

Oppositional discourses on the EU- Mercosur Association Agreement:

Neoliberal globalization and popular sovereignty within the context of
beef commodity chains

Word count: 23 253

Ana Rita Raleira

Student number: 01713746

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jeroen Adam

A dissertation submitted to Ghent University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Conflict and Development Studies

Academic year: 2020-2021

Deze pagina is niet beschikbaar omdat ze persoonsgegevens bevat.
Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent, 2022.

This page is not available because it contains personal information.
Ghent University, Library, 2022.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Jeroen Adam for all the support provided throughout the journey that brought me to this dissertation and to its completion. From contributing to my interest in rural dynamics through inspiring classes and conversations to gaining my profound respect for the investment and heart as an educator, Prof. Jeroen was undoubtedly a precious mentor.

A very special thank you to my parents for all the support and love throughout a journey that was not always easy for either of us, but which has certainly brought us closer together even in distance.

To Sebastiaan, no words will ever come close to express my love and gratitude for the support given. Through thick and thin, until death do us part.

Lastly, a very millennial/Gen Z shoutout to all the inspiring colleagues and friends who, for five years, helped me expand my horizons and enrich my spirit beyond any calculability. To them and all those mentioned here:

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini

(It is not my strength alone, but the strength of many that contribute to my success)

- Maori proverb -

Abstract

In 2019, after more than twenty years of negotiations, the EU and Mercosur reached an agreement in principle in the contested trade pillar. The provisions and implications of this free trade agreement have been the source of social upheaval since the outset of the negotiations between the two regional blocs.

Within the context of beef commodity chains between EU and Brazil, social contestation to the EU-Mercosur trade agreement was scrutinized against the background of neoliberal globalization and hegemonic economic structures, the corporate food regime, and the erosion of democratic foundations. Economic, social, and environmental sustainability issues were raised against the agreement while a wide front of social actors publicly mobilizes against it. Non-governmental organizations, indigenous organizations, and farmers' associations are among the actors that have continuously criticized the agreement.

The discourses of seven organizations from these three groups, and which oppose the EU-Mercosur agreement, were investigated in this research. Considering the background referred and larger societal frames associated to counter-movements, such as populism and food sovereignty, the discourses of the seven organizations were analyzed through a critical discourse analysis approach.

The findings show that, although united by a shared goal, these organizations do not share a homogeneous discourse and their views on production and consumption, trade, democracy, and sovereignty diverge and converge in different points. Their discourses revealed the underlying layers of meaning, offering a point of entrance into their motivations, interests, and aspirations, from where their relations to each other and to the structures and frames described were unveiled.

Table of contents

List of acronyms and abbreviations	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Literature review.....	10
2.1. Globalization, Global Commodity Chains, and Sovereignty: A world for sale	10
2.2. Neoliberalism and democracy: The liquid times of market doctrine	11
2.3. Scale, Tensions, and Friction	14
2.4. Counter-movements and Resistance.....	15
2.4.1. Populism: Responses of the ‘demos’ in a polarized world	18
2.4.2. Food Sovereignty as populism from the left.....	20
3. Case contextualization	24
3.1. Brazilian beef production: Historical evolution and state of play	24
3.2. The EU beef sector	27
3.3. The EU-Mercosur Association Agreement: The trade pillar conundrum	29
3.4. Civil society contestation: Overview on the opposition to the trade agreement	32
3.4.1. Brazilian indigenous organizations: APIB & COIAB	34
3.4.2. European Farmers’ Organizations: COPA COGECA, FUGEA & IFA	34
3.4.3. Non-Governmental Organizations: Greenpeace & Fern.....	35
4. Methodology.....	36
4.3. Discourse Analysis: Theoretical framework.....	36
4.4. Research Object and Analytical Framework	38
5. Findings, Discussion and Conclusion.....	41
5.1. Contestation: Why, How, and the Schizophrenia of EU	42
5.2. Production and Consumption	45
5.3. Trade	47
5.4. Democratic Functioning and Sovereignty.....	48
5.5. Hegemonic Frameworks: Bringing it all together	50
5.6. Concluding Remarks.....	53
6. Reference List.....	56
7. Annex	62

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AoA	Agreements on Agriculture
APIB	Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Original: Associação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil)
BRIC	Brazil-Russia-India-China
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
COIAB	Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (Original: Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira)
COPA COGECA	COPA: Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations COGECA: General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
EUMAA	EU-Mercosur Association Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSM	Food Sovereignty Movement
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
FUGEA	Fédération Unie de Groupements d'Éleveurs et d'Agriculteurs
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IA	Impact Assessment
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
LVC	La Via Campesina
Mercosur	Southern Common Market (Original: Mercado Común del Sur)
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TNC	Transnational Corporation
TCC	Transnational Commodity Chain
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organizations
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

During most of human history, settlements and civilizations were rural, so production and consumption happened within relatively small distance from each other and the food-related nexus was an important constitutive element of socio-cultural ties (Conversi, 2016; Hocquette et al., 2018). With modernity and the rise of industrialization, societies and their dynamics dramatically changed (Hocquette et al., 2018). The growth of urban centers occurred simultaneously with the re-organization of the countryside, which was not only increasingly defined by intensive/industrialized agricultural production, but also by the physical and abstract distance between producers (periphery) and consumers (center) (Hocquette et al., 2018). These changes ultimately shifted the societal role of agriculture, which went from historically and visibly anchoring communities to being a central element of the corporate food regime (McMichael, 2016; Rodrigues, 2008). These trends were further advanced during the twentieth century thanks to technological developments and standardized modes of production, as well as by the emergent international political economy of the time (Conversi, 2016; McMichael, 2016; Tsing, 2012). Globalization and neoliberalism promoted the development of transnational commodity chains and trade liberalization, which were both determinant to contemporary frameworks of agricultural production and rural development (Friedmann, 1993; McMichael, 2016). In this conjuncture, transnational corporations and agribusinesses gained foothold in the food system and have dominated the global trade of agri-food commodities, contributing as well to the diminished role of governmental policy in the governance of production and trade in this sector (Ihle, Dries, Jongeneel, Venus, & Wesseler, 2017; McMichael, 2016).

There have been side effects to these developments and the consequences of these interlinked processes have been manifold. Environmentally, it has significantly contributed to ecological degradation in the form of exponential deforestation rates, resource scarcity, ecosystem exhaustion, and encroachment of the commons (Ricart, Olcina, & Rico, 2019; Rodrigues, 2008). Socially, the industrialization and neoliberalization of food production has led to a significant change in food relations, subordinating food provisioning to profiteering and causing massive displacement, marginalization, and human rights' violations (Brown, 2015; McMichael, 2016; Rodrigues, 2008). Rural populations and workers have been struggling to maintain their livelihoods and to guarantee their reproduction on the countryside. The threat posed by these specific developments has led many to mobilize against the current production and trade regimes while simultaneously addressing the democratic dysfunction advanced by neoliberalism's *"peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms"* (Brown, 2015, p. 17).

Neoliberalism has been the impelling force behind multilateral trade initiatives and bilateral trade agreements, such as that included in the association agreement between the European Union (EU) and Mercosur (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Moreira & Brites, 2018). The EU-Mercosur Association Agreement (EUMAA) has been in the making for twenty years, being the trade pillar the main point

of dissonance between the two regional blocs (Messerlin, 2013; Moreira & Brites, 2018). Nevertheless, in 2019, an agreement in principle on the free trade agreement (FTA) (trade pillar) was reached and it included a strong focus on agricultural commodities, anticipating the abolishment of import tariffs on a set of agricultural products, such as beef, soy, and sugar (Karatepe, Scherrer, & Tizzot, 2020; McCabe et al., 2020). Several studies have indicated that the ratification of the agreement as it stands is likely to fuel an even greater increment of agri-food production in Mercosur countries, exacerbating the ongoing socio-environmental negative impacts (McCabe et al., 2020; Nicolás, 2021; Rajão et al., 2020).

The negotiations of the EUMAA have always been accompanied by popular contestation, both in South America and in Europe (Moreira & Brites, 2018). Concerns of different natures have been manifested by indigenous, farmers', and civil society organizations, which many mobilizations and campaigns have drawn the attention of the general public, as well as that of the media and governance institutions (EUobserver, 2020; EURACTIV, 2010; Lagoutte, 2020; Neslen, 2019a). It becomes evident that throughout the past two decades the EUMAA negotiations have not occurred in a social vacuum. Different sectors, segments, and organizations of civil society have followed closely the negotiations and their economic, social, and environmental concerns have contributed to the decisions and positions taken in national governments/EU decision-making bodies. The emergent resistance front against the agreement has been marked by claims and initiatives that, albeit heterogeneous in content and form. The establishment of the EUMAA may be a common arena of struggle, but the organizations at the forefront of these struggles do not share uniform ontological roots, perceptions and motivations, nor aspirations, which entails that their particular discourses may not always or entirely coincide. Considering this, I aim to investigate the discourses that civil society organizations have developed towards the agreement, namely how they relate to each other and to larger societal frames, such as trade liberalization, populism, and food sovereignty. Seven groups - including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous associations, and farmers' organizations -, which have been among the most vocal against the establishment of the EUMAA, were selected as research objects. As mentioned, despite the larger common goal, they are not necessarily moved by the same concerns, principles, worldviews, and future expectations, nor is their opposition indicative of equal relations to with trade and transnational commodity chains, neoliberalism, populism and food sovereignty. It is thus relevant to investigate the interrelations of these groups against the background and frames mentioned as to gain insight on the diversity existent within social struggles and movements, considering from that point of view the alternatives proposed by each of them.

To narrow down the scope of this research, I shall focus on the beef commodity chain between Brazil and the EU, as well as on the selected group of organizations, operative in either region or internationally, which are directly affected by or have paid special attention to this particular commodity. Beef is one of the agricultural commodities on which the FTA will have more impact as its imports are expected to increase thanks to the specifications of the agreement (Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015; McCabe et al., 2020). It is bound to contribute to the expansion of the

agricultural frontier and to deepen the ongoing socio-environmental impacts of production. Moreover, it is bound to create serious challenges for EU beef producers, namely in terms of economic sustainability (Lagoutte, 2020). This dissertation contains main five sections: After the introduction, a review and delineation of the pertinent existing literature and the contextualization of the specific case under analysis are presented. This is followed by a section dedicated to the methodological approach and analysis framework of the research. Lastly, the findings and a concluding discussion are presented where an attempt to answer the research question proposed will be offered.

2. Literature review

2.1. Globalization, Global Commodity Chains, and Sovereignty: A world for sale

Generally, globalization is considered a set of mainly economic processes and practices that distinguishes the most recent transformation of contemporary capitalism and which is characterized by the empowerment of finance capital and corporations operating on a world scale (Hay & Rosamond, 2002; Moreira, 2002). It forms a compound of universal capitalist structures defined by a specific mode of production and exchange that allowed for new and higher levels of freedom for capital (Dicken, Kelly, Olds, & Wai-Chung Yeung, 2001; Moreira, 2002). However, this view can be considered incomplete if the contribution of agency and subjectivities to the form and substance of economic globalization are not taken into consideration (Dicken et al., 2001; Hay & Rosamond, 2002). Globalization and its inherent structures result as well from mutually constructive interactions, which entails that world experiences and realities derived from globalizing dynamics are not pre-fixed or unilinear features but rather multidimensional, situated, and co-constructed (Dicken et al., 2001; Hay & Rosamond, 2002). Assuming this dialectical nature of globalization is to acknowledge that discursive practices help creating these realities while legitimizing them as “natural” and therefore to create the conditions for the acceptance of its outcomes as unavoidable (Hay & Rosamond, 2002). This venture is not devoid of ideological purpose since it also validates the standing of certain political economic paradigms and interests (Dicken et al., 2001; Gill & Law, 1989; Moreira, 2002). It is therefore crucial to reckon the performativity of globalization discourses, as well as the power relations that are embedded in and reproduced by them (Gill & Law, 1989). Yet, because of such dialectics, oppositional powers are also bound to emerge and challenge the hegemonic order by claiming and presenting alternatives to the shortcomings and negative consequences of globalization, more specifically of the actions of virtually unrestrained global capital (Gill & Law, 1989; M. B. Moreira, 2002).

Globalization is often associated with global or transnational commodity chains (GCCs or TCCs), which, as a concept, has been used to understand the structure and organization of the global economy (Dicken et al., 2001; Gereffi, Korzeniewicz, & Korzeniewicz, 1994). According to Gereffi, Korzeniewicz & Korzeniewicz (1994, p. 2), a GCC is a “*set of interorganizational networks clustered around one commodity or product, linking households, enterprises, and states to one another within the world-economy. These networks are situationally specific, socially constructed, and locally integrated, underscoring the social embeddedness of economic organization.*”. These have developed side by side with international trade, which has had a significant boost since 1994, and determined not only the transnational exchange of commodities, but all the processes between production and final sale (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). Looking into the dynamics of TCCs allows for the exploration and analysis of the economic organization and transnational flows of the global economy (Dicken et al., 2001). Capital is a prominent element flowing between regions and countries thanks to TCCs and, to a great extent, to transnational corporations (TNCs). This type of corporations are capital-intensive industries which focus on the production of commodities and tend to promote the maximization of

their profits through economies of scale and scope (Moreira, 2002). In a globalized world, the material and immaterial flows that constitute transnational networks transverse multiple scales (Dicken et al., 2001; Kulke, 2008). As transnationality became a defining feature of these networks, their spatial configurations started exceeding classical limits, namely those of the nation-state (Kulke, 2008). This does not mean that currently only the global scale matters, but rather that social relations and capital accumulation occurring at lower levels, such as locally, must be understood and analyzed in relation to the developments occurring at that wider scale (Gill & Law, 1989; M. B. Moreira, 2002). As globalization brought the ascension of the supra-national level, the prominence gained had an inevitable impact on nation-states. Their power over economic processes weakened since national structures of regulation and authority do not apply nor have the same control over economic affairs and players that operate beyond and above state limits (Gill & Law, 1989; Moreira, 2002).

