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**Degree of Master of Science**

## **Green Trade: The Absorption of the Antithesis**

**The Environmental Discourse of TTIP in the European Union**

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**ABSTRACT OF THESIS** submitted by:

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The evolution of how the relationship of global trade and the environment is conceptualized needs to be uncovered in order to understand to what extent, in what ways and through what mechanism the environmental discourses, like sustainable development, have been subsumed in the hegemonic discourse in our political institutions. By examining how the issues of environmentalism or sustainable development have figured in the debate of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) in the European Union, the latest episodes of this evolution can be brought to light.

To understand this discursive change a Gramscian scheme of thesis and antithesis is used. This mechanism is examined in post-2013 texts of all major political groups on TTIP in the European Union, with special attention given to the Commission's articulation of the pro-TTIP position. These texts are looked at through critical discourse analysis, which aims to uncover the relationship between language and power, thus defining discourse as language-in-use.

The study found that in fact no fundamental antithesis with regards to the inherent question of the relationship between the environment and trade liberalisation was coherently put forth by any of the opposition groups. Moreover, the areas in which there has been successful opposition, resulting in the absorption of the antithesis in certain policy conflicts, has been in issues relating to regulatory standards, specifically food standards, which are now increasingly framed as a synecdoche for fundamental European values even in Commission texts.



**Keywords:** trade, sustainability, TTIP, EU, discourse, Gramsci, Wanner

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## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter I: Introduction .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Chapter II: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter III: Methodology .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Results .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Chapter V: Discussion .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Chapter VI: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>69</b>

## List of Abbreviations

- **ALDE:** Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group is the current liberal–centrist political group of the European Parliament.
- **CETA:** Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, a free trade agreement between Canada and the EU, already negotiated awaiting ratification
- **CDA:** Critical discourse analysis
- **ECR:** European Conservatives and Reformists is a Eurosceptic and anti-federalist political group in the European Parliament.
- **EFDD:** Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD or EFD) is a Eurosceptic political group in the European Parliament.
- **EPP:** European People's Party group is the political group in the European Parliament consisting of deputies from the member parties of the centre-right European People's Party .
- **FTA:** Free-trade Agreement
- **GMO:** genetically modified organism
- **Greens-EFA:** The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) is the political group in the European Parliament containing green and regionalist political parties
- **GUE-NGL:** European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) is a left-wing political group in the European Parliament
- **INTA:** The International Trade Committee of the European Parliament
- **ISDS:** Investor-State Dispute Settlement
- **MEP:** Member of the European Parliament
- **NAFTA:** North American Free trade Agreement
- **ÖFSE:** Austrian Foundation for Development Research
- **S&D:** Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats is the political group in the European Parliament of the Party of European Socialists (PES)
- **TPP:** Trans-Pacific Partnership
- **TTIP:** Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership





## Chapter I: Introduction

In the study of the sustainable development discourse it has become a widely debated question whether the dominant sustainable development discourse within environmentalist movements have been subsumed by capitalist hegemony and thus protected in the context of global environmental, economic and development crises (Wanner 2004). This sustainable development discourse has penetrated into almost all policy making in Europe and has become intrinsically tied into the functioning of the European Union. Moreover, apart from its use in the policy making of Europe and its institutions, it has become a frequently used reference point in the discourse surrounding this policy making. Sustainable development has, however, been used most frequently in the context of planning and environmental discourses - international trade discourses are not seen as the primary and most identifiable discourses based on sustainable development (Wanner 2004).

The way these aforementioned discourses function will be discussed through the Gramscian theory of the absorption of the antithesis. This is built on the Gramscian idea of hegemony, which explains how the ideological basis of the socio-economic or socio-natural system sustains itself, creating a consensual basis for power. This consensual basis is never complete, leaving space for resisting counter-hegemonic discourses. These counter-hegemonic discourses inform the hegemonic discourse and change their structure and ground of legitimate reasoning. In the case of this thesis the evolution of the discourse on TTIP will be viewed through this lens using a Hegelian division of the discursive evolution into thesis, antithesis and synthesis, or the absorption of the antithesis.

Since the discourse surrounding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), where even an environmental side agreement was part of the deal, international trade cannot be separated out of sustainable development (Wanner 2004). In this thesis, thus, I will attempt to uncover to what extent issues of environmentalism or sustainable development have been part of the debate with regards to the largest currently negotiated bilateral free trade agreement (FTA): the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a free trade agreement (FTA) currently being negotiated between the United States and the European Union (EU). The United States and EU began TTIP negotiations in July 2013, and have held ten rounds of negotiations until the summer of 2015 (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). While both sides aim to conclude the negotiations this calendar year, some question the likelihood of doing so given the agreement's complexity and political disharmony between the two sides. The wish to deepen transatlantic economic integration is nothing new, and has long been in the making both within the EU and the US, with the current focus on a U.S.-EU FTA originating from a final report by a joint High-Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). This working group was established following the U.S.-EU Summit held in Washington, D.C. on November 28, 2011 to identify appropriate trade policy to increase transatlantic trade and investment (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). On February 11, 2013, the joint High-Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth published its final report declaring that "a comprehensive agreement that addresses a broad range of bilateral trade and investment issues, including regulatory issues, and contributes to the development of global rules, would provide the most significant mutual benefit of the various options ... considered" (Akhtar and Jones, 2013: 2). Accepting these findings, on February 13, 2013, U.S. and EU leaders declared that they would start internal preparations to launch the TTIP negotiations.

The United States and the EU share a large, growing, trade relationship. The two sides account for nearly half of world gross domestic product (GDP), about 30% of global exports, and have investments greater than \$3.7 trillion in each other's economies (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). There is, however, debate whether this trade relationship can continue to grow with the current tariff and regulatory barriers, with some claiming that the current regulatory framework is an obstacle to continued growth of transatlantic trade (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). On the side of the US, TTIP can be seen as a part of U.S. trade policy attempts to push for more open, rules-based trade and investment through the negotiation of bilateral and regional FTAs (Akhtar and Jones, 2013).

Moreover, it is crucial to note that there is a fundamentally similar debate with regards to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a plurilateral FTA under negotiation by the United States and 11 other countries across the Asia-Pacific region. The TPP and TTIP will possibly both have direct significance for the multilateral trading system. Yet the United States and EU,

until now, have not declared that the TTIP is being negotiated as an open agreement that other trading partners could take part in (in contrast to the TPP). Both the EU and the US have, however, communicated an interest in using the TTIP to present a common basis for the development of globally-relevant rules and standards in labour and environmental fields in future multilateral trade negotiations (Akhtar and Jones, 2013). That means that the debates and discourses surrounding these agreements will fundamentally shape the way in which we will conceptualize environment-trade interrelations in the coming decades.

The conceptualization of environment-trade relations, that I will take as my starting point will be what Wanner (2004) terms the green trade discourse. This is based on a discourse, where trade is itself good and with adequate protection can be made beneficial to the environment as well.

This thesis will look at the European Parliament and political actors present in it as the focal point of discursive shifts, as the EP is a discourse-based multilevel governance structure, where the mode of interaction is based on deliberation, therefore it lends itself to discursive analysis (Neyer, 2003). In the EP these trade-environmentrelations are present in deliberation historically and this thesis will later identify a gap in the literature with regards to the study of these deliberations.

Therefore the fundamental question I will aim to answer through this thesis will be how trade-environment relations are conceptualized and communicated in the discourse surrounding the TTIP debate in the European Parliament. I will relate these findings to the larger evolution of the sustainable development discourse.

First I will attempt to discuss the framework of thesis, antithesis and the absorption of the antithesis which I will use to explore the dynamics of discursive change in the TTIP debate. Then I will look at the changes and critiques of the sustainable development discourse and how that relates to green trade and free market environmentalism discourses. I will later discuss briefly the European Union's trade discourse and how that related historically to the natural environment, so that the current debate can be understood historically.

Next I will discuss how and why it is possible to look at the debate surrounding TTIP and not its text or its concrete policy implications, how the analysis of discourse can lead us

to results and how these results can be interpreted usefully in a scientific context. The concrete methodology used in this thesis will be critical discourse analysis.

Then in my discussion I will show the analyses of the main texts of debate with regards to TTIP in the European Parliament. I will discuss the most important texts in detail and signal the discourse's evolution through the debates in chronological order. Following the discussion I will set out the results, where I will show the three levels of thesis-antithesis juxtapositions. I will conclude by relating those findings to the wider nature-trade relations.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

In this section I will aim to identify the theoretical basis for looking at the discourses on TTIP. I will first discuss how and why the discourse surrounding an agreement can provide us with valuable insight even without looking at the agreement's agreed text. Then I will look at how, through Gramsci, can the changes in discourses be studied. After that I will look at how environmental aspects have been present in economic and trade discourses and then focus on sustainable development and green trade as these discourses. Lastly I will look at the European Union's major trade discourses and identify entry points for environmental considerations.

The reason why discourse can and should be studied separate from the text a political process has produced is, because discourse shapes our socio-political system in fundamental



ways, which would remain uncovered if only the product of political deliberations are considered (Loopmans et al, 2010). One of the ways in which the mechanism of discursive change affects our social structures can be understood by looking at Gramsci's idea of hegemony and building up from that foundation. The way in which Gramsci first used this term was an attempt to explain how and why the "ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate classes" is maintained (Carnoy, 1984).

In this concept of hegemony the rule of the state is not only based on force or the threat of force, but also on the consent of those being ruled over. This consent is tied in with the Gramscian idea of civil society and the integral state, whereby society is made up of separate interests, which often oppose each other, making hegemony or the consensual base on which the rule is based is dynamic, and thus unstable (Loopmans et al, 2010). This causes counter-hegemonic discourses, which deny the legitimacy of the power structures present in society and aim to undermine the consensual base of power.

These counter-hegemonic discourses (the antithesis) are then tackled by the hegemonic discourse (the thesis), which causes a permanent struggle for hegemony (Loopmans et al, 2010). This permanent struggle involves compromises, shared interests, common goals, institutional links with various social forces in civil society and the development of a common, congruent discourse, which is the process called the absorption of the antithesis (Loopmans et al, 2010). This absorption is, however, not a singular, unified and constant interpretation of the world and a strictly identifiable political discourse, but a language in which the boundaries of appropriate reasonings and limits of legitimate claims are set (Loopmans et al, 2010). It is not a common argument, but rather a commonly accepted basis on which opposing views can be expressed (Ives, 2004). This is tied in with Gramsci's concept of passive revolution. Passive revolution, or a 'revolution without a revolution', according to Ives (2004: 104), can be described as "changes [that] occur and often ...are reactions to problems and tensions of previous political and economic arrangements, but ...rarely resolve such problems and are not really democratic in the true sense of the term – they do not come from the people. Rather leaders propose policies that the people do not reject". Therefore passive revolution can be explained by a reconstruction of the hegemonic discourses by absorbing a share of the counter-hegemonic claims and arguments while leaving the fundamental structure of the hegemonic discourse intact (Loopmans et al, 2010). As a

result of the process the potential growth in support of the counter-hegemonic discourse is stopped from the top down; however, the consensual base of the hegemonic discourse continues.

There is another interpretation of passive revolution, one outside the sphere of the discursive struggle for hegemony, and used more frequently by classical Marxist scholars. Passive revolution, according to Raftopoulos (2010) can also be defined as a response from the ruling classes to an organic crisis arising from the disintegration of the politico-economic structure of domination, causing necessary major transformations to be carried out from the top agency of the state, and not through democratic participation. This however will not be the definition of passive revolution used in this thesis.

Thus the Gramscian theory of the absorption of the antithesis states that when a hegemonic discourse is being resisted and the organic crises of the hegemonic discourse arise the change is not a discrete one, whereby the hegemonic discourse is suspended and the previously resisting discourse becomes the new hegemonic discourse. Rather, the claim is that the hegemonic discourse, the thesis, takes over terminologies, assumptions and goals from the resisting discourse, the antithesis, thereby absorbing the antithesis into the thesis's overlying logic and structure, keeping what was defined as legitimate knowledge and the overlying power-structures intact (McNally and Schwarzmantel 2009, Bates 1975). The power structures mentioned here, are that of capitalist development, whereby the traditional Marxist ideas of class oppression and historical materialism are extended to include the power relations beyond the state and the economy into civil society, where the way the dominant class exercises its power is tied to a particular privileged conception of the world, which would have to be challenged before any seizure of political power could be envisaged (McNally and Schwarzmantel 2009). Moreover each and every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship, thereby one in which different actors have different resources to hegemonize their conception of the world. These discursive struggles occur not only within a nation or a singular political body, but also between the various forces of which the nation is composed and in the international and world-wide field between complexes of national and continental systems (McNally and Schwarzmantel 2009). This thesis will focus on the latter type of struggle.

