

THE LANGUAGE

OF BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH DISCOURSE FOR THE CASE OF EUROPEAN
ECONOMIC NETWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

LAURA STEGEMANN – S1716174

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE ACROSS BORDERS

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

BACHELOR THESIS

1ST SUPERVISOR: RINGO OSSEWAARDE

2ND SUPERVISOR: IRNA VAN DER MOLEN

06.07.2017

Table of Contents

1. Abstract	2
2. Introduction Chapter	2
2.1 Background	2
1.1 Outline of the thesis.....	6
2. Theoretical Chapter	6
2.1 Growth	6
2.2 Green Growth.....	8
2.3. Perspectives on Crisis and Change	11
2.4 Hypotheses	12
3. Methodological Chapter	12
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 Case selection.....	13
3.3 Method of data collection	13
3.4 The data.....	14
3.5 Method of data analysis	16
3.5.1 Operationalization	17
3.5.2 Conduction	18
3.6 Conclusion.....	19
4. Analysis Chapter	19
4.1 Dimension I – The persistence of the growth doctrine	20
4.2 Dimension II - The emergence of Green Growth	23
4.3 Dimension III – The state of crisis and prospects for change	27
4.4 Discussion and summary of the analysis results	29
5. Conclusion Chapter	30
5.1 Answering the research question	30
5.2. Reference to Introduction and research outlook	31
6. Recources	32
6. Annex	35

“That it’s a story, anybody knows. “

- Sachs

1. Abstract

This work is guided by the aim to explore, whether the green growth discourse’s potential to transform discursive power relations within the growth discourse of European economic network organizations in the context of the European Financial Crisis. The often-recognized controversial relation between economy and ecology is put into the context of contemporary narratives in crisis governance.

Along the lines of an analysis of the linguistic constellations of economic growth discourse within European economic network organizations, their reflection of the green growth approach is evaluated. It is suggested, that either, the “green notion” of the European Economic Strategy Paper “Europe 2020” is based on serious attempts to foster transitions towards a more holistic economic model; or, that the green growth concept’s impact to shifting economic paradigms is hindered or subject to the socio-historic solidity of a “growth-doctrine”.

Theoretical insights into the conceptualization of Economic Growth and Green Growth are offered as well as perspectives on the modelling economic regimes and dynamics transition are drawn from Antonio Gramsci and Frank W. Geels. Together with a methodological concept based on Foucauldian discourse analysis, they shall be the basis for the conduction and understanding of the analysis.

2. Introduction Chapter

In order to introduce to this paper, it is dedicated to reducing the thoughts and considerations that led to this study into a red line that is broadened by a review of relevant literature. The open spaces left by that lead to the formulation of a research question that shall guide this study. Secondly, an outline is given about the structure and content of this paper, briefly stating what steps are considered to formulating an answer to the issue at stake.

2.1 Background

The environmental crisis, has been increasingly discussed within the frame of a contemporarily apparent global crises discourse, yet differs from others in terms of our perception of it, its course, our responses as well and not least, what it means for life on earth.

The extent and severity of financial crises, their meaning, too, for example, heavily depend on the ways they are construed. Credibility and confidence govern their onset and course; finding remedies requires financial means and revised policies. In the foregone decade, this has been observable following imprudent financial and economic decisions in the USA. Their effects on the real economy were historic

and, on the other side of the Atlantic, revealed political flaws that added a whole other dimension to the issue. Nevertheless, insolvencies of European governments and deficit institutional arrangements had been there before. The European Sovereign Debt *Crisis* as such became material with its pronouncement and, more importantly, the following reactions of relevant actors. Proceeding, a lot of defining and redefining of policies, institutions and legal frameworks was involved and, once again, belief and trust built the basis of all. This became evident in the metaphoric and dramatic use of language within public discourse (Arrese and Vara-Miguel 2015); narratives, that served as a tool for power politics and negotiating leverage (cf. Heft 2017, Silaški and Đurović 2017, Kelsey et al. 2016, Zamponi et al. 2016, Pühringer and Hirte 2015, Schmidt 2014, Crespy and Schmidt 2014, Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014, Wodak and Angouri 2014, Dulli  n and Gu  rot 2012). This also transferred into the public sphere, where pressure had been created all throughout the printed and online media. Numbers and words went around like viral; voices became loud in the streets as well as in the parliaments; every party had to have a position. And regardless of their political couleur, the point I want to make here, is the emergence of a public notion there was something at stake, a general minimal consent that there was, at least, *some* urgency to act.

Opposed to that, what is currently discussed as the ecological crises emerged in a completely different context. Ever since Guy Stewart Callender, following his finding of a global temperature increase of 0.3  C, supposed that its cause can be found in “the increase in atmospheric dioxide from fossil fuel burning” in 1938 (Hawkins 2013), there has been a long path of rejecting and recognizing scientific evidence for climate change and, furthermore, for the role that human activities play in there. Ever since the beginnings of global governmental action in the form of summits in the 1990s and now, however, environmental degradation has sharpened drastically.¹ Not only the environment has been dying. Over the last decade, almost 1000 individuals have been assassinated worldwide by regimes, silencing their claim for the right to peacefully protect the natural resources that surround, protect and feed them and their communities.² The history of global climate policy is one of tedious compromises, who’s realization is often subject to power politics, where truth is often dependent on how it fits into the political and economic objectives of governments.³ In that notion, influential and impactful corporations contribute little to seriously rethinking the economy⁴. It appears like instead of taking measures,

¹ Since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions have risen by around 44% (Edenhofer and Jakob 2017: 19), 129 million ha of forest have been razed to the ground (WEF 2017) and half of the global coral reefs are either dead or dying (Global Issues 2013), to give a few examples.

² In Honduras, as a dramatic example for the violent persecution of environmental activists, 120 people have been murdered since 2010. The most recent example is the assassination of Berta C  ceres in 2016. Equally, the aim to protect mangrove areas against shrimp farms resulted in over 100 killings of local community members in a period of five years in the 1990s in Bangladesh. The list could go on. For more disturbing information on that, visit, e.g., <https://ensia.com/features/dying-to-save-the-world/> or <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/honduras-deadliest-country-world-environmental-activism/>, and Shipley, T. (2016). Enclosing the Commons in Honduras. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 75(2), 456-487.

³ US-President Donald Trump’s attitude towards environmental issues is a currently prominent example.

⁴ This statement is based on a revision of the corporate strategies of the ten biggest corporations according to annual revenue per year in Europe, as well as cases like VW, where the development of a green image turned out as fraudulent, further inside to that can be gained here <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/01/what-was-volkswagen-thinking/419127/> versus <http://en.volkswagen.com/en/company/responsibility/environmental-responsibility.html>.

governmental and business actors twist their way around taking on responsibility and action. In the case of a financial crisis, however, large amounts of money can be mobilized within a few months for saving banks, while other issues remain largely unaddressed, the ecological crisis and sustainable development being one of the most obvious examples (cf. e.g. Mittelman 2010).

Observations of these discrepancies arose in recent studies. “In most debates about sustainable development either the environment or the economy is given priority.”, Giddings et al. (2002) pointed out, adding that “The reality of life today is that the economy dominates environment and society.” (Giddings et al. 2002: 190). Huru and Popescu (2016) elaborate on the influence of corporate behavior that is informed by the pressures of the global economy on “global environmental politics”. In terms of the latter, studies like one from Carolan and Bell (2003) explore the question of why and how ‘truth’ does not stand independently outside of a debate but is located at the center of it and discursively constructed and utilized by various actors. They illustrate this on the example of the environmental dispute. The dominance of the neoliberal paradigm has regained attention in the course of the European Financial Crisis. For example, De Ville and Orbie (2014), for example, pursued the question of why the neoliberal discourse survived the crisis and even reinforced its legitimization. Hall (2014) offers insights on that from the perspective of the varieties of capitalism theory. Schmidt (2016) reflected in a paper for the 23rd Conference on Europeanists on the apparent “Resilience of ‘Bad Ideas’ in Eurozone crisis discourse, even as rival ideas inform changing practices”, concluding that “EU institutional players have been informally and pragmatically engaged in on-going processes of ideational innovation and discursive legitimation, as they have slowly been reinterpreting the rules without admitting it”. He concludes that “any radical change in policies” or general profound economic paradigm-shifts are not expected to be seen anytime soon; a bias, that is also topic of the work of Colin Crouch, as for example in “The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism” from 2011. In her famous book from 2014 “This Changes Everything”, Naomi Klein formulates the radical thesis that “our economic model is at war with life on earth”.

Alternative economic discourse communities take on differing perspectives on the relation between economy and ecology. A de-growth or zero growth discourse calls for a profound restructuring of the economic conceptualization, especially in terms of the labor market, redistribution mechanisms and macroeconomic measures like the size of GDP. (Geels 2013; Jackson and Senker 2011). Similar postulations are made by a post-growth discourse, paying special attention to the finite nature of a growth-based and resource intensive economic model, turning towards the development of future models based on already existing and working ones (Post Growth Institute 2017). Exponents of brown growth or business as usual neglect or even reject the negative impact and limitedness of a fossil-intensive economy and emphasize its overriding socio-economic merits (Worldbank 2011). The green growth discourse argues for the integration of ecological and economic benefits and objectives (ibid).

