur FTA, as shown in chapter 4, subsection 4.2. Moreover, it also supports the arguments of Manners (2002) of the EU acting as a normative power, as MEPs sees international agreements as means for establishing “order” in international politics and protecting the environment.

Within this discourse, there is a discernible narrative that underscores the European Union's role as a significant actor in mitigating deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. Whether through the advocacy of its internal policies, the utilization of multilateral agreements, or the financial support for regional initiatives aimed at safeguarding the Amazon, the stance taken by MEPs and the very deliberation of these issues within the European Parliament underscore the

existence of a strategic narrative positioning the EU as a pivotal entity in addressing deforestation in the Amazon. Consequently, the EU is portrayed as a key player in reducing deforestation's impact on climate change and ensuring a secure future for the global community at large.

Not a year later from the debate on the fires happening in the Amazon, in 19 June 2020, the EU Parliament debated on “land grabbing and deforestation” to discuss the Commission Communication on Land Grabbing and Deforestation in the Amazonas. Although the Communication was publicized, the debate did not discuss focal points of the Communication and focused on debating the EU role to cooperate to Amazonian countries for minimizing deforestation.

The debate held similar arguments then the prior ones, as it discussed the EU measures in international politics to protect the world's forests. The EU-Mercosur Agreement was a point of discussion once again, with some MEPs defending that could be used as leverage to impose environmental measures and sanctions, and with others calling for a cancelation of the Agreement given the impact to small-producer farmers in European countries and for a possible increase in deforestation.

While some MEPs called for a vigilant position of the Parliament for Amazonian governmental political actions, a MEP Angel Dzhambazki, aligned with European Conservatives parties, called the debate “inappropriate” and “useless”, as the European continent had its own concerns and the “Amazon River does not flow through any member State where your voters and the people who fund this institution with their taxes live” (2020, translated). Dzhambazki criticized the “humiliating self-flagellation” of his colleagues to gain votes and defended that they should not apologize for something they were not guilty for, referring to the deforestation of the Amazon forest.

It is important to underscore the position taken by a right-wing parliamentarian who opposed the European Union's intervention in the affairs of third countries, advocating instead for a concentration on internal matters. However, this perspective did not garner unanimous support among his colleagues, as the majority of discourses, particularly from more liberal parties, expressed apprehension regarding EU measures aimed at tackling global deforestation. This highlights the varying perceptions of the EU's external action within its own Parliament, where liberal parties advocate for a more assertive EU role in addressing external environmental

concerns, while conservative factions stress the importance of the EU prioritizing its domestic issues.

Within this debate, criticism regarding the EU's accountability for contributing to global deforestation through the import of commodities from deforested lands was a shared sentiment among several MEPs. Consequently, this discussion underscored the necessity for a shift in the EU's strategy concerning global environmental protection. It emphasized the need for the EU to scrutinize its own actions and initiate reforms from within, advocating for a more stringent approach to trade regulations and the entry of products into the EU market.

Here, is notable the idea of using the internal EU jurisdiction to exert influence in third countries. After several failed attempts to agree on legally binding international regime on sustainable forest management, the EU decided to follow the request of MEPs and act unilaterally. By advocating for change in internal legislation to influence the protection of the Amazon rainforest, in 2023 the EU adopted a new law to fight global deforestation (EU 2023/1115), regulating the entrance of products derived from deforested land. With this internal market Regulation, the EU expects to fight climate change and biodiversity loss, obliging companies worldwide to ensure due diligence in its products.

Hence, through the narrative conveyed in debates within the Plenary of the EP, various dimensions emerge in the way the EU positions itself as a crucial actor in mitigating deforestation in the Amazon. The discourses of MEPs notably reflect a more assertive stance on how the EU should address deforestation in the Amazon, in contrast to the cautious tone observed in the discourse presented by the EU Council President.