The transformations in the governance of the production-consumption nexus, namely in terms of the increment in international trade and the centrality of markets, influenced the perception and practice of sovereignty (Gill & Law, 1989; Moreira, 2002). Since the onset of neoliberal globalization during the 1980s, transnational and cross continental commodity chain networks developed and/or deepened thanks to the principles of this political economic paradigm, thereby allowing multinational corporations to gain not only economic foothold, but also power and influence over socio-political affairs (Conversi, 2016; Tsing, 2012). Corporate power also facilitated and reinforced neo-colonial relationships with countries from the Global South. Many countries that supply raw materials and primary goods (e.g., agricultural products) to multinationals are ex-colonies, which were already familiar with core-periphery dynamics, namely with exploitative economic relations that linger to this date and determine their marginal participation in global trade (Rodrigues, 2008). All these developments have increasingly contributed to the erosion of national and popular sovereignty, which became negotiable and liquid (Conversi, 2016; Krisch, 2017). Many nation-states have been subjected to waves of “de-sovereignization” for the alleged preservation of domestic macroeconomies. For instance, the possibility of outsourcing costs and responsibilities through subcontracting has allowed corporations to maximize their profits and to effectively meddle in fundamental socioeconomic affairs, which can be considered a form of acquired sovereignty (Conversi, 2016; Moreira, 2002; Tsing, 2012). These dynamics speak of the ways in which the Westphalian sovereignty has become fragmented and has been devolved upon new “sovereigns” in our globalized world, whose influence and decisions lack democratic input in spite of their undeniable effect on individuals, societies, environments, and all public and collective affairs (Conversi, 2016).

2.2. Neoliberalism and democracy: The liquid times of market doctrine

Neoliberalism emerged as a reaction to Keynesianism and democratic socialism (Brown, 2015). In broad lines, it presupposes the “economization” of life by subordinating it to economic policies largely based on neo-classical economics and rooted on the principle of the free market. Thus, in a neoliberal political economy, the centralization and expansion of the market in the polity is both a feature and the goal of economic development (Brown, 2015; Gandesha, 2016). The neoliberal market, operating

under a pre-established system of valuation, is conferred the responsibility of regulating all economic exchanges while also serving as a model for non-economic processes (Brown, 2015; Gandesha, 2016). Therefore, by being a defining feature of neoliberal governance, market forces have induced the reorganization of social spaces and of social life (Coronil, 2000). However, the market is not an autonomous entity with an inherent and fixed *modus operandi* which inevitably determines societal relations and/or political decision-making (Polanyi, 2001). Polanyi (2001) has provided historical examples of so-called “traditional” economies where the embeddedness of markets and the organization of trade in said societies was different than it currently is and so was its impact on social relations. This speaks of the contingency of such market model and sets it as a universalized product of a particular political economic context and hegemonic project, namely that of neoliberalism (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Gill & Law, 1989). Its post-Cold War hegemony, including its grip over imaginations and ways of being-in-the-world, imply the supremacy of a particular set of actors, frameworks, discourses and power relations that abide by the globalization of market society (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Coronil, 2000).

Generally, and in order to ensure the dominance of free markets, neoliberalism introduces economic policies that imply financialization, deregulation, privatization, and an overall reduction of state interference in socioeconomic affairs (Brown, 2015). Neoliberalism can be said to operate in function of modern corporations, paving the way for them to thrive by getting rid of hurdles and impediments (Brown, 2015). This Western governance model has become widespread thanks to globalization, which allowed for the expansion of neoliberal logic and ‘imperial mode of living’ worldwide, thus weaving the world together into a seemingly homogeneous whole under the command of globalized liberal markets (Brand, Görg, & Wissen, 2020; Gandesha, 2016). A fundamental feature for its global success was the capacity of adaptation. The ability to transfigure itself and adjust to spatiotemporal, as well as contextual variations has facilitated neoliberalism’s structural entrenchment and reproduction at multiple scales without making its unevenness apparent or easy to problematize (Brown, 2015). This largely results from its ingenious use of “soft power” which entails, for instance, consensus practices and legal schemes rather than openly authoritarian methods (Brown, 2015).

This formula and the underlying logic of globalized markets have been advantageously applied outside of the political economic context *stricto sensu* (Brown, 2015). Neoliberal rationality has subjugated nearly all domains of life to the model of the market by ingraining it into everyday practices and promoting the so-called economization of life (Brand et al., 2020). Not only did it normalize the access to cheap commodities and labor, it also made of every person a market actor, thereby consolidating the figure of the *homo oeconomicus* and shaping individual and collective identities to the neoliberal economic framing (Brand et al., 2020; Brown, 2015). Albeit not a unique characteristic of neoliberal rationality, this “economization of subjects” is distinctive because of its ubiquity (everyone, everywhere, all the time) and the capitalization of subjects (Subject = human capital dependent on competitive positioning and enhancement of personal value through self-investment) (Brown, 2015). Therefore, the neoliberal *homo oeconomicus* tends to personally legitimize neoliberal economic imperatives, taken often as common sense, and is instrumental to the

reversal of the social contract principle. Thus, the social protection once expected from the state through its institutions became the responsibility of individual citizens, who are demanded to face structural challenges and achieve self-realization while lacking personal and/or social security (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brown, 2015).

The realm of politics and of the political are not immune to these transformations and one of the most striking proofs of it is the ‘marketization of democracy’ (Brown, 2015; Gandesha, 2016). According to Brown (2015, p. 17) “*neoliberal reason, ubiquitous today in statecraft and the workplace, in jurisprudence, education, culture, and a vast range of quotidian activity, is converting the distinctly political character, meaning, and operation of democracy’s constituent elements into economic ones.*” This means that democratic principles and closely related aspects such as citizenship and sovereignty have been losing their political character by being rendered to the neoliberal “management” model (Brown, 2015; Conversi, 2016). This approach, which arguably sought to increase efficiency and effectiveness in policy-making without losing legitimacy, has nonetheless been promoting the depoliticization of society by curtailing the role of democratic institutions, cultures, and imaginaries (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019). Reducing political negotiations to expert planning, for example, has in fact contributed to the erosion of democratic foundations and specifically of what Marx called “the true realm of freedom” (as cited by Brown, 2015, p. 43), that is, the public sphere and the spaces for participatory citizenship (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brown, 2015). The thinning of this realm, which is a space where political dialogues, encounters, conflicts, reflections and imagination can be fostered, further contributes to distance citizens from political decision-making and to reinforce feelings of democratic and popular disempowerment (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019). The turn towards the economization of everything promoted by neoliberalism empties the content of democracy on all levels of political governance, whether national or supra-national, as is often considered the case of the European Union (EU), which purposes often seem to be restricted to economic development, growth, competitiveness, and financial ratings (Brown, 2015).

Nonetheless, radical transformation of societies due to neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization has originated a cascade of effects that spawn from economic disarray to subjective insecurity (Gandesha, 2016). Accumulation by dispossession, deregulation, dominance of finance capital and corporate interests, inequality in wealth distribution, economic insecurity, and the privatization of the commons have progressively increased, as have wider economic struggles such as financial or structural crises (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Brown, 2015). Neoliberal globalization has also fomented cultural and epistemic shocks related to differentiated collective identities (Gandesha, 2016). Adding to these, neoliberal governance has further advanced unsustainable practices of both production and consumption, deepening the ecological crisis and environmental degradation ravaging the planet (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Brown, 2015; Weis, 2013). All these consequences of unchecked neoliberal global governance have been politically translated into assaults on individual and collective sovereignty, as well as on democratic decision-making, justice and the rule of law, leading to political and social upheaval. The systemic destabilization created and which is increasingly more evident has led many to question the alleged inevitability of neoliberal principles and market focus (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). As a result, locally

and/or issue bound social dissent and popular protests have proliferated worldwide alongside collectively organized resistance in the form of transnational social movements, such as the Occupy Wall Street and the Anti-globalization movements (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Brown, 2015). Thus, the grievances caused by neoliberal political economic have been a breeding ground for rising populist tendencies, both on the right and on the left of the political spectrum (Brown, 2015; Gandesha, 2016).

2.3. Scale, Tensions, and Friction

As mentioned previously, neoliberalism's societal impact has been collectively and subjectively profound (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brown, 2015). The marketization of life and the growing importance of individuality have been instrumental to the waning of the social contract and led to progressively less just and inclusive societies wherein individual realization is a zero-sum game: the few that can achieve it do so at the expense of others (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019). In addition to this, democracy has also been under serious stress given all the institutional, social, and individual transformations induced by modernization processes and exacerbated by neoliberal globalization. As referred by Blühdorn and Butzlaff (2019), representative democracy is facing a legitimation crisis and underperforming as a system (considered dysfunctional and inefficient) and as a means for emancipation (unable to guarantee peoples' rights).

The issue of scale is especially important to understand past and present transformations and namely how those occur within the scalar relationship between large and small (Tsing, 2012). According to Tsing (2012), to expand a project without compromising its uniformity and blueprint, it is necessary to withhold distortion effects that might induce transformation. "Precision nesting" is a technical feat that allows for scalability, that is, for the expansion from small to large, without changing the framework since the different scales, with all their encompassed elements, are neatly adjusted to and aligned with each other. Scalability has been an important property of modern world making, one that has contributed to define winners and losers and a crucial element in the process of globalization (Tsing, 2012). Scalability allows for a model to be reproduced profitably through the neutralization of agentic relations, especially those centered on care as they are perceived as the source of transformation and can therefore threatened the continuity (and, most importantly, the profitability) of the system. Therefore, agentic alienation and control through the creation of new structural conditions, based on human labor and the commodification of nature, was a key process to safeguard the stability and regularity of the system (Tsing, 2012). Thanks to scalability, capitalism managed, throughout time, to extend its grip worldwide while making everything marketable. Political governance, increasingly based on a capitalist *raison d'être*, focused on wealth accumulation and economic growth, often achieved by creating '*political ecologies of production*' (Tsing, 2012, p. 506). The twentieth century was marked by these trends, especially with the emergence of globalization and neoliberalism, which associated more than ever progress and development to expansion through scalability.

While virtually taking over the world, scalability and its unlimited expansionism sowed seeds of discontent. Standardization, regulation, compartmentalization, control, alienation, and all the necessary building blocks of scalable models came with a price – disregard for human needs and for the destruction of nature (Tsing, 2012). However, the side effects of scalable capitalism and neoliberal globalization, and the corresponding discourses have presented new contingencies (e.g., climate change and social movements) that cannot be controlled or hidden by the system and which represent opportunities for transformation by creating contact spaces that connect difference (Dicken et al., 2001). In other words, relations can set in motion processes of “friction” through which dominant frameworks can be altered (Tsing, 2012). Friction facilitates the development of new normative and discursive formulations, specifically oppositional ones that can defy romantic version of free trade and TCCs promoted by neoliberal globalization (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Conversi, 2016). Thus, a growing pool of resistance movements and discourses started developing, including calls for socioenvironmental justice, market protectionism, popular sovereignty, land sovereignty, self-determination rights, and defence of rurality, among other alternative values that implied the possibility of re-gaining subjectivity and political sovereignty (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019).

2.4. Counter-movements and Resistance

Given the challenges posed by globalization and neoliberalism as described before, it is useful to recall Polanyi’s account of the historical transformation into market societies (Polanyi, 2001). According to Polanyi, the developments spanning from the nineteenth century until the 1930s gradually revealed the existence of problematic structural dynamics underlying market societies. These developments and the dawn of the market society were, as stated by the author, fundamentally connected to the question of land, more specifically to its acquired status of fictitious commodity (together with labor and money). In parallel with the increasing importance of fictitious commodities, the strengthening of commodification and massification in production and consumption, and the rising focus on economic growth and world market competition created a combination factors that led to an unsustainable system and social reality (Brand et al., 2020; Polanyi, 2001). These conditions have already led to social disarray and waves of protest in the past and are once again emerging, this time against neoliberal orthodoxy, namely free trade agreements, neoliberal economic institutions, and transnational corporations, echoing those that protested against capitalist forces in Europe in the beginning of the twentieth (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Polanyi, 2001). Likewise, many back then supported authoritarian and populist regimes in search for societal changes, which is a trend that has again made its way into contemporary struggles (Mamonova & Franquesa, 2019; Polanyi, 2001).

These moments of crisis and counterreactions are moments of social transformation. Polanyi did not provide a thorough qualitative description of these socially transformative processes, but has nonetheless characterized them as a ‘double movement’ (Polanyi, 2001). However, this idea appears reductive as it homogenizes contingent conflicts and subsumes them under the same conceptual umbrella, as if they constitute a singular reaction phenomenon (Brand et al., 2020). Despite deriving

from the same capitalist contradictions and arising from the destabilization of neoliberal globalization, these conflicts must be considered individually and analysed in the context of their geo-historical circumstances (Biekart & Fowler, 2013; Brand et al., 2020). Therefore, according to Brand et al. (2020, p. 171), it is also important to “*think beyond Polanyi*” and to broaden the ‘double movement’ metaphor by taking into account the diversity existent in social struggles and in the alternatives they might offer (Brand et al., 2020).

The multiplicity of struggles and their contingency is manifested through the perception and approaches adopted in relation to common issues derived from the perceived source of the problem (Brand et al., 2020; Woods, 2003). For instance, as mentioned previously, one of the aspects that motivates many social struggles is the loss of sovereignty. While being a shared point of discontent, the notion of sovereignty, its substance and the possibilities to re-gain it are ambiguous, fluid and disputed (Conversi, 2016). This reflects the heterogeneity and situatedness of counter-movements against the neoliberal grip, but it is also telling of the deep-rootedness of uncertainty in contemporary social realities (Conversi, 2016; Krisch, 2017). Bauman (2000) has delved into this through the concept of ‘liquid modernity’, which can be considered a facet of neoliberal times thanks to which contemporary societies and modes of life are characterized by motion, instability, permanent change, and absence of strict boundaries. Sovereignty is also affected, and a form of liquid sovereignty substituted its Westphalian (understood as solid) essence (Bauman, 2000). Under such a configuration and without any effective amelioration response to it from the neoliberal system, societies’ have been rendered vulnerable and are unable to be self-reliant in the face of challenges, such as in cases of social precarity, democratic withdrawal, and environmental degradation, which are perceived as harmful and brought into question by social movements (Conversi, 2016; Krisch, 2017).

Regarding political standing, counter-movements can be defined according to their position in the spectrum between reactionary or progressive. In Polanyi’s account, both prototypical types could be found among the movements rising against the commodification of land (Polanyi, 2001). In terms of politically reactionary movements, Polanyi described the case of big landowners fighting against the ‘mobilization of the land’ and for the implementation of protectionist measures in the agricultural sector. Conversely, progressive counter-movements struggling against the same issues would do so by seeking land reforms through which land was no longer governed by the rules of the market and neither monopolized by large-scale landowners (Brand et al., 2020). Thus, the process of transformation set in motion by the resistance movements can take different shapes, with more democratic or authoritarian contours, without losing its oppositional nature and revealing that these processes are very heterogeneous by nature (Brand et al., 2020; Woods, 2003). According to Woods (2003), these movements are often segmented (many groups or cells), policephalous (many leaders), reticular (many links between the groups/cells forming a bounded network), contradictory and ambiguous. This diversity is also reflected in the approaches used and in the existence of different discourses and action frames (Woods, 2003). The strategic merger of different groups strengthens their collective power to push for a change that is generally considered imperative for all (involved or

not), even if the collective action frames do not completely overlap (Caraway, 2018). By collective action frame, it is meant the “*set of beliefs and meanings that motivate people to act while giving legitimacy to social movements activities*” through which groups identify problems and culprits, as well as possible solutions (Caraway, 2018, p. 12). As referred before, the frames utilized by different groups may only partially match since they emerge out of specific processes of meaning-making that can differ from group to groups. Societal and identitarian differences among individuals and groups are reflected on the collective action frames established and this fragmentation may be difficult to bridge and/or overcome. The consequence is then the inability to materialize a coordinated and consensual collective movement constituted by all the civil society groups that are, in theory, “on the same boat” (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019).