One perspective this paper takes on is based on Marc Saxer reflecting in “Social Europe”, that in terms of “construct[ing] a platform for a broad societal alliance a narrative is needed which appeals to members of different life worlds at the same time.”, and that

“successful political projects have mastered this challenge by building discursive bridges between different life worlds. Hegemonic political projects managed to tap into the narratives, imaginaries, terminologies and utopias of diverse discourse communities, strengthen narrative links and highlight compatibilities. By re-framing issues, spinning messages and merging narratives, neighbouring discourse communities can be co-opted into the (hegemonic) alliance” (Saxer 2013)

A second view on green growth is inspired by Sullivan’s ontological view “On nature and knowledge in a political ecology of the ‘green economy’” (2017). In there, he takes on a critical stance on the way mainstream actors pick up the concept of sustainability and draws conclusions on how “nature” is located and interpreted in the frame of such paradigms and finds that a totalization of the ecological terminology that is taking place, in such a way to “flatten diversity” and “denote and determine the technical and epistemological procedures by which their constituents can be known in advance” (Sullivan 2017: 232). In simple terms, the second view takes into account the possibility that the concept of Green growth cannot function of a discursive bridge in the sense that it is integrated; but rather dominated by the dominant growth-discourse beforehand. The conduction of my study is therefore guided by the question:

(RQ) Does the green growth discourse have the potential to transform discursive power relations within the growth discourse of European economic network organizations in the context of the European Financial Crisis?

It is decided to forego a further division into sub questions, since the theoretical concepts provide a clear guideline concerning the components of the question, which are the green growth discourse as an emerging alternative narrative, growth is introduced as the force dominating the discursive power relations and, lastly, the concept of crisis. Embedded in the context of the European Financial Crisis, the question shall be analyzed on a set of documents representing the economic growth discourse of European economic networks, ranging from 2009 to 2017.

The findings shall contribute to the scientific and public debate on the relation between economy and ecology. The focus on discourse and ideas helps to deconstruct and understand the dynamics behind the contradictions this relation is defined by. The study of economic networks as a place of production and reproduction of hegemonic ideas fills a gap and delivers a perspective in the debate on the governance of crisis discourse. (legitimacy loss despite crisis)

1.1 Outline of the thesis

The research question and its background as presented above are going to be underpinned by theoretical concepts. The second chapter will explain the concept of economic growth, that has been pointed out as the hegemonic concept persisting to dominate our economic model by various scholars, as briefly reviewed above. The concept of green growth will be presented afterwards. To pay attention to the role of European Financial Crisis, the chapter will furthermore create a perspective on possible dynamics of transformations, drawing on the concepts of Antonio Gramsci and Frank Geels. Drawing on my literature review and theory, two hypotheses will be presented.

In a third chapter, I will define the scope of this paper by justifying the case and data selection and describing it. Then, I will turn towards why I conduct my study in the design of a discourse analysis. This requires a brief reference to the Foucauldian analytical tradition as well as a practical description on the steps I will conduct to answer the research question.

After that, a chapter will be dedicated to the presentation of my findings, which will be organized in three categories. Apart from that, it contains a section to discuss and summarize them.

A last chapter will formulate the answer to my research question based on my findings. On that basis, the considerations made in the introduction will be revisited and prospects for future research are formulated.

2. Theoretical Chapter

This chapter shall serve some conceptual and theoretical considerations concerning my research question. It begins with a closer look at the term ‘economic model’. Disassembling it into its ideational components shall help to shed some light on the seemingly controversial relation between economy and environment, as discussed beforehand. Moving on from the discussion of growth as the fundamental paradigm in European economy, I will present some versions of environmental counter discourse as part of (the/a) counter-discourses. These thoughts shall build the basis for understanding my analysis, which shall be conducted building on the assumptions of Frank W. Geels’ multi-level-perspective and the political economy as theorized by Peter Cox.

2.1 Growth

As pointed out earlier, many point to the flaws of ‘our economic model’ when assessing past and present attempts towards a more holistic global governance. But what exactly is meant by that? The character of an economic model is defined by the idea on how to provide yourself livelihood as a society, or more practically phrased, how and what to produce and consume. This idea does not only determine the mode of production in the very material sense but is reflected in the way it is institutionalized. We can regard this as an economic worldview, or paradigm, which not only underlies interpretations, observations and

predictions of economic realities in mathematical terms⁵, but sets frames to perception and knowledge; and scopes to the desirable and the possible. If reproduced and conventionalized over generations, ideas and worldviews might become so naturally normal, that even bewildering and contradictory events don't seem to result in a deeper questioning, but blur at the very horizon of what could be. (Foucault 1996: 24f.)

The idea of economic growth carries the objective of the increase of economic output in size or productivity. The former relates to the production of goods and services. The former, output growth is assessed by their inflation-adjusted rise in value. The latter is the sum of factors of production, such as labor, capital, technology and human capital and is measured by the size of an economic community's, mostly in the frame of a nation's, Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Central pillars of the growth concept to keep in mind for later are (1) productivity of an economic community's labor force, which includes both the rate as well as the productiveness of employment, (2) inflation, referring to a modest annual increase in the market value of commodities and services of ideally 2% and the overall indicator of economic growth and associated with that, the standard of living, the size of the (3) GDP of an economic community.⁶

It can be identified as the central guiding principle, the *Leitmotiv* of various contemporary economies all over the world, regarding the character of the rhetoric it is accompanied by. Growth as an economic objective advanced to the center of not only Western free and social market economies, but also in, for example, Japan's neo-mercantilist system or China's socialistic market economy. Identified as a driver for social improvements in general, fostering economic growth had also been central in development cooperation, especially in terms of poverty reduction (Worldbank 2011: 2).

Entering the European context, the idea of growth roots back to the establishment of liberal economic theory with the idea of individual economic freedom of choice summing up to collective prosperity, as formulated by Adam Smith in 1776 in his famous work "The Wealth of Nations" (Solow 1988: 307). Time revealed flaws in the universal functioning of the 'invisible hand', as the consequences of the global economic crisis of the early 1930s showed that some difficulties cannot be resolved by the balancing forces of the free market. Economic growth theory as such emerged in the context of its aftermath, mainly theorized by Roy F. Harrod (1939) and Evsey Domar (1946) and further developed by Robert M. Solow (1956) (Solow 1988: 308). Next to the social dimension of the consequences, John Maynard Keynes identified several factors that negatively impacted the demand side of the mechanism and concluded that governmental policies shall cushion large amplitudes in the economic cycle. These ideas predominated European economic policy making until classic liberal ideas experienced a

⁵ Definitions can be drawn from eg. <http://www.investorguide.com/definition/economic-model.html> or <http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Economic+model>

⁶ My outline of economic growth is basen on a range of existing definitions and concepts of economic growth, e.g. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economicgrowth.asp> or <http://www.ecb.europa.eu/mopo/html/index.en.html>

renaissance in the 1970s; at a time when recurring inflation and stagnation raised doubts about the optimal functioning of the demand oriented design of economic policies. The new liberal economic paradigm fostered the reduction of the economic role of governments, for example by cutting social security systems, the privatization of common goods and service provision or the transfer of responsibilities back to the individual. Carried by politicians like former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, thoughts like those formulated by Anthony Giddens in “The Third Way” (1998) built the basis for comprehensive economic reform projects, like for example the Agenda 2020 in the German labor market in the beginning of the new millennium. Differing in their approach, all the strategies pursued or pursue economic growth.

2.2 Green Growth

The 1990s came along with a growing consent that a largely unregulated economic model can not only be accompanied with undesired social side effects, but with possible degradations of the global environment. Not merely did scientific evidence increase on Callender’s assumptions about an association between the burning of fossil fuels and the rise of the global average temperature. Worries also grew due to increasingly observable declines in biodiversity and ecosystems that directly or indirectly root back to anthropogenic activities. As the decade brought about momentum for global governance, it also marked the beginning of globally organized climate action with the UN Climate Summit in Rio 1992, resulting in the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The integration of economic with social and environmental objectives defined the emerging sustainable development discourse (Worldbank 2011: 2f.)

Now a liberal institutionalist would applaud these events, but be pulled back to realistic grounds by the further cause of environmental dialogue within the global climate regime; revealing obstacles that root in the assumptions of game theory, moral hazard issues and overall, power politics.⁷

Firstly, despite summits and conventions, the dialogue mainly remained a dialogue. Even the conclusion of a global agreement following the UN Climate Summit 2015 in Paris, which had been widely acknowledged as a milestone in global environmental governance, seems to be at risk following the recent withdrawal of the USA. Taking a look at the argumentation that led to this decision, resembling those of various other opposing actors, one can recognize a fear that progressive environmental protection might threaten economic development, referring to the unfeasibility of comprehensive environmental protection and the importance of energy and emission intensive labor sectors, like the coal industry.⁸ The degree of coherence and long-term vision of such positions is debatable.

⁷ If it is not explicit what is meant by this remark, see for instance Terhalle, M., & Depledge, J. (2013). Great-power politics, order transition, and climate governance: insights from international relations theory. *Climate policy*, 13(5), 572-588.

⁸ More insights into the “renaissance of coal” can be drawn from Edenhofer, O. (2015). King Coal and the queen of subsidies. *Science*, 349(6254), 1286-1287.

Secondly, there are large groups of actors, that did not participate in or slow the dialogue, be it in the form of entire nations that are absent from summits and following agreements and efforts, negotiations between groups of countries that are involved into and effected by climate change differently (Bodansky 2001) or industry sectors that push the topic aside and continue doing business as usual or engaging in green-washing (Walker and Wan 2012).

The term ‘green growth’ entered the stage around 2005, when 52 stakeholders (OECD 2017) agreed on the pursuit of sustainable development with a slightly new approach, introducing a more feasible and politically enforceable strategy to achieving it regarding its loss of momentum during the beginning new millennial. That was driven by the realization that in the face of ever and sometimes rapidly worsening environmental indicators, actors faced what I indicated already in the introduction: “something much more profound had to be done” (Worldbank 2011: 6); solutions that go beyond short-term-oriented investment and small-scale commitments, that require global cooperation and profound paradigm shifts. The environmental discourse stagnated between the highly idealistic objectives of sustainable development on the one hand, and economic costs on the other hand (Edenhofer and Jakob 2017: 35ff.) “in a world, where GDP growth (and the employment it generates) remain the core interest of voters and business and the overriding policy objective of governments” (Worldbank 2011: 6).