The discourse underscored an interpretation of the EU's role in global environmental conservation that advocates for proactive engagement. It emphasized the urgent need for the EU to take decisive action to halt deforestation in the Amazon, utilizing all available means at its disposal. This proactive stance entails harnessing the diverse channels of influence that the EU possesses, both directly and indirectly, with the overarching goal of mitigating deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

The MEPs' inclination towards a more robust approach can be attributed to a confluence of political factors. Given the integral role of environmental concerns within European societies, coupled with the considerable influence wielded by European Green Parties in the Parliament, it is foreseeable that politicians would expose assertive viewpoints on issues that capture global attention. The resonance of environmental issues within European political discourse, alongside

the electoral weight of Green Parties, amplifies the significance of addressing problems that have garnered widespread international focus. This alignment between political dynamics and public sentiments contributes to the heightened emphasis on decisive actions by MEPs concerning matters of global significance, such as the pressing issue of deforestation in the Amazon.

The deliberation on extraterritorial matters within the EP's plenary embodies, by its own existence, is a strategic narrative. It explicitly signifies the EU's standpoint that the issue of deforestation in the Amazon transcends regional boundaries and is, in essence, a European concern that must be debated by its own politicians, without the participation of Brazilians representatives. The deliberations conducted within the parliamentary setting emphasize the European Union's comprehension of the international order. Despite the measured tone evident in the discourse of the President of the EU Council, the EU acknowledges the Amazon as a cross-border concern, warranting deliberation on the approach it will adopt to address this issue.

The weight of these debates extends beyond the immediate environmental context, offering insights into how the EU perceives its own role on the global stage. The intentional engagement in shaping the actions of other nations according to its values becomes apparent. The MEPs not only deliberate on the best course of action for the EU regarding the deforestation issue but also propose alternative mechanisms through which the EU can exert direct influence on the Brazilian government to align with EU expectations. These alternatives span various approaches, encompassing internal legislation, investment in multilateral projects, and sanctions imposed within the framework of the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. This multifaceted discourse underscores the EU's strategic intent to actively shape and influence the environmental policies of other nations in accordance with its values and objectives.

Therefore, considering the existence of this debate as a strategic narrative, it is possible to classify it as a "cultural filter", aligning with Manners' (2002) examination of EU power dynamics. This classification is perceived due to the narrative's objective to disseminate its cultural and political perspectives on the deforestation issue, presenting the Amazon rainforest as a common good and as essential for good of humankind, the EU articulates its vision on the international system. Consequently, it creates an arena of international order in which it is normal to discuss, inside its own Parliament, matters of national management of the Amazon rainforest, despite Amazonian countries sovereignty over it. The debate on the EP Plenary does not jeopardize the Brazilian sovereignty over the Amazon, but it does present to the world the

clear position of the EU as an actor that will act, within the bounds of international legal order, to influence the forestry management in the region.

The assertive stance taken by MEPs diverges from public discourses articulated by representatives of the EU or politicians from Member States. It appears that in formulating the EU's position on the Amazon, diplomatic discourses adopt a more cautious approach in conveying the EU's intentions to exert influence in the region. This contrast is evident comparing the MEPs positions with the discourse delivered by the EU Council President and as subsequently demonstrated, in the discourse presented by the President of the European Commission during her visit to Brazil, Ursula von der Leyen.

### **5.3.3. EU Commission: discourse by Ursula Von der Leyen**

Following the reinstatement of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva to the Presidential Office in Brazil in 2023, the President of the European Commission delivered a statement on the EU-Brazil strategic partnership during a joint press conference on June 12, 2023. At the outset of her discourse, Ursula von der Leyen affirmed that with Lula's return, Brazil has regained its status as a significant global player, marking the resurgence of European engagement in the region. She emphasized that it was opportune to elevate the strategic partnership to a new level and to outline specific commitments, announcing fresh investments in Brazil through the Global Gateway project. Additionally, she underscored a substantial allocation of 10 billion euros for cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, a sum to be complemented by private investments and contributions from EU Member States.

