Climate leadership, climate justice and security: an impossible trinity for the EU

Abstract:

The 2015 Paris Climate Accords marked the rise of climate change politics to the prominence. As such, the relation between fossil-based development and national power (or regional power in the case of EU) will come under more strain in the face of 'how' the adaptation, mitigation and transition efforts will be managed. In that study, 'impossible trinity in the geopolitics of climate change' analytical framework is developed based on a theoretical discussion. Then, European discourses are analysed applying the impossible trinity analytical framework to test whether European discourses are sensitive to the said dilemmas within the impossible trinity framework. The results of the study suggested European discourses deliberately escape to address them which is neither sustainable nor encouraging for paradigmatic changes to face the challenge of climate change.

Keywords:

Green Deal, geopolitics, geoeconomics, climate change, European Union.

How to quote:

Introduction

Climate change has increasingly been acknowledged as the defining challenge of humanity. After decades of denial politics, it has emerged as a main theme in international relations debates. The 2015 Paris Climate Accords[1] marked the rise of climate change politics to the prominence. In this regard, worldwide adaptation and transition strategies gathers momentum as the broader repercussions of climate change and so-called green transition on geopolitics become more and more recognized[2]. The relation between fossil-based development and national power (or regional power in the case of EU) will come under more strain in the face of 'how' the adaptation, mitigation and transition efforts will be managed. On the other hand, there is a sheer need for developing countries to catch-up with the developed countries, an international justice perspective would suggest the EU just like the other developed countries to bear a burden in proportion to its historical responsibility[3]. However, such a move could fundamentally upset current economic superpower status of the EU in the global power configuration. Depending on aforementioned 'how', there will certainly be implications on both the power configurations (and where the EU will stand) and international climate justice.

Thus, this paper considers it essential to investigate the following questions:

What do the EU discourses on climate change tell us about geopolitical aspects of the

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[1] See the state of play in climate change governance and some climate facts:
UN News. (2020, December 2). The race to zero emissions, and why the world depends on it. Retrieved from UN News: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078612

[2] See some works linking climate change politics and geopolitics:
ALLEN, J. R., & JONES, B. (2021, February 4). What climate change will mean for US security and geopolitics. Retrieved from Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/04/what-climate-change-will-mean-for-us-security-and-geopolitics/
European Union Institute for Security Studies (ISS). (2020, December 11). CLIMATE CHANGE, DEFENCE AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION. Retrieved from European Union Institute for Security Studies (ISS): https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/climate-change-defence-and-crisis-management-reflection-action
HERMAN, S. (2019). The Paris Climate Agreement - Harbinger of a New Global Order. Swarthmore International Relations Journal, 1-18. Retrieved from https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=swarthmoreirjournal
LEONARD, M., PISANI-FERRY, J., SHAPIRO, J., TAGLIAPIETRA, S., & WOLFF, G. (2021, February 3). The geopolitics of the European Green Deal. Retrieved from European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR): https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-geopolitics-of-the-european-green-deal/
REITERER, M. (2021, February 24). EU Security Policy After COVID: Walking the Talk or Losing Credibility. Retrieved from Brussels School of Governance: https://brussels-school.be/sites/default/files/CSDS_Policy_brief_202101.pdf

[3] The need for the developed countries (thereby including the EU) to bear more burden is also an important part of the Paris Climate Accord. See: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078612

climate challenge and the international climate justice? Are they sensitive to the security-justice dilemma in the geopolitics of climate change, if so, which ways?

In the light of these questions, this paper will try to argue the impossible trinity between the EU's supposed climate leadership role, international climate justice and the realist characteristics of international relations with a focus on security dilemma. In doing so, this paper will first provide a theoretical discussion to elaborate on each aspect of *impossible trinity* encompassing the EU's supposed climate leadership role, international climate justice, and security dilemma. Then, this paper will sketch out the *impossible trinity in the geopolitics of climate change* analytical framework. Inspired by Dani Rodrik's seminal work[4], this study adapts his impossible trinity/trilemma of the world political economy framework to the context of geopolitics of climate change. Parallels can be drawn as follows: hyper globalization, national sovereignty and democratic policies in his work represents, respectively, the modalities of EU's climate leadership, realpolitik security concerns and democratic policies in this study[5].