The green growth discourse challenges this seemingly obvious contradiction with its core message that “protecting the environment can actually yield *better* growth” (ibid.). It calls for the integration of nature, or natural resources, into macroeconomic calculations, in the form of “natural capital” as a factor of production (World Bank 2011: 3) as well as the fostering of “synergies between environment and economy” (UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform 2017). What sounds misleading at first can be illustrated at the example of the white-nose-syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease, that has decimated millions of individuals of bat populations across North America since its emergence in 2006.⁹ The economic dimension of this issues becomes apparent, taking a look at the bats’ role in their ecological systems. They eat “tons of insects nightly”, most of which threaten crops, forests and transmit diseases. Apart from that, bats play a crucial role in pollination and even in reforestation, with a variety of tropical plants being totally dependent on bats as pollinators and seed-dispersers. (Lineback and Lineback Gritzner 2014). This example illustrates how, the investment of financial and intellectual resources into the search for remedies can provide short-term improvements for the economy regarding agriculture, *and* long-term ecological benefits in the form of the salvation of a species and the preservation of the ecological equilibrium. Business as usual, on the contrary, would probably turn to chemical engineering and genetic engineering to preserve crops and flora, however, that would cause

⁹ The ecological tragedy is marked by the slow reproduction of the mammals. Females give birth to only one pup per year, whose chances to live through hibernation are kept low by the virus, setting in around the muzzle and wings. (Proscia 2016). Those bat species that do not hibernate in caves, where the cold-affine virus disrupts their sleep and exhaust the bat’s energy reserves to starvation or dehydration (Fears 2015), face serious threats by wind turbines. (Medellin, Melnick and Pearl 2014). Confronted with population losses of up to 90%, many biologists are deeply concerned (Fears 2015).

ecological side effects de novo.¹⁰ Green Growth reveals that the doubts and fears of opponents of climate change pointing to economic losses and high costs with little benefits are, de facto, blind to the effectiveness of a progressive rethinking of economic models moving beyond GDP as the golden indicator of human well-being; as “the ultimate goal of economic policy” and core of development (Weltbank 2011).

Aside these empirical arguments, a theoretical foundation had been delivered by John Holdren and Paul Ehrlich, measuring the impact of human activity on the environment with the variables population, consumption and technology, all regarding their environmental impact. They argue that only the development of an environmentally productive technology can absorb the implications of growing population and an even faster growing consumption of resources. (Ehrlich and Holdren 1971)

In contrast to advocates of de-growth or non-growth approaches, green growth does not challenge growth per se, but points out, why economic growth in the classical sense is pursued illogically and criticizes the misallocation of “resources between the different factors of production” (Worldbank 2011: 11). Finally, the overinvested or sometimes even subsidized degradation of the environment, sometimes even subsidized, under-investment in environmental ends, is introduced into the concept of market-failure. (ibid) While claiming positive impacts on GDP-growth, the approach emphasizes the need for a rethinking of the conventional measurement of ‘prosperity’.

It is to be kept that the concept of green growth mainly comprises (1) the concept of natural capital, standing for the inclusion of nature into economic models, (2) green investment, as the pursuit of developing technology that contributes to sustainable development and finally, (3) sustainability, in the sense that it calls for a paradigm shift towards a holistic assessment of prosperity and the value of the economic activities of a community.

What makes the green growth discourse interesting to study amongst other forms of alternative economic growth discourse is that by assessing methods for the pursuit of growth from a holistic perspective, it holds the potential to integrate completely opposite discursive communities with pragmatic economic and ecological solutions to their claims. Building this discursive bridge, might be crucial to fostering holistic global governance at the core of economic activity.¹¹

¹⁰ Other examples for the positive economic and ecological double effect of preserving the environment can be found in the implications of the depletion of bee populations on plant diversity (European Academies Science Advisory Council 2015), monocultural forestry and agriculture on soil quality and natural resistance to floods and storms (Gamfeldt et al. 2013) or the damage done to our ocean (or the 10% of it we know) by micro-plastic and fisheries (Takada 2013; Brierly and Kingsford 2009), the list could go on.

¹¹ For the purpose and keeping the scope of my analysis, I presented the core elements of the green growth concept that will find their way into the operationalization. A detailed assessment of the concept in terms of policies and its distinction into a strong and weak version can be attained by the lecture of Jacobs, M. (2012). Green growth: economic theory and political discourse. *Centre for climate change economics and policy working paper*, 108.

2.3. Perspectives on Crisis and Change

After reflecting on the growth-paradigm, I am going to present to theoretical approaches that offer a model for understanding, how hegemonic regimes of ideas persist and moreover, how they transform. This step shall help to locate both of the presented concepts in the wider context of the economic regime, as well as it shall shed light on the role played by the context of the European Financial Crisis.

The Neo-Gramscian approach pictures the political economy in three dimensions: Firstly, there are material capabilities. The second dimension refers to ideas. These root in basic expectations on the economy, for example, the idea of growth. These ideas are produced and reproduced via societal, governmental or economic institutions, like, for example, education, public opinion, political parties, an administration or, as in my case, economic networks. Together, these three dimensions form a hegemonic bloc, characterized by its respective dominant paradigm. The interesting part here is: once institutionalized and materialized, ideas persist, even in the face of contradictions. (Cox 1981)

To ebb this into t, a look at the multi-level-perspective (Geels 2002) can help. The hegemonic bloc can be found at the core of the economy, where socioeconomic, sociotechnical and political structures become evident in institutions, policies, market constellations, consumers' behavior or public opinion, to name some examples. These components of the "regime-level" are interconnected, yet stagnant. Institutionalization generates stability and continuity on the one; but path dependency and stagnancy on the other side. The regime is embedded into a wider context, what Geels calls the "landscape-level", providing the conditions in response to which the regime and its components evolve. The "novelty-level", finally, comprises ideas and innovations off the regime path, developing independently from the mainstream, that are shared within and amongst respective groups of actors. The dynamics in these niches are influenced by the regime level's structures and its developments.

Now, regarding transformations, Gramsci sees crisis as a revealing force of the "morbid symptoms" (Gramsci 1971: 176) and as "the doom of a particular period, but it is temporary, an intermediate state towards something new" (Ossewaarde 2017: 15), in which the invisible consent that nourishes the hegemonic bloc becomes visible to the afflicted.

More practical, Geels sees crisis as a "shock" on the landscape level, an event that forces responses on the regime level. The struggles and restructurings that follow, give rise to what is termed "windows of opportunity" for the elements of the novelty level to enter and, eventually, establish themselves there on the long run.

In that sense, the main concepts that are derived from this section are the perception of a crisis as a (1) shock or collapse, including the vocabulary of (2) stagnation and recession, as well as the (2) recovery from this including its shape in rebuilding a (4) post-crisis economy.

2.4 Hypotheses

The theory section is going to be summarized with the formulation of two hypotheses on the results of my analysis, that arise from both the background laid down in the first, and the theoretical insights gained in the second chapter of this work.

Taking into account the perceived feasibility and positive echo throughout the main actors of the global climate regime, as well as a more frequently use of the overall concept of sustainability in the communication of governments and corporations, combined with the potential for change provided by the context of the European Financial Crisis, it is expected that

(H1) The analysis of my dataset will result in a high reflection of the concept of green growth and practical objectives for its implication will be given. A paradigm-shift will be evident in the use of language and the assessment of the situation of crisis.

Given the historic weight of the pre-dominant concept of classic economic growth combined with scholarly evidence for its persistence throughout and despite the crisis, as well as the well-organized material interests of a large range of stakeholders, another assumption is that

(H2) The reflection of green growth in the set of documents will be low or of a rather rhetoric character, without serious attempts to transfer the concept into action.

3. Methodological Chapter

After laying down the theoretical foundations to my question, this chapter is going to discuss the practical aspects of answering my research question.

3.1 Introduction

Words confer images to our thoughts and meaning to our actions. Ergo, words are the bridge between the ideal and the material. Despite seeming abstract at first glance, analyzing the linguistic dimension of governance has very practical implications on attaining a profound understanding about the way society is organized. This is why discourse analysis is chosen as the appropriate research design to unveil the dominant character of our economic model, to understand the dynamics behind and to assess the potential of the green growth discourse to integrate the seemingly contradictory. Such insights establish the basis for the pursuit of feasible problem-solving. This chapter begins with the presentation of the case that will be the subject of my analysis. More concretely, the next section is presenting and describing the data and the strategy applied in its collection. The method of data collection will be explained afterwards. In that step, the rather large and theoretical pool of approaches will be tailored to my specific case including a description and justification of the steps I set up for analysis.

3.2 Case selection

Throughout this work, the term European economic growth discourse is utilized, which shall be addressed briefly by some clarifying remarks. A discourse can be regarded as the sum of statements that revolve around the field at stake and thereby constitute what the individual and the collective perceive as such. Additionally, “the manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this ‘not-said’ is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said” (Foucault 1969: 28) It is therefore neither possible nor desirable to exactly determine the borders of the discourse at stake. That implies the necessity to study units of discourse “in that punctuality in which it appears, and in that temporal dispersion that enables it to be repeated, known, forgotten, transformed, utterly erased, and hidden, far from all view, in the dust of books. Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs. (Foucault 1969: 28)

Due to the methodological need to define a focus, the choice fell on the study of the economic growth discourse for the case of European economic network organizations. That decision is not only made due to the scope of this paper. Economic networks can be defined as a “combination of individuals, groups or countries interacting to benefit the whole community”, in the sense that they offer an opportunity to exchange their individual “competitive advantages and resources” (Investopedia 2017) amongst each other. Remembering Smith’s thesis of the collective’s merits given the economic freedom of all, he would have probably regarded networks as a place for exchanging best practices for the utilization of the latter. Economic networks, apart from that, form part of the institutional landscape on the economic regime-level. Therefore, their discourse in the context of the European Financial Crisis shall be regarded itself as a part within the unity of economic growth discourse (Foucault 1969: 23ff.), like a small piece of a larger story.