Responding to Lula's discourse on how Brazil would tackle the global challenge of fighting climate change, Von der Leyen welcomed its position to achieve leadership on climate and on biodiversity protection. And, regarding the Amazon, the Commission president stated:

We discussed the Amazon Forest that is a wonder of nature. It is the green lung of our planet. And it is a key ally against global warming. We want to contribute EUR 20 million to the Amazon Fund. Of course, our Member States will also contribute. We discussed your plan to end deforestation by 2030. This is great news for the world. And Europe is also your partner in this. Here too, we would like to support you because you have a big responsibility in stopping deforestation in the rainforest. (VON DER LEYEN, 2023).

Von der Leyen cites constantly in her discourse the Global Gateway initiatives and, on an infographic linked to her discourse in the official page of the European Commission, it is possible to see “country project examples” under this initiative in Brazil. One of the projects, highlighted as a priority, is the prevention of deforestation, the promotion of sustainable

bioeconomy and the traceability of supply chains. It is also cited the implementation of the Amazonia+ programme.

Despite citing the existence of a project focused in protecting the Amazon rainforest, reviewing the Commission Communication on the Global Gateway project (2021), there is a notable absence of detailed information on the Amazonia+ programme publicized. The only available resource found until the present date is a one-minute video on the official Twitter page of the European Commission (@EU\_Commission), providing a brief overview of the program without additional links or explanatory documents (EU COMMISSION, 2023).

The constrained availability of information can be attributed to a strategic narrative employed by the EU, as what it chooses to make public is, also, a matter of how the EU presents itself to the global world. The gradual release of information during the planning and implementation phases of newly introduced initiatives is not an uncommon practice. However, it is noteworthy that the EU refrains from providing more details on its direct initiatives concerning the Amazon rainforest, although discourses by Von der Leyen and Tusk consistently emphasize financial investment. In fact, despite the existence of numerous projects in the region funded by EU initiatives such as Team Europe, Horizon, and Global Gateway, public access to information to these projects remains limited. Another conspicuous instance of strategic information omission by the EU is observed in the recent absence of publicizing the Political Dialogue segment of the EU-Mercosur Agreement, as the EU chose to divulge only the Trade segment.

The selection of information for publicity, disclosure, or a more cautious discourse is integral to the strategic narrative meticulously constructed by the EU in shaping its role as a player in global politics. A notable illustration of this narrative emerges in Ursula Von der Leyen's discourse, where, serving as the representative of the European Commission and embodying the public face of the EU, she underscores the pressing need for the EU to redirect investments toward the preservation of the Amazon rainforest.

This articulated diplomatic discourse aims to foster a more profound collaboration with Brazil, particularly following the return of Lula to governmental leadership, by advocating for increased financial investments and fostering extensive bilateral cooperation between the involved parties. Furthermore, it articulates a distinct EU identity by asserting that, with Lula's return, the EU can resume its mission of collaborating with the country. In doing so, it seeks to project core EU values and highlights the potential for meaningful negotiations based on shared objectives and principles. This strategic positioning underscores the EU's commitment to

engaging with Brazil under Lula's leadership and underscores the importance of aligning collaborative efforts with shared values for mutual benefit.

Much like the discourse articulated by the EU Council President, Ursula Von der Leyen's statement similarly emphasizes financial investments geared towards the protection of the Amazon. This consistent thematic thread underscores a broader narrative characterized by "transference" dynamics, signifying the exchange of benefits between the EU and Brazil. Von der Leyen's discourse also manifests attributes of "informational diffusion," as it symbolically conveys the revival and reaffirmation of the partnership between the EU and Brazil. This is because the narrative articulated by the EU Commissioner goes beyond mere financial commitments; it encapsulates a strategic diplomatic alignment of interests with Brazil, without entering into detail on future projects. The symbolism inherent in proclaiming the reinvigoration of the EU-Brazil partnership serves not only as a strategic messaging tool but also as a means of fostering a sense of renewed collaboration and shared objectives, retaking the establishment of the strategic partnership.