Either from a reactionary or a progressive standing, the opposition against neoliberal globalization and its side effects is embodied by different civil society groups. Workers’ and farmers’ unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous organizations and other grassroots social movements are among those that have used endured the consequences of marketization and used its contradictions as a springboard for resistance (Berndt, Werner, & Fernández, 2020; M. B. Moreira, 2002). These movements seek the improvement in material conditions, but also the possibility of self-realization and self-determination, to which increased direct participation, stronger representation, and political sovereignty are inalienable aspects (Biekart & Fowler, 2013; Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019). Resistance foci have emerged in civil society and many of these groups and organizations are linked, directly or indirectly, to the agricultural sector. In the case of farmers, the integration into highly competitive global markets represented risks, pressures, and losses that imprisoned them in situations of permanent precarity (Moreira, 2002). Indigenous groups and NGOs have also been among the voices that rose against the damaging practices surrounding the corporate food regime and the global food production chains. They have been particularly vocal about the monopolization and exhaustion of the commons, such as land and water, often in relation to their use in damaging agricultural activities, such as extensive grain monocultures and meatification complexes (McMichael, 2016). This diversity indicates, according to McMichael (2016), that in the analysis of a food regime and of corresponding counter-movements it is important to consider the production and circulation relations in place. More than commodity movements, circulation relations refer to the geo-political conditions that determine the existence of a “*world market instituted by the state system – a world market with particular local effects*” (McMichael, 2016, p. 3). Thus, besides the economic and labor conditions that determine the existent capitalist production relations, geopolitical and social conditions also determine existent neoliberal circular relations, that is, the trade and investment schemes (McMichael, 2016). Broadening the analytical scope and including these factors also allows for a better understanding of the claims and demands made by civil society groups that oppose the globalized, corporate-driven food regime. Many social movements, for instance, have called for a turn towards localism – a governance ethics based on more local control and participation, geared in this case towards local food production and consumption (Ayres & Bosia, 2011).

Because of the nature of these counter-movements and their claims, they are often coined as populist (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019). This draws attention to the fact that populism is not a strictly top-down phenomenon and that the collective action frames and identities often associated with populism must also be understood within the context in which the movements arise (Aslanidis, 2017). Populist movements help achieving this objective because they provide a platform through which citizens can become politically assertive (Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020). Far from being a random or pathological event, populism demonstrates people's willingness to revive the 'demos' as a political power that can offer a counterbalance to dominant groups (Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Considering this, the connection between populism and democracy becomes evident and, according to Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert (2020), it emerges out of popular dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of liberal democracy. It is suggested, by the same scholars, that this type of popular engagement seeks the "*democratization of democracy*", that is, for a higher participation in decision-making through which their rights can be respected and their concerns effectively addressed (Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020, p. 15). However, it is also acknowledged that populist initiatives can also enable the development of illiberal democratic regimes depending on the values that are disputed/embraced, in which case these initiatives are considered an "*illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism*" (Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020, p. 15).

2.4.1. Populism: Responses of the 'demos' in a polarized world

The European model of (liberal) democracy and capitalism have developed in parallel, which has led the former to be deeply influenced by the later. Capitalist values and powers have been politically and legally safeguarded thanks to democratic abstractions, which means that democracy has facilitated and condoned the dominance of certain groups and elites over others (Brown, 2015). Democracy has always been an empty vessel devoid of any inherent content and this bare form entails thus the possibility to substantiate and instrumentalize it without organic constraints (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brown, 2015). This would, in theory, serve the core principle of democracy the best way – that of 'the people' as sovereign, having the 'power to' decide upon "*the fundamentals and coordinates of their common existence*" (Brown, 2015, p. 209). However, this principle has been captured, economized, and corrupted, contributing further to the subordination of popular will (Brown, 2015). According to scholars such as Blühdorn and Butzlaff (2019), populism has emerged as a by-product of democracy's "*open-ended struggle*", constituting a response to the compounded effects of all these dynamics of veiled oppression. Whether a right-win phenomenon, marked by nationalist and xenophobic traits, or left-wing, populism should not be understood as pathological or outstanding (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). To the contrary, populism is a result of fostered inequality, disenfranchisement, and subordination potentialized by the indeterminacy of modern 'liquid' societies (Bronk & Jacoby, 2020).

As we live in what has been considered a 'populist zeitgeist', populism has become a recurrent object of analysis, as well as the focus of discussions that transverse both scholarly and public spaces (Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). In many instances and with debatable correctness,

populism is conceived as an extraordinary and perilous trend grounded on problematic political objectives (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). To be clear, there is no consensus about populism's defining properties since a variety of attributes (not always or not entirely compatible with each other) can be associated with it (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). It is often assumed that populism is inherently constituted by authoritarianism and nativism, which precludes forms of populism unrelated to such characteristics. These elements can indeed be concurrent and combined with populism, namely in its right-wing form, but they are not considered a necessary pre-condition (Gandesha, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Broadly, populism involves a complex interrelation of economic, cultural, and social psychological factors, which are intrinsically connected and are equally derived from modern systems and structures in place, invalidating thereby one-dimensional conceptions regarding the socio-political development of populism (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Gandesha, 2016; Mudde, 2004).

Among the consensual features of populism is the existence of an antagonism between two allegedly homogeneous groups, namely 'the people' and the 'elite'. This confrontation is often further emphasized by a moralistic assessment wherein 'the people' is considered the 'pure' party and the 'elite' the 'corrupt' one (Brubaker, 2020; Gandesha, 2016; Mudde, 2004). The immanent antagonism is characterized by a two-fold opposition: vertical (against those on top) and horizontal (against outsiders), which the 'elite' is considered to combine. The simplistic idealization of these parties and their supposed homogeneity was challenged and further elaborated on by Laclau (1977, 2005), who considers populism rather a form of '*antagonistic synthesis*', entailing the equivalential articulation of heterogeneous groups and elements, embodied by the single figure of the 'people', in opposition to an '*antagonistic frontier*' determined by a compounded 'power bloc'. Laclau's formulation of populism allowed not only for the demystification of homogeneity, but also for the avoidance of class reductionism by conceptualizing populism as a political project capable of integrating and articulating a diversified pool of 'subaltern' interests (Gandesha, 2016; Laclau, 1977, 2005).

Another rather consensual characteristic of populism is anti-institutionalism or anti-establishmentism, which is expressed in the disapproval and delegitimization of arguably democratic structures and institutions (Brubaker, 2020; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). In sum, populism upholds a political praxis that directly translates the so-called *volonté générale* (general will), which entails that, in the context of liberal democracy, popular assertions should be sovereign (Gandesha, 2016; Mudde, 2004). An important aspect is that populism can also intersect with other ideologies and discourses, such as nationalism, majoritarianism, and protectionism, wherefrom particular manifestations of populism emerge. Yet, most of these should be considered the result of the amalgamation enabled by populism's chameleonic nature rather than its default setup (Brubaker, 2020; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Therefore, different populist strands exist and they can be distinguished by traditional categories of political differentiation, that is left and right, according to 1) the perception on the nature and causes of contemporary crises, and 2) how to address them, which affect how 'the people' and their adversaries are conceived (Borras, 2020; Gandesha, 2016). Independently of underlying political orientations, considering populism an impediment to democracy fails to recognize it as an expression of democratic transformation and a product of structural conditions,

namely the liquidity of modern times and the economization of life (Bauman, 2000; Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brown, 2015).

Populist manifestations can differ significantly in form and content, for which Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013, p. 150) propose an approach to populism as a “*thin-centered ideology*” made of only a few core concepts that is, in itself, “*limited in ambition and scope*”, but which gains substantiation and public appeal by relying not only on contextual elements that reverberate with ‘the heartland’ and ‘the people’, but also on the articulation with other ideologies (Laclau, 1977; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Brubaker (2020, p. 60), on the other hand, considers it more beneficial to approach populism as an inherently ambiguous “*discursive and stylistic repertoire*” that, although counting on the core elements mentioned before, is also internally constituted by a blend of differentiated ideas, from redistribution to authoritarianism. The idea of populism as ambivalent and its understanding as a mobilizing political discourse, in particular, has been gaining foothold among scholars (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Brubaker, 2020; Gandesha, 2016). Contrary to political movements, political discourses do not presuppose membership nor the representation of individuals with shared political beliefs, but they are rather “*communicative arenas or systems of meaning, which are integrated by particular communicative codes, but never include full individuals*” (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019, p. 206). Therefore, populist discourses can be said to establish a “*discursive arena for the performance of sovereignty*” which can appeal to a wide audience, made not only of those considered “*full members*”, but also of those that, at times and/or in part, align with the ideas and values conveyed by said discourse (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019, p. 194). Despite the political amorphousness that can accompany populist movements, the discourses propagated offer an emancipatory space where future aspirations can gain shape and current constraints and grievances can be voiced (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019).

Rural communities are especially impacted by the contemporary world order and its associated crisis, specifically by globalized neoliberal capitalism in tandem with liberal, representative democracies (Hajdu & Mamonova, 2020; Mamonova, Franquesa, & Brooks, 2020). It follows from that there is widespread resentment on the countryside, which is increasingly channelled through populist initiatives (Mamonova et al., 2020). Many contemporary right-wing initiatives have developed thanks to the coming together of different rural groups frustrated and disillusioned by accumulated problems related to food provisioning, social and individual insecurity, indebtedness, institutional neglect and lack of effective reforms (Borras, 2020; Hajdu & Mamonova, 2020). Borras (2020) considers, however, that this conjuncture may be equally propitious to rally the many rural grievances around a common political project that combines pluralism, socialism, and anti-capitalism. This could constitute not only a strategy to combat right-wing populism, but a new formula for a well substantiated, conscious left-wing populism that is capable of responding to the calls for fundamental change departing from those that increasingly engorge the fringes of society (Borras, 2020).

2.4.2. Food Sovereignty as populism from the left

As aforementioned, neoliberal globalization introduced major societal transformations that have led to a conjuncture of overlapping crises (Borras, 2020; Conversi, 2016). The so-called ‘losers of globalization’ have been at the forefront of the contestations against the current political economic status quo, resisting in counter-movements often coined as populist and materialized around concrete issues and spaces. Food and human sustenance have become one of such arenas of struggle, where larger societal and popular issues converge. Here, the right to food - associated with the neoliberal notion of food security and commodity fetishism - has been challenged by the arguably more radical right to production (Conversi, 2016; McMichael, 2016). Intrinsically dependent on the access to commons, such as land/soil and water, food production brings a territorial dimension to this specific space of struggle, denoting the connection of these issues with sovereignty (Conversi, 2016). This becomes even more evident in the concept of food sovereignty, which entails a reframing of food relations by eradicating state and capital control over food production and transferring such rights onto the grassroots level, defending thereby local economies, land rights, and popular sovereignty over the (re)production of life (Conversi, 2016; McMichael, 2016).

The concept of food sovereignty has its formal origins in the World Food Summit of 1996 and in the network of farmer and peasant collectives *La Via Campesina* (LVC) (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Conversi, 2016). After consecutive adaptations, food sovereignty was finally defined in the 2007 Declaration of Nyéléni as *“the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems”* (Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007, p. 1). It evokes a discourse of popular control over food systems in order to defy the power hold of corporations and commercial interests and their devastating socio-ecological effects (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; McMichael, 2016). The struggle for self-determination and -reliance clearly underlies the main tenets of the concept of food sovereignty, which includes right to production and participation in decision-making (in food production governance as well as trade), bridging producers and consumers, and opposition to neoliberal frameworks undermining and inhibiting the achievement of the former (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Conversi, 2016; McMichael, 2016; Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007). As a ‘movement of movements’, food sovereignty has not only global reach, but involves the comprehensive articulation of diverse popular demands and agendas against the impositions of neoliberal globalization (Borras, 2020; Conversi, 2016). It is in fact a heterogeneous social movement that takes food sovereignty as a platform for action around which different groups/communities mobilize (Borras, 2020). All the specific principles and provisions within the cadre of food sovereignty contrast with the current regime of capitalist agricultural production, which is export-oriented and based on the commodification, industrialization and intensification of food production (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Burnett & Murphy, 2014). Many rural groups and collectives have adopted the food sovereignty frame and adapted it to their locales and circumstances, by which it has contributed to the empowerment of local communities (Ayres & Bosia, 2011).

The food sovereignty movement (FSM) goes back to the 1980s, when it emerged as a counterweight to the agrarian restructuring imposed by the neoliberal ‘free trade’ agenda and to the devastating

local effects caused, such as environmental degradation and the massive dispossession of small-scale (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Conversi, 2016). The FSM offered a multi-scalar space for resistance movements around the world, bridging local and global responses against transnational agribusinesses, corporate control, and the neoliberal hegemony (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). It gained traction after the Uruguay Round of Agreements (1986-1994), when the WTO was established and the AoA came into force (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Conversi, 2016). Agricultural production and trade were then subdued to liberalization and privatization and to TNCs power, thanks to which international trade became the core objective of food production governance, adding further pressure to an already asymmetrical, inequitable, and oppressive system (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; McMichael, 2016). The FSM has stood as a ‘collective defiance’ to this, demanding not only more autonomy to national governments, but also from them in terms of the rights of grassroot populations and food producers to participate in agricultural governance and related decision-making spaces (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). Notwithstanding the denunciation of trade-centered transnational corporations and multilateral institutions and agreements, the FSM is not altogether and irrevocably opposed to trade (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). In the Declaration of Nyéléni, it is stated that food sovereignty “*promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition.*” (Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007, p. 1). In practice, this means that local food provision and the rights of small-scale producers are prioritized over trade outcomes, but surpluses can be commercialized and exchanged (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). What is condemned by the FSM, as stated by McMichael (2016, p. 3), are “*the food regime and its circulation relations, promoting ‘agriculture without farmers’ on a global scale, governed by exchange value*”.