3.3 Method of data collection

The object of analysis shall be a set of documents released by European Economic Forum and Network organizations. The selection of networks is based on a research of the range of networks focused on the European market and finally made due to their impact and reach. The ten networks I picked followingly, have been regarded in terms of their range of action. These comprise the organization of forums for various types of economic stakeholders, such as policy makers, civil society representatives, business actors or other types of influential individuals, the formulation of periodical economic outlooks or assessments, or the publication of strategic documents, such as manifestos and action plans.

Two documents have been picked for every organization, one for the period of the crisis, which I set between 2009 (election of Papandreo’s government revealing the actual state of sovereign debt) and 2012 (calming of the markets by Draghi and Stability Mechanism) and another for the post-crisis period, starting from 2013. The classification into offers the possibility to identify possible linguistic

differences between the time groups, as well as their utilization of the crisis narrative. I would like to note that by post-crisis, I do not imply that the crisis had been over then. I drew the line between the groups around 2012 for several reasons. In this year, average European unemployment reached a peak value and the European Central bank drastically lowered its interest rate down to 0.75%. Draghi's famous three words "whatever it takes" marked a turning point for calming down panicky financial systems (Walsh 2014). Furthermore, the European Stability mechanism came into force, with the following year generating news about the end of European economic recession (e.g. Tagesschau 2013).

As a place for exchange and formulating objectives, the language utilized in these networks is regarded as suitable for the answering of my research question in the following ways. Regarding the superficially observable increase of attention for sustainability concerns in their use of language, an in-depth discourse analysis offers the possibility to evaluate both quantity and quality of its application. Apart from that, the interactive character mentioned before, makes insights into the underlying paradigm valuable for the assessment of the transformative influence of the crisis. Finally, they represent a dynamic and practical example of the discourse at stake.

3.4 The data

The foundation "World Economic Forum" has, since its establishment in 1971, emerged with the objective of offering a space for exchange for various stakeholders. In that way, its relevance reaches from framing economic objectives to the sphere of politics, e.g. by encouraging favorable economic reforms¹². The clique-like framework of the annual meetings in Davos, Switzerland, gives the network an exclusive and elite-like character, which is evident by common terms like "the Spirit of Davos" (WEF 2017). My analysis includes the report of the World Economic Forum Europe in 2010, as well as its "Competitiveness Report" from 2014. The first has been held during the peak of the European Financial Crisis and "gathered over 400 leaders from more than 36 countries" (WEF 2017). The activities stood under the light of "Renewed Leadership, New Vision" (WEF 2010: 1). The document offers insight into the rhetoric of a classical WEF meeting. The second document is a comprehensive assessment of the factors that determine the state of competitiveness of the European economy, including recommendations on how to improve on that. A third document, the article "What are Europe's big challenges in 2016", is included because of the impact of the institution, as well as for the interest to see, what is framed here as a "big challenge".

The "Brussels Economic Forum" (BEF) operates similarly, staging annual meetings for "top European and international policy makers and opinion leaders as well as civil society and business leaders" (European Commission 2017). The BEF 2010, as well as the BEF 2017 are represented each

¹² The year 1974 marked the year, in which political leaders had first been invited to Davos. The opportunity had been taken following the collapse of the Bretton Woods regime and the Arab Israeli war. See for more information <https://www.weforum.org/about/history>, as well as Graz, J. C. (2003). How powerful are transnational elite clubs? The social myth of the World Economic Forum. *New Political Economy*, 8(3), 321-340.

by two speeches held during the events. At the time of the BEF 2010, András Simor served as the Governor of the National Bank of Hungary; currently, he functions as Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer of the European Bank. (European Bank 2017) In his speech, he talks about the “Post-Crisis Global Economy and the Convergence Process”. Another speech had been held by then European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Policy Olli Rehn on “EU Strategies for a Post-Crisis World: Enhancing Growth through Smart Consolidation and Structural Reforms. The speeches included from the BEF 2017 are held by Commissioner Moscovici reflecting on strategies towards “enhanced cohesion, integration and prosperity” and a keynote speech by Commission Vice-President Dombrovski, in which he elaborates on social inequalities.

The EBN innovation network will be assessed on the basis of their economic forecasts from 2009 and 2013. Two further economic forecasts from 2011 and 2015 are drawn from the European Economic Network (EUREN). The former builds a community for business and innovation, while the latter is a network of leading economic institutes. Similarly, Euroframe forms a macroeconomic research network and is represented through their economic assessments from 2010 and 2016. These documents comprise a detailed analysis of the European economic activity and serve as a basis for finding out about the role that growth and green growth play in this economic discipline.

With a special focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), the Enterprise European Network is co-funded by the EU in the context of the “Programme for the competitiveness of SME’s”. My analysis will include the program leaflet, since the network itself does not provide any publications whatsoever. It is, nevertheless, valuable for the analysis, since SME’s represent the smaller and emerging actors within the economy, that I assume to possess a special interest in future economic prospects. Furthermore, the European Family Business Network’s document on the Europe 2020 strategy from 2010, as well as “Global and Regional Trends” from 2017 are subject to analysis in order to include the position of the expectedly traditional or conservative stance on economics. The European Creative Business Network’s offer of documents does not reach back to the crisis-period. I decided to include one of their most recent documents from 2017 (“Creative Industries and Effective Altruism”) nonetheless, given the size and the potential of creative industries in defining directions in the field of technology and innovation (ECBN 2017).

The European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR Europe) describes itself as the “leading European business network for Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR Europe 2017) and functions as a platform for business. With a special focus on sustainability, it is oriented at the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Europe 2020 Strategy (ibid). Due to the unavailability of reports from the crisis-period, the network will be only represented for the post-crisis period by the “Enterprise Europe Network 2020 Manifesto” from 2015 as well as the report “The sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The Value for Europe” from 2017. Both documents can be regarded as strategic documents that formulate recommendations for future economic foci. For recreating the balance, two documents released by a similar initiative, the “One Planet Economy Network”, are

involved. As a two-year project, it developed alternative measures for assessing the economy and has been funded by the EU as well as a variety of research institutions. It will be represented by a comprehensive forecast on economic scenarios as well as an “Action Plan”, in which concrete economic recommendations are formulated. Both of the documents are from 2011.

The documents are selected in a way that they represent different types of communication, as they comprise forecasts, assessments, programs, action plans, speeches and strategy papers. They furthermore represent the period of crisis and post-crisis in a balanced way. The dataset comprises 22 documents and a total of 407 pages.

3.5 Method of data analysis

After having presented the case and the dataset, I will now describe how exactly I will go about analyzing them. This chapter is not the place for the introduction of theoretical aspects. However, those of discourse analysis as introduced in Michel Foucault’s “The archeology of knowledge” are key to gaining a profound understanding of methodological decisions that follow, as well for understanding the value of their results. Not least, it justifies the choice to conduct a discourse analysis to a large degree. Therefore, an exception is made to dedicate a short paragraph to the brief introduction of knowledge and discourse.

As I said, we want to find out about the idea behind our economic model, so it is useful to think about the formation of such. Knowledge, as Foucault expresses it, is a “group of elements, formed in a regular manner by a discursive practice; and which are indispensable to the constitution of a science, although they are not necessarily destined to give rise to one” (Foucault 1969: 201). So, knowledge arises from discourse; from its linguistic creation in the public; but also vice versa. Once established, knowledge also defines the discourse that takes it on, functioning as a basis for developing it further, for testing and contesting it. The arena for doing so, however, is not accessible to all voices of society. It depends on whether you are given access to an imaginary microphone, and these societal structures amplify or mute respective positions. In terms of the case at stake, knowledge is understood as the content of the growth discourse and the promotion, transformation and development of it depends on the actors involved in these circles; but also vice versa, the character of the dominant knowledge the growth discourse is informed by, defines the participants that get to express themselves. And this is where discourse and power relations are connected, because “knowledge is also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse” and “also the field of coordination and subordination of statements in which concepts appear, and”, more importantly, “are defined, applied and transformed” (ibid).¹³

¹³ The discipline of discourse analysis comprises various approaches that have been developed according to the respective fields of application. They will not be further explained, since this is not the place for a literature review. In case of unclearities, please find more information in the Gee, J. P., & Handford, M. (Eds.). (2013). *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis*. Routledge.

It is aimed to state shortly the omission of the analysis of the discourse's dispositive, an aspect, that had been included in the methodology of an earlier version of this paper. The latter is what defines every element of a discourse. Identifying it means identifying the motive that defines the inside of understanding, of power strategies, of discursive practice, their institutional and practical effects and logically at the same time, also what remains external to them. It can be understood as the invisible border of a reality created by discourse, or as Keller says, the "material, cognitive and normative infrastructure of discourse" (Keller 2008: 99), in which interpretative patterns arise, that are shaped by and that shape social actors.

It is technically and scientifically not possible to make a definite statement about the dispositive of the economic growth discourse on the sole basis of the scope of this study. As mentioned, this paper only accounts for a fragment of the economic growth discourse. This choice has been, as a result, made to keep the design simple and lucid. Since tendencies are visible, this topic shall be readdressed in the conclusion of this paper, when prospects for future research are made.

3.5.1 Operationalization

At this point, I will present the operationalization of the concepts introduced in the foregone chapter; those who's application I want to work out in the given documents, in the form of codes. They will be called "growth", accounting for the dominant discourse, "green growth", for the type of alternative discourse I study and "crisis", which accounts for the actor's perception of the context their actions are embedded into. The keywords that the codes reflect their underlying concept. The attributed number of keywords to them is small and chosen them carefully. This is to avoid the possibility of generating "too many" matches that might not accurately reflect the code and cause faulty results. Table 1 shows the exact composition of the codes, complying with the key terms of the concepts discussed in the theory chapter.