Furthermore, European discourses articulated in the European Green Deal[6] will be critically analyzed through the lens of impossible trinity analytical framework. This paper considers applying its discourse analysis drawing on the European Green Deal Communication the most relevant for practical and analytical purposes of this paper: Practically, since it is assumed to be the latest overarching roadmap in the EU efforts towards carbon neutrality by 2050, it is more useful to focus on this single broad policy communication instead of dealing with many single less-comprehensive policy initiatives of the Union. Analytically, as this paper's analytical framework will be intersecting with the geopolitical aspect of climate change politics, it is this very same European Commission led by Ursula von Der Leyen that released the European Green Deal Communication and concurrently established itself as a 'geopolitical commission'[7]. In the end, this paper will

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[4] RODRIK, Dani. The Globalization Paradox: Why Global Markets, States, and Democracy Can't Coexist. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

[5] Briefly, "EU Climate Leadership" bears similar elements of non/extra-territorial paradigm in "hyper globalization", "realpolitik security concerns" is near to perfect match with "national sovereignty" whereas "international climate justice" roughly corresponds to "democratic values" due to its values/ideals aspect.

[6] The European Green Deal communication is laid out in 2019 by the European Commission to set the roadmap to transition towards carbon neutrality in Europe:
European Commission. (2019, December 11). *The European Green Deal.* Retrieved from European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

[7] *Speech in the European Parliament Plenary Session as delivered by President-elect Ursula von der Leyen.* (2019, November 27). Retrieved from European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/president-elect-speech-original_1.pdf

make conclusions and some final remarks.

Climate leadership, climate justice and security: describing the three vertices of impossible trinity

To begin with, this paper considers the theoretical contribution of Peter Taylor (1994)[8] as an overarching theme to the discussion of geopolitics of climate change. In his work explaining territoriality that underpins the modern-world system, Taylor argues that (modern, territorial and extractivist) nation-states strive to adapt to a new context of declining state authority to sustain their relevance in international arena[9]. However, he means that despite the erosion of nation-state authority to varying degrees, the underlying logic of territoriality that characterizes the modern world system is ultimately doomed to face environmental calamities like climate crisis because only anti-territoriality would be part of the solution[10]. Thus, it can be deduced that even the EU as a special mix of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism cannot manage to be part of the solution as implied in the sense Taylor mentions because of this contradiction between its underlying territorial logic and necessary ecological solution as anti-territorial. In a similar vein, the work of Susan Baker (2007)[11], in which she shows the EU's approach towards climate change, can be seen to reflect the EU's territorial and 'growthist' logic.

The EU's position and Supposed Climate Leadership Role

To understand earlier approaches of the EU, in her study Susan Baker (2007)[12] contends that the EU indisputably embraces 'the strategy of ecological modernization'[13] while retaining a 'declaratory' commitment to 'sustainable development'[14]. She concludes[15] that with its declaratory commitment to sustainable development the EU tries to co-opt radical critiques of modernity and to symbolically politicize[16] sustainable development in its

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[8] TAYLOR, P. J. (1994). The state as container: territoriality in the modern world-system. *Progress in Human Geography*, 151-162. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/030913259401800202

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] BAKER, S. (2007). Sustainable development as symbolic commitment: Declaratory politics and the seductive appeal of ecological modernisation in the European Union. *297-317*, Environmental Politics. Retrieved from https://rsa.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09644010701211874#.YJsVC7UzbIU

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] The theory that posits growth can be decoupled from emissions by employment of technologies etc.

[14] 'Sustainable development' meant to have more emphasis on equality aspect against climate change.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Baker does not consider the EU's adoption of ecological modernization while making declaratory