Wanner (2014:4) claims that the ‘green economy’ and the ‘green trade’ discourse can be seen as a Gramscian passive revolution, whereby the sustainable development discourse, which became the dominant discourse within environmentalist movements, subsumed by capitalist hegemony, “is protected in the context of global environmental, economic and development crises”. In this thesis my aim will be to assess whether this passive revolution can be detected in the win-win discourse surrounding the TTIP negotiations, how the liberalization of trade is shown to effect the environment, therefore to answer whether environmental debates became an integral part of trade debates in TTIP. This, I claim, can be in part answered by whether the integration of environmental concern voiced by the anti-TTIP discourse gained an important political role during the TTIP debate. Moreover, in this thesis my objective is to relate this to the overarching “sustainable development” passive revolution originating from the Brundtland Report. As it is important to note, that NAFTA, following the Brundtland Report, explicitly mentioned sustainability as a goal, and thus provided a historical point of entry for environmentalists in free trade agreements (Gregory 1992). This point of entry was used so effectively in the NAFTA debate that a separate environmental side-agreement was accepted by the three parties, which signified the crucial importance environmental considerations played in the discourse (Gregory 1992). This point of entry was used so effectively in the NAFTA debate that a separate environmental side-agreement was accepted by the three parties, which signified the crucial importance environmental considerations played in the discourse (Gregory 1992).

Sustainable development as a discourse has multiple conceptualizations. One of the most radical ones, is Banerjee (2003:45), who in his seminal paper explores the distinctive background of the discursive shift within the environmental movement towards sustainable development, which he finds is that “despite claims of a paradigm shift, the sustainable development paradigm is based on an economic, not ecological, rationality”. This economic rationality is overtly acknowledged as the basis in some articulations of sustainable development, but it is, in Banerjee’s (2003) argument, still the underlying logical structure even when it is not overtly acknowledged. This rationality he claims is the rationality of Enlightenment thinking, one that was imposed on the Global South through imperialism. This post-imperialist regime of truth can be seen in international trade agreements, and in the

resistance to these agreements, which are a part of a larger anti-imperialist struggle in the Global South, thereby identifying an antithesis alliance between nationalists and environmentalists, similar to the one explored here for TTIP and identified previously by Meng (2006). Out of these regimes of truths Banerjee (2003) separates the three most influential ones: environmental realism, environmental idealism, and environmental instrumentalism. Environmental realism is defined by Macnaghten and Urry (1998) as the conceptualization of nature as a 'scientifically researchable environment', through which the scientific method and rational choice, especially cost-benefit analysis, are a series of choices and transformations that can be made to sustain nature as a resource provider for humankind. In this regime of truth, social and cultural differences in Nature's place in human societies are disregarded and the human subject is universalised as the agent making choices based on cost-benefit analysis. Environmental idealism, also according to Macnaghten and Urry (1998) is identified as where nature's valuing is not a product of spatial and temporal processes but is a constant, which may give space for inherent valuing of nature. Out of these mentioned concepts, the first two regimes of truths are of the basis for trade policy debates. Using these as a basis, along Banerjee (2003) with Macnaghten and Urry (1998), claim that environmental realism and idealism are the basis of international trade agreements and thus underpin the discourses aimed at supporting them. Among these regimes of truth, environmental realism is the founding discourse of the Brundtlandt report, and thus the way through which the environmental antithesis entered the trade and development discourse, with keeping some of the opposing elements brought forward by sustainable development, like the unsustainability of the current socio-economic system.

This rationalisation of the nature-human relationship is foundational for the "green trade" discourse, however it is not identical to it. In the green trade and economy discourse economic development is seen as the best way to achieve the well-being of the greatest number of people, thus the increasingly free movement of capital is a common good, for which all barriers, including ones composed of environmental regulations, need to be overcome (Sawyer 2011). Thus the conflicts between environmental and free trade discourses can be divided into three main categories: in the objectives of the agreement, defined as inherent policy conflicts, in the relation between the international trade agreement and the domestic environmental policy goals of the contracting parties, defined as vertical policy conflicts, and

in the relation between international trade and other – specifically environmental – agreements, or horizontal policy conflicts (Horvathy 2014). In the following pages I will consider these in the following subdivisions: the inherent conflict is the one that can be seen as the opposition between the thesis of the free trade discourse and the antithesis of environmental opposition, whereas the vertical policy conflict is more indicative of the debate regarding regulations and standards, and the horizontal policy conflict can be conceptualized as the debate between the goals of international trade policy and climate change goals.

All these previously mentioned discourses can be pulled together into a master frame, or an umbrella environmental discourse, one which has characterised our political deliberations of the relationship between the environment and the socio-economic system, which is the discourse of sustainable development. This discourse originates in the previously mentioned Brundtland Commission, where the expression itself was first coined. Since then this phrase has seeped into academic, political and economic discussion and has become the main way in which environmental considerations can be injected into the discussion on the economy and trade. However, this term, which we will see is frequently used in the European Union's discourse has, according to Redclift (2005), many different, sometimes even mutually exclusive definitions. This term, he argues, can be used, for example, both in favour of keeping natural resources in state or public hands and can also be used in favour of privatising them. This is, still according to Redclift (2005), made possible by the terms which came about as a result of this discourse, like "natural capital" and "social capital", which show the extent to which sustainable development is a foundational economic rationality infused with the concept of limited natural resources. Redclift (2005) moreover observes how following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, sustainable development lost its second part and began to be used as "sustainability", thereby becoming a word freely added on to different concepts. Moreover this meant, that as the neo-classical economic rationality overtook this concept, the ideas of measurement and indicating the progress towards (or within) sustainability overtook isolated discussions of the carrying capacity and limits of Nature, as a basis of the socio-economic system. Thereby, as Redclift (2005) claimed, sustainability became an „attempt (...) to translate environmental choices into market preferences, following neo-liberal orthodoxy". In opposition to these critical remarks, however, some scholars, like (Murphy 2012) and (Springett 2013), hold more favourable views of the WCED Report for its genuine contribution

to the cause of sustainability—including its concerns for the needs of the poor, for economic growth based on less energy-intensive production, and for more equitable distribution and opportunities. Regardless of where the “essence of intended meaning” may lie in the Brundtland Report, it undoubtedly transformed the concerns for the environment and sustainability into a global development agenda.

However, Murphy’s (2012). and Springett’s (2013) view of sustainability and sustainable development is not shared by all. Criticism, for example in Holden et al (2014) has been made of the term, claiming that no clear definition exists to guide policy makers in solving problems at the global or regional levels. Instead of a defined term, sustainable development has started to increasingly reflect socially desirable attributes of solutions to local- and project-level problems, but has as an umbrella term or concept ignored the global challenges that it was meant to address (Holden et al 2014). Moreover, other critics like Sachs (1991) and Morris (2012) similarly claim, that that these terms have been only ever vaguely defined which meant that they were not functioning concepts, but rather ideologically useful “oxymorons”.Blewitt (2014), however disagrees with this and claims, that sustainable development has been increasingly narrowly defined and currently is vigorouslydelineated. However Blewitt (2014) also argues that sustainable development as a concept has been tied into the wider socio-political narrative and thus has followed the changes in these wider narratives. Following this connection Brand (2012) argues, that due to the fact that sustainability was tied in with neoliberalism in the past decades, and the latter faced a crisis in 2008, the main claims within the discourse shifted producing a new widely accepted discursive subset: “the green economy”. This latter term includes the goal of a technology-led solution to natural problems, with the complete disregard or successful avoidance of Earth’s carrying capacity, and thus instead of focusing on a qualitative shift in the socio-economic system through changing its governance it focuses on changing it through a qualitative technological change, thereby similarly drawing on free-market environmentalism. This shift in discourse, as claimed by Brand (2012:125), comes in handy for the overaccumulated post-crisis financial capital, which thus has „discovered agriculture, soil, infrastructure, and environmental protection as a new field of investment, thereby creating opportunities for few, threatening the living conditions of many, particularly in the Global South”.

The primary oppositional discourse to the green economy/green trade is the “limits to growth” reasoning, which instead of denying that there is an intrinsic contradiction between the limits of natural resources and ever expanding material well-being and population aims to exactly bring this contradiction forwards through the idea of limits of economic activity to Planet Earth’s carrying capacity (Eastin et al 2011). This discourse originates from the Club of Rome, which commissioned *Limits to Growth* in 1968, thus chronologically before the Brundtland Commission. The term ‘contradiction’ is even brought forward in the Club of Rome’s website on this report: „the Club of Rome had demonstrated the contradiction of unlimited and unrestrained growth in material consumption in a world of clearly finite resources and had brought the issue to the top of the global agenda.” The fact that this contradiction was identified and brought forward, however, led to a response by those of a more free market environmentalist persuasion. The response to this was highlighting the importance of technological solutions, by which humanity can continuously avoid these limits, which in turn needs wealth creation and thus trade. Moreover Eastin et al (2011) claim that as climate change became the main manifestation of the limits to growth, being the limit of sink of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the debate changed “to debating long-term emission targets from confronting the socio-political dimensions”.

The fact that the debate switched in the way described above can be seen in the way states and other political actors regarded environmental issues, like climate change, when discussing matters of paramount importance to the functioning of the socio-economic system. One of these matters of paramount importance to the socio-economic system was trade policy, in which we can track the imprint of larger discursive changes (Wanner 2014). This is clearly visible when we see how the “green economy” discourse mentioned above had its trade counterpart in the green trade discourse, which similarly conceptualized nature-trade relations in win-win terms, as opposed to terms of contradiction (Wanner 2014). The fact that the larger socio-natural discourses can be found in trade policy allows that by the examination of trade discourse in a given time frame and geographical location we can gain valuable insight into the major discursive changes in the larger socio-natural narratives. Thus addressing the discourses tied to the TTIP agreements in 2014 and doing that in the European Union framework provides a basis on which an understanding of the changes in the nature-economy discourse after the global financial crisis can be built.

The discursive background on which the EU has taken part in the TTIP negotiations is part of a broader strategy called “Global Europe”, which was announced by the DG for Trade and which aimed at securing bilateral free-trade agreements with the larger economies of the world. This was presented as EU policy in 2006, though it culminated in the first trade agreement between the EU and South Korea only in 2010. The fact that the Global financial crisis happened in the meantime did not impede the application of this EU policy (Siles-Brügge 2011). Siles-Brügge (2011) argues that this was done through a discursive tool, whereby the DG Trade presented an ideational imperative of liberalisation, which constructed trade liberalisation as a “desirable outcome in itself”. Thus, Siles-Brügge (2011) claimed that by constructing trade liberalisation as a response to the external economic pressure on the EU by the global financial crisis, the provisions of liberalisation were pushed through as remedies rather than causes of the crisis. Moreover among the opponents of the trade agreement Siles-Brügge (2011) showed that by framing their opposition with terms of ensuring access to the Korean market a significant discursive victory was awarded to the DG Trade, whereby the intrinsic desirability of trade liberalisation was accepted as a given.

In their study on the discursive shifts of the EU’s external trade policy, De Ville and Orbie (2014) found that the discourses of trade commissioners after the global financial crisis aimed at reinforcing the neoliberal foundations of EU policy, not only internally, relating to the structures of the internal market, but also with regards to the EU’s external trade policy. They, similarly to Siles-Brügge (2011), argued that the trade commissioners presented further trade liberalisation as intrinsically virtuous. De Ville and Orbie (2014), moreover do show, that the discourse itself has stayed similar since the 1990s with only minor changes, aiming to adapt the political presentation of trade policy to the current presentation of the socio-economic reality. In the construction of political reality the state is destined to merely to protect traders and enhance trade through the promotion of mutual trade concessions with other states, or bilateral trade agreements.

De Ville and Orbie (2014) claim that in the DG Trade’s discourse environmental viewpoints were rarely present, until 2000, when Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy’s idea of “harnessing globalisation” began to seep down in the EU political mechanism. Commissioner Lamy, who tied in his conceptualization of trade with the then emerging “third way” rhetoric, based on Giddens and politically manifesting in New Labour, was very much still founded on



the neoliberal idea of the intrinsic benefit of decreasing trade barriers and with free market environmentalism. Globalisation was seen as an inevitable force, which the EU could harness, and if this harnessing was done correctly the environment could benefit, with more technical solutions, markets for environmental externalities and more people being able to afford sustainable lifestyle choices. This, I will later claim, was the beginning of the absorption of the antithesis, yet this also was a more superficial one, when the environmentalist goals were included in the debate, but not the neo-Malthusian environmentalist reasoning, not the idea of limits to growth. Moreover, De Ville and Orbie(2014), through looking at the rest of the trade Commissioners' discourses, namely of Mandelson, Ashton and De Gucht, since the global financial crisis of 2008 until 2014, find that the commission has been adapting its discourse to the current stage of the crisis while leaving the metanarrative of the intrinsic value of the free movement of capital intact. They identified four main discursive shifts since 2008, namely: "from a (i) defensive towards an offensive discourse which first sees liberalization as (ii) desirable and then as (iii) necessary and finally a little more nuanced discourse whereby liberalization is still (iv) necessary but no longer sufficient." (De Ville and Orbie, 2014: 175)

Thus, what I aim to do here with discourse analysis has been used previously to uncover power relations in EU discourse and has also been used to do so with regards to EU trade policy in De Ville and Orbie (2014). This study published last year identifies a gap, that given the "outspokenly neoliberal tendencies of EU trade policy over the past 15 years and the important position of the EU Trade Commissioner in EU (external) policies, it may be surprising that critical and discursive analyses of EU trade policy have been lacking in the literature" (De Ville and Orbie, 2014: 5). This lack in the discursive analysis is especially the case for discursive analyses of trade policy in relation to the environment, and this is the exact gap in the literature I aim to fill in the subsequent chapters. Thus by focusing on the discourse of the Trade Commission and the European Parliament I will continue the analysis of De Ville and Orbie (2014) into the year 2015 with specialised vantage point of environment-trade relations.