Code (C)	Keywords
C1: Growth	Growth productiv* inflation GDP
C2: Green Growth	Green growth natural capital green investment sustainab*
C3: Crisis	Crisis shock collapse stagnation recession recover* post-crisis

Table 1: Codes

Finally, it must be added that during the interpretation of the results of the coding, its coherent conduction required further "spontaneous" coding of the text. For example, some interpretation triggered reflected on the influence and character of terms like "investment". In order to prove or neglect such assumptions, the interpretation required this kind of evidence from the text. In order to not to leave the reader in the dark about these processes, Table 2 comprises the terms that are affected.

Term (T)	Keywords
T1: Investment	Investment
T2: Consumption	Consumption

Table 2: Additional term-based coding

3.5.2 Conduction

This section deals with the explicit steps that are going to be addressed in the process of analysis.

- (1) With the technical help of the data analysis software “Atlas.ti”, the documents of the data set will be coded. The quantitative findings serve as the basis for their qualitative analysis. So, the first question I will pose deals with the density of the respective concept’s occurrence. The matches are assessed one by one; this is necessary to validate their correct placement by the software and to check the context of the sentence and the paragraph in which they appear.¹⁴ In terms of cooccurrences, which means that two codes are assigned to the same passage or statement, according results given by the software will be presented in the form of a table, so that these numbers can be taken into account when pointing to the quantity of matches of an individual code.
- (2) A second step regards the findings in the light of the situated use of language. The foregone identification of controversies; which in this case has been triggered by an emerging discourse on crisis in terms of the relation between the environment and the economy. It has then been placed into the context of the economic discourse of the financial crisis. In order to arrive at insights on the relation of the social order and the “social wrong”, the findings will be questioned in terms of how they reflect and legitimize social conditions and a certain knowledge, or consensus, on that. This requires putting the statements into their social context, considering what aspects of this context are omitted in its formulation.

Precisely, I will examine the way C1 (Growth) is portrayed, as well as the way it is *not* portrayed. The same accounts for C2 (Green Growth), with a special focus on its entrance to the mainstream of economic discourse and C3 (Crisis), which gives information about how the immediate context of the discourse is perceived.¹⁵

- (3) In a third step, I will consider the role of the speaker or author, which I will call actor throughout the course of my analysis, as well as the occasion of speaking, which includes the background of the organization and its audience.¹⁶ The results of the two last steps are not backed up in the form of a table in the frame of the main text of this paper, due to the size of the material. For providing evidence, the Atlas.ti output can be sighted in the appendix of this work.¹⁷

¹⁴ The results will be proven by tables that included in the beginning of the analysis to provide an overview and evidence.

¹⁵ This step is based on approaches utilized by Wetheral et al. 2001 and Fairclough’s semiotics of the “social wrong” (2012).

¹⁶ Foucault refers to that as “enunciative modalities” (1969: 55ff.) and their inclusion shall shed light on the immediate context of the statements. Apart from that, his notions of the “Formation of strategies” (1969: 71ff.).

¹⁷ An according table will be included in the beginning of the analysis to provide an overview.

3.6 Conclusion

Summing up, the potential of the green growth discourse to transform discursive power relations within economic growth discourse shall be assessed for the case of the European economic network discourse in the context of the European financial crisis with the methodology of discourse analysis. A basis is built by Michel Foucault's "The Archeology of Knowledge" (1996). The data comprises a collection of network and forum documents that are selected in a way to account for different types of organizations, publications and points of time.

The operationalization has taken place according to the concepts presented in the theory section and their most important keywords. The conduction of the analysis is guided by three steps, the first one being of a quantitative nature, assessing the position of the concept in relation to the frequency of the others. The following two steps guide the qualitative interpretation of the passages according to their context and finally, to the actor and occasion involved.

4. Analysis Chapter

This chapter is going to present the insights gained by the analysis of the economic discourse in the various documents. After having illustrated the empirical circumstances described in the introduction chapter with their corresponding theoretical concepts, they got converted into methodological tools. These have been applied to analyze my dataset. This section is dedicated to presenting the results. The findings are structured from the point of view of different dimensions, which I define according to the central discursive elements C1 (Growth), C2 (Green Growth) and C3 (Crisis). It will be shown how the interpretation of this concept as evident in the dataset, affects the discussion and portrayal of the former two. The dimensions are provided with titles that shall point towards the direction of the respective findings and give orientation. For the same reason, the findings will be illustrated representatively with the most striking, surprising or significant quotes.

It is noteworthy that throughout these sections, the division into crisis-documents and post-crisis documents shall offer temporal orientation representing two phases within one context. When taking into account the social context or conditions that underpin certain statements, this can help to explain potential changes in rhetoric with slight changes in their temporal context.

Before diving into the deeper analysis of the most significant quotes, the following tables will be shortly introduced. Throughout the analytical dimensions, I will refer to them whenever necessary.

	C1: Growth	C2: Green Growth	C3: Crisis
C1: Growth	0	121	33
C2: Green Growth	121	0	5
C3: Crisis	33	5	0

Table 3: Cooccurrence of coding matches

Table 3 shows the number of doubled matches. The high amount of them in C1 and C2 arise from the fact that the term “growth” is part of “green growth”. In order to avoid bias, this is important to take into account later on for the terms of growth and green growth. The other doublings do not show extensive sizes and could be weighed out in the interpretation of the respective examples.

	C1: Growth	C2: Green Growth	C3: Crisis	Totals
Crisis-Documents (2009-2012)	595	176	232	1003
Post-Crisis-Documents (since 2013)	550	329	67	946
Totals	1145	505	299	1949

Table 4: Quantitative results of coding

Table 4 represents the quantitative findings of the study, that shall serve as the entrance to the discussion of the respective sections.

4.1 Dimension I – The persistence of the growth doctrine

This section focusses on the actors’ application of the concept of growth. At the beginning of that, I wish to make the remark that the findings in terms of C1 led to restructuring the logic of this paper. At first, I wanted to position the growth-discourse at the side to let it function as a point of reference and comparison to what stood at the center: C2: Green Growth. My findings, however, led me to realize that the opposite must be the case.

That is, first of all, a consequence to the fact that the term “growth” is, after “Europe”, the second most frequently appearing term in the entire dataset. Furthermore, the C1-code resulted in 1145 matches, taking into account its cooccurrence in C2, the results still amount to 1024 matches, even if defined by only four explicit keywords. To gain an idea, I conducted an auto-coding complementing the code by concept-related terms like or “competition” or “output”, which resulted in an even higher number of matches (approx. 2200). The crisis documents show only a very slight difference to the post-crisis group, already indicating a notion of “persistence”. To stick to my methodological premise to keep focus on the most relevant keywords, I will not include these results, however, I find that information noteworthy in this context.

The concept appears in every of the analyzed documents with the exception of a WEF report from 2016 about the most pressing political challenges the EU is going to face in that year. Neither growth, but also not environmental issues have been put on this agenda (WEF 2010). The documents showing the highest density of the term are the European strategy “Europe 2020”, the WEF competitiveness report for the

European region from 2014, as well as economic forecasts and assessments, mainly by EUREN and EUROFRAME. The latter almost entirely consist of reflections on the current state of growth and its determinants, what slowed down growth during the crisis, and what it currently looks like.

What is interesting is that the WEF Competitiveness Report picks up the concept of growth but rather utilizing the vocabulary of “productivity”. As I pointed out in my theory section, the word belongs to the same notion.

“At the heart of competitiveness is the level of productivity of an economy. As such, competitive economies are those that are able to provide high and rising living standards, allowing all members of a society to contribute to and benefit from these levels of prosperity.” (WEF 2014: 7)

This quotation perfectly illustrates, how growth (or productivity) is self-evidently connected to living standards and, furthermore, shows how this actor claims that this process is accompanied by societal equality in terms of the participation in these procedures. A look at the corresponding social context of this, highly qualifies the statement, assuming that with “society”, the WEF does not only refer to the Davos elites. Studies deliver evidence that “the number of people whose wealth is equal to that of the poorest half of the world’s population” (Oxfam 2016) has gone down from 388 in 2010 to 62 individuals in 2015. Just to clarify that argument, the struggles caused by the financial crisis, so, the “level of productivity of an economy” (WEF 2014: 7), did have an impact on the living standards of many but obviously not on the few, as stated by Oxfam (2016). To give an example, the number of people at risk of poverty, which was at the level of 114 million individuals affected in 2009, has risen to 118 million in 2010, trend upwards. Another example is child poverty, that has between 2008 and 2012 remained roughly the same in the European average, but risen in those countries most affected by the crisis.

Also, Valdis Dombrovski made use of this rhetoric at the occasion of the Brussels Economic Forum in 2017, emphasizing “more inclusive growth for all, especially the weakest in our societies” (BEF 2017: 1). Equally, the “Europe 2020” strategy draws on this connection, directing its economic outlook towards the goal “that everybody can benefit from growth.” (European Commission 2010), to name one more of many examples.

The focus on employment and the sorrow about rising unemployment rates during the crisis is often framed in terms of its contribution to economic growth, through the detour of private consumption capacities. The latter can often be found as parts of economic assessments as well as it is often uncritically positioned as a key factor for growth and finally, to overcome the crisis. Followingly, growth-oriented organization regret that

“Private consumption, on the other hand, will remain weak, as the recession will continue to hit the labour market progressively” (EBN 2009:5)

and in regard of fading fiscal stimuli, EUROFRAME fears that

“This will curtail public demand and restrain private consumption which is forecast to grow by only around 1 per cent this year and next. Other reasons to expect sluggish private household demand are bleak employment prospects” (EUROFRAME 2010: 19)

These two examples illustrate, how employment and consumption are not connected in terms of the value of them for the life of individuals; we could think about the character of labor, the conditions of labor and its overall impact on people’s lives; we could think about consumption in terms of what goods and services are consumed; in terms of their societal and environmental value, also for those who produce or deliver them. In the paradigm of growth, however, the sole question for the evaluation of consumption seems to be whether the factor of consumption rises the GDP, or not. In order to attain an overview on the utilization of consumption, I conducted an auto-coding of the dataset solely for the term “consumption”. Apart from the finding I just presented, the term is also picked up by different organizations in terms of sustainability. I will get back to this in the next dimension.