identity construction while preserving its neoliberal characters. Thus, earlier approaches of the EU especially since 2000 are characterized with no divorce from 'growthism' and fundamentally expansionist understanding of capitalism. Nevertheless, the 2015 Paris Climate Accords —as the main frame in global governance of climate change with a leading role of the EU— carries a very similar line of logic as well albeit it encompasses relatively more ambitious justice perspective. Apart from these critical dissatisfactions, the EU has also been seen to play 'a leading role'[17] and the EU explicitly establishes itself as a 'global leader in climate action'[18]. On a balanced account, there are also some signs[19] that signal inter-institutional clashes would occur in shaping the EU climate action per se, let alone its global leadership role. To make the EU's climate leadership role real, the EU would need to get other actors on board for "the legitimacy and the credibility of the EU's climate leadership"[20] by different modalities of leadership. In this regard, following typology would help for a nuanced conception of leadership: *leadership by example/multilateralism*[21] is briefly about norm-setting in terms of mobilizing ambitious targets through multilateral approach. On the other hand, *leadership by assistance*[22] implies engagement particularly with close partners and neighbours to promote green transition with a view of distributional (justice) dimension of climate change. Lastly, *leadership by power*[23] refers to the leveraging capacity (in a sharp power sense) of the EU as a geoeconomics actor to advance and/or export the transition efforts worldwide.

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commitment to sustainable development as 'ecological deception' because of possible driving force of this declaratory commitment in 'the symbolic politics of the EU'.

[17] SIDDI, M. (2020, May). *The European Green Deal: assessing its current state and future implementation.* Retrieved from Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA): https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/wp114_european-green-deal.pdf

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] TAYLOR, K. (2021, March 5). *EU Commission clashes with Parliament over 'net' 2030 climate target.* Retrieved from EURACTIV: https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/eu-commission-clashes-with-parliament-over-net-2030-climate-target/

Importance of inter-institutional coordination is also acknowledged in this ECFR policy paper:

OERTEL, J., TOLLMANN, J., & TSANG, B. (2020, December 3). *Climate superpowers: How the EU and China can compete and cooperate for a green future.* Retrieved from European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR): https://ecfr.eu/publication/climate-superpowers-how-the-eu-and-china-can-compete-and-cooperate-for-a-green-future/

[20] GRIMM, S., REINERS, W., HELWIG, N., SIDDI, M., & MOURIER, L. (2021). *The Global Dimension of the European Green Deal: The EU as a Green Leader?* Retrieved from Multinational Development Policy Dialogue - Konrad Adenauer Stiftung: https://www.kas.de/documents/272317/272366/The+Global+Dimension+of+the+European+Green+Deal+-+The+EU+as+a+Green+Leader.pdf/7cdbc965-652b-6b83-13ce-8dd3c1e361f1?version=1.1&t=1616614992833

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

International Climate Justice

International climate justice is seen as indispensable for any climate action to have a chance of bringing about some sort of viable change and success. In that regard, the landmark Paris Climate Accord has included a justice perspective embedded in the notion of 'common but differentiated responsibilities'[24]. Accordingly, peculiarities of the countries are to be taken into consideration in terms of their possible Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Thus, besides to the need to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, the EU and other developed countries is bound to provide $100 billion dollars per year to be entitled to respective developing countries[25] (such as China while Turkey is considered to be a developed country according to the criteria of Paris agreement). Yet, developed countries including the EU member states fall short of delivering on this[26] for several reasons among which fiscal problems of developed countries and the considerable cross-sectional distributional effects are listed by many authors[27].

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[24] HERMAN, S. (2019). The Paris Climate Agreement - Harbinger of a New Global Order. *Swarthmore International Relations Journal*, 1-18. Retrieved from https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=swarthmoreirjournal

[25] UN News. (2020, December 2). *The race to zero emissions, and why the world depends on it*. Retrieved from UN News: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078612

[26] See 'under-delivery' issue in the context of North-South tension:
EVANS, T. (2021, April 16). *Snapshot: the geopolitical context for global climate action*. Retrieved from E3G: https://www.e3g.org/publications/snapshot-the-geopolitical-context-for-global-climate-action/
See also:
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/09/rich-failing-help-fund-poor-countries-climate-fight-warns-un-chief-antonio-guterres

[27] Some related works:
DERVIŞ, K., & STRAUSS, S. (2021, February 18). *The decarbonization paradox*. Retrieved from Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-decarbonization-paradox/?preview_id=1412345
DERVIŞ, K. (2020, February 11). *Getting Carbon Border Taxes Right*. Retrieved from Project Syndicate: https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/carbon-border-taxes-efficiency-distributional-problems-by-kemal-dervis-2020-02?barrier=accesspay
BUITER, W. H. (2020, February 10). *Is Global Climate Solidarity Impossible?* Retrieved from Project Syndicate: https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/global-climate-solidarity-impossible-by-willem-h-buiter-1-2020-02?barrier=accesspaylog
As new specific measures of the EU Green Deal are announced at the time of editing of this study, intra-EU climate justice concerns has already started to be raised:
https://www.ft.com/content/883a676c-7370-4e42-9b3a-dcf7e898e7bd