This discursive shift detailed above can be seen to affect the trade commission's discourse on the relationship between environmental well-being and free trade. When looking at the differences in the way in which TTIP was advocated, we can see that whereas NAFTA

was advocated as benefiting environmental well-being, TTIP was merely described as not detrimental to it. This can be seen as what De Ville and Orbie(2014) describe as the shift from an defensive to an offensive green trade discourse. Yet, regardless of this shift, the desirability of the EU's openness remains unquestioned by the commission. What however remains to be examined in the Trade Commission's current discourse on TTIP is to what extent the idea of a contradiction between the increasingly free movement of capital and environmental well-being has been acknowledged and what discursive strategies the commission has adopted in responding to this idea.

Lastly, scholarly investigations of the EU are still largely dominated by rational choice institutionalist scholars concentrating on the near autonomy of the Commission as opposed to the member states like Radaelli (2010), with these studies mostly applying principal-agent or related models, and with an exact focus on lobby groups in EU trade policy. In this sense this thesis will be a departure, but a departure keeping a close look at the Commission in promoting trade. The aforementioned studies have added to our knowledge with regards to the institutional complexities of EU trade politics, yet these studies have not problematized the neoliberal discourse and essential composition of the European Commission's trade policy, thereby to some extent assuming and reifying the notion that the free movement of capital is inevitable (De Ville and Orbie, 2014). As opposed to these studies, critical studies of EU trade policy have been made, but these focused not on socio-natural relations, but on EU-developing country relations. Three exceptions can be made regarding this gap in the literature: Hoven's (2004) study on the DG Trade's discourse leading up to the 2001 Doha Summit, Siles-Brügge' (2011) study on the Commission's discourse on the EU-South Korea free trade agreement and De Ville and Orbie's (2014) overview of the Commission's trade discourse since 2008; all three explore the discursive construction of the neoliberal trade policy in the EU. Yet even De Ville and Orbie's (2014) study stops examining trade discourse before Commissioner Malmström's period and none of these studies focus specifically on trade-environment relations.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

This thesis will be focusing on the discourse of the environment with regards to the TTIP negotiations and the political debates surrounding this agreement on the European Union level. The fact that the discourse itself will be looked at, rather than the actual agreement and its environmental effects has to do with the fact that the discourse surrounding the agreement itself already affects how people in the European Union think of the environment and its relationship to the socio-economic system. In the study of environmental politics and policy, looking at discursive changes and the environment's place in larger socio-economic debates has a strong tradition, summarized in Hajer and Versteeg's (2005) article. In this article discourse or a discursive pattern under investigation is seen as a particular linguistic regularity that can be delineated in conversations or texts, thus discourse analysis is seen as directed on situational logics studying 'language-in-use'. Moreover, Hajer and Versteeg (2005) claim that there are three main strengths of discourse analysis for the study of environmental politics, which are: firstly its capability to make clear the role of language in politics, secondly its ability to expose the embeddedness of language in practices and lastly its capacity to answer 'how' questions and to illuminate mechanisms. Their article ends by calling on those practising discourse analysis in environmental politics to, given the

changing nature of policy making, identify the new sites of politics and analysing the political dynamics therein (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). That is what looking at the TTIP debates aims to do, in this new site of politics to analyse the dynamics of environmental considerations in trade debates and to comprehend the extent to which oppositional actors can mould the mechanisms of political language.

To uncover the ways in which the political language of the environment in the European trade discourse evolves I will use the methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA, following Weiss and Wodak (2007) is not based on a uniform, single theoretical formulation, it consists of several approaches. Consequently we have to declare that there is no guiding theoretical or epistemological viewpoint that is used consistently within CDA. CDA is grounded on the works of mainly Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas: Foucault's epistemological and discourse theory works are used, as is Habermas's discourse theory. Therefore the criticism has been made against CDA, that on the whole it is eclectic and thus unsystematic (Weiss and Wodak 2007). However, the fact it is unsystematic can be seen also as one of CDA's main advantages, as that makes CDA dynamic and applicable to multiple discursive tasks and moreover as discourse's relationship to societal processes is not unitary, only a flexible approach can attempt to uncover major relations. The strength of CDA is that it applies both linguistic and sociological approaches and that texts are interpreted through the concepts of ideology, power, hierarchy, gender and other sociological variables (Weiss and Wodak 2007). Therefore CDA can be summarized the following way: CDA aims to uncover the relationship between language and power, where discourse is defined as language-in-use (Weiss and Wodak 2007). Thus the terminology of CDA is used to in concrete refer to the critical linguistic approach of scholars who consider the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communication. Therefore what can be seen as a unitary factor in this diverse method is that most research using CDA concretely considers visible or hidden relationships of struggle and conflict in the political language mentioned above (Weiss and Wodak 2007).

Criticism against CDA, however, has stated that the terms "critical" and "discourse" are defined too broadly, thus identifying or constructing any kind of power relations in any human speech could count as CDA. Therefore before I describe the concrete methodology used here I will attempt to define "critical" and "discourse" in a narrower sense. This criticism moreover reflects on the fact that CDA has become a settled academic discipline with the comparable

rituals and institutional practices as any another academic discipline (Weiss and Wodak 2007). This, according to the same criticism, could mean that CDA has become ‘uncritical’ – with for example the sheer fact of the use of abbreviations such as CDA serving the same purpose as in other traditional, non-critical disciplines – to sideline outsiders and to mystify the behaviours and intentions associated with the research (Weiss and Wodak 2007). Therefore to avoid mystification without substance, I will attempt to describe the kind of CDA that will be used in the following chapter.

Firstly the question what exact kind of discourse I will look at needs to be addressed. There is a difference between the German and Central European context, where a division is made between ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, drawing on the tradition in text linguistics along with the tradition of rhetoric. However in the British and American tradition of CDA, ‘discourse’ is regularly used for both written and oral texts (Weiss and Wodak 2007). I will draw on the British tradition of CDA, as I will look at both texts prepared either as policy papers or political materials of debate and speeches made by political actors, thus a combination of written and oral texts.

The way in which the critical prefix in front of discourse analysis changes the methodology used in this thesis also needs explanation. The foundational difference, what makes CDA different from any other types of discourse analyses, relate to the term ‘critical’, which according to a number of ‘critical linguists’ could be traced to the impact of the Frankfurt School or Jürgen Habermas, mentioned already. Since, the Frankfurt school, this concept is mostly used in a broader sense, bringing us to what Fairclough describes as, “that, in human matters, interconnections and chains of cause-and-effect may be distorted out of vision”. Thus, to be critical is essentially to attempt to make visible “the interconnectedness of things” (Fairclough, 2013: 125). This interconnectedness thus will be present in relation both to larger narratives that the political discourse on the environment’s role in the TTIP debate draws into, and also interrelatedness between the political opposition’s and supporters’ discourse in this regard, and how these discourses shape each other.

What however is crucial to highlight is that in CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use people with political power make of it (Weiss and Wodak 2007). This is the reason why CDA often goes with the vantage point of those who lack power in the

socio-economic and political systems and critically analyses the language use of those in power; those who are able to construct and reify the existence of inequalities themselves and who also have the resources and the possibility to change these relations of power. Drawing on its Critical Theory predecessors, CDA looks at the need for interdisciplinary work in order to acquire detailed knowledge of how language functions in constituting, transmitting and reifying knowledge, which in turn are constitutive of social institutions or the way in which power is exercised. Consequently, major building blocks of CDA are a concern with power as a central condition in social life and efforts to create a theory of language which incorporates this as one of its cornerstones (Weiss and Wodak 2007). Thus immediate attention is paid not only to the approach of struggles for power and therefore for control, but also to the intertextuality and recontextualization of contending discourses in various public spaces and genres. Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures (Weiss and Wodak 2007). This means that in the following chapters language will be seen as inseparable from other social matters and social power for a number of reasons: as Weiss and Wodak (2007) argue, language indexes power, expresses power and is a party to where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Thus the following idea is fundamental to CDA: “power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term” (Weiss and Wodak 2007:26). This is also the reason why a mix of macro and micro analysis of texts is used here, as we can see that almost all linguistic forms have at some point been used in the service of the expression of power by a process of syntactic or textual metaphor. Thus the way in which ‘environment’ as a word is used, the words with which ecological ideas are expressed, and how these words themselves appear in a text are not a coincidence of speech but a part of the way in which linguistic forms are used in various articulations and manipulations of power. As a result of these, CDA might be defined as essentially interested in analysing non-transparent as well as transparent structural dependences of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language (Weiss and Wodak 2007). Therefore I will base my research on Habermas’ claim that “language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. Insofar as the legitimizations of power relations ... are not articulated ... language is also ideological” (quoted in Bourdieu, 1991:154).

Understanding this power of the language used, I will not look at the agreements themselves, but the debates and deliberations surrounding them only. This is mainly due to the fact that TTIP does not have a text yet. It is also because the way the environment is situated in the discourse, I argue, is as constitutive of the socio-natural effects these agreements will herald as the texts of the agreements would be. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) would argue that since CDA rests on the postulate that discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned, it is a crucial characteristic of the economic, socio-natural and cultural changes of late modernity that these changes exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse simultaneously, and that the processes that are taking place outside the discursive reality are substantively shaped by these discourses. Therefore by uncovering the relationship of the environment to trade and capital flows in the discourses shaping these trade negotiations, relationships between the environmental well-being of Europeans and the socio-economic systems they live in can be uncovered similarly.

Moreover, in the linguistic analysis, the use of synecdoches will be uncovered. The reason synecdoches play a crucial role, is because in political communication they are the most widely used ways in which theoretical arguments are made in seemingly technical and technocratic language (Reisigl and Wodak 2005). A synecdoche, according to Reisigl and Wodak (2005), originates from the Greek: 'to take up with something else', thus synecdoches are substitutions within a unified field of reference, whereby a term is exchanged to by a different term, the extension of which is either semantically broader or semantically narrower. According to the direction of substitution, synecdoches can be divided into two groups. One is the particularising synecdoche or to say a part standing for the whole and the other is the generalising synecdoche, when the whole is standing for a part (Reisigl and Wodak, 2005).

These investigations thus will be made according to the three-dimensional framework, that a large majority of CDA scholars agree on, thus according to Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) can be seen as a basis for this very wide-ranging methodology. The first dimension in this framework is discourse-as-text, or the linguistic aspects and assembling of concrete examples of discourse. The first example of this would be the choices and patterns in vocabulary, like the wording in particular contexts: for example what exact words describe the "environmental aspect" in the trade discourse. A second type of example of this first

dimension is the grammar, the conjunction or the text structure of a concrete text, like what words follow the word 'environment' or whether the active or passive voice is used.

The second dimension of the basic framework is the discourse-as-discursive-practice, in other words, discourse as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). This concretely means examining speech acts (the way in which certain words are used opposed to others), coherence (the ways in which discourse by similar actors in different circumstances differ), and intertextuality, (the way in which different discourses reflect on each other). –the three most important ways in which the text as such is linked to its context. There is an important difference here between "manifest intertextuality", where intertextuality is undisguised and "interdiscursivity", where intertextuality is disguised and is often the result of widely used phrases and normative sentence structures. Disguised here would mean when someone uses a phrase or thought pattern that originates from a school of thought without acknowledging it, whereas it is manifest you can find a reference to the school of thought or theoretical background or person.

The last dimension is discourse-as-social-practice, which is the ideological consequences and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). This is where the previously mentioned Gramscian idea of the absorption of the antithesis plays a huge role, since this is the way in which one can conceptualize the relationship between discourses competing for hegemony. Thus to put this Gramscian idea and the similar Hegelian conceptualization of thesis, antithesis, synthesis into use, we can argue that hegemonies change, which can be uncovered in discursive change, when the latter is viewed from the angle of intertextuality, or in the way in which competing discourses draw on each other (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). This intertextuality is the way in which discourse is shifting the hegemonic structure, when the articulation of power is being respoken, or rewritten, which allows us to see the emergence of new orders of discourse, and thus is the struggle over normativity, attempt at control, and resistance against regimes of power (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000).