From analysing these different narratives perpetrated by different EU institutions – the EP, the EU Council and the EU Commission – it is interesting to consider how a project of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) evolved, transforming itself on an actor of major influence in international politics and international public law. Specifically on matters of External Action and Foreign Affairs, the evolution the EU came to better address global problems with the institution of the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which gave more power to the EP, established a new High Representative role for Foreign Affairs and a new EU diplomatic service (the EU External Action). Not coincidentally, the same year the EU reviewed its external action through the Lisbon Treaty, it also established the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership, as the country was emerging in the global arena as a prominent actor.

As presented in Chapter 1 the Lisbon Treaty outlines the EU's commitment to promoting sustainable environmental development in developing countries and contributing to the establishment of international measures aimed at enhancing the sustainable management of global natural resources (TREATY OF LISBON, 2007). Durán (2020) asserts that the EU, progressively refining its external policy, has employed a variety of instruments, including multilateral, regional, bilateral, and unilateral approaches, to exert global influence on environmental issues since the 1980s.

This commitment is evident in the proceedings of the EP, where several MEPs have advocated for leveraging the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement to impose environmental liability on Brazil. Additionally, there have been calls to formulate internal policies prohibiting the entry of products derived from deforestation into the EU market. Moreover, it is noticeable in the different narrative perpetrated by the EU Council and the EU Commission the EU following the international public law environmental principles, mainly the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Through this principle, the EU presents its narrative the intention to secure with Brazil a partnership to protect and restore the Amazon rainforest, acknowledging its own responsibility on the deforestation rate in tropical forests worldwide.

Hence, through the strategic deployment of narrative, the EU actively pursues its goal of positioning itself as a foremost leader in global initiatives aimed at mitigating climate change and safeguarding the global environment. In pursuit of this objective, the European Union employs a multifaceted approach, primarily leveraging political discourse and strategic narratives to position itself as a significant actor in this context. Additionally, the EU reinforces its commitment by strengthening multilateral frameworks and sets a positive example through the formulation and implementation of internal policies and laws.

However, it is possible to denote that the EU did not made a more established use of its bilateral relation with Brazil, through its Joint Actions, to present its projects and intentions of protecting the Amazon rainforest. As Kulolesi (2013) and Zielonka (2008) observed the insertion of environmental clauses in its bilateral objectives with strategic partners, this could not be proved by analysing the discourse employed in the seven Joint Summits and two Joint Action Plan publicized.

The European Union's initiatives aimed at protecting the Amazon rainforest are more intricately manifested through multilateral alternatives and through unilateral global governance, regulating its own internal market. This includes funding civil society projects, investing in programs such as FLEGT or REDD+, and exploring avenues such as the insertion of environmental clauses in the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. Notably, recent discussions highlight the EU's stance on withholding the closure of the Agreement unless Brazil fulfils its international environmental obligations. Furthermore, within the framework of EU relations with Latin American and Caribbean nations (EU-LAC), the EU introduces additional programs focused on forestry protection.



Therefore, it was possible to understand, through the analysis of EU narrative through different institutions, that the strategic narrative of the EU towards the Amazon rainforest presents various layers. The official, diplomatic narrative, appears to hold a more cautious instance, preoccupied in clearly stating to the world that it knows it does not have the sovereignty or power to decide over the forest management. However, it does plead for a position of cooperation to achieve lower deforestation levels in the region. Surrounding this central narrative presented as the official voice, it is possible to denote peripheric narratives that present more clearly the vision of a more imperative EU, that “leads by example” and should use its position of power in global economics and politics as leverage to force Brazil to follow its international environmental obligations, as represented by MEPs positions during the debates. Another layer of strategic narrative is the one that presents the financial investment in the Amazon rainforest and even points to participation in programs and projects, but without publicizing in detail which project and its achievements.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research delves into an examination of the European Union's (EU) approach to environmental protection, with a specific focus on its intentions and actions concerning the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, recognized as the world's largest remaining tropical forest. The investigation is grounded in the recognition of the EU's pivotal role as a significant international actor in the realm of Global Environmental Governance, a role that has evolved over the span of seven decades.