Table 3 Scorecard of progress towards a fair share of international climate finance (2017–2018)

Country	Fair share based on a composite index ($ billions)	Climate finance contributions (2017–2018 average, $ billions)	Progress towards providing a fair share of climate finance (%)
Norway	0.576	1.082	188
Sweden	0.906	1.372	151
Germany	8.274	9.236	112
France	5.402	4.854	90
Japan	11.740	9.372	80
Denmark	0.615	0.452	74
Netherlands	1.779	1.230	69
Switzerland	0.968	0.601	62
Belgium	1.125	0.611	54
Finland	0.560	0.281	50
Luxembourg	0.106	0.051	48
United Kingdom	5.873	2.812	48
Austria	0.826	0.388	47
Iceland	0.038	0.013	36
Ireland	0.597	0.199	33
Italy	4.737	1.195	25
Spain	3.445	0.787	23
Canada	4.153	0.697	17
New Zealand	0.430	0.071	17
Australia	2.948	0.477	16
Portugal	0.696	0.091	13
Greece	0.790	0.072	9
United States	43.416	1.856	4

Note: Countries in dark green are paying their fair share of climate finance. Colours are in quartile increments. Light green, paying 75–100% of their fair share; yellow, paying 50–75% of their fair share; orange, paying 25–50% of their fair share; red, paying less than 25% of their fair share.

Figure 1. Performance indicator of OECD countries, most of which are EU members as well, on meeting their fair share of climate finance to poor countries according to the Overseas Development Institute. Source. https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/ODI_WP_fairshare_final0709.pdf

The picture about international justice perspective is even more grim from the activist point of view and 'the degrowth' narratives. The Fridays for Future environmental

movement and young climate activist Greta Thunberg (particularly with her speech[28] at COP24) played an important role in reinvigorating international climate action. In their recent blog article[29] together with her colleagues, she rebukes the EU's proposed climate ambitions (implicitly European Green Deal framework as well) for them being ignorant to international climate justice concerns and having 'loopholes' that leave space for future underperformance in climate action. On the more extreme side, the so-called degrowth movement[30] strongly rejects 'growthism' and puts an emphasis on the colonial roots and neo-colonial dimensions of the climate crisis. Thus, degrowth establishes itself as aligned with the social movements in the Global South, calls for an end to 'growthism', and defends the dismantling of structures that sustain global inequalities and exacerbate climate crisis.[31] Similar calls for 'true climate justice'[32] are made with a view to the post-pandemic world. Many hints can also be increasingly found about this challenging dimension of international climate justice and the cases for Global South countries like China, India, Algeria, Saudi Arabia etc. in a bunch of recently published works[33].

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[28] COP24 Speech by Greta Thunberg. (2018, December 15). Retrieved from United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/COP24_HLS_ENGO.pdf

[29] NEUBAUER, L., THUNBERG, G., CHARLIER, A., & HEYDEN, A. d. (2020, October 4). *The EU is cheating with numbers — and stealing our future.* Retrieved from Medium: https://gretathunberg.medium.com/the-eu-is-cheating-with-numbers-and-stealing-our-future-1aca3e9a295f

[30] MEREDITH, S. (2021, February 19). *A guide to degrowth: The movement prioritizing wellbeing in a bid to avoid climate cataclysm.* Retrieved from CNBC: https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/19/degrowth-pushing-social-wellbeing-and-climate-over-economic-growth.html

[31] HICKEL, J. (2021). The anti-colonial politics of degrowth. *Political Geography.* Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629821000640

[32] TURHAN, E. (2021). Envisioning climate justice for a post-pandemic world. *Dialogues in Human Geography,* 4-7. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2043820621995608

[33] PÉREZ, A. (2021, April 23). *A Green New Deal for whom?* Retrieved from Open Democracy: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/green-new-deal-whom/