Due to the varied levels and ways in which within CDA a text can be analysed, the texts in this thesis will be analysed in different detail. Commissioner Malmström's speech in London



will be analysed in the most microlinguistic way, as that is the speech contains the most intertextual data, whereas the plenary debate in the European Parliament will be analysed in a more macrolinguistic way as that, due to the short and varied political texts allows more for the identification of synecdoches.

In this thesis the texts are chosen according to three qualities: the fact that they are an attempt to politicize the TTIP discourse on the environment, that they cover a wide range of party positions in the European Parliament or the Commission and that they are in discussion with each other and thus show the evolution of the discourse. The first text is chosen as the starting point because before February of 2014 or the European Green position paper the TTIP debate was a technocratic one, where environmental issues were not considered separately, thus disallowing look at discourse indicative of trade-environment relations. Similarly the rest of the texts are politicizing the trade negotiation, regardless of whether that political purpose is to create a compromise between the thesis and the antithesis or to propagate the thesis as the only realistic environmental alternative. Moreover, the texts come from a wide range of political actors in the European Union, the EPP, the GUE-NGL group, the Greens, ALDE, PES, ECR and the Commission, mostly from Trade Commissioner Malmström. Lastly, these texts are also chosen as the ones that had the most media attention and generally the most influence with regards to the subsequent discourses, thus the texts chosen here are chosen to show an evolution of discourse.

## Chapter IV: Results

### The Thesis: Trade is inherently valuable

Prior to formulating any oppositional discourse to TTIP, the trade agreement was discussed in the framework of free-market ideology of Commissioner De Gucht, with fundamental ideological notions unchallenged and thus constructed as the objective conceptualization of trade. One of the few statements on TTIP prior to 2014 was given by trade commissioner De Gucht just ahead of the second round of negotiations in October of 2013, thereby already at a time when the agreement was well in the process of negotiations, but before the main political debates begun.

The most telling about the Commissioner's statement was that the environment, nature or the climate was not mentioned once. There is implicit mention of not watering down the EU' regulations, but what regulations are most important or how will that relate to regulatory convergence, the main point of the agreement, is not mentioned.

The first conceptualization of the agreement's effects on these regulations is when the Commissioner says: "We have to make the EU and the US regulatory systems more compatible and to help shape global rules in trade since this is where the economic and political benefits of a deal lie" (De Gucht, 2013). This argument is the golden standard argument, whereby the

Commissioner suggests that if regulations on the majority of goods will be unified across the Atlantic, these will be the regulations used all across the world economy. This argument will be used frequently to underline the geopolitical importance of the agreement, but it also has a meaning that the EU regulation will change and somehow be closer to US regulations.

Later the Commissioner draws the comparison between a unified transatlantic regulatory body and the fact that within the common market of the European Union this unification of regulations already happened and was a riveting success. The Commissioner however, in what is a succinct definition of what the Commission's view of regulation's role in global trade is, says: "critically these rules and institutions would not be credible if we fail to deliver the concrete and measurable reduction in costs for business" (De Gucht, 2013). Thus, according to the Commissioner the rules and institutions governing trade are there to help to generation profit and not to protect people or the environment. This conceptualization of regulation can be seen as the thesis of TTIP and of free market ideology, where the generation of profit and the increase of the volume of traded goods is a desirable outcome in itself, it posses inherent value.

Therefore what we can see in this short text on TTIP is that prior to the articulation of an antithesis the environment was not considered as part of the debate and that regulations were conceptualized as something to aid and benefit trade, trade being an inherent good in itself.

### **The first attempt of the antithesis: the European Greens**

The first document worth looking at is the first attempt to place environmental considerations in the forefront of the TTIP debate. This is also important as before the beginning of 2014 TTIP were not highly politicized debates, and thus the document detailed below can be seen as one of the primary attempts at politicizing the TTIP discourse (Akhtar and Jones, 2014).

Thus if we look at the main document of European Green opposition, the position paper "TTIP – Too many untrustworthy promises and real risks" adopted at the European Green Party Green Electoral Convention on 22 February 2014 in Brussels, we can see that the attempts have been made to bring the environmental viewpoint of the trade negotiations forward (European Green Party, 2014). The position paper immediately starts with the slogan: "trade should improve our planet, not privilege big business", whereby it not only starts by affirming a contradiction between the free movement of capital and the carrying capacity of our planet, but it also affirms that trade should not only not harm or "respect" our environment, but it should be a force that contributes to the stability of environmental systems .

This argument continues by the position paper declaring, that TTIP "is about much more than trade". This is partly a reference to the non tariff barriers, or regulations, which will be affected by this treaty, but it is also referring to how this agreement should not just be viewed through the lens of trade surpluses and export figures but also through its wider societal effects. The claim that this agreement is not only about economic figures, but it affects the way people lead their lives has been one of the fundamental rhetorical tactics by the European Greens. This is partly due to the fact that this is a complex issue, which is abstract, thus hard to politicize. This is why the position paper states, that TTIP has "irreversible impacts on our daily lives, in particular on our health, food, labour, product safety, environment, social standards as well as privacy standards". This uses the similar grouping of standards that are higher than in the US, but this wording includes privacy standards, mentioned only by the Greens, and talks about irreversible impacts, suggesting that the agreement would have a larger impact on these standards than suggested by either the ALDE or the S&D groups.

Later, the position paper of the European Greens claims to be "challenging the legitimacy and the content of these negotiations, although we strongly favour expanding transatlantic co-operation in mutually beneficial areas, notably with regard to tackling climate change and environmental protection, tax fraud and evasion". This is crucial in the discursive strategy of the European Greens, because what countered their claims of opposition was that they were "anti-American". This is what the position paper aims to tackle here, by shifting the transatlantic cooperation from the economy to climate protection. This is also the first mention of the climate in any of the major documents of European politics on TTIP, thereby

attempting to bridge the gap between the so-called “economic” and “trade” debates and the “climate” debate, currently central with regards to the Paris climate conference debate.

With regards to the economic side of the argument the position paper tries to follow the similar pattern of discourse as the GUE-NGL group did in their alternative study, discussed next, as the European Greens “demand a realistic economic analysis, including an environmental and human rights impact assessment, also regarding global impacts”. The fact that a realistic economic analysis is said to be needed attempts to make the claim that the economic analyses that the Commission uses are in fact not realistic, thus not the objective foundation for a depoliticized debate claimed. Through this the position paper attempts to delegitimize the Commission’s stance as on the side of reason versus the European Greens on the side of emotion and ideology. Moreover by defining economic analysis as something that should include a human rights and an environmental perspective implicitly draws on the three-legged stool definition of sustainability and broadens what impacts of the treaty should be considered, thereby attempting to make a strong case for considering the environmental aspects of the agreement and also drawing on the idea that there are monetary quantifications of environmental issues conceptualizing the environmental damage caused by trade or economic activity as such as unaccounted externalities.

### **Dismantling the master’s house with the master’s tool: the European Left**

The GUE-NGL group to tackle the Commission’s claim that the critics base their opposition on beliefs rather than facts conducted an alternative study on TTIP in the summer of 2014. Gabi Zimmer, the president of GUE-NGL and MEP for Die Linke, the German radical-left party, presented the study by claiming, that “the European Commission and the member states have endorsed many pseudo- scientific studies that claim free trade agreements are drivers of growth, jobs, and sustainable development for both partners. But this is far from the reality.”

To challenge the positive assertions about TTIP made in five of these studies, the GUE/NGL group asked a team of independent researchers from the ÖFSE (Austrian Foundation for Development Research) to scrutinise their findings and the methodologies used” (Raza et al, 2014). By the presentation of the study we can see that the GUE-NGL group attempted to undermine the Commission’s position that (only) their arguments are grounded on objective

facts. By claiming that the research that the GUE-NGL group paid for is independent the group tries to “dismantle the master’s house with the master’s tools” and claim that objectivity, science and reason are indeed on the side of those opposing TTIP. By highlighting the scrutiny of the methodologies the claim is made that the five studies the Commission bases its reasoning on constitute bad science, thus the Commission is unreasonable. This strategy of the GUE-NGL group stays within what is seen as the reasoning dictated by the Commission. This kind of argumentation does not view the fundamental moral issues against the agreement, against ISDS, the conceptualization of nature-trade relations and TTIP’s effects on democratic procedures as the central argument against the agreement.

Zimmer ends the presentation of the study with the following sentence: “we will continue to fight TTIP as it is incompatible with the kind of EU we want to build: one that puts social justice at the heart of its priorities, strives for an economy that respects the environment, contributes to a peaceful world, and seeks to build a trade policy that is fair and sustainable for all partners (Raza et al 2014).” Here the way the environment is phrased is telling of the far-left group’s view of human-nature relationship. The environment here exists as a separate entity to the economy, an entity it nonetheless needs to ‘respect’. The fact that it needs to be respected shows that environment is not seen as what the economy is based on, or that its traded goods tend to be from the environment, rather it is seen as a passive subject that needs to be interfered with as little as possible. Thus here the nature-culture or economy-environment binary is not reified, but it is constructed in a way that allows for the conceptualization of the environment as passive and simply what is everything that is not the economy, and the economy which is everything humans do with the environment.

The report itself however does not contain any attempt to quantify the environmental costs of the agreement. The environment is mentioned only a few times, and there is no chapter or separate part in which the environmental effects are discussed, therefore to what extent TTIP ‘disrespects’ the environment is unknown. The typical way in which the environment is discussed in the study is illustrated by the claim that “the social costs of regulatory change are by their very nature difficult, if not impossible to quantify. Nevertheless, they can be very large and thus require careful analysis, in particular in those areas where they relate to public security & health as well as environmental safety.”

This careful analysis is never done, but we can see that in the report the environment is viewed only in the context of its safety to humans and that environmental safety along with security and health are seen as all social, thus non-economic costs of the agreement. This distinction between social and economic costs suggests that the detriment of public health and environmental safety are non-quantifiable and are not quantified in economic terms. This view rejects the idea that these social costs are simply externalities of capitalist production that have yet to be internalized. This notion disregards what environmental damage is done by simply increasing the transcontinental movements of goods and capital. What it does, however, it completely separates out the environmental issues opposing TTIP, and aims to dismantle the argumentation of the Commission about the economic benefits shared by all by focusing not on the Commission's reasoning but on their foundational studies and claims of objectivity and reason.

### **The Absorption of the Antithesis: the first plenary debate in the European Parliament**

One of the first debates on TTIP in the plenary session of the European Parliament was in Strasbourg on the 15th of July 2014. The first to speak in this debate was Commissioner De Gucht, the trade commissioner prior to Cecilia Malmström. Commissioner De Gucht after talking about increasing transparency of the negotiations turned to those critics, who claim that the agreement will lower the European standards of protection in environmental, labour and consumer protections. This he counters by claiming that, "some are tempted to turn this into a Kulturkampf, claiming that TTIP threatens to Americanise our way of life (Plenary debate, 2014)." The people who claim that the agreement will lower the consumer protection and thus environmental standards are in the European Parliament the Greens and the GUE-NGL group, thus it can be seen that this criticism is levelled at them. This criticism is building two juxtapositions at once between those for the agreement and those against. The first such juxtaposition is that this will become a kulturkampf as opposed to debate based on reasoned arguments, thus those opposed are unreasonably, irrational, playing on emotions, whereas those in favour are objective, reasonable and rational. This juxtaposition has frequently been

a tool used by those arguing for neoliberal political decisions, as Beeson and Firth (1998) have shown in the context of the Australian political debate of the 1980s. The second juxtaposition created here is between those who are opposed to the agreement, who are anti-American, nationalistic, and protectionist and those who are in favour of the agreement and believe in the Transatlantic alliance, are cosmopolitan and open.

Then the Commissioner denies that the agreement would lower environmental standards, citing just as high US standards for air and water quality and also drawing on President Obama's words that he will not sign an agreement that will lower environmental and other standards. Then he declares that since in the EU internal market standards were not lowered, but free trade was allowed to flow, this argument on lowering of environmental standards due to TTIP is "illogical". This again is redrawing the juxtaposition between logical TTIP and the illogical opposition. Then the Commissioner makes a statement that exemplifies the way in which the the environmental opposition to TTIP is placed together with those who are anti-trade: "we should remove protectionism but keep protection" (Plenary debate, 2014). This reifies the position that protectionism is anti-progress and a win-win situation is possible, drawing on the wider green trade discourse. After this the Commissioner draws on the previously mentioned conceptualization of regulation as red tape, saying that "the only thing that is lowered is the amount of red tape."

On the issue of the safety of European GMO bans the Commissioner uses softer language than even Commissioner Malmström later or either the S&D or the EPP groups, he says that TTIP "will not give a blanket approval of imports of GMOs. (Plenary debate, 2014)" Now this obviously leaves the ground open for approval of some GMO products, which is exactly the issue that has been warned against by the European Green opposition repeatedly. Then still regarding the issue of the GMO ban Commissioner DeGucht makes the point that with regards to GMO foodstuffs "we should rely on the opinions of our own scientists in EFSA [European Food Safety Authority] and not on ideology" Again we see the juxtaposition between the rational Commission, which relies on facts, sound science and is objective and the opposition which relies on ideology, emotions and is irrational.