Another key point is investment, which is, as often stated, dependent on trust in the market and the credibility of its agents.¹⁸ In terms of growth, investment is desired to provide the financial means to foster economic activity (European Commission 2017). During and after the financial crisis, especially the behavior and commitments made by officials like heads and financial ministers of governments, Commission officials or Central Bank Presidents had a huge impact on this, as

“Policy uncertainty in the European Union and the United States and continued weakness of economies in the euro zone are significant risks to economic growth.” (Euroframe 2017: 10).

This quotation follows the logic of the previous ones. Policies, or here, the uncertainty about them, standing at the beginning of the logical derivation, which continues with their impact on investment and, finally, ending with the limits to benefits for economic growth. The WEF, once again, delivers an unambiguous opinion on this topic in their 2014 Competition Report, formulating the following recommendation:

“Bearing in mind the risk of social dislocation, European governments should gradually cut subsidies, make their social support programmes more targeted and effective, and then shift spending towards growth-boosting investments. They should also do more to leverage private investments into infrastructure, education or healthcare. Such a strategy could create a virtuous circle in which higher spending today generates additional growth that, in turn, makes it easier not only to repay debt, but also

¹⁸ Further insights can be drawn from e.g. Hall, R. B. (2008). *Central banking as global governance: constructing financial credibility* (Vol. 109). Cambridge University Press.

to maintain a fair, social market economy. European politicians could start laying the groundwork today by explaining to their voters that fiscal reform is needed to safeguard their future standard of living.”

I probably do not have to go into a detailed deconstruction of this statement, that is highly controversial regarding the context of the impact of austerity measures in the aftermath of the crisis.¹⁹ The costs of rescuing growth after the crisis is quasi outsourced from and by the once who are partly responsible for them. The WEF promotes the redirection of governmental spending towards – not further defined – “growth-boosting investments” and away from the provision of common goods like “infrastructure, education or healthcare” in a very unproblematic, casually said, easy way; the recommendation is framed as “virtuous”, “fair” and “social”. Furthermore, European politicians are encouraged to convince the (not citizens, but) voters about the legitimacy of that intend, influencing them rhetorically, by indirectly pointing to the actual need to convince them, given that they want to stay in power.

In terms of enunciative modalities, what we can see here; and taking into account the specific role of economic networks I explained earlier; is the notion that the speakers make use of their position in order to inform the larger group of the economic elite of Europe, via the medium of economic strategies and gatherings. On the side of the recipients, the belonging to this elite is emphasized by the exclusive character of memberships and invitations, or, to the possession of a certain type of expertise transferred via forecasts and strategy papers. Noteworthy apart from that, is the remark that the discourse revolves to large degrees about aspects carried out by the majority of citizens – those, who do not sit in the room.

Summing up the findings of this section, the doctrine of growth seems to be what constitutes the frame and the purpose of economic knowledge, and this knowledge, vice versa, defines the persistence of growth. This complies with Foucault’s notion of the mutual construction of discourse and knowledge. In that sense, economic growth functions as the goal of economic activity and, at the same time, the means to achieve it. This section shows, how certain socio-economic elements, like employment, investment and consumption, but also common goods like education and health-care are subordinated or made subject to the pursuit of economic growth.

4.2 Dimension II - The emergence of Green Growth

This section jumps on to the evaluation of the emergence of the green growth discourse. First of all, I would like to justify my use of the term “emergence” in this regard. On the one hand, it refers to the notion of a growing consensus within society that the current state of environmental degradation requires taking on action, as I explained in the introduction. Apart from that, it gives justice to the fact that, in comparison to earlier years, this discourse has gained momentum, as well as the general sustainability

¹⁹ For a detailed depiction, see this study by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation: Matsaganis, M. (2013). The Greek crisis: social impact and policy responses. *Department of Western Europe/North America, Berlin*.

discourse into which it is embedded. On the other hand and given the findings of the previous section, one can doubt its potential to replace the classical growth doctrine at the center of the hegemonic economic regime. In that sense, the specific aim of this section is not to purely describe the emergence of an alternative discourse, but to pay attention to the conditions and consequently, the character of the emergence.

To begin with the quantitative remarks, the C2-code resulted in 505 matches in the documents studied. To compare it with the code for growth, this is about half as much. The relatively high number of matches might be a result of the inclusion of the term “sustainability”. I decided to do that, because the green growth discourse emerged from the sustainability discourse and often, as we will see, the portrayal of the latter happens in the meaning of green growth, but sometimes it is used in terms of the classical growth concept. But more on that later. The documents in which the concept of green growth appears the most densely are the documents released by the OPEN project as well as the European economic strategy “Europe 2020”, in which the concept appears 43 times. The post-crisis period resulted in a higher number of matches, indicating a little gain of momentum after 2012.

The analysis of the latest European economic strategy paper showed a strong emphasis on elements of the sustainable growth discourse. Already its title indicates the structure of the paper, in which neoliberal goals are complemented by sustainable attributes. Directly indicated by framing sustainability as one of the three strategic pillars, it is furthermore indirectly reflected in the content of the other two: the fostering of a knowledge and innovation based economy as well as the extent of social cohesion and social indicators. (European Commission 2010)

“What is needed is a strategy to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.” (European Commission 2010: 11)

Embedding the document into the context of its production sheds light on the special emphasis on the need for a fresh economic approach. 2010, only one year after the rolling off of the events and consequences of the European Financial crisis, such as e.g. the high degree of youth unemployment put the European Union under pressure. International credibility had to be recreated, but also internally, prospects were claimed by various stakeholders. The exemplary quote above shows, how old objectives – in the already familiar formation of employment, social standards and growth or productivity – are put as the goal of a strategy that is pursued smartly, which stands for innovative, sustainably, and inclusively, referring to social equality. The emphasis on sustainability is incorporated throughout the entire strategy paper, which, at first sight, looks like the emergence of the green growth discourse made it to the governmental sphere, and thereby, finally entered the center of the dominant regime. Sadly, that is not the case, because for the European Union

“Sustainable growth means building a resource efficient, sustainable and competitive economy, exploiting Europe's leadership in the race to develop new processes and technologies” (European Commission 2010: 15)

The incorporation of the green growth discourse into the current economic strategy takes on the aftertaste of only picking the concepts that benefit classic economic growth as well as it mostly remains at naming the concept and dropping keywords, without concrete objectives for action. That accounts especially for the documents of the WEF. Regarding passages like those examined in the foregone section, the mentioning of the importance of sustainability cannot be taken serious, since the latter stands in sharp contrast to the objectives it fosters. Equally, the concept is presented in further documents.

The global financial crisis, to widen the context of the document for a short remark, plays another factor for the seemingly paradigm change in the European economic strategy. The root causes of it unrested the governed, recognizing the mechanisms behind what has been presented to them as economic freedom for years. The crises revealed, as well so in Europe, their dependence on something they do not control, but do have to pay for. Inequalities had not only been caused by the crisis, but revealed. People lost faith in the elites, articulated in protests as well as an emerging Euroscepticism. The financial and economic crisis the Union got into, slowly turned into a democratic and legitimization crisis.²⁰

In that regard, the search for an efficient economic strategy and, more importantly, for the legitimization of such, points towards another aspect. A productive, growing economy and the material capabilities that go along with that generate global power. The exploitation of the topic of climate change becomes evident,

“particularly in new areas such as climate and green growth, [...] expanding our global reach” (European Commission 2010: 23)

Earlier, I mentioned that the reflection of green growth in strategies ends there and is seldom fostered seriously in the discursive practices of EU officials. The four speeches on the occasion of the Brussels Economic Forum approve that assumption. However, in terms of new prospects for generating power in a global system, Rehn says that

“we must invest in the low-carbon economy and green growth. It is better to be ahead of the curve in striving for a smart and green economic transformation. With the rising trend in global demand for fossil fuels, this is very much in the enlightened self-interest of Europe. (BEF 2010: 3)

²⁰ Further insights into the losses of legitimacy of the European Union in the past years: Van Apeldoorn, B. (2009). The contradictions of ‘embedded neoliberalism’ and Europe’s multi-level legitimacy crisis: The European project and its limits. In *Contradictions and limits of neoliberal European governance* (pp. 21-43). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Another interesting aspect to note is that the strategy is not called ‘economic strategy’, but ‘strategy for growth’. As in the other documents, growth is the starting point for the new strategy to foster it. The framing of the “exit strategy” of the crisis in terms of sustainability serves both the purpose of presenting a fresh approach as well as it shows the recognition of the potential to foster growth more effectively with a green transition, pointing to its long-term benefits. Regarding the theoretical assumptions of Ehrlich and Holdren, the importance of technology in cushioning and transforming the effects of human economic activity, is well reflected by the heavy emphasize of the strategy on innovation. Sadly, it is not concrete, in what shall be invested. That is a crucial point regarding the context of high amounts of money that flow into research that serve military or entertainment purposes (cf. Mittelman 2010).²¹

Another aspect worth mentioning is, that in many cases, the vocabulary of sustainability is attributed to notions of the growth paradigm, e.g. in terms of the importance of the “sustainability of its banking system” (EUROFRAME 2010: 5).

Other organizations, however, offer more concrete perspectives on a serious inclusion of the concept of green growth and develop it to become the leading economic paradigm. In that regard, some aim to “develop and implement new sustainable production methods, consumption and livelihoods.” (CSR Enterprise Europe Network 2015: 3). What stands out here, is that the approach includes aspects like “livelihood”, “human rights” or e.g. the fostering of a “circular economy, instead of only picking concepts that directly contribute to classical economic growth. Furthermore, it promotes “true leadership on sustainable growth” (CSR Enterprise Europe Network 2015: 2), triggering the liability of governance. Furthermore, networks like this and projects like OPEN but also the network for creative industries (cf. ECBN 2017:1) put special emphasize on the direction of investment and innovation, while others only name the sole importance of research and innovation. Interesting is also their stance on consumption, as already indicated in Dimension I. Comparing T2 amongst the different types of documents, EUREN-like economic assessments portray it as crucial to foster growth, while organizations like CSR Enterprise Europe Network and OPEN focus more on the specific character of consumption in the transition towards sustainability.