ALLEN, J. R., & JONES, B. (2021, February 4). *What climate change will mean for US security and geopolitics.* Retrieved from Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/04/what-climate-change-will-mean-for-us-security-and-geopolitics/

LOWE, S. (2021, April 22). *THE EU'S CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM: HOW TO MAKE IT WORK FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.* Retrieved from Center for European Reform (CER): https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2021/eus-carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism-how-make-it-work

LEONARD, M., PISANI-FERRY, J., SHAPIRO, J., TAGLIAPIETRA, S., & WOLFF, G. (2021, February 3). *The geopolitics of the European Green Deal.* Retrieved from European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR): https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-geopolitics-of-the-european-green-deal/

LASSILA, J., & SIDDI, M. (2021, March). *Russia meets climate change: The domestic politicization of environmental issues and external pressure to decarbonize.* Retrieved from Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA): https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bp303_russia-meets-climate-change.pdf

Security Dilemma/Concerns and the Revenge of Realism

Contrary to earlier expectations for a unipolar hegemony (a US-led one) and possibility of truly international liberal order (in the sense of almost fully universal whereby post-national paradigm could enable fertile cooperation), nationalism of all sorts has made a strong appearance across the world including Chinese revival, Russian resurrection, right-wing populists in Europe and member states' growing grip on the EU level decision-making. Thus, in his latest book *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (2018)[34], leading Realist scholar John J. Mearsheimer makes the case for how indeed great power politics never disappeared contrary to liberal expectations and; realist tenets[35] like security competition, security dilemma, powerfulness of nationalism etc. still holds true as long as the international society is fundamentally organized around nation-states (albeit nation-state power diminished to varying degrees). The fact that the EU recently defined one element of its relationship with China as 'systemic rival'[36] is an example of growing anxiety of the EU about the rise of Chinese power. The exponentially growing appetite for articulating EU strategic autonomy in debates is also a manifestation for mounting security concerns the EU and certain member states face. Some powers that will expectedly be the most impacted by the implications of European Green Deal and consecutive associated EU policies are China, Russia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia etc.[37] Even the USA alongside these challenging powerhouses is likely to be more concerned with relative gains than climate action per se[38]. Some alarming news[39] and the

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[34] MEARSHEIMER, J. J. (2018). *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv5cgb1w

[35] See some discussions covering realist IR theory and climate change debate: https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=swarthmoreirjournal and https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/news/2015/11/30/126356/the-realist-case-for-climate-change-cooperation/

[36] OERTEL, J., TOLLMANN, J., & TSANG, B. (2020, December 3). *Climate superpowers: How the EU and China can compete and cooperate for a green future.* Retrieved from European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR): https://ecfr.eu/publication/climate-superpowers-how-the-eu-and-china-can-compete-and-cooperate-for-a-green-future/

[37] LEONARD, M., PISANI-FERRY, J., SHAPIRO, J., TAGLIAPIETRA, S., & WOLFF, G. (2021, February 3). *The geopolitics of the European Green Deal.* Retrieved from European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR): https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-geopolitics-of-the-european-green-deal/

[38] LEONARD, M., PISANI-FERRY, J., SHAPIRO, J., TAGLIAPIETRA, S., & WOLFF, G. (2021, February 9). *The EU Can't Separate Climate Policy From Foreign Policy.* Retrieved from Foreign Affairs: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2021-02-09/eu-cant-separate-climate-policy-foreign-policy

[39] LATHAM, A. (2021, April 2). *China Looks to the Arctic to Avoid Another Suez Slowdown.* Retrieved from National Interest: https://nationalinterest.org/feature/china-looks-arctic-avoid-another-suez-slowdown-181715

TAYLOR, K. (2021, April 16). *Chinese president slams EU carbon border levy in call with Macron, Merkel.* Retrieved from EURACTIV: https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/chinese-president-slams-eu-carbon-border-levy-in-call-with-macron-merkel/

publications of some pan-European think tanks[40] already hints at the geopolitical dimension of climate change with an emphasis on industrial competitiveness, supply chains security of raw materials, technological edge etc. with mostly no due regard for the maxim that "you cannot have your cake and eat it". Against this background, free riding would seem attractive to rivals and other critical players, any climate action moves of the EU would compromise the EU's advantageous position as economic superpower and put it into a security dilemma with rivals. Thus, the comeback of realism with the growing security competition in a world of increasing multipolarity must be reckoned with in assessing the prospects of climate action and the European Green Deal.