Constituted of ‘messy spaces of compromise’, food sovereignty is also characterized by tensions, frictions, and ambiguities that are worthy of mention (Naylor, 2014). An obvious stress point surrounds the idea of sovereignty since it is, by itself, a contested concept that invites questions such as who/what is sovereign, how is that sovereignty exercised and in respect to whom/what or how far does it reach. These questions apply to the same extent to food sovereignty and it makes the case for the vagueness of the concept (Conversi, 2016). Another often cited issue is that of the romanticization of the peasant, of peasant production, and of rurality in general. It is not always the case that these categories are intrinsically and diametrically opposed to capitalism or to its market doctrine (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Naylor, 2014). Despite recognizing the challenges of global markets’ dynamics, many farmers would still rather maintain their production activities within the global system and claim instead for more equitable opportunities within it rather than for its overthrow (Burnett & Murphy, 2014). An example of the variety of claims that can be found in this regard is given by Wolford (2010): sugarcane producers in the north of Brazil preferred to remain focused on the production of this ‘exploitative crop’ instead of substituting it by self-sufficiency farming. While farmers in the south of Brazil chose for the opposite, producers in the north felt safer with sugarcane. They knew the production needs and challenges, as well as the specific market dynamics, so it was considered a more reliable choice (Wolford, 2010). In comparison to the alternatives available, this was the option that best served their interests, even if it had downsides that still demanded improvement (Wolford, 2010). Thus, one of the issues that have been appointed to food sovereignty is its binary imaginary

wherein there is either complete non-capitalist restructuring of all market relations or thorough subjugation to and by it (Naylor, 2014). Although this is not always present, the ambiguous and unclear character of the FSM gives leeway for presumptions to take root, leading many to detach from it. As stated by Burnett and Murphy (2014, p. 1073), “*despite its intentions to the contrary, it [FSM] fails to represent peasants across class, political and ideological divides, as well as in many geographical areas*”. This is telling of the often-omitted internal friction that exists in the FSM and within the diverse initiatives that strive for a successful establishment of alternative food systems (Ayres & Bosia, 2011; Naylor, 2014).

3. Case contextualization

3.1. Brazilian beef production: Historical evolution and state of play

21st century Brazil has become a powerhouse in what comes to agricultural products (Ribeiro, 2012; Rodrigues, 2008). Since the 19th century, Latin America has been a relevant agri-food producing region, considering their historical economic reliance on agricultural products (Norberg, 2020). The position it holds today as leading power in production and export of several agricultural products was the result of different but entwined factors developing throughout the two last centuries (Norberg, 2020; Ribeiro, 2012). The first steps of the beef industry in Brazil were taken thanks to external inputs, namely in terms of livestock and grass (Ribeiro, 2012). Livestock was first introduced in Brazil as a form of promoting territorial expansion through cattle ranching, which is still reflected in Brazil's present-day territorial configuration and which, together with other extractive practices such as precious metals mining, led to the elimination and/or displacement of countless indigenous communities (Ribeiro, 2012). However, Iberian cattle species were not adapted to tropical climates and their survival and productivity was often difficult and costly to maintain (Ribeiro, 2012). By the end of the 19th century, Zebu cattle originally from India was introduced in Brazil and mixed with the existent Iberian cattle. The genetic modification of the Brazilian herd was an important springboard for successful large-scale production and relevance in the world market since these animals were better adapted to the environmental conditions and were generally bigger than Iberian species (Ribeiro, 2012). New types of grass were also brought to Brazil (from Africa and regions) and facilitated the feeding needs of cattle herds due to which the bovine herd in Brazil almost tripled (Ribeiro, 2012). Barbed wire was another important introduction which made its way into the country as a reliable tool for fencing off lands and avoiding crossbreeding while also indirectly contributing to the ongoing problem of land concentration (Ribeiro, 2012). Barbed wire reinforced images of exclusion and ensured the ownership of both herds and lands, especially after the 'devolved lands' legislation (part of the land law of 1850), which asserted that all unmeasured, unmarked, unconceded and/or unsold lands were public and under state control. Until then, most lands did not have legal documentation, especially in the interior of the country, and the administrative costs of demarcation and registration were high (Germani, 2006; Ribeiro, 2012). This contributed to the process of land concentration, which worsened during the 20th century much due to the increasing development of the beef industry, itself advanced by an increase in international demand and technological innovations (e.g., cold storage, eradication of foot-and-mouth disease) (Ribeiro, 2012; Rodrigues, 2008). The re-organization of land and the modifications in cattle raising and management that took place in the previous century jeopardized the social reproduction of rural families, forcing many to abandon rural areas or to collectively struggle for their lands and modes of life if deciding to stay (Germani, 2006; Ribeiro, 2012).

Although there were political attempts to promote rural development through land reforms in the first half of the 20th century, these were reversed during the dictatorship period (1964 – 1985), which adopted a 'conservative modernization' approach to Brazilian agriculture. Cattle ranching was

instrumental in advancing the geopolitical and economic interests of the dictatorial state during its historical period, relying on the incentive of internal colonization and economic exploitation of allegedly unoccupied and geopolitically vulnerable regions (Germani, 2006; Rodrigues, 2008). The use of cattle ranching in this context was also ideologically and financially supported by multilateral institutions, such as the FAO and the WB, which portrayed livestock as an efficient solution to maintain land and regulate tenure systems, being therefore considered “*an excellent investment for development*” (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 5). The expansion of cattle ranching into low populated regions, such as the Amazon, was also a springboard for infrastructural developments, such as roads, ports, and hydroelectric dams, which attracted other extractive activities into the region, such as mining and logging (Rodrigues, 2008; Schmink, Hoelle, Gomes, & Thaler, 2019). Even after re-democratization and pressure from social movements, a fundamental change in the production rationale and a consistent agrarian reform failed to take place. In the case of the latter, land redistribution occurred only in the form of exceptionality and in areas where conflicts were too intense (Germani, 2006). Otherwise, agricultural and land policies continued favoring export-oriented agribusinesses and large land owners in spite of all constant calls from peasants and rural movements for change and effective government action (Ribeiro, 2012).

In the first decade of the 21st century and has Brazil rose to prominence as an agricultural giant, cattle ranching and breeding remained one of the largest agricultural activities (Ribeiro, 2012; Rodrigues, 2008). Since the beginning of the current century, Brazil has been one of the largest agricultural exporters globally, especially in terms of beef and soybean, fueling its agricultural output by intensifying production and expanding agricultural areas (Norberg, 2020; Rodrigues, 2008). Soy, which production was historically concentrated in the Southern regions of Brazil, expanded to the interior of the country and joined cattle ranching in the search for cheaper lands while pushing the agricultural frontier further (Norberg, 2020; Rodrigues, 2008). Thanks to the increasing demand led by export markets, the production of these two commodities kept rising and expansion into the Amazon basin states was unstoppable. Since arriving in the region, soybean production grew by approximately 60% (between 1998 and 2002) and cattle heads almost doubled (from 26.2 million to 51.6 million between 1991 and 2001) (Rodrigues, 2008). Due to these dynamics, the land use and distribution inequalities that were already present only deepened. At the same time, land concentration in Brazil has been advancing, reaching levels deemed as very strong and borderline absolute (Ribeiro, 2012). According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, most of the farming operations in Brazil are family farms (77%) and they occupy only 23% of the total agricultural land in the country. These family farms are responsible for about 23% of the total agricultural output while the remaining share comes from larger, non-family operations, specialized in the production and export of agricultural commodities such as soy and beef (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017b).

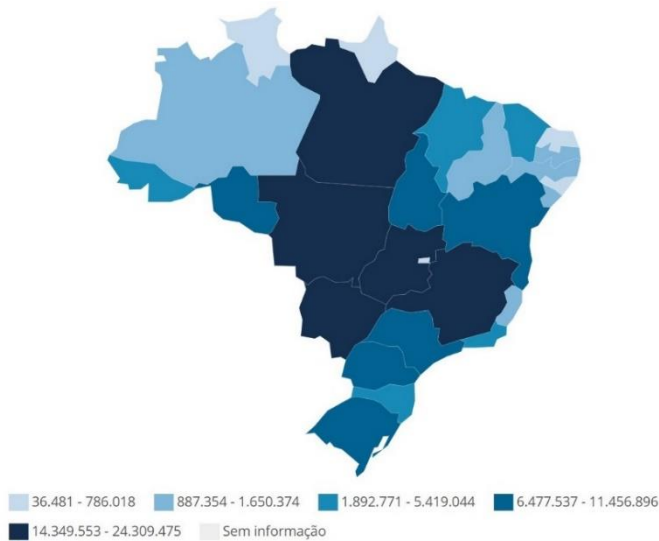


Figure 1 - Geographical distribution of the cattle in Brazil according to herd size. Source: IBGE, 2017

Brazilian states with the largest cattle herd size (nº of heads)	
<i>Mato Grosso</i>	24.309.475
<i>Minas Gerais</i>	19.575.839
<i>Mato Grosso do Sul</i>	19.485.201
<i>Goiás</i>	17.292.288
<i>Pará</i>	14.349.553

Table 1 - Highest number of cattle farms in Brazil. Source: IBGE, 2017

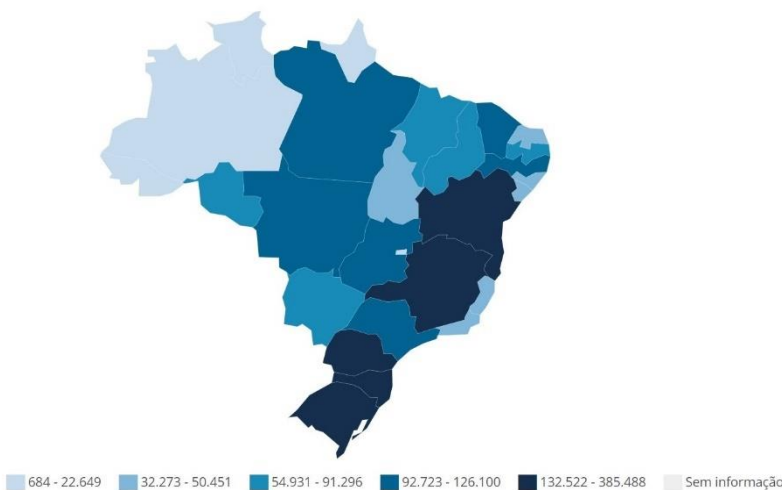


Figure 2 - Geographical concentration of Brazilian cattle farms. Source: IBGE, 2017

Brazilian states with the highest number of cattle farms	
<i>Minas Gerais</i>	385.488
<i>Bahia</i>	297.894
<i>Rio Grande do Sul</i>	261.717
<i>Paraná</i>	170.296
<i>Santa Catarina</i>	132.522

Table 2 - Biggest herd sizes in Brazil. Source: IBGE, 2017

In the estimations from the 2017 Agricultural Census, it becomes clear that there is a concentration of cattle herds in certain states (Fig. 1, Tab. 1) and that those states are not necessarily the ones that have most cattle farms (Fig. 2, Tab. 2). Furthermore, the states with the highest percentage of land occupied by non-familial agriculture that also have the largest herds or the highest number of cattle farms are Mato Grosso do Sul (more than 95%), Mato Grosso (more than 90%), Goiás (more than 80%), Paraná (more than 75%), and Rio Grande do Sul (more than 75%) (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017a). This speaks for the high economic concentration of the beef sector in Brazil and for the dominance of agribusinesses.

The exponential development of the agricultural frontier came with innumerable costs. These regions, transformed in order to make room for soy and beef production, processing, and transport, are now

vivid examples of the model of development employed and of the lack of importance attributed to its socio-environmental consequences (Nepstad, Stickler, & Almeida, 2006; Rodrigues, 2008). Deforestation and ecosystem degradation have worsened, especially since the *ruralista* front¹ garnered power and influence in the Brazilian National Congress, through which it managed to roll back several environmental policies and provisions, such as the Forest Code (Kuepper, Steinweg, Piotrowski, & Arnould, 2020; Schmink et al., 2019). In addition to this, they have also been pressuring for the revision of the legal frameworks regulating the private appropriation of public land and the demarcation of indigenous lands, aiming at opening those territories to exploration (Kuepper et al., 2020; Schmink et al., 2019). The processes of territorial and social enclosure have been a main driver of land conflicts and resistance struggles in Brazil over the years (Ribeiro, 2012). According to a 2017 report on rural conflicts, there were land-driven conflicts in more than 4% of the Brazilian territory, corresponding to 37 million hectares of land (Canuto, Luz, & Andrade, 2017). These figures have doubled in comparison to the previous year and, qualitatively speaking, they also represent an increment of big massacres (counting with a high number of dead casualties) and a particular incidence on indigenous lands (54% of the total conflicts) (Canuto et al., 2017). The processes of development associated to agricultural exploitation and frontier expansion produce high volatile contexts wherein human and environmental rights are increasingly more at the mercy of structures and agents which dominance is reflected both in and beyond the nation-state, such as large agribusinesses and transnational corporations (McMichael, 2016; Rodrigues, 2008).

3.2. The EU beef sector

In 2018, beef production in the EU was ranked third in the world (13% of the total global trade), amounting to approximately eight million tons of carcasses (Hocquette et al., 2018; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Together with the US (19%) and Brazil (15%), the three biggest producers of beef are responsible for 47% of the global output in beef meat (Bağ-Filipek, 2018; Hocquette et al., 2018). 17% of all EU farms are cattle farms and 57% of these are commercial farms², comprising both cattle farms specialized in the production of a single commodity, be it dairy or beef meat (Farm Europe, 2018; Ihle et al., 2017). Cattle-keeping farms contribute altogether to one third of the total EU agricultural production value and agricultural land use, while employing one quarter of all EU agriculture workers (Farm Europe, 2018; Hocquette et al., 2018; Ihle et al., 2017). Most of the EU cattle herd is concentrated in the Benelux, the Alps region, Poland, France, and Ireland, which are also key players in the EU's role as a global trader of bovine products, meat and live animal exports (Ihle et al., 2017). Most of the EU trade in bovine products happens inside the EU which internal imports represented, in 2017, more than 40% of the total global imports. Only 20% of the bovine

¹ The Agriculture and Cattle Farming Parliamentary Front, popularly known as ruralista front, is a political faction dominated by the interests of agribusinesses and large landholders in Brazil (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, n.d.)

² The definition of commercial farm depends on the economic size of the operation, which is defined individually per MS. In the EU, this varies between €2000 and €25000 in standard output per year (Ihle et al., 2017)

product exports of EU MSs actually went to third countries while only 5% of the total imports came from outside of the EU (Ihle et al., 2017).