The relevance of this study is underscored by the EU's recognition of the escalating global significance of environmental issues, particularly during the 1980s when it became evident that the United States was not prioritizing a leadership role in addressing these concerns. Consequently, the EU strategically positioned itself with the overarching objective of assuming a leadership role in the global effort to mitigate climate change.

In elucidating the evolution of the EU over the past seven decades, this research intended to uncover the factors and milestones that have contributed to its status as a key player in Global Environmental Governance. By understanding this historical trajectory, it was possible to gain insights into the EU's motivations and strategies related to environmental protection, specifically in the context of its endeavors to safeguard the Amazon rainforest.

To comprehensively address these objectives, the study employed a multi-faceted approach that involves examining the EU's historical trajectory, its motivations for assuming a leadership role in global environmental initiatives, and the specific actions it has undertaken to fulfill its commitment to protect the Amazon rainforest, externally and internally.

Given the intricate nature of the Amazon rainforest and its paramount significance in the global ecosystem, compounded by the global-national tensions arising from Brazil's inadequate management practices in the last years, this research undertakes an exploration of the historical evolution of Brazilian policies related to the Amazon. This investigation is crucial for a nuanced understanding of the conflicts inherent in the region within the broader context of global environmental politics. By unraveling the historical trajectory of Brazilian policies, this study sheds light on the complex political landscape surrounding the Amazon, revealing diverse actors with unique narratives on how Brazil should navigate the challenges associated with the rainforest.

Historically, the Amazon has been viewed as a frontier for Brazil's developmental aspirations, resulting in its exploitation with minimal regard for environmental consequences or the well-being of indigenous communities residing in the forest. However, as global concerns about climate change escalated and studies underscored the role of deforestation and land-use in contributing to this issue, the Amazon transformed into a symbol of transnational environmental activism.

In response to this shift, the EU emerged as a vocal advocate for the protection of the Amazon. This research illuminates the diverse strategies employed by the EU to influence forestry protection in Brazil. These strategies encompass engagement through the EU-Mercosur Agreement negotiations, participation in multilateral projects, investment in civil organizations and governmental programs, and the assertion of influence through its internal jurisdiction.

It was possible to denote an absence of the utilization of Joint Statements resulting from EU-Brazil Summits held between 2007 and 2014 as an instrument for projecting the EU's intent to protect the Amazon. Furthermore, the EU's depth of engagement with the issue is limited in the Joint Actions published for the periods 2007-2011 and 2011-2014. These omissions raise questions about why the EU does not approach the matter more directly in the official documents that followed the establishment of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership, choosing to position itself through peripheral discourses channels.

Henceforth, our analysis of the European Union's narrative across various institutions unveils a nuanced and multi-layered strategic approach concerning the Amazon rainforest. The official diplomatic narrative adopts a cautious tone, explicitly acknowledging the EU's lack of sovereignty and authority in dictating forest management decisions. Instead, it emphasizes a cooperative stance, advocating for collaborative efforts to mitigate deforestation in the region. Beyond this central narrative, peripheral layers emerge, highlighting a more assertive vision within the EU.

In this secondary narrative, the EU positions itself as a proactive leader, emphasizing the need to set an example. This perspective contends that the EU, leveraging its considerable influence in global economics and politics, should compel Brazil to adhere to its international environmental obligations. This stance is notably reflected in the discussions articulated by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) during Plenary debates. This underscores that the EU consistently frames the Amazon not merely as a regional issue but as a global concern,

thereby emphasizing its critical role in utilizing technology, financial resources, and accumulated experience to guide and collaborate with Brazil for the protection of the forest.

In conclusion, it is evident that the EU strategically situates itself on a global scale regarding issues pertinent to Sustainable Development by employing narratives aligned with its approach to the principles of Global Environmental Governance. Furthermore, the strategic narrative of the EU, rooted in its vision of Global Environmental Governance, operates within a discursive arena populated by diverse actors holding distinct positions and narratives regarding the significance of preserving the Amazon rainforest for the planet.

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