The EU faces impossible trinity

In the light of theoretical discussion, this paper ends up with an analytical framework of *impossible trinity* comprising the EU's supposed climate leadership, international climate justice, and realism-driven security concerns. Accordingly, the EU might achieve its goals in two simultaneous elements of the trinity at best.

Figure 2. Impossible Trinity. Source. Schema is created by the author based on EU flag sourced in the following EU official website: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag_en

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[40] See some publications of ECFR:
https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-geopolitics-of-the-european-green-deal/ https://ecfr.eu/publication/climate-superpowers-how-the-eu-and-china-can-compete-and-cooperate-for-a-green-future/
See some publications of FIIA: https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bp303_russia-meets-climate-change.pdf https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/wp114_european-green-deal.pdf

In the first scenario, if the EU prioritizes *leadership by example/multilateralism* based on its soft power and with due regard to maintaining current power configurations, it is highly likely that worldwide necessary climate ambition and international justice dimension will be downgraded even in Paris Agreement standards. In the second scenario, if the EU prioritizes *leadership by assistance* taking the risk of further overwhelming existing fiscal delicacy and fuelling populist discontent at home, it is highly likely that it will manage to satisfactorily deliver on international justice dimension in Paris Agreement standards and even beyond at the expense of weakening the EU's relative position as economic superpower vis-à-vis rivals and other critical players. In the third scenario, if the EU prioritizes *leadership by power* leveraging its geo-economic power and ensuring its competitive advantage as economic superpower (i.e., introducing a robust carbon tax to avoid carbon leakage and get others 'sharply' on board), it is highly likely that international justice dimension will be downgraded. Although the exact policies[41] in real world would not be a perfect fit for the typology in this analytical framework, this paper proposes the investigation of whether European discourses (in the European Green Deal Communication) are sensitive to the dilemmas that characterize *impossible trinity* analytical framework.
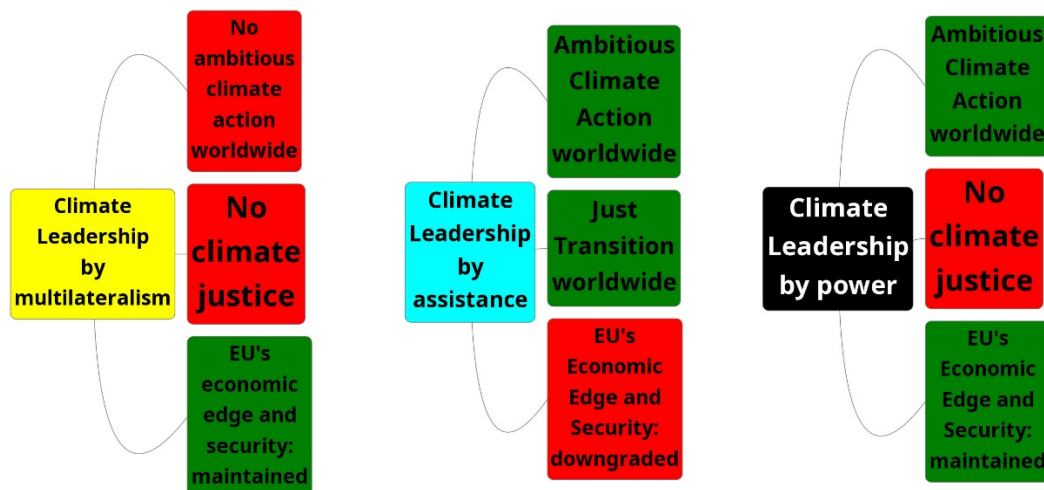

Figure 3. Alternative scenarios in the impossible trinity.

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[41] For instance, at the time of editing of this study, the EU has announced a Carbon Border adjustment mechanism in its 'Fit for 55' package under EU Green Deal. A joint report by E3G and Sandbag shows that costs of this mechanism on trade partners would be limited because of the limited scope and ambition of the mechanism. Thus, this new mechanism remains far away from an idealistic conception of EU *leadership by power*.