There is a high variety and different degrees of complexity in beef supply chains across the EU (Hocquette et al., 2018; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). The links that constitute these chains do not always see eye to eye, for which lack of understanding and trust is frequently present. One of the trigger points in these relationships is product value and the way in which valuation occurs since, at farm level, beef production is commonly of marginal profitability (Hocquette et al., 2018). Even though actions upstream, undertaken by producers, are the most determinant for the quality of the product and the success of the supply downstream, among retailers and consumers, this does not translate into an advantage for producers (Hocquette et al., 2018; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Moreover, beef production demands cross-compliance with several EU regulations from different areas (e.g., animal welfare, environment, food safety), which guarantees the production of meat with the standards expected by consumers, given the high price paid for beef (Bağ-Filipek, 2018; Hocquette et al., 2018). However, complying with legal requirements and meeting consumer expectations on standards carries considerable production costs that affordable prices often fail to cover, hampering the economic sustainability of EU beef farms (Hocquette et al., 2018; Karatepe et al., 2020; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Due to these specificities, farm operations that make use of economies of scale are often seen as more resilient and able to face the inherent challenges of the sector. However, these imply increasing farm sizes and pressures to raise labor productivity, contributing to tendencies of concentration within the agricultural sector (Hocquette et al., 2018; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). In present-day EU, the concentration of the beef and veal sector is still on average low, but there is a considerably variable picture of this when zooming in different MSs. For instance, in France and Germany the concentration of the sector is high, representing more than 50% of the market shares (Hocquette et al., 2018). In this regard, retailers are important vectors of change since they are the main drivers of many supply chains and can dictate the characteristics of the animals and products they wish to have on their shelves while also being able to exert power over farm gate prices, without offering incentives that can improve the sustainability of the producers (Hocquette et al., 2018; Ihle et al., 2017; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015).

According to Kristkova & Gracia-Alvaréz-Coque (2015, p. 86), the *“evolution of producer prices in the EU shows that they remain below estimated production costs”*. Considering the existence of small or even negative profit margins in beef production, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) became an important life-line due to its financial provisions, which have allowed eligible farmers to offset the economic imbalances and achieve profitability through subsidization and decoupled payments³ schemes (Hocquette et al., 2018; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). For instance, in Ireland, only 20% of beef farms are economically viable and half of the farms in the country depend on decoupled payments to keep afloat and guarantee the necessary household income (Karatepe et al.,

³ Fixed income attributed to ensure the economic sustainability of farm households that do not depend on the production and output levels nor market conditions (European Commission, 2021b)

2020; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Yet, even with these mechanisms and incentives, many farm incomes and net income per worker still remain low and below the average for EU farms in other agricultural sectors (Hocquette et al., 2018). Furthermore, recent CAP reforms have worsened the position of EU beef farmers, causing a loss of production and/or profitability in the sector and significantly impacting price relationships within the EU (Karatepe et al., 2020; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Trade liberalization is also likely to have deep repercussions in the beef sector by allowing important players such as the US, Canada, and the Mercosur countries to directly compete with EU beef products in the single market (Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015).

Global beef consumption, during the period 2011 – 2025, is likely to increase (Hocquette et al., 2018). This also applies to the EU, although the increase in beef consumption within the union is among the lowest expected globally since the consumption growth has been declining in the EU since 1985, when it reached its maximum at 25kg/person annually (Hocquette et al., 2018). In spite of this, EU beef consumption is expected to grow at a pace that is not met by internal supply, which will incentivize imports, especially from Brazil and other Mercosur countries as the most important sources of beef imports in the EU (Hocquette et al., 2018; Ihle et al., 2017). Upon the formalization of the EUMAA, the beef offer from Mercosur countries will further increase and weaken the position of beef producers in the EU market since Mercosur beef is highly cost-competitive and nearly impossible to meet due to the slim profit margins already bore by EU producers (Hocquette et al., 2018). Although EU beef production has some of the highest standards in the world, not only in terms of efficiency and quality, but also in terms of environmental impacts (the EU is among those contributing the least to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions), the trade-off is that its production costs make it hard to compete with low cost production countries, threatening the survival of many small producers in the sector (Hocquette et al., 2018). That is why, in the context of the agricultural sector, where market prices are highly volatile, economic challenges and policy changes can have dire consequences for rural households and rural economies as a whole (European Commission, 2021b; Ihle et al., 2017).

3.3. The EU-Mercosur Association Agreement: The trade pillar conundrum

The Southern Common Market (known by its Spanish acronym Mercosur) is a South American regional integration and trade bloc established at the beginning of the 1990s which currently counts on four full country members - Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay (Mercosur Secretariat, 2021; Moreira & Brites, 2018). The aim of Mercosur has been primarily to “*promote a common space that generates business and investment opportunities through the competitive integration of national economies into the international market*” (Mercosur Secretariat, 2021). In line with this, a common internal market wherein the free movement of goods, labor and services is possible has been created (Horn, 2020). Brazil, as the biggest full member of the bloc, has been determinant on the course taken by Mercosur over the years, namely in terms of the economic partnerships established (Moreira & Brites, 2018).

In 1992, the first steps towards an association agreement between the EU and Mercosur were taken. An Interinstitutional Cooperation Agreement was established with the purpose of streamlining the collaboration between the two regional blocs during the negotiations of the agreement focused on strengthening bilateral relations across three main pillars – trade, political dialogue, and cooperation (Moreira & Brites, 2018). Despite the promising start, the negotiations of this agreement were halted due to European civil society contestation against the agreement, led in particular by agricultural groups (Moreira & Brites, 2018). Therefore, the negotiations for the establishment of the EUMAA only formally kick-started in June 1999 (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). The dedication to the establishment of a free trade agreement with Mercosur lies mostly, from an EU standpoint, on the political and economic relevance of Brazil (Messerlin, 2013). At the beginning of the 21st century, Brazil was an important silent ally of the EU in trade and economic debates by having fostered a consensus-seeking approach in multilateral trade negotiations among global south countries, in a similar way that the EU has done among global north ones. Such support was highly regarded by the EU since it served its political interests in terms of macroeconomic and fiscal policies (Messerlin, 2013). Between 2001 and 2004, the EUMAA negotiations advanced steadfastly, despite reports pointing out the vulnerability of European products (mostly agri-food and beverages) to trade with Mercosur and the subsequent waves of protests because of that (“EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement,” 2004; Moreira & Brites, 2018). Around 2004, the ‘pink tide’ rolled over the Southern cone, replacing several neoliberal governments by left-wing ones, and deepened the differences in the negotiation goals of each bloc, leading to a new suspension (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Moreira & Brites, 2018). The EUMAA negotiations were resumed in 2010 and picked up pace in 2017 due to the political economic changes the Mercosur bloc was undergoing, which set free trade once again as a priority to the Mercosur bloc (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Moreira & Brites, 2018). The period of recovery that its Mercosur members found themselves in was considered ideal to strengthen trade ties with strategic partners (Moreira & Brites, 2018). Fast forwarding to 28th of June of 2019, roughly 20 years after the start of the negotiations, the two blocs reached an agreement in principle on its most controversial pillar – trade (Cañas, 2021; Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Horn, 2020).

According to the preliminary FTA, several EU sectors are set to benefit from the provisions outlined, which facilitate exports to the Mercosur market for automotive, machinery, textile, chemical, and pharmaceutical products (Cañas, 2021; Horn, 2020; Moreira & Brites, 2018). Conversely, certain EU sectors were left in a precarious position due to the trade liberalization foreseen. The agricultural sector is the most prominent case since several Mercosur agri-products, such as beef, will be granted almost full removal of import duties (Cañas, 2021; Horn, 2020; Moreira & Brites, 2018). Currently, beef takes up approximately 3% of the total EU imports from Mercosur and the quota granted by the FTA has been estimated at 1.2% of the annual EU beef consumption, which has led to the conclusion that the impact of the extra market access provided to Mercosur beef will not be significant (Karatepe et al., 2020; McCabe et al., 2020). However, when zooming into the types of beef products, the conditions of the beef market, and the accumulated effects of trade liberalization, the scenario has been deemed much bleaker for EU producers (Karatepe et al., 2020; McCabe et al., 2020). Agriculture is already one of the most unequal and precarious professional sectors in general and further negative

impacts on rural areas can have serious consequences, hindering development and employment opportunities, as well as the overall subsistence of rural populations on both sides of the Atlantic (Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015; McCabe et al., 2020).

The different sectorial dis/advantages expected from the FTA have internally divided the EU and affected the support shown by different MSs towards the EUMAA (Deutsche Welle, 2019; Moreira & Brites, 2018). For instance, Germany, Spain, and Portugal have been firm supporters of the agreement due to national economic and political interests, while France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium (especially Wallonia), and Austria have manifested skepticism towards it and threatened not to ratify it in its current terms (EUobserver, 2020; Iago, 2020; Lusa, 2019; Neslen, 2019a, 2019b; Oltermann, 2019). This polarization was also observed in the Mercosur countries. According to Moreira & Brites (2018), the Brazilian industrial sector was generally in favour of the agreement as it would allow the sector to supply its material needs more easily, while also considering it an added value for job creation within the sector. Likewise, the agricultural and livestock sectors also firmly supported the FTA, although this was not a consensual position. On the one hand, many export-oriented and/or transnational agribusinesses were frustrated by the conditions of the agreement for the sector since they aspired for a more ambitious FTA, with minimal to no trade restrictions for agricultural products (Moreira & Brites, 2018; Tooge, 2019). On the other hand, a considerable part of the agricultural sector, namely that of subsistence and peasant agriculture, thoroughly opposed the FTA. Their concerns lied on its impact on domestic production and consumption and on the conditions of Mercosur populations at large, considering it a serious threat to labour rights, employment opportunities, and domestic food security (“EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement,” 2004; Moreira & Brites, 2018). Moreover, the agreement has also been found prejudicial for the Mercosur bloc in the long-term since the trade provisions will deteriorate to the benefit of the EU and thereby reinforce the inequality between the two regions (Lagoutte, 2020; Moreira & Brites, 2018). In fact, the terms of the EUMAA re-enact a historical pattern of North-South economic exchanges wherein the developed north (EU) provides high-value industrial products and the developing south (Mercosur) raw materials and primary goods (Moreira & Brites, 2018; Rodrigues, 2008). This asymmetrical valuation subliminally present in the agreement reproduces and intensifies the center-periphery relationship between both regions (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Moreira & Brites, 2018).

The agreement in principle was vetoed by a small majority in the EU Parliament on the 7th of October 2020 (European Parliament, 2020; Nadibaidze, 2020). To come fully into force, the EUMAA must not only be approved by the European Parliament, but also be ratified by the MSs, both in the EU and in Mercosur. However, in the more than 20 years that it has been in the making, the agreement has been raising increasing concerns in relation to its potential and expected impacts (Lagoutte, 2020). Civil society groups and organizations from both regions have been a vocal opposition against the agreement, drawing growing attention to its shortcomings and multidimensional consequences (Nadibaidze, 2020).

3.4. Civil society contestation: Overview on the opposition to the trade agreement

The EU has been heavily criticized because of its contradictory international trade policy as it is said to undermine EU commitments in areas such as human rights, labor rights, and the environment (Lagoutte, 2020; Nadibaidze, 2020). The EU-Mercosur FTA is a prime example of this, which, since its inception, it has been associated to the promotion of further rural precarity, socio-environmental conflicts, commodification of the commons (e.g. water bodies, forests, land), and growing environmental degradation (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Horn, 2020; Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque, 2015). Although the “Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter” of EUMAA addresses many of the red flags raised, several actors - national parliaments and governments, academics, and civil society organizations (CSOs), among others - have considered the regulatory provisions in the chapter, including the compliance with standards set up by international treaties and agreements, limited in scope and vague. The fact that they are not legally binding and fail to have robust institutional structures ensuring the implementation of said provisions were also pointed out as major drawbacks (Harrison & Paulini, 2020; Lagoutte, 2020; McCabe et al., 2020). Despite recognizing the key role of responsible supply chain management in the achievement of sustainable development goals and thereby in the elimination of socio-environmental issues, the chapter does little more than incentivizing voluntary initiatives (Harrison & Paulini, 2020). These issues have been at the basis of civil society’s growing opposition to the agreement and figure prominently in their discourses.

As already mentioned, the agreement is expected to promote, among others, a significant increase in meat production in Mercosur countries - > 50% in Brazil and > 70% in Paraguay, according to an estimation by Kristkova & García-Alvaréz-Coque (2015). Livestock activity and feed production have been identified as the main drivers of forest clearings and fires, such as those that occurred in the Amazon region in 2019 (Kehoe, Reis, Virah-Sawny, Balmford, & Kuemmerle, 2019; McCabe et al., 2020; Rajão et al., 2020). Moreover, cattle is a significant contributor to GHG emissions and the increased trade between the two regional blocs is expected to add an extra nine million tonnes of GHG/year, 82% of which are attributed to beef production alone (GRAIN, 2019; Nepstad et al., 2006). The increment in deforestation and GHG emissions promoted by the FTA’s production incentive have also been correlated to other ecological impacts, such as water pollution, watersheds’ reduction, lower rainfall rates, biodiversity loss, and climate change (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; GRAIN, 2019; Nepstad et al., 2006). Farm animal welfare issues have also been raised in the context of the increased intensive production and exports (Harrison & Paulini, 2020). Another commonly cited concern lies with the use of pesticides and fertilizers, of which Brazil is one of the biggest buyers worldwide. The Bolsonaro administration has recently extended its list of approvals, including now a considerable number of pesticides which use is banned in the EU (GRAIN, 2019; McCabe et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the EUMAA contemplates these products and European biotech corporations will be allowed to export EU-banned pesticides to the Mercosur in spite of the identified environmental and health hazard risks for both EU and Mercosur populations (Horn, 2020; McCabe et al., 2020).

Increasing human rights' violations are another expected side effect from the EUMAA. Indigenous and other traditional populations are already in the center of the hurricane, facing threats of territorial dispossession and to the continuation of their socio-cultural reproduction and overall survival (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; Horn, 2020). Indigenous peoples are important flagbearers for environmental protection and human rights, raising awareness about the centuries-long challenges, conflicts, and violence their communities have come up against due to capitalist models of development (Jalata, 2011). The current political situation in Brazil, due to the Bolsonaro administration, has promoted a particularly hostile environment for indigenous communities. Their constitutional rights have been increasingly overridden in view of economic gains and further exploitation by agribusinesses and extractive industries (Lagoutte, 2020; LUSA, 2019). According to a report from 2018, 111 events of territorial invasion and illegal exploitation of natural resources occurred, all of which are associated with high human costs (Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Cimi), 2018). Small farmers and peasant communities are also expected to suffer similar pressures due to the rush for land and natural resources derived from the expansion of markets for agri-food commodities (GRAIN, 2019; McCabe et al., 2020). In addition to this, the working conditions and labor rights in Mercosur countries also raise concerns which are poorly addressed by the EUMAA (Lagoutte, 2020). Forced labor is rampant in rural areas of Brazil and it is closely linked to land concentration and the labor-intensive extractive industries operating in those areas (McCabe et al., 2020). In fact, between 1995 and 2017, around 16 800 Brazilian workers were rescued from slave-like work conditions in the cattle industry and these numbers are bound to enlarge due to the increase in production foreseen upon the establishment of the trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur (Lagoutte, 2020; McCabe et al., 2020).