The next speaker of crucial importance was on behalf of the S&D group. David Martin started with discussing the geopolitical importance of the agreement and turned to a new kind



of oppositional issue, that of the geographical indicator, claiming that: “[we] want to see quality European products such as Parma ham and Feta cheese given strong geographic protection against genetic products and misleading marketing”. The mention of genetic products again shows how the GMO debate stands in for the whole debate surrounding the precautionary principle and the European regulatory standards. A little later there is even a full list given of these synecdoches: “regulatory convergence must not lead to chlorinated chickens, hormone-treated beef or GMOs getting access to the European Union market”. Again, as in the opinion submitted to the INTA committee, the S&D group’s speaker does not make a case for labour regulations, it is only again a visible balancing act between supporting the agreement and listing the Green/GUE opposition’s main points of disagreement.

Then spoke Emma McClarkin, of the ECR group, an MEP from the British Conservatives, who after claiming that everyone will benefit from this agreement said that the main benefit for every individual man and woman on both sides of the Atlantic will be “products which are of a better standard and at a cheaper price”. So there the MEP even claims that TTIP will improve the standards, not just keep these standards intact like we heard in other pro-TTIP arguments. This presents at best a radically free market environmentalist idea of trade-environment relations, at worst an ideology of trade that believes that environmental aspects are of no importance. Later, when she also mentions the synecdoches of the debate she says: “EU negotiators have ruled out the inclusion of hormone beef and chlorinated chicken, so I hope that this scaremongering will stop”. So, the juxtaposition mentioned earlier in the Commissioner’s speech has been taken to the extreme, where those talking about food safety are not only irrational and ideological, but actually “scaremongering”.

Later Marietje Schaake on behalf of the ALDE group starts with a metaphor that has been frequently used with regards to all EU negotiations: keeping one’s feet on the gas. She says: “But those days, when Vice-President Biden liked to talk about finishing the deal on one tank of gas, seem a little bit far behind us at this moment, one-and-a half years down the road. It seems as though the Americans have chosen an exceptionally environmentally friendly car to drive in. In any case, I think that they and maybe all of us should step on the gas to keep the very important momentum that started these negotiations.” Now the lack of progress on TTIP is visualized by instead of giving enough gas to a car is to have been driving an

environmentally friendly, thus slow car. This shows, how environmentalist issues, symbols and technical solutions are not only overtaken by free trade discourse to underpin their argument and to delegitimize those opposed to free trade, but also to conceptualize environmentalism as opposed to “progress”, thus to the ever freer global movement of capital. Then the MEP similarly to the previous speakers talks about “unnecessary bureaucratic burdens” and at the same the importance to keep food safety standards.

Matt Carthy, MEP for Sinn Fein, speaking for the GUE-NGL group, first started by declaring that TTIP has “the potential to damage our environment and devastate the rights of workers, producers and consumers.” This is crucial as other than MattCarthy only Jill Evans for Plaid Cymru, sitting in the Green group, mentioned at all the rights of workers or trade unions in this debate. More importantly here the right to a safe environment is conceptualized as the rights of consumers and producers. The rights of producers is later detailed in Carthy’s speech, whereby he focuses on Irish farmers’ rights, as he claims “the unique standards and production systems that apply on Irish family farms, for example, will be compromised in negotiations”. By the fact that he brings forward the example of family farms, he show the TTIP debate in a light of a debate between the large multinationals and small business like family farms ,thereby attempting to delegitimize the small enterprise reasoning of the EPP group. Moreover he does this by equating environmental standards with food standards, the most comprehensible and most quickly felt part of environmental regulation: food safety regulation is highlighted.

Other than what was said in this debate on TTIP in the plenary of the European Union, what was not said is also of crucial importance. Sustainability, sustainable development or sustainable growth as a concept was used once, by an MEP from the GUE-NGL group in a long list of issues that this agreement is contrary to. Climate, climate change or global warming was not mentioned once. Neither were the words ‘emission’, ‘greenhouse gases’, ‘renewable’, or ‘planet’. Terms that were frequently mentioned, on the other hand, were: ‘energy’ (in the sense of fossil fuels), ‘industry’, ‘investment’ and ‘oil and gas’.

This shows how environmental considerations have entered the TTIP debate in the European Parliament only through the food safety issue. Food safety has become, with its synecdoches like hormone beef, chlorine chicken and GMO products, the number one

politicized environmental issue. Other than this a secondary issue has been the protection of all other environmental standards, which are mostly included in a list of demands like labour, consumer protection and health standards. With these standards, the main point of the supporters of the agreement is that these standards will be kept at their current level, with only unnecessary regulations being harmonized away (this argument is mostly made by drawing on the “red tape” symbolism). Only the most extreme pro-TTIP argumentation, here this is the ECR group, makes the claim that these standards, or any standards, will improve. This debate plenary has shown that the environmental aspect of the debate has been important, but has only engaged with food safety and the whole agreement’s effects on the global climate crisis has been absent. Consequently, what in other texts often takes an important role, namely the deployment of ‘sustainability’ in arguing for this agreement, was almost non-existent in this political forum on both sides of the TTIP-debate, suggesting that sustainability as a concept may not be the divisive political issue it was in some previous free trade agreements, notably NAFTA (Gregory 1992).

### **The Balancing Act: the European Social Democrats**

Bernd Lange, German Social Democrat MEP, the trade spokesperson of the S&D group in the European Parliament, submitted a draft report on TTIP to the INTA committee. This report and generally Lange’s handling of the issue has been termed a “balancing act” in the European media, and thus shows an important case of compromise building discourse, of political speech aiming to downplay contradictions and build win-win scenarios wherever possible.

This is clearly seen already in the introduction to the goals of TTIP, which among other things aims to achieve “sustainable growth”. This term is then used frequently in the introductory chapter, however in this ‘sustainable’ is not used as taken from sustainable development, but is used as opposed to growth built on boom-and-bust economics, which is clearly seen from the fact that according to the report: “The economic crisis will only be resolved and sustainable growth achieved in the EU with a different EU macroeconomic policy” (Lange, 2015). Therefore sustainability is here seen as a juxtaposition to the austerity-led economic policies of the Juncker-commission, not as anything that has to do with the ecological aspect of this word. The fact that ‘sustainable economic growth’ can have such

widely used meaning without drawing on the environmental origin of this term would suggest that sustainable development has not managed to reach the level of wide usage that those in environmental discourse studies sometimes take for granted.

The first mention of the environment in Lange's text comes in a chapter called "the right side of globalisation" (Lange, 2015). This term is quite similar to Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy's (1999–2004) discourse of 'harnessing globalization', which was an approach focusing on the free flows of capital, but also taking into account social, environmental and developmental factors (De Ville and Orbie 2014). Yet, due to the dominance of Third Way social democrat politics, this trade policy discourse was still drawing on the neoliberal paradigm, making trade liberalization, economic competitiveness, and supply-side measures to deal with any ensuing negative consequences of the 'inevitability' of globalization a priority, while also signalling the importance of environmental and labour rights (De Ville and Orbie 2014). This discourse stayed quite similar in the ten years since Commissioner Lamy stepped down to 2014, as the report declares: "a good trade agreement could be an answer for being on the right side of globalization. We have to stimulate sustainable growth but at the same time we have to protect workers, consumers and the environment (Lange, 2015)." In the first sentence the claim is made that the right side of globalisation is where trade is increasingly liberalized, but standards of environmental well-being are kept in place, where we have a win-win scenario between the free movement of capital and the state of the environment. In the second sentence the possibility of increased trade causing environmental degradation is acknowledged, as the environment needs to be protected from the stimulation of growth, even if it is sustainable growth. However, even in the second sentence quoted, by coming down on the right side of globalisation this contradiction can be overcome and the win-win scenario of third way politics is drawn on.

Other than in the introduction, there is even a separate chapter in the report called "Trade and sustainable development". This is the first time and only time when the report uses sustainability not in the macroeconomic sense, but in the sustainable development sense. The chapter, which is placed in a prominent position between the list of non-negotiable issues and the chapter on investment protection, has a strong wording, which suggests that sustainability should be a concept that reaches through all aspects of the agreement. The chapter says that "environmental standards should not be limited to the trade and sustainable

development chapter but equally be included in other areas of the agreement”, which is something that is answering criticism to previous trade agreements, like NAFTA, where there was an environmental side agreement, but environmental considerations were not included in any other areas of the agreement (Gregory, 1992 ). The chapter moreover, includes labour rights in the realm of sustainability, drawing on the three-legged-stool conceptualization of sustainability, including the social aspect as well. However this chapter also conceptualizes environmental standards as what is present in international environmental agreements and does not mention that the United States, the state with which the present proposed agreement is with, did not ratify many of these agreements and it does not mention that European environmental standards are higher both in chemical usage, food safety and climate protection than in the United States. The chapter then finishes with a call for a comprehensive sustainable impact assessment for the agreement, based on the economic, social and environmental effects, which is something that has been demanded by the European Green opposition as well. This similarly refers back to the three-legged approach of sustainability.

The next chapter of the report, the one on non-negotiable issues, however lacks any mention of environmental issues that have been, even by the Commission, declared a red line. There is no mention of GMOs or fracking, or any other one of the synecdoches of higher quality European regulation.

The greatest blow to the previously mentioned declaration of environmental aspects included in all parts of the agreement comes in the energy and raw materials chapter, where it declares that the “TTIP agreement should abolish any existing export restrictions on energy existing between the two trading partners, thereby supporting a diversification of energy sources”. The fact that energy diversification has been a term used by EU officials, mostly the Commission, to facilitate and discursively ground the import of fracking and tar sand products has been widely covered in Kennedy’s (2014) report and in Johnson and Boersma’s (2014) study. However the claim that TTIP should abolish all existing restrictions, including those grounded on climate protection or public health grounds seems to be in opposition to the sentence in the introduction claiming that TTIP should create „a regulatory framework by strengthening regulations to the highest standards on a global level, so that social and environment dumping is excluded”. Subsequently, however, this chapter on energy and raw materials declares that “the right of either partner to govern the exploration and exploitation

of energy sources shall remain untouched by an agreement”, which means that TTIP should not overturn existing member state bans on for example fracking technologies, but does make a ban on importing energy obtained from fracking or tar sand technologies impossible. This is exactly the case where the contradiction between the free movement of capital through fossil fuel trade and the state of the environment seem to be in contradiction, which, in this S&D opinion on TTIP is not only disregarded, but the right for the free movement of fossil fuels is affirmed, whereas the right to not contribute to environmentally damaging technologies is neglected.

In the agriculture chapter the report explicitly mentions the two synecdoches of higher-level European food standards: GMOs and hormone-treated beef. The third one: chlorine chicken is missing in this particular report. Moreover this chapter refers to the precautionary principle of the European Union as a fundamental value, which is a term mostly used for democracy, due process, the rule of law, freedom of belief and free assembly, or in other words the fundamental values of the functioning of the European political system. However, this chapter attempts to get rid of all the debates concerning the harmonisation of food safety rules and of producers concerning the precautionary principle by simply stating that there was a solution adequate for both sides in CETA, so there surely can be an adequate solution in TTIP. CETA as such has not been seen as an adequate solution to the issue of differing food safety standards either by the European Greens, or by the European agrarian groups (Horvathy, 2014).

In the chapter on regulatory cooperation and non-tariff barriers, which can be described as the “meat” of the agreement, again without explicit mention of the environment we can see that through discursive tactics the green opposition’s argument are being countered or accepted. Firstly, this report also uses the term that the supporters of the agreement, mostly from the ECR and EPP groups use, namely the phrasing of regulation as “red tape”. This phrasing has had a long history and its usage in political discourse to underlie deregulatory political will originates from the United States and reached prominence in the seventies (Kaufman, 1977). It conceptualizes state, in this sense both EU and member-state level, regulation as unnecessary, a burden, as something that can be solved only by cutting it, Kaufman also mentions that the reason it is red is to play on the business language of “in the red”. The way it is exactly phrased in the report is: “negotiators on both sides need to identify

and be clear about which regulations are fundamental and cannot be compromised on and which regulations can be subject of reducing red tape.” Therefore a division is made between fundamental and uncompromisable regulation and unnecessary, superfluous regulation. When later giving examples of identifying what “red tape” precisely entails, the report uses the example used frequently by Commissioner Malmström and those in favour of the agreements: the car sector. The claim behind this is, not only in this instance, but generally, that the car safety tests that allow for market entrance in the US and the EU are virtually equivalent, but have some technical differences, which can be easily overcome without compromising the safety of the vehicles themselves. This claim works as a symbol for the TTIP supporters well for the reasons. First of all, in large parts of Europe the automobile sector is the main industry, and thus the main employer, so its growth can be felt quickly by a large number of people (Lampon et al 2014). Secondly, American cars have a relatively good reputation in Europe, as opposed to for example American foodstuffs, so it can easily be understood by Europeans as true, that the American automobile standards are safe (Majone 1991). Later the chapter on regulatory cooperation and non-tariff barriers goes on to declare two red lines, or issues, where no regulatory harmonization should be possible: the first one when the report stated, that “in the chemical sector no mutual recognition or harmonization is possible” and the second one, where the report states that “the EU's precautionary principle should not be compromised” . These both represent important issues pushed by the European Green opposition, and it is interesting that both mentioned red lines in the S&D report involve environmental issues and issues such as labour regulations or data collection regulation are not mentioned as specific issues. Labour rights and regulation are in this report always mentioned in conjunction with environmental standards, signifying the possibility that the S&D or GUE-NGL groups could not successfully build a separate workers’ rights anti-TTIP narrative in the way that the Greens have with environmental standards.