Analysing European Discourses on 'Climate Leadership-International Climate Justice-Security Dilemma'

European Green Deal Communication (2019) makes its 'growthist' narrative clear from the very beginning as it posits: It *is a new growth strategy* [emphasis is added] that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and *where economic growth is decoupled from resource use* [emphasis is added].

Alongside this, the text bears considerable references towards 'blue economy' and 'circular economy'. Overall envisioning of the green transition outlined in the text is certainly far from any radical approach necessary to fix climate crisis. In addition, the text places a notable commitment to 'sustainable development' under the UN framework. In that sense, the EU policy line detected by Susan Baker (2007) seems largely intact.

On the other hand, the intra-EU climate justice perspective in green transition is robust as many mechanisms like the Green Transition Fund is envisioned. The nature of climate crisis as transnational issue and the need for a global action is highlighted alongside realist concerns as follows:

The environmental ambition of the Green Deal will not be achieved by Europe acting alone. *The drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss are global and are not limited by national borders* [emphasis added]. The EU can use its influence, expertise and financial resources to mobilize its neighbours and partners to join it on a sustainable path. The EU will continue to lead international efforts and wants to build alliances with the likeminded. It also recognizes *the need to maintain its security of supply and competitiveness even when others are unwilling to act* [emphasis added].

Besides, the text acknowledges that current trajectory under Paris Agreement NDCs is not sufficient to achieve Paris targets. The section 3 is almost entirely attributed to the topic of EU's global climate leadership. The text reflects more of the characteristics of *leadership by example* but also keeps the option of *leadership by power* available as long as necessary. It indirectly implies the challenges/dilemmas of *impossible trinity* as it seeks 'innovative forms of engagement': …the EU will step up bilateral engagement with partner countries and, where necessary, establish *innovative forms of engagement* [emphasis

added]. The EU will continue to engage with the economies of the G20 that are responsible for 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Stepping up the level of climate action taken by international partners requires *tailor-made geographic strategies* [emphasis added] that reflect different contexts and local needs, for example *for current and future big emitters* [emphasis added], for the least developed countries, and for small island developing states.

Whereas countries and regions with which the EU has the most potential to cooperate like Africa and like-minded countries is widely discussed, the case for China as a more challenging negotiating partner is rather less underscored. The text also has an understanding of climate change as a "threat multiplier and a source of instability". It also pays due regard to 'fiscal delicacy' in the EU and member states budgets to finance green transition at the EU level and in global cooperation frameworks and aims at exploring private funding channels as an essential complement to the success of European Green Deal.

All in all, this paper assesses the European Green Deal Communication as a policy document which bears ambivalences in terms of addressing *impossible trinity* framework introduced in this paper. Rather, it seems the text is in desperate quest to escape from addressing it. On the other hand, it is understandable that a political entity like the EU does not want to develop either confrontational or pessimist/deterministic discourses as it contradicts to its so-called DNA. However, leaving dilemmas and challenges unanswered is *neither sustainable* especially in the context of climate crisis *nor encouraging* for radical transformations necessary to face the challenge.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the European discourses through the lens of *impossible trinity* in the geopolitics of climate change framework. *Impossible trinity* framework suggests that there are inherent dilemmas for the EU in the geopolitics of climate change and the EU can only manage to realize two elements of the trinity at best. The EU Climate Leadership (in different modalities), International Climate Justice (Paris Agreement perspective alongside more radical critiques), and realism-driven security concerns (security dilemma etc.) are elements of the proposed *impossible trinity* analytical framework. A rich theoretical discussion also laid the groundwork for the design of this analytical framework. Discourse analysis applied to the European Green Deal Communication concluded that

European discourses (embedded in the European Green Deal Communication) shows a deliberate restraint from addressing the dilemmas of *impossible trinity* for reasons associated with the EU's sui generis reality*.* Whereas climate crisis as implied by Peter Taylor in theoretical discussion of this paper calls for paradigmatic changes namely from 'territoriality' to 'anti-territoriality', a paradigmatic change possibly promoted by bottom-up approaches is also needed for the built-in of the EU for it to be a source of hope in the face of defining challenge of our age.

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