On the European side, farmers have been raising their voices against the agreement because of its expected effects on supply, prices, and competition (Ghiotto & Echaide, 2019; GRAIN, 2019; Lagoutte, 2020). Several impact assessments report negative effects on beef, poultry, sugar, fruit (especially oranges), and rice, predicting considerable losses to the EU farming sector and consequent social costs to rural areas and communities (Lagoutte, 2020; McCabe et al., 2020). European farmers are vulnerable against the agro-industrial mightiness of Mercosur countries with which they cannot compete in terms of production costs and upon the existing low profit margins (McCabe et al., 2020). A feedback loop is bound to emerge in the beef sector upon the opening of the EU market since the cheaper price of beef may lead to higher consumption and thereby promote further expansion of Mercosur production while gradually weakening the EU sector (McCabe et al., 2020). Therefore, increased agri-food competition in the EU internal market is likely to drive many EU farmers further into debt and socio-economic precarity (GRAIN, 2019).

In order to analyze the specific discourses and approaches utilized by CSOs opposing the EUMAA, seven organizations were selected (the selection criteria and justification is provided in section 4). For the sake of structure and clarity, they were sub-divided into three categories - Brazilian indigenous organizations, European farmers' organizations, and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – and a brief overview and characterization of each of them is presented in the following sections.

3.4.1. Brazilian indigenous organizations: APIB & COIAB

➤ APIB

The Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil is a key player of the indigenous movement in Brazil, grouping several regional indigenous organisations (COIAB, APOINME, Conselho Terena, ATY GUASU, CGY, ARPINSUDESTE, ARPINSUL) to mobilise and strengthen the unity of Brazilian indigenous peoples. The organisation was established during the 2005 edition of Acampamento Terra Livre, a yearly national mobilization during which awareness for indigenous rights is raised. The main objectives of APIB are the promotion of mobilizations and permanent articulation of the indigenous movement, offering training programmes for indigenous leaders and organisations, lobbying for public policies aimed at indigenous peoples, communicating on indigenous rights and struggles, and building alliances with the international indigenous movement. They are a vocal body against the ongoing threats and aggressions that indigenous peoples face in Brazil (APIB, 2021).

➤ COIAB

The Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira is one of the organisations constituting APIB and is the largest regional indigenous organisation in Brazil. It was founded in 1989 by indigenous leaders to demand recognition of indigenous rights. COIAB is active in the Brazilian Amazon, comprising nine states (Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins), and defends indigenous rights to land, health, education, culture, and sustainability, with regard to the diversity of the peoples of the Amazon (COIAB, 2020).

3.4.2. European Farmers' Organizations: COPA COGECA, FUGEA & IFA

➤ COPA COGECA

The Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA) and the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (COGECA) are EU-wide (including Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey) farmers' organisations, protecting and defending the interests of European farmers in Brussels. COPA thereby represents farmers and their families, while COGECA represents cooperatives in the agri-food, forestry, and fisheries industries. Both organisations function under a joint secretariat and they have been recognised by the European authorities as the main representatives of the agricultural and cooperative agricultural and fishery sector (COGECA, 2021).

➤ FUGEA

The Fédération Unie de Groupements d'Éleveurs et d'Agriculteurs is an agricultural syndicate and peasant movement from the Walloon region in Belgium. Established in 1973 under the name FUJA (Front Uni des Jeunes Agriculteur), this young, independent, and pluralist peasant movement defends agricultural policies which support peasant autonomy and sustainable agriculture. The organisation is active nationally and internationally as a spokesperson of the agricultural and rural sector, by cooperating with political actors and civil society (FUGEA, 2021).

➤ IFA

The Irish Farmer's Association is an organisation and lobby group formed in 1955 (then as National Farmers Association) that seeks to represent the Irish agricultural sector, both in Ireland and at the European level, defending the interests of Irish farmers. As the largest farming representative organization in Ireland, every Irish county has its own branch, providing the link between the counties and the national level. The Irish agriculture is mostly grass-based and largely comprised of cattle production (IFA, 2021).

3.4.3. Non-Governmental Organizations: Greenpeace & Fern

➤ Greenpeace

Greenpeace is one of the world's leading environmental and social organisations, focusing on the protection of biodiversity, prevention of pollution and promotion of world peace. Founded as a protest movement against US nuclear testing in Alaska in 1971, it went on to stage more protests against nuclear tests, slaughter of seals, the whaling industry, marine pollution and other environmental and social issues. Greenpeace is now comprised of several offices in more than 55 countries through which it promotes direct actions, lobbying and campaigning, as well as research on worldwide socio-environmental issues without relying on governmental or corporate funding (Greenpeace, 2021).

➤ Fern

Fern is a European organisation founded in 1995 that promotes the protection of forests and the rights of the people living in and depending on forests. They seek to increase environmental and social justice by lobbying with the EU for forests and forest peoples. The organisation was founded as a means for NGOs to get informed about the developments in EU forest policymaking, including now climate, trade, and consumption as well. In order to meet their objectives, Fern cooperates with other social and environmental organisations, as well as forest peoples affected by injustices and policy makers, to come up with solutions that can be implemented by the EU (Fern, 2021).

4. Methodology

4.3. Discourse Analysis: Theoretical framework

Discourses can be defined as specific assemblages of ideas, concepts, and categories which are (re)produced and transformed in particular practices and forms of acting through which the material, mental and social worlds can be represented and be given meaning (Ferrari, 2020; Hajer, 1995, as cited by Takahashi & Meisner, 2012, Koch, 2012). Thus, discourses imply more than aggregates of words and sentences, be they written or spoken. They concern the integration of language units as they form meanings that surpass those contained in each individual unit (Fischer, 2003, as cited by Takahashi & Meisner, 2012, Koch, 2012). Rather than being mere tools that mirror social reality, discourses are storylines that summarize complex narratives as they are perceived and represented from the different positions of groups of social actors (Ferrari, 2020; Takahashi & Meisner, 2012). Considering this, it becomes evident that there can be as many discourses as there are perspectives on the world which, as stated by Fairclough (2004, p. 124), *“are associated with the different relations people have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people”*. Upon this multiplicity in the context of social interactions, interrelations between different discourses can be established, although their specific nature is not defined a priori. Relationships between different discourses and people develop on the basis of each particular interaction, so they can be, for instance, complementary, competitive, or dominating (Fairclough, 2004). Furthermore, the different perspectives conveyed by discourses refer not only to the perception of the world as it stands, but also to its possibilities of becoming. Discourses are also projective inasmuch as they convey imaginaries and possibilities for transformative change (Fairclough, 2004).

This understanding of discourses departs from a social constructivist point of view wherein reality is assumed to be constructed through social interaction (Huchkin, 1997). Therefore, discourses and social reality have a mutually transformative relationship in which one can shape and be shaped by the other (Takahashi & Meisner, 2012; Wodak, 2015). Considering this, the element of power became an important part of discourse analysis, being often associated with the work of Foucault (Fairclough, 2004). On his approach to the governance of discourses, Foucault emphasized that the relationship between power and discourse stems from the fact that *“Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.”* (Foucault, 1981, pp. 52-53, as cited by Koch, 2012, p. 57). Foucault brought forth the issue of discursive hegemony and the struggles that arise around that (Takahashi & Meisner, 2012). Hegemony, a Gramscian concept that has already been mentioned in previous sections, entails a particular vision on power and on the struggles for it. Building on Marxist theory, Antonio Gramsci emphasized the role of ideology and the need to build social consent in order to sustain relations of power (Gill & Law, 1989). Hegemony and discourse become entwined on the basis of the universalization of particular meanings and representations of social reality and their performative power in the construction and reproduction of that social reality. For instance,

neoliberal discourses assume that globalization leads to economic progress and that efficiency is not only necessary, but desirable, which are visions that have been fairly adopted and taken for granted in contemporary societies (Fairclough, 2004). Hegemonic discourse struggles entail the contestation of universalized discourses, namely the worldviews, value systems, and assumptions conveyed them, and they exist in addition to the contention over the material reality, or in Marxist terms the means of production and the economic structure (Fairclough, 2004).

Discourse analysis stems from linguistics and it emerged as a form of meaning analysis that went beyond the levels of word and sentence. Thanks to the ‘discursive turn’, discourses and texts as a whole became a unit of analysis in their own right (Johnston, 2013). It is important to clarify that texts, whether visual materials, written, or oral, are part of discourses in that they bridge the production and reception of messages and their meanings (Wodak, 2015). Texts are integral parts of social interactions since they mediate between discourses and the social practices that traverse the multiple dimensions and scales of social life (Fairclough, 2004). In principle, discourse analysis is noncritical, focusing on description and analysis of texts *per se* rather than on explanation and contextualization. Distancing itself from this, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed as a form of discourse analysis that puts in evidence the ideological systems and representations that make up discourses while recognizing their contingency and situatedness (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough (1995) developed a known model of CDA consisting of three interrelated levels of analysis which are themselves linked to three discursive dimensions (Fig. 3).

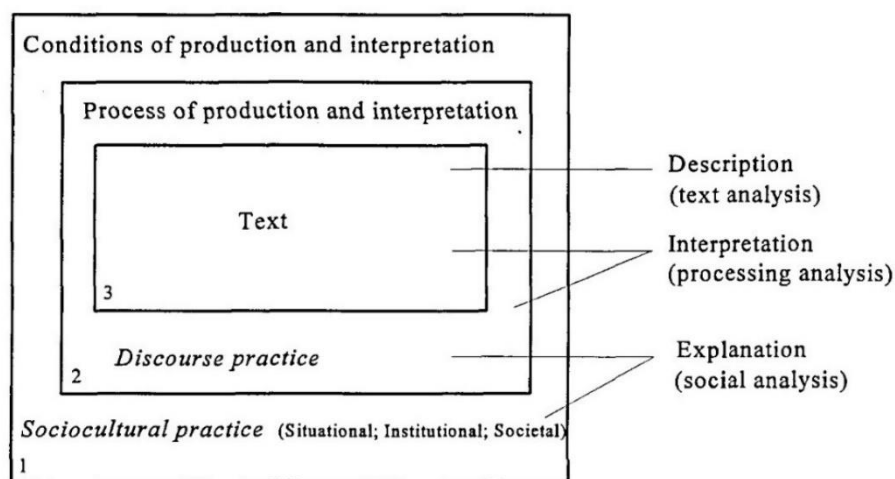


Figure 3 - Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Levels. Source: Janks (1997)

The three discursive dimensions are specifically the object of analysis, the discourse practice, and the socio-cultural practice. In Fairclough’s analytical model, the text refers to the object of analysis and it is approached through a descriptive text analysis (Janks, 1997). The discourse practice refers to the processes of production and reception of the text and to the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships established (Janks, 1997; Wodak, 2015). This discursive level requires a processing analysis or, in other words, interpretation of the texts. As for the socio-cultural practice, it refers to

the socio-historical conditions in which the discourse practice occurs, that is, the contextual conditions wherein production and reception occur. In this case, a social analysis, providing an explanation, is demanded (Janks, 1997). This model corroborates the approach often utilized in the study of social movements from a discourse analysis perspective, which addresses the communicative repertoire of the social groups/communities and the symbolic space and structures in which it is embedded (Johnston, 2013). Furthermore, the analysis of documents and texts allows for the revision of information about specific phenomena and, through that, the indirect access to the social world of those involved, thereby weaving different information layers and to uncover the complexities of the relations under scrutiny (Mogalakwe, 2006; Nimmo, 2011). This summarizes the methodological aim of this research, which relies not only in the description of the discourses mobilized by different civil society groups in relation to the EU-Mercosur agreement, but also to break down their propositions and assumptions, interests and motivations while analysing them in relation to larger contemporary socio-political frames, such as those referred in the literature review.

4.4. Research Object and Analytical Framework

As mentioned, the proposition of this research is to analyze the discourses developed by the seven CSOs listed and described before (cf. section 3.4.1., 3.4.2., and 3.4.3.) which have publicly opposed the EU-Mercosur free trade agreement. This analysis entails looking into the linkages (or lack thereof) between these discourses and their relation to the larger societal frames approached in the literature review, such as food systems, trade liberalization, populism, and food sovereignty.

The selection of the organizations was based on theoretical and practical criteria, related to both all categories and to each one of them in particular. Firstly, all the organizations selected have been deeply involvement in opposition against the EUMAA in the recent past, engaging in different types of lobbying and awareness-raising actions through multiple platforms. Secondly, all of them have taken part in protest actions of different natures in the EU and have engaged with European society (including institutional actors and decision-making bodies) in addressing the intrinsic problems carried by the FTA. Thirdly, all of these organizations are well-established organizations, with good on-line repertoires and presence which can be easily accessed. Additionally, they communicate in languages that I speak and/or have enough passive knowledge on, allowing me to analyze the texts produced without completely relying on translations and third-party mediation.

Analyzed CSOs		
Indigenous organizations (Brazil)	Farmers' Organizations (EU)	NGOs (International/EU)
APIB	COPA COGECA	Greenpeace
COIAB	FUGEA	Fern
	IFA	

Table 3 - Research focus: Selected CSOs by category

Specifically, APIB and COIAB, besides being the largest and most representative indigenous organizations in Brazil, have organized and participated in a European tour that took place in October-November 2019 with the goal of raising awareness about the environmental degradation and human rights’ violations occurring in Brazil, which the trade agreement is likely to worsen. During this tour, a delegation of indigenous leaders travelled through several EU countries and met with government and EU officials, political parties, CSOs, companies and corporation representatives, and European citizens at large in order to address the problems posed by trade in general and the EUMAA in particular. This tour was organized with the support of NGOs, such as Fern and Greenpeace, which played an important role in facilitating the encounters and meetings organized. As for the farmers’ organizations, they have been active actors in engaging with EU policy and contributing to EU’s decision-making in the realm of trade and agricultural policy, among other topics related to farming practices and rural issues. This engagement is also done at the national and regional level (in the case of FUGEA and IFA), as well as with the media. FUGEA and IFA are also Belgian and Irish organizations respectively, which countries were among the first to express concern about the trade agreement, and to which the pressure by these farmers’ organizations contributed significantly. Lastly, Fern and Greenpeace are NGOs that focus on the type of issues on which the contestation against the agreement is based (socio-environmental issues) and which have expert knowledge about the Brazilian context, as well as about the institutional EU setup. Like the other groups, Fern and Greenpeace have been directly involved in data gathering and reporting, as well as in institutional lobbying. They have also worked closely together with the indigenous organizations as referred previously and continue engaging with them and with other NGOs in Brazil. Despite the common opposition, shared categories, and organizational collaboration, the interests, motivations, and therefore discourses of each of these CSOs in opposing the agreement are not necessarily one and the same. Although that is often the acritical assumption, its evidence has not been widely explored in the literature and not specifically in relation to the EUMAA. Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the intra- and inter-category relations between these groups, as well as their positions in relation to the larger frames explored in the literature review.