The enunciative modalities are very similar to those of the previous dimension, with the exception of the more green growth oriented CSR Enterprise Europe Network and the OPEN project. Interpreting their texts as a whole in comparison to others shows a convincing style of language, which could be linked with their – still – underrepresentation in the scope of economic voices. The actors seem to be aware about this. So, while criticizing them for their rather strong emphasize on the contribution to growth instead of the envisage of synergies between ecology and the economy, one could also portray it the other way around. Knowing about the strong stake the classic growth doctrine hold, they might put extra weight on their concept’s merits to growth, in order to be heard in the arena.

²¹ A research did not result in a large amount of investment into transformations towards green growth, http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/result_en?q=%28contenttype%3D%27project%27%20OR%20result/relation/categories/resultCategory/code%3D%27brief%27%2C%27report%27%29%20AND%20programme/pga%3D%27H2020-Euratom%2A%27

Despite these efforts, the conclusion to this dimension turns out as follows: The overall representation, or, to use my words, the character of the emergence of green growth is to be explained with the Union's need to legitimize the continual of the growth-doctrine as well as in case of actually turning out as a positive driver for the latter, it is also contributive to the European power position in the global economy.

Superficially, the documents show a growing consensus that sustainability should play a role, however, it turns out that this does not lead to a profound rethinking of the economic model and generally remains in the sphere of rhetoric. Environmentally friendly conceptions end at the limits of classic growth and as such, a reference to the protection of the rich biodiversity we find ourselves in or the responsibility for future generations in nowhere to be found.

As far as what we can see in the scope of the analysis of the present dataset, the dominance of the classic growth doctrine swallows up the emerging green growth - before it can even unfold - in a very European way. I say that, because the discourse at stake reflects to typical notions:

Firstly, supplying the market and economic growth stand at the center of economic action and above all other concerns, be it environmental or societal.²² Secondly, we rediscover central points of the European enlightenment movement; the mastery of the nature and the liberal myth of progress. I will elaborate on that in more detail in the conclusion chapter of this paper.

4.3 Dimension III – The state of crisis and prospects for change

The third and last dimension deals with the ways in which the economic situation of the last ten years has been framed as a state of crisis, including the perspective taken on in the search for remedies, as well as future prospects that were given.

The concept of crisis as operationalized in C3, generated 299 matches and is represented throughout the documents, which suggests the assumption that generally, all involved actors recognized the state of crisis, but mainly in the European economic strategy “Europe 2020”, especially in its preface, emphasizing the assumption I posed in the foregone chapter, that the inclusion of sustainability should be rather understood in terms of the economic crisis, instead of the environmental crisis.

Overall, the crisis has been framed in urgent terms, often putting the economic losses into sharp contrast with the growth of the preceding times, as the European Commission mourns about

“two years of crisis erasing twenty years of fiscal consolidation. Our growth potential has been halved during the crisis. Many investment plans, talents and ideas risk going to waste because of uncertainties, sluggish demand and lack of funding.” (European Commission 2010: 8)

²² The overfishing of the ocean has wide ecological, social and economic impacts, both in Europe as well as internationally. The European Union does play a sad role in there. See for instance: <http://overfishing.org/>

However, references to the perception to find oneself “in the middle of its biggest financial and economic crisis for a generation” (OPEN blog entry YEAR: 1) or “the deepest recession since the 1930s” (Euroframe 2010: 2) did not cease in the time after 2012. Often, more recent documents refer to the “economic recovery in the Euro area” (Euroframe 2017: 2).

Some actors frame the crisis as a “critical juncture for Europe” (WEF 2010: 5), wondering

“Could this crisis be turned into an opportunity?” (ibid.)

This “opportunity”, however, is seen in terms of the ways “to assess the tough choices and develop action plans that will lead the region back to growth, stability and prosperity”, whereas I find the expression “back to” quite exemplary for the notion of orienting towards a future conception of the economy based on the conventional growth of the past couple of hundred years.

In the same sense, the “Europe 2020” strategy is marked by the utilization of short sentences with clear language, all of them carrying the message that once the crisis is over, it will be even better than before, we might even be a “much more powerful economic entity” (WEF 2010: 11).

This reflects in EU official Olli Rehn’s speech that has been held in the same year and during the peak of the crisis. Its reflection “EU Strategies for a Post-Crisis World” is, first of all, put under the purpose of “Enhancing Growth”. Secondly, this notion does not stand in the light of sustainable growth, but is explicitly framed in the old and vague growth-rhetoric of “Smart Consolidation” and “Structural Reforms” (BEF 2010: 1).

To emphasize this paradox, a quote from the speech of EU-official Dombrovskis in the same occasion during the post-crisis period accounts. In there, he makes the call for a recovery, who’s sustainability shall be ensured. Thereby, he does not talk about actual sustainability of strategies of recovery with environmental value, but about the importance to trigger and maintain economic growth:

“We need to use this opportunity to go further: to ensure the sustainability of our recovery” (Dombrovski 2017 at BEF: 1)

Again, the utilization of the term “further” is misleading, since he is talking about an old concept, creating the illusion of presenting a progressive perspective to overcome the consequences of the crisis, to “recover”.

Concluding the third dimension of analysis, we can see that the overall notion to regard crises, within all the struggles it involves, as an opportunity to change for the better is picked up by various actors. The framing the motivation and means to get out of the crisis, however, show that the ‘new’ approaches contain little that is actually ‘new’; the overall goal is to get back to the classic economic paradigm of economic growth.

4.4 Discussion and summary of the analysis results

“We cannot continue in the old rhetoric.”, announced former Commission president Barroso on the occasion of the World Economic Forum Europe. “It is totally inadequate to the challenges ahead. We need to redesign the European social model and the social market economy.” Here we can see an acknowledgement that up to that point, the economic model led to obvious problems. What follows this discretion, however, perfectly illustrates how the imagination for future alternatives ends with the limits of the growth-doctrine. On top of that, this is used as a legitimization of consequent costs: “To do this, we need the language of blood, sweat and tears.” Who exactly had to pay the bill with blood, sweat and tears, in order to get out of the economic depression, had been observable (cf. Blockupy Europe). Further evidence for this is delivered by questions like “What type of recovery after the crisis?” (Euren 2009: 1), that placed the question inside the framework of recovery, which refers to the recovery of economic growth (cf. *ibid.* ff.).

Furthermore, “Many participants called the crises a watershed; a new start; a time for policymakers and politicians to roll up their sleeves and redesign the European social model; the catalyst for structural reform in the weaker countries of the area. Some predicted it could turn the Eurozone into a much more powerful economic entity.” (WEF 2010: 11) – quotes like this are exemplary of the overall notion of pursuing economic activity during and after the crisis, in terms of power and in terms of material capabilities. It is obvious, but I would still like to emphasize that the actor’s definition of power and of material capabilities does not, as well as the overall definition of the state of urgent crisis, in any way connect to the richness of our planetary ecosystem, or the losses we all had to suffer throughout recent decades.

The possibilities of green economic and industrial activity are envisaged only in the search for “new drivers of growth” (WEF 2010). Growth, seems to remain the main driver for development, abroad, by investing into the expansion of resource intensive economies in the global south, and at home, developing the economy seems to have turned into “direct[ing] it towards more knowledge intensive, higher-productivity activities.” (*ibid.*)

The dominant character of the growth doctrine does not constitute a new scientific insight. As laid out in the introduction, many scholars point to the hegemonic influence of neoliberal thinking in the mainstream conceptualizations of our economic model. What is, however, striking, is its heavy influence on the oppression of the rethinking of the economy in holistic terms. We must not forget that “all theory depends on assumptions which are not quite true. That is what makes it theory” (Solow 1956: 65). Theory is what creates our economic model and our economic model ensures what turns into ‘observable reality’.

5. Conclusion Chapter

What strikes my mind first when thinking about introducing the main findings of my research is the term “The Resilience of Bad Ideas, as utilized by Schmidt (2016). Having said this, the conclusion will begin with the neglection or affirmation of the hypotheses, drawing on the insights presented in the foregone chapter. After that, the main thoughts of the introduction are picked up and reflected upon from, complementing them with perspectives gained during this paper. In a third step, I will formulate the implications that arise from my results, both of the general character as well as in terms of the scientific community.

5.1 Answering the research question

Recalling the first hypothesis, expecting that

(H1) The analysis of my dataset will result in a high reflection of the concept of green growth and practical objectives for its implication will be given. A paradigm-shift will be evident in the use of language and the assessment of the situation of crisis,

can be neglected. The results of my data analysis do show a certain degree of reflection of Green Growth in the context of a larger embedding into a vocabulary of sustainability. A deeper analysis in the form of taking into account the context it is situated in, is often not more than a mere lip service. The situation of crisis and the accompanying notion to present a way out, led to an emergence of the inclusion of sustainability into strategic papers. These, however, lack precise conceptualization and, opposed to the explicit addressing of economic objectives related to Growth, are not expressed in terms of clear goals or projects, nor with an urgency to transform a system that led to what has been overall dramatically been construed as the Financial Crisis. In contrast to that, notices to the state of ecology and the degradation of the environment have not at all been treated in any of the documents.