What however is also of interest in this report is that just a couple of lines after calling for no mutual recognition or harmonization in the chemical sector the report states: “the sectorial initiatives on regulatory cooperation, on chemicals, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics can provide for important additional opportunities for removing unnecessary nontariff barriers and creating new market access opportunities”. How Bernd Lange believes it can simultaneously be impossible to have mutual recognition or harmonization of the chemical

sector, while removing non-barriers (which are regulations) in the sector and have regulatory cooperation is incomprehensible. This is however truly telling of the S&D discourse on nature-trade relations in the TTIP discourse: this report tries to accommodate each view articulated during the TTIP debate to such a degree that it runs the risk of losing its own coherence. The fact that this report has been termed a “balancing act” in the media is thus warranted, moreover Bernard Lange’s party the German SPD, has also had what the German media called an “incomprehensible” position on TTIP. 1

In summary this report incorporates the European Greens’ main concerns, symbols, synecdoches and discursive tactics with regards to the environmental aspect of TTIP (GMO, hormone treated beef), but does that along with also accepting discursive cornerstones from the EPP and ECR groups as well (like fracking, “red tape” and the automobile industry). In cases where the two collide like in the example of the chemical sector the report takes two positions at once, or in other instances it does not mention them at all, as we see that in the report there is not one mention of climate change or climate protection. Moreover, the report does not bring forward a new “social democrat” narrative of TTIP, does not identify or construct new symbols or metaphors for the planned agreement, it rather balances between two competing narratives of the trade-environment relationship.

### **Environment as the unmonetizable: Commissioner Malmström in London**

First I will look at an example of the Commission’s discourse on the TTIP agreement. I will start with a discourse analysis on the European Commission’s trade commissioner Cecilia Malmström’s speech delivered in London on the 16th of February, 2015. The speech is called “TTIP: On Course to Deliver for the UK” and is addressed at a conference called „TTIP: Facts, Fiction and the Future”, which is an event in Europe House, organised by the socialist and ECR group in the European Parliament, with government representatives and MEPs present, moderated by a BBC journalist. Thus, as both of the groups in the European Parliament that



organised this event are, to varying extent, supporting TTIP, and no one who voiced public opposition to the Partnership is present, we can say that this event aims to legitimize and disseminate the reasoning for TTIP.

The speech first begins with the Commissioner setting the tone of free trade as a British value, something that is a natural political condition to the UK. This is then continued with her adding that the close relationship, or special relationship, between the USA and the UK is also an inherent value of the UK.

“Your close relationship with the United States and your long history of benefitting from open markets mean that this deal seems inherently logical to most British people. (Malmström, 2015)”

One of the main underlying assumptions here is that historically the entirety of the UK benefited from open markets, as the “your long history” here refers to the British peoples, not just the political decision-makers of the UK present at this forum. The fact that free trade as such is beneficial to the majority of British people is claimed here without any factual justification, as something that is clear to all Brits and thus the benefits of free trade added with the “close relationship” of the UK and the US together make TTIP something that derives from British values and thus visibly emerge from the interest of the majority of Britain’s population.

The Commissioner then follows with the first and most fundamental argument for TTIP, that: “the economic argument is simple – more trade means more opportunity.” (Malmström, 2015). Other than the fact that this is a clear example of the Commissioner using postulates of neoliberal ideology as objective, neutral facts, it also mandates us to pose the question, opportunities for whom? Here the antithesis to the Commissioner’s statement would be, that for “big business” or “multinationals from both sides of the Atlantic benefit”, as articulated by MEP Albiol from the radical left group of the European Parliament (GUE). This counter-narrative, which is implicitly considered by the Commissioner, is countered with her listing as examples three different British SMEs, thus arguing that it is not big business alone but SMEs as well that will benefit from TTIP. However she does not dispute the fact that big business benefits from TTIP, saying, that “but bigger firms can also benefit, with gains for people who supply them and work for them. (Malmström, 2015)” This statement comes from

trickle-down economics, and is implicitly showing the fact of wealth generated by trade in large companies trickling down to the large majority of the public, as if a large multinational makes more profit, it can make more things, thus buy more supplies, thus generate more profit, thus increase wages and employment in the suppliers, thus making people have more disposable income, who in turn buy more things, which makes the multinational make more profit and the circle of limitless growth continues thus forth. This idea, which is a similarly ideologically charged statement, again is not put forward as her belief in the effects of TTIP, nor what is her political standing, but is put forward as what will happen, as what has happened before, and what is “objective” and “fact”.

Then the commissioner does what she does only twice in her in speech, and mentions the environment. Yet both times, environment is not mentioned alone, it is talked about as a part of the environment, safety and health group, or what is conceptualized as non-monetary values. Environment is the only word used about any kind of ecological considerations, no mentions of climate, green, ecology or renewable can be found in this speech, showing how ecological considerations are of no particular importance in this debate and for those she aims at as her audience here.

The first mention of environment is in alluding to a Beatles song, as she says: “as the Beatles thankfully didn't sing... .. money can't buy me health, safety, a clean environment, tough rules on consumer protection, or a stable financial system. So a true transatlantic partnership must support, or at the very least not undermine, these important societal objectives. (Malmström, 2015)” Here the Commissioner again draws on something British, Beatles, to give an aura of authenticity and thus legitimacy to her speech. This authenticity is aimed at framing TTIP or free trade as a natural consequence of Britishness. Moreover, the term “clean environment” is a way to conceptualize environmental problems only in the sense of pollution, thus disregarding the anthropogenic harm caused by industrial activities, climate change and all issues of environmental justice. This is also reaffirmed, that TTIP must be made in a way as to not undermine “these important societal objectives”, thus conceptualizing environmental issues as a societal issue only, leaving no place for the intrinsic value of nature, as opposed to the inherently logical idea of free trade for Britain, environmental and health protections are not inherently valuable but valuable because societies currently wish to value them. What, however, is also included in the phrasing by the Commissioner is, that health

and the environment are beyond quantifiably monetary value. This is a statement frequently put forward in antithesis discourse to free market and free trade. If it is acknowledged by both sides that the environment is not to be included in the market economy, but protected from it, then we must acknowledge that the passive revolution happened with regards to “green thought” not only through free trade and free market environmentalism but also through the absorption of anti and non-materialist ecological antitheses. This would lead us to believe, that the absorption of the antithesis happened not only at a superficial level, mentioned previously, thus not only in the vertical policy conflict, but also in an inherent way. Thus beyond creating political weight for debates on food safety and environmental regulation, the benefits of free trade could have also been at the forefront of the political debate.

When talking about how regulatory cooperation could happen without the lowering of environmental standards the commissioner says it can come about: „by focusing our regulatory cooperation efforts on areas where we have the same level of protection but technical differences create unnecessary trade barriers” . This thus suggests that a win-win scenario can be created whereby the regulations that are of substantive difference between the US and the EU will be kept in place, and only those regulations where differences are moot will be harmonized. However this win-win scenario faces discursive obstacles that the Commissioner fails to overcome. The first issue raised is who decides what are “technical differences”? If the negotiating mandate is the answer to the question posed, then the fact is that for the US and for the EU different regulations fall into the substantive and the technical categories. However to answer these questions the Commissioner even gives an incomplete list of the sectors that should be the subject of technical regulatory convergence: “car safety, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, financial services, textiles and engineering.” Now, leaving aside the fact that pharmaceuticals and medical devices have technological differences, which however are simply indivisible from “substantive” regulatory differences, the fact that financial services is included here is both telling from a geographical and a discursive point of view. Only in the City of London can the claim that the post-crisis US and EU financial services have only moot regulatory differences be made unchallenged. The post-crisis US financial regulation has become much stronger than that in the EU, thus the US anti-TTIP movement frequently makes the claim that TTIP is a way to undermine tougher US financial regulations.

Thus, what is technical and what is a substantive difference in regulation between the two sides of the Atlantic is ultimately a political question, not a “fact”. Moreover, the Commissioner claims that these „technical differences create unnecessary trade barriers”, thus ultimately acknowledging that there is legitimate reason to limit trade, for example for environmental reasons, as those are to be seen then as necessary trade barriers.

When speaking about concrete issues, the Commissioner mentions few, and only those that have had the greatest opposition, thus bringing no separate “symbol” or “totem” of pro-TTIP thesis, she simply refutes the symbolism or synecdoches of the opposition. The symbolism of the environmental opposition is food safety presented through hormone treated beef and chicken and genetically modified food. Both of these work powerfully not only because they signify the stricter food safety regulations on Europe, but because hormone treated chicken and beef are something so everyday and close to home for Europeans that they are good ways to bring the complex TTIP debates about regulatory convergence to an understandable, simplified level. GMO, however is a symbol of European values, or as Heller (2007) conceptualized the French anti-GMO discourse as an antagonism between culture and “culturelessness” associated with technoscience and industry-driven foods such as GMOs and McDonald's. Therefore GMO is not an issue of cost-benefit analysis, but an emotional issue, one where European values and traditions are presented as being under attack from US monetary interests.

After the concrete issues the Commissioner talks about the non-economic reasoning behind TTIP, saying that: “we have done so [started negotiating TTIP] on the basis of a shared set of values that date back to the Enlightenment, like open markets, democracy, and the rights of individuals”. The fact that the Enlightenment is mentioned here is to make clear the distinction between the Global North: Europe and the USA created by Enlightenment against the rest of the world, not supportive of open markets, democracy and the rights of individuals. By discussing a value-community between the USA and the EU the Commissioner again attempts to phrase TTIP in a way that is inherent in European values, as something that is a consequence of our history . Then the Commissioner ends with talking directly to the opposition, saying: „as far as I'm concerned, the price of admission to a discussion as important as this is that you base your arguments on facts, not distortions”. This is yet another attempt to show how she and those supporting TTIP are on the side of facts and objectivity

and those opposed are distorting, ideological and have no regard for facts or “for reality as it is”.

Thus the Commissioner’s discourse includes so far fundamental absorptions of the Limits to Growth discourse, but also superficial ones in vertical discursive conflicts, like conceptualizing the environment as a set of EU standards. Horizontal conflicts are absent in the Commissioner’s London speech. What, however, is also of crucial importance is that the intertextuality and interdiscursivity is mainly through the Commissioner attempting to refute the synecdoches used by the European Green opposition to the agreement.

### **Winning a battle: European Greens and foodstuff**

On April 16th 2015 Bart Staes, Flemish Green MEP, submitted an opinion to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety for the Committee on International Trade on recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). This opinion which highlights the relationship of TTIP and sustainable development and other environmentally important concepts, also opposes ISDS and thus its acceptance in the INTA committee was claimed by Greens in the European Parliament as a “battle won”. Thus Staes’s opinion can be seen as a key summary of the Greens’ discourse on TTIP in the European Parliament.

Staes’s opinion, after the formalities, starts with a concise declaration of free trade’s position in European society, which states:

“whereas trade has been a generator for growth, employment and prosperity for generations in Europe; whereas however, trade and investment are not goals in themselves but should constitute a means to raise standards of living, improve well-being as well as protect and promote public health, contribute to ensuring full employment as well as the sustainable use of the world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development, seeking both to protect and preserve the environment.(Staes, 2015)”

Thus by stating in its first sentence the opinion implies that trade as such has historically been positive, as it has brought “prosperity for generations in Europe”. This statement is important to be included in this opinion, as those opposed to TTIP have been characterised as “anti-trade” in general, which as the supporters of TTIP would point out is highly contradictory to them being members of the European Common Market, which is a free trade area in itself. This statement however is followed by a more important ideological statement, one with which the inherent value of free trade itself is called into question, as “trade and investment are not goals in themselves”, thus the deconstruction of barriers to the free movement of capital (also euphemistically called investment) has no intrinsic value, Staes creates the discursive possibility of non-beneficial free trade. He states that free trade is beneficial only when it “contribute [sic] to ensuring full employment as well as the sustainable use of the world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development”(Staes, 2015). This is one of the first entries of sustainable development into this debate. The sustainable development discourse here is seen as ensuring a sustainable trade agreement, one where some barriers to the free movement of capital are ended, but others are kept in place in a manner where capital accumulation can continue to grow, but environmental standards are intact. This vision of sustainability denies the possibility of capital accumulation in itself being detrimental to environmental well-being, thereby again signalling the acceptance of the basic logic of free-market ideology, thus attempting again to use only a vertical policy conflict in trade, with avoiding the inherent one. This sustainable development used in the text is then seen as a necessary means by which we can “protect and preserve the environment”. The fact that these terms are separate imply two things: the environment needs to be protected from something and that it exists in a unified state which needs to be preserved. This something, what the environment needs to be protected from is in this case the bad kind of trade, the kind that did not bring prosperity for generations. What delineates the two will be very clearly seen in the following parts of the text, however, the fact that trade can be beneficial or detrimental to the environment is an important discursive foundation to the opposition of European Greens.