Specifically, the analysis was conducted by gathering textual sources concerning the CSOs and the trade agreement, in both written or spoken formats. The list of all collected texts and their transcriptions are provided (Annex II), together with source references, and access dates. The texts utilized include different genres, such as reports, position papers, news articles and videos, website posts, open letters, media interviews, press releases, social media posts and original content distributed through on-line sharing services (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Spotify), webinars, meeting minutes, and public consultation recordings (e.g.: EU Parliament Committee meetings). All of these texts were collected

CSO	Number of texts
<i>APIB & COIAB*</i>	6 + 24
<i>COPA COGECA</i>	22
<i>FUGEA</i>	19
<i>IFA</i>	22
<i>Greenpeace</i>	20
<i>Fern</i>	21

Table 4 - Number of texts collect and analyzed per organization.

on-line, through the different available channels and sources mentioned. According to Hewson (2015), doing primary research on the internet - an approach known as internet-mediated research – allows to produce new evidence and, in the case of static and published data, it falls within the scope of document/text analysis. Besides the formats commonly associated with these (newspaper articles, reports, policy papers, etc.), social networks and media sharing services are also useful and accessible platforms where insightful findings can be done and relevant data gathered (Hewson, 2015). Moreover, the texts collected were scrutinized to guarantee the credibility of the sources and, to further ensure this, only material that was directly produced or which directly quoted representatives of the CSO was used. This was especially relevant given the fact that no other method of analysis was used through which the data could be triangulated (Koch, 2012). In the specific case of APIB and COIAB, six separate texts were analyzed for each (Tab. 2), but since they jointly organized and shared views during the European tour, the textual material that originated from the latter (twenty-four texts, Tab. 2) was attributed and associated with both in the analysis.

All the texts collected and analyzed were published/created between 2016 and 2021, although the majority is from 2019 onwards, covering the most intense period of protests and social mobilizations as a result of the ‘agreement in principle’ reached by the two regional blocs. The translations to English (of the texts originally written in Portuguese, Dutch or French) are my own translations. To ensure the accuracy of the translations, I consulted fluent speakers of the languages mentioned in order to control and certify the quality of the translations.

Due to the limited space of this research, the analysis relies mostly on the contents of the texts and does not contemplate a systematic analysis of words and other linguistic markers.

With regards to the analysis itself, the different texts were coded after being collected, listed and prepared for analysis. According to the grounded theory approach, coding entails defining what the data under analysis is about or, in other words, *“it involves identifying and recording one or more passages of text or other data items such as the parts of pictures that, in some sense, exemplify the same theoretical or descriptive data”* (Gibbs, 2007, p. 38). Therefore, and as a first step, the descriptive codes were established and equally attributed whenever the same topic/argument appeared in the texts analyzed. Afterwards, they were grouped under larger analytical/axial codes by which intertextual and interdiscursive patterns emerged. All the topics and specific groupings created were summarized per organization in the coding tables in Annex I, except in the case of APIB and COIAB, which analysis was merged due to the reasons explained above.

The codes created and the overall analysis took into account the larger social context (as demanded in a CDA approach), specifically that which is considered pertinent to this research, in line with what is summarized in the literature review. The findings and discussion of the analytical codes and patterns found are presented in the following section.

5. Findings, Discussion and Conclusion

Six analytical codes emerged as the most relevant and transversal in the discourses of the groups scrutinized: (1) Nature and Type of Contestation; (2) Contradictions and Inconsistencies; (3) Views on Production and Consumption; (4) Views on trade; (5) Democratic functioning & Sovereignty; and (6) Views on Development and Hegemonic frameworks. These codes constitute not only the larger themes that underlie and transverse the discourses, but also translate the meanings that inform and guide the opposition shown by the groups, namely in its relation to broader socio-economic and socio-political structures. The interlinkage between these themes is illustrated by Fig. 4 below.

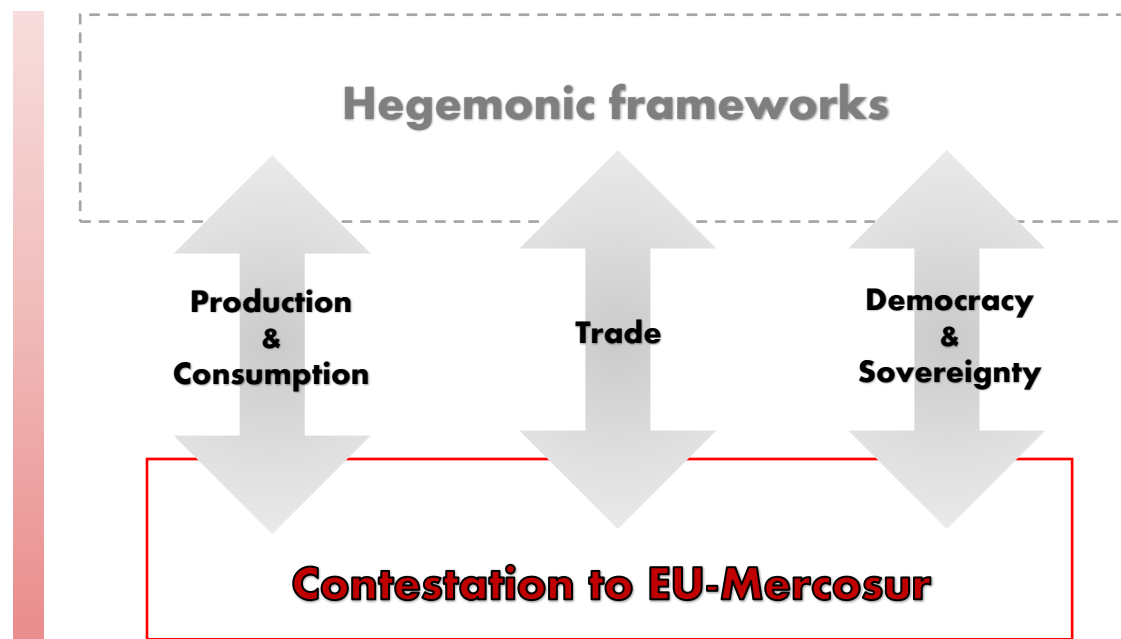


Figure 4 – Thematic underpinnings underlying the discourses of CSOs opposing the EU-Mercosur trade agreement.

There are multiple lines of contestation towards the FTA. These encompass economic, political, environmental, and social arguments which expose simultaneously the contradictions and inconsistencies identified in relation to the policy objectives and long-term goals of the EU. This contestation constitutes the base level of the oppositional discourses, entailing the objective reasons that motivate the position to the FTA. It is through this entry point that it is possible to access deeper meaning levels of the discourses and to connect them to specific understandings and particular relations to hegemonic frameworks. The views manifested on production and consumption, trade, and democratic functioning and sovereignty constitute the main thematic lines underlying the discourses and they bridge the two levels (cf. Fig. 4) within the context of opposition to the trade agreement. The perceptions, assessments, tensions, and alternatives manifested in relation to each of these fields of societal organization are manifested in the different discourses, revealing thereby a specific relation to the hegemonic frameworks that dominate their governance and contemporary operation. While the discourses of some groups demonstrated clear positions towards the hegemonic

frameworks, such as neoliberal globalization and the corporate-driven food system, others did not address them altogether. This is also indicative of the type of relation they have established with said frameworks and how those inform, in turn, their positions in relation to the themes explored. In general, these findings demonstrate that, as mentioned by Woods (2003), Brand et al. (2020), Naylor (2014), and Burnet & Murphy (2014), and Wolford (2010), there is heterogeneity within social contestation movements and that they do not necessarily have contempt for globalization processes and capitalism or abide by socio-environmental protection and locality as their primordial objectives. Besides this, other important observations are described and discussed in more detail below.

5.1 Contestation: Why, How, and the Schizophrenia of EU

The opposition towards the EU-Mercosur FTA occurs along four main lines of argument related to the areas wherein negative effects derived from its establishment are expected. There are thus several economic, political, social, and environmental factors presented as harmful and undesirable consequences, many of which would aggravate ongoing situations. Most of these have already been acknowledged by multiple studies as has been made explicit before (cf. section 3.4.). Despite the discrete categorization indicated, most of the effects expected were perceived as closely entwined and/or a continuation from each other since the materialization of one or more was often linked to the emergence of others. For instance, one of the economic concerns found across farmers' organizations' discourses was the unfair competition fostered by the FTA. This goes hand-in-hand with some of the social impacts referred in their discourses, such as precarity and farmers' mental burden. Besides these, a number of contradictions were also signaled by all the groups, adding another layer to the contestation against the FTA. These arguments, the contradictions exposed, and the overall contestation came through as compounded results from an immediate source (the FTA) and from the social, political, and economic background against which they develop - the political economic framework, the food system (production and consumption), and the institutional settings. A systematic listing of the contesting arguments are presented by each organization is included in Annex II.

The environmental impacts figure prominently in all the discourses, in one or more of their many configurations - biodiversity loss, ecosystem destruction, deforestation, increased carbon/GHG emissions, soil degradation, climate change, pollution, and threats to public health. A similar pattern can be found in the case of social impacts, although the picture here is less homogeneous. Human rights' violations in Brazil, concerning abuses and killings of indigenous and traditional populations, were referred by all organizations, except COPA COGECA and IFA, while slave and forced labor was not mentioned by COPA COGECA only. Furthermore, the killing of environmental activists and the lack of socio-environmental safeguards on financial investments were mentioned by Fern and Greenpeace. While FUGEA referred to the social consequences in Brazil and in the EU to a similar extent, IFA and COPA COGECA tended to rather focus on the social concerns specific to the

agricultural sector, such as precarity, lack of support for rural communities (EU), and generational renewal. Most of these sectorial concerns were also referred by Greenpeace and Fern.

As for the economic concerns, all organizations except APIB & COIAB referred several negative impacts, to be felt mostly by farmers and small and medium enterprises. Unfair competition and cheaper beef products coming in from Brazil are expected to create an oversupply and put pressure on prices, creating a damaging race to the bottom in the sector that is perceived as likely to shatter its already fragile economic sustainability. Because of that, the defense and protection of the sector is considered crucial by all (except APIB & COIAB), especially when considering the concessions made in the agreement in terms of imports into the EU. Moreover, the agricultural sector, namely sub-sectors such as that of beef, has been considered the bargaining chip of the agreement, which the European Commission has accepted to give away in order to reap gains in other industries' exports (cf. section 3.3). This "winners and losers" situation has been identified by all the farmers' organizations and NGOs and it feeds into the grievances already manifest in the sector due to ongoing precarization and uncertainty.

In terms of political contestation, APIB & COIAB, FUGEA, Greenpeace, and Fern pointed out the fact that the FTA comes at a time when there is a political climate in Brazil widely recognized as adverse, offering a questionable endorsement to the current policies of the Bolsonaro administration. In addition to this, Greenpeace referred that it is unlikely that the EU will be able to effectively influence Brazilian policy in a good direction, albeit that being publicized as one of the advantages of establishing bilateral trade agreements. Besides this, the Brazilian government has been considered unreliable and likely to keep on failing to meet the commitments necessary and/or agreed upon in the context of bilateral trade relations. Both NGOs also mentioned that there is a worryingly slow due process in cases when EU trade partners are involved, for instance, in violation of human rights or environmental misconduct. According to the NGOs, this leaves room to consider that the same will happen when similar situations arise in the context of the EUMAA. Moreover, Greenpeace and Fern consider that the agreement has raised fundamental problems concerning good governance, that is, regarding the transparency, access to information, and participation during the negotiation process. Problems concerning issues of consultation and transparency have been raised by other groups as well and shall be discussed more in depth in section 5.4. . COPA COGECA also contested the FTA for being a so-called "*political agreement*"⁴, criticizing it on the basis of perceived political biases and interests underlying it rather than balanced economic partnership.

The type of political action promoted against the FTA is also present in the discourses of the organizations. The NGOs, FUGEA, and APIB & COIAB established coalitions and alliances with each other (together with other groups or not) and with other CSOs, being all part of a broad, transnational coalition established against the EUMAA. In addition, they all mentioned promoting awareness-raising campaigns and incentivized resistance against this type of damaging trade policy. COPA

⁴ Annex II - COPA COGECA, Text 1.10, p. 50

COGECA and IFA mentioned only institutional lobbying and governmental pressures (in which the other groups also engaged), namely meetings with EU and government officials, or, in the case of IFA, collaboration with other country-wide farmers' organizations.

These contesting arguments were accompanied by the denunciation of contradictions and inconsistencies, found especially with regard to the conflicting positions taken by the EU. In this sense, the EU's promotion of **double standards** was pointed out by all groups and referred in relation to two specific points.

“Europe can no longer apply double standards. It wants to fight to prevent climate change and global warming and on the other hand... It is its companies that buy in Brazil, finance deforestation and finance the fires and finance the loss of our territories to the ruralista group [Agribusiness faction in the Brazilian Congress].”⁵

“There is a clear contradiction at EU level. One arm of the commission is prepared to do this deal and undermine the environment and animal welfare, while European farmers are asked to play their part on climate change and maintain the highest welfare standards.”⁶

The first case has been identified by all groups and is systematically referred as an inherent contradiction present in EU policies and goals. The EU action plans such as the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy, namely in relation to climate neutrality and reduced deforestation, are said to be undermined by the expected effects of the FTA. Moreover, the foreseen increase in agri-food production expected in Brazil due to the FTA occurs simultaneously with the reduction of socio-environmental protections in the country, thereby increasing the possibilities of curbing the goals and values promoted by the EU. The second case was mostly touched upon by the farmers' organizations and it refers to the fact that there are different production standards between the EU and Brazil. These production requirements are considered essential by the EU Commission since they guarantee aspects deemed important by EU society, such as animal welfare, food safety, and environmental protection. However, allowing the free entry of goods produced with lower standards than those demanded in the EU undermines this idea while creating a disadvantage to EU farmers and defrauding consumer expectations, as was pointed out by COPA COGECA, FUGEA, IFA, Greenpeace. Furthermore, although safeguards to fight market disruption and protect the sector were setup, these were deemed insufficient by COPA COGECA and IFA in relation to the losses expected in the sector. In addition, this was considered a possible driver of production relocation, according to FUGEA and COPA COGECA, diminishing the self-sufficiency of Europe in agri-food production despite the recognized high European standards of production and its higher climate efficiency.