The second assumption that

(H2) The reflection of green growth in the set of documents will be low or of a rather rhetoric character, without serious attempts to transfer the concept into action

can be partly approved. The part that serious attempts are a rarity in the practically applied rhetoric of Green Growth has already been discussed above. The first part of the assumption deserves a closer elaboration. The degree of reflection of the concept of Green Growth in the dataset varied across the type of documents. Projects like OPEN and CSR Enterprise Europe Network show a relatively high degree of the concept, including comprehensive practical recommendations. The economic Strategy paper “Europe 2020” reflects the concept to a high degree, basically to 1/3, but a closer look reveals, as also already said, its character as a strategy to regain trust and present a positive future prospect. This

becomes especially evident in the speeches of EU officials at an EU forum, that did only very slightly touch the vocabulary of Sustainability. Especially economic forecasts by networks like EUREN reflected very little on that. Furthermore, some of these actors utilized vocabulary from the field of sustainability to refer to Classic Growth models, ironically sometimes even of the sustainable development of oil prices in the following quarters. That shows, how the conventional forces on the one hand and, on the other hand, the material interests of actors within the Growth-doctrine persists.

I still would like to add the positive fact that there is, at least, some evidence for engaged actors in the framework of European economic networks.

5.2. Reference to Introduction and research outlook

An extension has to be made to the conclusions drawn from the discussion of H2. During the interpretation of the analytical results, it became clear that the vague formulation of the concept of sustainability is not only due to a competition of narratives. Due to its position in “the middle” between exponents of de-growth or no-growth discourses and the classical economic paradigm of Growth, the rhetoric induces the conclusion that the dominant Growth discourse is using its narratives to take it over. This is mainly visible in the way that the main emphasize in the representation of Green Growth in the dataset, that rather puts the focus on Growth, than on Green. Mostly, only the aspects that contribute to the economy are highlighted, not the efforts of the economy for the environment. This discursive structure of Growth stands like the limits to possible action taken on for the valuing and preserving of the very basis of our livelihoods. What common sense can lead someone to the investment into the pollution of the air we breathe for the sake of random numbers on a piece of paper?

The conflicts that arise from the dominant or hegemonic paradigm that informs economic and ecological policy and strategy making lead to the formulation of two possible drivers.

Even if the governments came up with the same amount of money or policy reforms for its salvation as they did for the financial system, that wouldn't do. You cannot bail out the rain forest for its losses to corporations. You cannot rise water quality like interest rates if it becomes toxic. You cannot compensate ecosystems for the loss of yet another species with the help of reconciliation or financial aid policies. The state cannot cushion the consequences of market failure on nature.

Another aspect here is the different role that time plays in the economy and in the environment. Economic strategies are mostly directed at short-time effects of growth and profit. Economic benefits need to be visible promptly in order to legitimize their costs. Taken the example of the European Financial Crisis, the remedies comprise, as stated, ad hoc financial means for correcting red numbers on accounts, letting the masses pay with taxes and indirectly cutting their living standard through austerity policies. Then again, their purpose of returning their voters back to an economy striving of growth and prosperity requires the “language of blood sweat and tears” (Barroso), all of that, defined by progressive and ambitious language. In contrast, remedies for the ecological crisis, in many cases, require to *not* do

something, to deal with objects that are not subject to discursive construction and other times, to plant something and simply wait and stay silent.

The reader may excuse the extensive comparison. This is due to an intensive research in the field, that consequently reveals the absurdity I just tried to paint a picture of.

The analysis of discursive patterns of power and limitations to knowledge shall not result in a conclusion ending with the yet another statement on the dominance of Economic Growth. The implications of my findings shall also serve as inspiration to conduct similar research in this field, or even others, where the dominant discourse integrates emerging alternative or minority discourses, in order to form them to comply with its own and old objectives.²³

It is desired to make one final remark. Foucault once stated, “it’s up to you, who are directly involved with what goes on [in geography], faced with all the conflicts of power which traverse it, to confront them and construct the instruments which will enable you to fight on that terrain.” (Foucault 1980a: 65). Discourse analysis offers some helpful tools to reveal power structures and put them in a larger context. From the basis of observations of contradiction and of recognition for according scientific insights, and “Given the high level pro-sustainability declarations of the last twenty years and the meagre results, sustainability science has to seek the causes of failure, not only describe the sad symptoms. We simply cannot go on dealing with the bubbles on the surface and not asking what keeps the pot boiling.” (561)

Concluding, if we reveal the story and do not want to accept this pre-dominant story, even if you are not handed the microphone you can at least stop listening to what others shout inside. That attention could be redirected to learning from the thousands of efforts and voices that do not generate news like latest developments on global financial markets.²⁴ For that one day, the mastery of the nature for the purpose of Growth will make space for truthful enlightenment.

6. Recources

Bodansky, D. (2001). The history of the global climate change regime. *International relations and global climate change*, 23.

Baker, A. (2010). Restraining regulatory capture? Anglo-America, crisis politics and trajectories of change in global financial governance. *International Affairs*, 86(3), 647-663.

Blockupy. (2017). Retrieved from <https://blockupy.org/>

BBC News. 2009. Follow the money. Retrieved from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8249411.stm>.

²³ During my analysis, I stumbled across some examples for that, e.g. in terms of the economically reframed value of women’s empowerment: “Perhaps a more unexpected and consequently untapped source of growth is the so called ‘gender dividend’. This is the growing body of evidence that by addressing female consumers and harnessing the power of females within private industry, businesses will yield significant returns. Equality and empowerment for women and girls is not just the right thing to do but essential to achieve our most promising and sustainable future.” (CSR 2017: 14) Another prominent example that appeared in my dataset is the treatment of migrants according to the economic benefits that can be expected from their protection and integration (EUREN 2016: 8).

²⁴ Some positivity towards the end: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkZDSqyE1do>, <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/>

Cordis. (2017). Projects & Results

Cox, R. W. (1981). Social forces, states and world orders: beyond international relations theory. *Millennium*, 10(2), 126-155.

Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-death of Neo-liberalism*: Wiley.

Edenhofer, O. (2015). King Coal and the queen of subsidies. *Science*, 349(6254), 1286-1287.

Ehrlich, P. R., & Holdren, J. P. (1971). Impact of population growth.

European Central Bank. (2014.) *Statement by Mario Draghi, President of the ECB, at the Thirtieth meeting of the IMFC*. Retrieved from

European Bank. (2017). András Simon. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrd.com/executive-committee/andras-simor.html>.

Expertsvar. (2013, January 9). Mixed forests more productive than monocultures. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved June 5, 2017 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130109081141.htm

Foucault, M. (1969). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Vintage.

Fournier, P. (2014). *Foucault and International Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/12/foucault-and-international-relations/>.

Gamfeldt, L. et al. (2013). Higher levels of multiple ecosystem services are found in forests with more tree species. *Nature communications*, 4, 1340.

Gee, J. P., & Handford, M. (Eds.). (2013). *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis*. Routledge.

Geels, F. W. (2013). The impact of the financial–economic crisis on sustainability transitions: Financial investment, governance and public discourse. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 6, 67-95.

Giddings, B., Hopwood, B., & O'brien, G. (2002). Environment, economy and society: fitting them together into sustainable development. *Sustainable development*, 10(4), 187-196.

Global Issues. (2013). Coral Reefs. Retrieved from <http://www.globalissues.org/article/173/coral-reefs>.

Investorguide. (2017). Definition Economic Model. Retrieved from <http://www.investorguide.com/definition/economic-model.html>.

Jackson, M. O. (2008). *Social and Economic Networks*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ.

Jackson, T., & Senker, P. (2011). Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet. *Energy & Environment*, 22(7), 1013-1016.

Jacobs, M. (2012). Green growth: economic theory and political discourse. *Centre for climate change economics and policy working paper*, 108.

Mittelman, J. H. (2010). Crisis and global governance: money, discourses, and institutions. *Globalizations*, 7(1-2), 157-172.

Ossewaarde, M. (2017). 'Crises of Modernity' Discourses and the Rise of Financial Technologies in a Contested Mechanized World. *Philosophy and technology*.

Peters, B. G., Pierre, J., & Randma-Liiv, T. (2011). Global financial crisis, public administration and governance: Do new problems require new solutions?. *Public Organization Review*, 11(1), 13-27.

Popescu, G. H., & Huru, D. (2016). The role of multinational corporations in global environmental politics. *Economics, Management, and Financial Markets*, 11(3), 72-78. 2016.

Postgrowth. (2017). About. Retrieved from <http://postgrowth.org/learn/about-post-growth/>.

Saxer, M. (2013). What We Need to Learn From Neoliberal Discourse. *Social Europe*.

Scrieciu, S., Rezai, A., & Mechler, R. (2013). On the economic foundations of green growth discourses: the case of climate change mitigation and macroeconomic dynamics in economic modeling. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Energy and Environment*, 2(3), 251-268.

Sharp, L., & Richardson, T. (2001). Reflections on Foucauldian discourse analysis in planning and environmental policy research. *Journal of environmental policy and planning*, 3(3), 193-209.

Spangenberg, J. H. (2010). The growth discourse, growth policy and sustainable development: two thought experiments. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(6), 561-566.

Sullivan, S. (2017). What's ontology got to do with it? On nature and knowledge in a political ecology of the 'green economy'. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24, 217-242.

The Free Dictionary. (2017). Economic Model. <http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Economic+model>.

The News York Times. 2011. *Adding Up the Government's Total Bailout Tab*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/02/04/business/20090205-bailout-totals-graphic.html?_r=0.

United Nations. (2017). Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1447>.

Van Apeldoorn, B. (2009). The contradictions of 'embedded neoliberalism' and Europe's multi-level legitimacy crisis: The European project and its limits. In *Contradictions and limits of neoliberal European governance* (pp. 21-43). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Walker, K., & Wan, F. (2012). The harm of symbolic actions and green-washing: Corporate actions and communications on environmental performance and their financial implications. *Journal of business ethics*, 109(2), 227-242.

Walsh, Ben. (2014). Tim Geithner: The 3 Words That Saved The Euro Were Ad-Libbed. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/13/mario-draghi-whatever-it-takes_n_6152290.html.

Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., & Yates, S. J. (Eds.). (2001). *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis*. Sage.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Methods for critical discourse analysis*. Sage.

Woods, N. (2010). Global Governance after the Financial Crisis: A new multilateralism or the last

WWF. (2017) Deforestation. Retrieved from http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/deforestation/.