““while recognising that sustainable development is an overarching objective of the Parties, and that the Parties will not encourage trade or foreign direct investment by lowering domestic environmental, health and safety legislation and standards; whereas

the European Commission and President Obama have stated, in public, on numerous occasions that standards will not be lowered on either side of the Atlantic (Staes, 2015)”

Here firstly Staes again brings in the master frame of sustainable development and suggests that this is a shared goal of the US and the EU, one which is beyond debate. He moreover presents what the proponents of the agreement, namely, Commissioner Malmström so frequently declare: that environmental and other standards will not be lowered. The fact that this has been stated by the Commission and President Obama adds certainty to this claim, however this will be exactly the claim that will be argued against most throughout the present text. Thus we can say, that this present text in its entirety was an attempt of the European Greens to win the vertical policy conflict, and make environmental standards untouchable by this agreement.

“TTIP to reduce and eliminate existing non-tariff barriers could lead to an agreement that could endanger the EU level of protection concerning public health including food safety, animal health and the environment .”

These arguments put the environment along with food safety and animal health into the grouping of regulations protecting public health. Environment here exists as the codified environmental standards that are present in the EU’s and member states statutes. The environment as something that is affected by the economic activity outside claimed to be promoted by TTIP itself is completely disregarded in this text, and generally in the “official” Green opposition to the agreement. If again, we look at this quantitatively, we see that the word environment is used 21 times in the text, out of which 17 times it is used in the context of environmental standard or regulation. This suggests that the opposition to TTIP according to this text is a struggle to keep the current European standards of environmental protection intact. The possibility that these standards could, as a result of this agreement get even “tougher” does not even surface as an argument on either side of the political divide. These European standards of environmental protection are indicative of European difference to the USA and to the already manifest achievement of the European Green movement.

“whereas a prerequisite to achieve greater regulatory compatibility without endangering existing and future EU health and environmental standards is to clearly

distinguish between those areas where the objectives and levels of protection are similar from those where they are diverging .”

The fact that the environment is almost always tied with standards that are not going to weaken is explicit here. In this sentence we see what the supporters of the agreements claim as the main goal of the agreements: to harmonize regulation “where the objectives and levels of protection are similar”,, thus where this harmonization would only create a technical change and no real change in the level of environmental protection would occur. This can be seen as a discursive strategy whereby the effects of the agreements on regulation is claimed to be minimal, yet at the same this minimal technological change is claimed to have a large positive effect on bilateral trade between the USA or Canada and the EU. Moreover the fact that both existing and future regulation can be endangered according to the text, show how the regulatory cooperation chapter itself, which is very seldom discussed, has the potential to make the argument about effects of these agreements for regulations to be adopted far away in the future.

This text moreover identifies a major discursive point of the European Green opposition to TTIP, which is to highlight that the USA is less green than Europe, with inferior standards and no real political will to tackle the climate crisis and generally more laissezfaire capitalist ideals. These claims, when articulated in a more regulatory framework in parliamentary proceedings, a lot of times have a numerical or legal basis, like highlighting the fact that the “US has not ratified major international conventions on chemical substances” or that “there is a general pattern of lower amounts of pesticide residues allowed on food in the EU as compared to the US” . These claim to show the dangers in regulatory harmonization, showing how harmonization even led by a “meet me half way” principle would result in substantial lowering of EU environmental regulation. This is the reasoning that is tackled by the idea that harmonization would be done at the highest level or only in cases where these differences are not significant, which would however seem to be in complete disagreement with the concept of regulations as a non-tariff barrier to trade and with the free market environmentalist ideal that it is not top-down state control but market incentives that create environmental well-being.



“whereas the import into the EU of poultry meat treated with antimicrobial solutions containing sodium hypochlorite should be prevented”

This seemingly rather technical sentence, however contains the main discursive tool used by the European Greens against TTIP: the chlorine chicken. CETA cannot be opposed by the same chlorine chicken, as poultry is excluded from its agricultural chapter. However in TTIP this has become a major discursive tool. Thus my claim here, following the definition and structure of analysis used by Rasmussen (2012), is that the chlorine chicken is a synecdoche in the anti-TTIP discourse.

The chlorine chicken is a particularising synecdoche, whereby this particular difference in food safety regulation between the United States and the EU is seen as representative of the USA having generally weaker regulation and thus the agreement meaning the flooding of EU markets by cheap unhealthy food stuff from the US. This chlorine chicken was used by the European Greens so often, that Sigmar Gabriel, Economy minister of Germany and the leader of the Social Democrats, even said that “much is said about ‘chlorine chickens’ and too little about the geopolitical significance of TTIP”.<sup>2</sup> Gabriel here is trying to highlight the particularity of the poultry regulation and counter it with the generality of geopolitics, thus completely disregarding the fact that the chlorine chicken stands also for something as general as geopolitics, but is used in this way, because regulatory differences and food safety are complex and are need to be simplified if they are to be effectively communicated. This is what can be seen in the fact that the chlorinated chicken is mentioned separately as a prerequisite for TTIP, when no other concrete food safety issues, other than GMOs, are mentioned concretely.

“countering the significant threats posed by climate change and maintaining the integrity of adopted climate policy should take priority over trade promotion .”

In the later part of Staes’ opinion, the MEP starts to list the possible issues with regards to the environmental aspects of TTIP. This quoted line is signifying, how the European Green opposition is unwilling to accept both the free market environmentalist argument that increased trade would lead to increased wealth which leads to more technological capabilities,

thus better countering and mitigation of climate change and similarly it is contrary to the Commission's narrative that TTIP will lead to no lowering of standards and that there is no contradiction between climate protection and increased transatlantic economic activity. Here, similarly to other parts of the text, the opposition to the agreement is formed in the defensive, as the integrity of climate policy has to be maintained, thus there is a threat the current policy will weaken it. The criticism, similar to that used in relation to other environmental standards, is that the US regulations will weaken the EU fight against climate change. Moreover by highlighting that these policies are mainly threatened by trade itself, the report completely counters the narrative that increased trade in itself is a good thing and suggests that trade can have disadvantages, and that even a contradiction between climate policy and trade is likely.

"calls on the Commission to recognize that where the EU and the US have very different rules, there will be no agreement, such as on public healthcare services, GMOs, the use of hormones in the bovine sector (...) not to negotiate on these issues (Staes, 2015)"

A synecdoche here is used again, however this time it is not only hormone in beef, which again is a stand-in for the trade-off between increased agricultural trade and weakening of EU food standards, but the explicit mention of GMOs itself. GMOs are not only a vital part of the European Green opposition to TTIP/CETA, because of the fact that multiple EU member states have indeed banned GMO production and/or sales, but also because GMO represent the difference between the conception of culturedness and the precautionary principle itself. If we look at analyses on the way in which the anti-GMO debate has been framed in two of the most vocal countries in this issue, France and Hungary, we can see that the differentiation from the USA was a core part of the framing of the anti-GMO movement, as outlined below.

Heller (2007) suggested that in the French debate over GMOs, actors present different definitions of food quality located between poles of what is termed "technoscience" and "techne". Even though scientists tend to define food quality in terms of technoscience or objective, numerical values looking at matters of food safety, small farmers tend to appeal to techne of production, conceptualizing GMOs as a rupture with artisanal, traditional and thus French culture. Thus small-scale farmers use the framing of "techne" in their anti-GMO campaign, yet they often define food quality in an ambiguous way, changing between the concepts of agricultural method (technique) or production scale. Despite this ambiguity,

GMOs are still viewed as *la malbouffe*, or “bad” food, with anti-GMO campaigners establishing themselves as protectors of traditional technés such as Roquefort, and thus as protectors of Frenchness. Consequently, unlike many discourses that frame GMOs as “unnatural,” the anti-GMO movement in France tends to frame GMOs as “uncultural.” In the French debate, debate can be seen as one between French traditional culturedness and American modern “culturelessness”, the latter being associated with technoscience and industry-driven foods such as GMOs and McDonald's (Heller 2007).

The same debate in Hungary, as shown by Harper (2004), similarly involves the theme of patriotism, in this instance the claim of Hungarianness. Thus, when looking at the Hungarian debates on GMOs, environmentalists drew on “the patriotic theme of defending a native son from slander while also holding up an oppositional ‘European’ style of citizenship for Hungarians to adopt” (Harper, 2004:54). Opposition to GMOs was, however, also considered pro-science since the anti-GMO movement got the backing of several well established scientists. Moreover, as this at that time was a trans-European movement, Hungarians felt like the anti-GMO movement was an entry point into a trans-European discourse, thereby similarly signifying the Hungarian integration into the European Union and thus to Europe or the “west” (Harper, 2004).

Consequently the role the GMO ban plays in the European Green discourse on TTIP is one of a synecdoche, as in the French and Hungarian GMO-ban discourses, both had patriotic undertones and were used to reconstruct a sense of belongingness and of culturedness. This was used in contrast to GMO which was constructed as an American, industrializing way of relation to food and nature. Thereby the fact that GMO is so frequently used, and its European opposition is demanded to be untouchable or demanded that the Commission does not negotiate on this issue can be seen as a synecdoche for the set of standards of the EU, which are seen as superior to that of the United States, and the way the EU relates to this standard, which will be discussed later. Therefore GMO in a way stands in for a distinct idea of Europeanness, one which successfully translates in many member states as a symbol for belongingness.

The way in which the EU relates to standards and procedures is included Staes’s opinion here:

„having regard to Articles 168 and 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular to the precautionary principle in Article 191(2)”

Here it is important to note, that similarly to GMOs, the precautionary principle itself is seen as non-negotiable and integral to the way the European Union functions. That point is not hard to make, as in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union there is an article which describes the precautionary principle, and makes that the founding principle of all subsequently passed environmental or other regulations. The precautionary principle, according to O'Riordan and Jordan (1995) has been a fundamental demand of the green movement, and subsequently was transformed into principles, guidelines and a point of leverage. They claim that the precautionary principle is neither a well defined principle nor a stable concept, rather it has become a stand-in for ideologies that challenge the status quo of political power, ideology and civil rights. Other than Europeanness, it is also a way to tackle “the hegemony of cost-benefit analysis, the powerlessness of victims of environmental abuse, and the unimplemented ethics of intrinsic natural rights and inter-generational equity” (O'Riordan and Jordan, 1995:11).

### **The Protection of the Environment as a European Value: Commissioner Malmström**

On May 4th 2015 Commissioner Malmström in Washington D.C. made a speech called “Achieving Europe’s Strategic Goals” for the Centre for Strategic and International Studies Statesman’s Forum. Here the Commissioner mentions the environmental aspect of TTIP three times.

The first time the Commissioner mentions the environment in the speech it is done in a context previously unseen in her speeches. The commissioner states:

“But Europeans are demanding people! They want a trade policy that sees beyond economics: a tool to promote European values around the world. Values like democracy, human rights, protection of the environment and equality (Malmström, 2015b).”

In this context the environment is not in the group it is usually in, it is not a part of a list of environmental, health and safety standards which need to be kept intact from regulatory cooperation; on the contrary the protection of the environment is now seen as a civilization value alongside democracy, human rights and equality. It is no longer a part of

higher European standards which need to be protected, but it became a European value, something integral to the way in which Europe defines itself. Moreover these values are also seen as “beyond economics” or in other terms unmonetizable. The fact that the environment cannot be converted to monetary value has been mentioned by the Commissioner previously, and signals the absorption of this argument put forward by the environmentalist opposition to free trade. However the Commissioner claims that these European values, which are not monetary assets, like environmental protection, do still have a place in trade policy, as the EU trade policy aims to promote these exact kinds of values around the world. The idea that trade policy is a promoter of values in the context of the new wave of bilateral trade deals was first raised with regards to the TPP debate in the United States. In an open letter to Congress the US ambassadors to the TPP nations wrote, that TPP will “promote American values in partnership with friends and allies around the region”<sup>3</sup>.

However, even though the idea that trade promotes values is something that originates in the US discourse, what these values are as defined by the Commissioner again draws in the idea of Europeanness. Equality and environmental protection are frequently used in this debate, as shown in previous speeches, as signposts for Europe’s difference to the US, thus here, as the difference between European and American values. During the next mention of the environment in the speech the Commissioner similarly puts environmental protection alongside another aspect of the so-called European values, labour rights. The Commissioner claims that TTIP will have a “specialised trade preference scheme to strengthen labour rights and environmental protection” (Malmström, 2015b). This is a departure from the previous conceptualization of TTIP that only aims to keep the level of environmental protection in place, that aims only to protect the current European environmental standards. Here both the environment and labour rights will be in better shape due to a certain type of trade, thus drawing back to the previously mentioned green trade discourse and the win-win scenarios so often quoted in this regard.

However just a couple of paragraphs later the Commissioner goes back to TTIP being “also about protecting and strengthening our shared transatlantic values – from open markets to high levels of regulatory protection for the environment, health and consumer

protection.(Malmström, 2015b).” This time the environmental protection is not only a European value, but it is a mutual value shared between the United States and the European Union. This later type of argument, used frequently by the Commissioner, is attempting to mask all inherent conflicts between the opening markets and regulatory protections. This can be masked however not only by claiming that there is no inherent conflict, but also by claiming the exact opposite that there is an inherently positive relationship due to a specialised “trade preference scheme”.

### **Political Sidelines: Commissioner Malmström and ISDS**

After increasing criticism against the ISDS part of TTIP, on May 6th 2015 Commissioner Malmström made a speech to counter the critics in the trade committee of the European Parliament. This speech was short, however the extent to which this speech attempted to counter the discursive strategies gives us an example of some of the antithesis’s propositions are overtaken or absorbed by the thesis.

The speech starts with Commissioner Malmström, after detailing other issues of the DG Trade, which are irrelevant to TTIP, calling for a “reformed approach” of ISDS, one which fixes „the problems with dispute settlement that have caused such concern”(Malmström, 2015c). The admission that there are indeed problems with dispute settlement was brought forward here for the first time. Then the Commissioner goes on to explain that “we propose to remove any ambiguity about sovereign governments' right to regulate, putting that in black and white. In the past, agreements have been drafted more with the protection of investment in mind than the right of governments to regulate. It will no longer be the case(Malmström, 2015c)”. This first is an admission that previous agreements with ISDS or similar measures have been contrary to governmental sovereignty and even acknowledges that these chapters were previously written in favour of investors, something that has been argued by anti-TTIP actors most strongly with NAFTA. This argument seems to have been endorsed, rather than following the previous strategy and even the argument of neoliberal organisations, that ISDS as such, regardless of the details, is inherently good as it eases capital flows and investment, which are also inherent goods. This major political defeat by the Commission on ISDS however happened in the name of national sovereignty and democratic procedure, and not as an affect

of the environmental opposition. This shows that even the vertical policy debates have been less strong in the environmental opposition, than in other oppositional discourses.

## Chapter V: Discussion

**Table 1: Summary Table of Texts Analysed**

TEXT	VERTICAL POLICY CONFLICT	HORIZONTAL POLICY CONFLICT	INHERENT POLICY CONFLICT	DISCOURSE TACTICS	POLITICAL GROUP
De Gucht's statement. 2013 October	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	Trade is beneficial for all. Using ideological phrases as objective truths.	ALDE
European Greens, Position paper. 2014 February	Environmental regulations need to be kept at current level	TTIP's effects on climate change	ABSENT	TTIP is more than a trade agreement, non-economic issues need to be engaged with.	Greens-EFA
GUE alternative study. 2014 May	Environmental regulations need to be kept at current level	ABSENT	ABSENT	Undermining Commission's claim of objectivity with the use of cost-benefit analysis.	GUE-NGL
Parliamentary debate. 2014 July	Environmental regulations need to be kept at current level	ABSENT	ABSENT	GMO ( and food safety generally) as a synecdoche for the dangers of regulatory convergence.	ALL
Lange report to the ENVI committee. 2014 July	Environmental regulations need to be kept at current level	ABSENT	ABSENT	GMO ( and food safety generally) as a synecdoche for the dangers of regulatory convergence.	S&D
Malmström in London. 2015 February	Environmental regulations need to be kept at current level	ABSENT	ABSENT	Intertextuality in refuting synecdoches used with regards to foodstuffs.	ALDE
Staes opinion on TTIP. 2015 April.	The EU's regulation making powers need to be intact	ABSENT	ABSENT	Reconceptualising the synecdoche of GMO not as a health risk but as a "European value".	Greens-EFA
Malmström in the USA. 2015 May	The EU's regulation making powers need to be intact	ABSENT	ABSENT	Using and accepting environmental protection and high standards as a European value.	ALDE
Malmström in the European Parliament	Investor-State Dispute Settlement favours the investors in its current form.	ABSENT	ABSENT	Using the concept of national sovereignty.	ALDE

Looking at the discursive tactics and intertextual evolution of the environmental discourse surrounding the TTIP debate the categories of inherent, vertical and horizontal conflicts between environmental and free trade discourses can be used. By using these categories an attempt can be made in which the uncovering of the antithesis to the win-win environmental discourse shifted the way the Commission discussed the relation of TTIP and the environment.



The first category, which is vertical policy conflicts, is the one that has been most successful at shifting the pro-TTIP discourse, it is one that has been present in all but the first text analysed as can be seen in Table 1. This, kind of conflict between discourses, which in this particular context is defined as the debate between the international trade agreement and the domestic environmental policy goals of the contracting parties, or in particular as the debate regarding regulations and standards, has been the debate going on in greatest length, detail and quantity.

What can be seen primarily within this debate on standards and regulations has been the attempt to equate environmental standards with food standards, thereby addressing the most direct and easily felt part of environmental regulation: the food we eat. Even within the foodstuffs, as has been shown previously, three particular products have been elevated to the forefront of discourse: chlorinated chicken, hormone fed beef and GMOs. These are all particularising synecdoches, representing the weaker regulation present in the United States, and that TTIP would harmonise the European regulation down to the US level. They also all represent European standards by which they represent a specific Europeaness, an idea of culturedness, of higher quality foodstuffs. This especially true of GMOs, which have been an ongoing battle in EU environmental politics with some member states, like France and Hungary, adopting strong GMO-bans.

Due to the fact that by this the opposition to TTIP, mostly the European Greens, have managed to choose a discursive tool, which draws on previously built environmental issues, which are also easily understandable, concrete and effect our health, the pro-TTIP has had to be defensive. The pro-TTIP discourse, as seen in Commissioner Malmström's speeches has been full of declarations of how the agreement will not weaken European standards and the commissioner has also multiple times declared that health and the environment are beyond quantifiably monetary value and thus they cannot be part of the agreement. This meant that the pro-TTIP discourse due to these vertical conflicts had to acknowledge that there are limits to the harmonization of regulations. Consequently the discourse, absorbing the importance and superiority of European regulation was founded on the claim, that a win-win scenario will be the case with regards to increasing trade flows and keeping regulatory powers, whereby the regulations that are of substantive difference between the US and the EU will be kept in place, and only those regulations where differences are small will be harmonized.

The second type of discursive attempt of the antithesis was less successful, the ones of horizontal policy conflicts. An attempt to include this debate was made once as seen in Table 1, which was the position paper of the European Greens. This is the juxtaposition between international trade and other environmental issues, especially with regards to the main topic of international environmental considerations: climate change. European Greens and the European Left, to a lesser extent, attempted to inject climate change and trade's relation to it into the debate with regards to TTIP, but they were not successful in doing so. This lack of any real discursive shift was manifest in the fact, that as opposed to NAFTA around twenty years ago, no environmental side agreement was even considered. Climate change with regards to the TTIP debate was not mentioned, and sustainability was almost only mentioned with regard to economically sustainable growth and the sustainable use of natural resources. This is less than expected, since due to the Paris COP, climate is supposed to be in the forefront of EU politics, so the two issues could have plausibly been connected.

The third category of discursive contradictions, inherent conflicts, have been however without attempts in the EU discourse on TTIP, as seen in Figure 1. Debate on the validity of the proposed objective of the agreement or foundational debates between the thesis of the free trade discourse and the antithesis of environmental protectionism have been few and weak. Even the left group in the European Parliament, GUE-NGL, used similar terminology to the Commission and merely attempted to delegitimize the Commission's stance as not being truthfully objective and calculating economic benefits in a wrong way. As opposed to what unfolded in the vertical discursive differences, in the inherent ones, it was exactly the antithesis which was on the defensive. The juxtaposition used by the Commission and the EPP-ALDE-ECR groups was the familiar one between those supportive of trade and on the side of reason and objective knowledge and those opposed on the side of emotions, fear mongering and subjectivity (Beeson and Firth, 1998). The only real attempt at an inherent discursive conflict was in Staes' opinion, where he brings forth the discursive possibility of non-beneficial trade. Other than this the sustainable development discourse here is proposing to create a sustainable trade agreement, one where some barriers to the free movement of capital are removed, but ones which are deemed as constructing "Europeanness" are kept in place in a manner constitutive to capital accumulation, with keeping the higher quality environmental well-being of Europeans intact. This definition of sustainable trade, or green trade, rejects the

possibility of capital accumulation in itself being detrimental to environmental well-being, thereby again signalling the acceptance of the basic logic of free-market environmentalism, thus attempting again to use only a vertical policy conflict in trade, while avoiding the inherent one.

In summary it can be stated that the ecological antithesis to the TTIP discourse has managed to make certain areas untouchable by the agreement, but has not managed to change the underlying structure or the logical foundation of the Commission's proposal. Therefore it can be stated that the antithesis with regards to vertical policy conflicts has been absorbed and with the issue of foodstuffs and more broadly European regulation, the environment has managed to become one of the fundamental differences in the agreement. However debates on how the liberalization of trade effects the environment and how has the climate crisis effected the way in which conceptualize global trade remain totally absent. What happened in NAFTA, moreover, did not repeat itself, the passive revolution of sustainable development did not take over the TTIP debate, win-win rhetoric was not a founding block in the Commission's discourse. Sustainable development instead remained on the bottom of the list of priorities, the effects of the Brundtland Commission and even the present SDGs are unfelt, sustainability is not a word which is continuously broadened, quite the opposite it has become a word rarely used in trade negotiations in the European Union.

## Chapter VI: Conclusion

Firstly by referring back to the concepts of environmental realism and idealism as the foundations of discourse on international trade and the environment we can identify a shift taking place since the TTIP debate began (Banerjee, 2003 and Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). Environmental realism, which looks at nature as a scientifically researchable environment', which can be under full control of humans is the idea we see underpinning the discourse on standards and regulations. It is the conception of environmental realism that made a large

part of the environmental debate on TTIP about what sectors are regulated, how these regulations relate to US regulations and what are the areas in need of being left out completely from the agreement. The fact that food safety regulations and especially GMOs have become the most important terrain of discursive changes is telling, as the conceptualization of nature as the thing which the state regulates on behalf of people is the definition itself of environmental realism.

Moreover environmental realism informs the cost-benefit analysis based alternative study of GUE-NGL, by which environmental costs and externalities are not counted as economic affects, thus the boundary between trade and nature is reified. This rhetoric makes it clear that environmental issues are side issues of trade policy and environmental problems caused by the increasingly free movement of capital can be managed by rules and regulations.

Some concepts, however, have started to filter in from environmental idealism also during the TTIP debate in the European Parliament uncovered here. Environmental idealism, or the idea that nature's valuing is not a product of spatial and temporal processes but is a constant, which we saw in Commissioner Malmström's idea of nature as unmonetizable and in Staes's idea of trade that disrupts the environment in its holistic state, again reifying the idea that trade and the economy as something that stands outside and thus does not depend on nature, but as opposed to environmental realism as something that hurts nature in its "true state".

Moreover the TTIP debate managed to highlight how other than Staes's previously mentioned postulate there was no disputing the idea that the liberalization of trade is a common good, for which all barriers, including ones composed of environmental regulations, need to be overcome, and thus increasing economic wellbeing can create more wealth which can be used to tackle environmental problems. This is the founding idea of free market environmentalism, which Commissioner Malmström based her arguments on during this debate. Similarly, this is also the finding that no successful and visible discussion on the inherent policy conflict within TTIP was present which signals, how the argument against TTIP itself was articulated within the hegemonic discourse.

Moreover this thesis showed, how the EU's trade policy has stayed with the "Harnessing Globalisation" basis, whereby the Global financial crisis happened in the meantime did not change the application of this EU trade policy and the Paris climate meeting did not make the European Parliament consider climatic effects in its trade policy (Siles-Brügge 2011). Trade stayed a "desirable outcome in itself", where those who oppose continuous liberalisation are emotional, fearful and in summary outside the legitimate cost-benefit analysis logic. Also, this thesis finds that De Ville and Orbie's (2014) claim that in the DG Trade's discourse environmental viewpoints were rarely present in last decade is still largely true, even though attempts at changing this have not all been unsuccessful.

What conclusion can be drawn from this study of the trade discourse is that there was no absorption of the antithesis with regards to the inherent question of the relationship between the environment and trade liberalisation. This is mostly due to the fact that instead of a countering narrative, those opposed to TTIP articulated a discourse that similarly was congruent to free trade logic, which however was successful in creating certain no-go areas of regulatory convergence.

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