⁵ Annex II - APIB & COIAB, Text 3.3, p. 20

⁶ Annex II - IFA, Text 3.5, p. 75

Besides these, the fact that products, such as pesticides and growth hormones, that are banned in the EU are allowed to be used in Brazil was also pointed out by all groups as another incoherence overlooked by the FTA. This means that food safety standards might be undermined, especially if the right mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement are not in place, which is yet another contradictory point mentioned by all the groups. Although there is a verbalized intention to guarantee food safety and standards, as well as a socio-environmentally approved origin of the products, there are no monitoring or enforcement mechanisms in place that can ensure these. The FTA does not include, in its chapter on trade and sustainable development, any legally binding clauses or mechanisms, although those are present in other chapters. In addition, and as pointed out by Fern, the sustainability chapter is only going to enter into force one year after the ratification of the EUMAA in spite of the looming problems. At the same time, as reported by the farmers' groups, the food quality assurances provided by Brazilian authorities are not reliable. Voluntary certification schemes introduced by companies are also cited as inefficient and lacking guarantees in general.

Scale distortions were also mentioned as a problematic, namely by COPA COGEA and IFA. These refer to the fact that EU trade policy in general is designed and assessed from a macro-level perspective and in this aggregate view the economic effects seem insignificant. This however overlooks the effective consequences on the ground, for real people and in specific rural areas.

5.2 Production and Consumption

The groups' views on production are manifested in their discourses mainly in two broad lines: how they perceive production and consumption and how these can and/or should be improved. Considering these lines, it is possible to create two groups in terms of the similarity found in their discourses in relation to these two lines.

On the one side, there is COPA COGECA and IFA. They consider the model of production in the EU superior to that found in Brazil and this normative differentiation is owed to the fact that the production standards are higher in Europe and farmers follow them closely. Furthermore, in Brazil, most production is done by large agribusiness and TNCs which is not the case, according to them, in the EU, where family farms are seen as dominant. The latter are considered best options in terms of production considering their locality, higher quality, lower environmental impact, and better animal welfare, and the contribution to rural economies and development. Despite this qualitative difference, the funding trends in the two blocs go to separate directions – in Brazil, higher state funds are being allocated to agri-food production while in the EU these funds, namely the CAP, are increasingly reduced – which is considered problematic and a jeopardy for the agricultural sector. In relation to the CAP, all three farmers' organizations (here FUGEA accompanies the other two) consider that the reform is demanding in terms of the environmental standards it entails, contributing for extra costs in production which are considered especially difficult to meet and offset in the context of further trade liberalization and reduced consumption. Decreased beef consumption is seen by IFA

and COPA COGECA as problematic and an extra source of uncertainty. According to them, EU beef has a good value for money and the quality meets consumers' demands and expectations, contrary to beef coming from Brazil, which only perceived advantage – cheapness - would be absorbed, according to IFA, by retailers and defraud consumers overall. The EU model of production is considered good enough as it is, already ensuring as best standards as possible, especially considering that production costs are already difficult to bear due to the low profit margin of the beef sector. All changes and further adaptation, for instance in the run towards climate neutrality, is not dismissed by COPA COGECA, but it is mentioned that it should be science-based (not ideological) and it is dependent on technological innovations. Here it is possible to see that the structures of the food system and the economic logic that guides them is not questioned or perceived as inherently problematic, as mentioned by Naylor (2014). Furthermore, system-wide and fundamental changes such as those mentioned by McMichael (2016) are rather deemed ideological and dismissed in favor of technological innovations, being rather in line with what Brand et al. (2020, p. 167) labelled as 'green capitalism'.

On the other side, there is FUGEA, Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB. They also make the same normative evaluation when comparing the production models in Brazil and in the EU. They all reject agro-industrial production, which the FTA is set to promote in Brazil due to increased beef and soy trade, which are bound to lead to more land occupation and consequently land conflicts. Agro-industrial type of production is considered to exist in both regional blocs, wherein it is maintained and defended by lobby groups (which COPA COGECA and IFA are considered to be). Agro-industrial production is considered to undermine family-based production in the two blocs, while also being incompatible with truly sustainable agriculture. They all support small-scale, local and short-chain production, guided by agroecology and aligned with food security/sovereignty principles. FUGEA considers the production standards in the EU costly, especially in view of the last CAP reform, which Greenpeace and Fern also consider needs to be revisited and adapted – for instance by limiting the funding to industrial agriculture - in order to promote better production systems. Consumption as it is currently is considered problematic by the NGOs and APIB & COIAB because of product origins, quantities, and dietary choices – namely in relation to the consumption of meat – being also part of the causal mechanisms that lead to the socio-environmental problems already mentioned. For instance, EU livestock production is mostly based on feed that comes from Brazil (soy) and therefore even consuming EU beef can have consequences in Brazil (Rajão et al., 2020; Rodrigues, 2008). FUGEA considers important to address consumers' preferences and demands in regard to food origin and quality, while not making references to need for decreased consumption. As for the improvements necessary, these groups consider that it is important to promote a change in the production-consumption nexus in order to support an effective green transition, for which the CAP reform mentioned above is seen as crucial. Furthermore, both NGOs and APIB & COIAB reinforce the idea that responsibility along the supply chain needs to be achieved, from producers to consumers and with special attention to the role of corporations for which production certification is seen as important to be demanded. In the case of this second group of organizations, the discourses reveal positions aligned with the goals, values, and practices of food sovereignty (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). In

general, they are critical of the dominant production models and recognize the power asymmetries that maintain them (Friedmann, 1993; McMichael, 2016).

5.3 Trade

The views on trade also show divergence among the groups, both in relation to the specific EU-Mercosur FTA and the views on trade policy in general.

All groups reject the current FTA and the agreement in principle reached, showing no support for it as it stands. All of them consider that it needs to be suspended and revised in order to be considered acceptable, except for Greenpeace that already affirmed its non-support for the agreement independently of any revisions. It has stated that any positive improvements will be too little, too late at this point, which is also corroborated by Fern. According to COPA COGECA and IFA, the current agreement is a result of rushed decision-making and fails to consider important consequences, such as 1) problems of cumulative effects due to the coming-together of several FTAs, 2) market-impacting events (e.g., Brexit), and 3) the effects that it can have on production standards and on the EU model of production (that is, lead to a reduction of the standards and to concentration of production). FUGEA corroborates the latter, specifically in regard to the stimulation of industrial farming and to the contribution to the disappearance of small-scale production. Following IFA, the agricultural gains of the FTA do not compensate the losses, especially in the highly sensitive beef market, which removal from the FTA is seen as the best option due to the already high market access of Mercosur beef without it.

COPA COGECA and IFA tend to support EU's trade policy, although conveying that it needs to be balanced and to prioritize the protection of vulnerable sectors, such as agriculture. According to these two groups, EU's trade policy should focus especially in reducing further market access to sensitive commodities, such as beef, in order to avoid creating disadvantages for EU farmers. COPA COGECA considers multilateral trade agreements a better option since these are considered to promote a more levelled playing field and to establish the same baseline for everyone, so standard discrepancies and gaps are less evident and prejudicial. IFA, on its turn, has affirmed that the current line of trade liberalization is undermining the CAP, which aligns with the opposition shown by FUGEA, Greenpeace, and Fern. These three organizations consider that FTAs are not fit for smaller farms, rather favoring large corporations and being promoted by powerful lobby groups and thereby undermining sustainable development. To Fern, Greenpeace, and APIB & COIAB, FTAs such as the EU-Mercosur, which are a continuation of the same business-as-usual trade policy, stimulate not only further trade exchanges, but also consumption, exacerbating agribusiness expansion, support for opaque supply chains, and promoting the negative socio-environmental effects aforementioned. APIB & COIAB specifically consider that the wider society is aware and responsible for this as well, being therefore also in charge of pushing for the necessary changes. For these reasons, FUGEA, Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB consider that EU trade policy should be revised and re-designed in order to include provisions, such as default due diligence mechanisms, that can stimulate the necessary changes in

the agricultural sector and protect the good practices. Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB advocate for regulatory and enforcement mechanisms oriented towards those engaging and benefitting from these commercial exchanges (corporations/companies), ensuring that there is socio-environmental protection and food safety across supply chains.

5.4 Democratic Functioning and Sovereignty

The views on democratic functioning and sovereignty show a general feeling of lack of recognition of claims, needs, and rights.

“Despite the many signals coming from various sectors of Belgian society and in other European countries, the European Commission and the Council working groups accompanying the negotiation of trade agreements remain deaf to years of criticism of European trade policy and continue to conclude trade agreements that prioritise commercial interests to the detriment of health, human rights and labour, as well as environmental and climate protection.”⁷
(emphasis added)

These claims crosscut all the organizations and condemn the lack of recognition for the specific needs and demands of each of them. These are also paired with criticism towards a generalized lack of transparency and democratic scrutiny in trade negotiation processes, contributing to a perceived hinderance of political legitimacy and credibility at the EU level. In addition to this, both NGOs, FUGEA, and APIB & COIAB flagged the fact that there is a systemic absence of proper civil society consultation and participation in the decision-making involved in these trade agreements, in line with what is mentioned by Ayres & Bosia (2011). This is pointed out as especially problematic in the case of the EUMAA by Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB because of the ongoing de-regulation trend, as well as the weakening/corruption of governmental agencies promoted by state-capital collusion in Brazil.

Constitutional rights and International treaties have been increasingly disrespected, leading to what APIB & COIAB have called *“the institutionalization of genocide”*⁸, and the FTA is likely to enhance these processes, making it important to establish direct consultation and participation mechanisms oriented towards actors on the ground, such as indigenous peoples. This also led both NGOs to draw attention to the fact that the Impact Assessment (IA) study was not taken into consideration in the negotiations as the agreement in principle was reached before the IA was completed. According to the better regulation agenda and guidelines of the European Commission, IAs are required in all EU initiatives that might imply environmental, social, or economic impacts in order to provide evidence that can support the decision-making process (European Commission, 2021a). Therefore, as the IA was only available after an agreement had been reached, its outcomes were not taken into consideration in the negotiations while the final report was still not available by the end of March

⁷ Annex II - FUGEA, Text 2.11, p.

⁸ Annex II - APIB & COIAB, Texts 1.6 and 3.16, p. 14 and p. 29 respectively (examples)

2021. This adds to what is mentioned by Brown (2015) with regards to the neoliberal management model in the sense that, besides eroding political legitimacy, this model fails to deliver on its supposed efficiency and effectiveness gains. The IA episode reinforced the position of the NGOs towards the need for a participatory revision of EU trade policy (cf. 5.3), especially to guarantee the updating of consultation and participation mechanisms, no longer allowing for “*decision-making bodies and procedures that operate outside democratic scrutiny*”⁹, which is currently the case for the EUMAA and, as posed by Brand et al. (2020), sacrifices freedom and democratic control at the altar of economic coordination and bureaucratization.

Contrary to Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB, the farmers’ organizations put great onus on the national level, applying institutional pressure in parliaments and governments in order to have their claims heard and reflected on the official positions taken by the MSs. This process has been laden with tensions by the fact that these organizations demand stands, from both the EU and national governments, that reflect their constituencies’ wishes and the protection of national agricultural/beef sectors. Accordingly, farmers’ groups expect the EU and national governments to show a strong political position in defending the agricultural sector and specifically farmers and rural areas in all the policy areas where these might come into jeopardy, with a specific emphasis on trade policy and on the opening of the internal market. The Irish and Belgian governments, for instance, have sided with the farmers and declared their concerns towards the FTA and the inability to support it as it stands (EUobserver, 2020; Neslen, 2019a). Similarly, the EU Parliament has vetoed the agreement and these organizations welcomed that initiative as a sign of support for their concerns and needs. Nonetheless, political trust is found lacking across the board.

Overall, there is a sense of disregard towards peoples’ will in the establishment of this agreement. All the groups have underlined the lack of respect for and commitment towards popular demands, exposing the poor health of popular sovereignty in institutional politics and the political consequences derived from this. Fern and COPA COGECA linked the undermining of popular sovereignty and the unattended grievances in rural areas to the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and to its expression in the latest EU elections.

*Just a few weeks after the European elections, **where the rural communities’ vote was a matter of concern to EU institutions**, how can we possibly envisage the prospect of **weakening once again our EU farming communities**, which are the cornerstone of our rural Europe, once again?¹⁰*
(emphasis added)

⁹ Annex II - Greenpeace, Text 1.11, p. 100

¹⁰ Annex II - COPA COGECA, Text 1.2, p. 47

Just like it was mentioned by Mamonova et al. (2020) and contrary to Borrás (2020), right-wing populism is what is on the rise in the EU and, as was subtly pointed out by COPA COGECA in the statement above, it is fomented by the grievances of the countryside.

5.5 Hegemonic Frameworks: Bringing it all together

The issues found and alternatives suggested in regard to food production and consumption, as well as trade and the democratic functioning of society are indicative of each groups' particular position towards dominant systems. Although these have been expressed in relation to each of those specific fields, some of the organizations have also made their stands clear in relation to the type of changes deemed necessary in order to address the issues that come to the surface in concrete situations such as this created by the establishment of the EUMAA.

The discourses of COPA COGECA and IFA reveal that these groups do not consider the need or desirability to promote systemic change. Just like suggested by Wolford (2010) and Naylor (2014), their suggestions and positions towards production-consumption, trade, and democratic functioning are directed towards rectifications of perceived shortcomings, namely in relation to the aspects that create disadvantages for farmers and economic sustainability challenges. Their focus lies precisely on ensuring that rural businesses and economy are viable in the current political economic context and that the EU production model (cf. section 5.2) is not endangered by unnecessarily stringent requirements or spill-over effects from policy areas such as trade. This can be considered a demonstration of the “soft power” of neoliberalism (Brown, 2015).

*“I think finally I would point out that if something needs to be changed or if something is under pressure to change that is **how we and this house** [EU Parliament] **consider what we call European added value. Can we go for non-scientific evidence-based decisions? Can we put restrictions to our own farmers that we cannot impose in our imports? Can we tell our farmers and their cooperatives that they cannot use certain technologies because we feel that it is not appropriate and at the same time, we cannot limit imports of the same commodities? This is something that will come to your table and we will certainly of course help you to find the balance between the 2 extremes (...)**”¹¹*
(Emphasis added)

The “EU added value”, based on high standards of production and socio-environmental protection, is questioned in terms of its adequacy, fairness, and scientific accuracy. This added value was questioned because of the market disadvantages it fosters (especially in the context of trade liberalization), the lack of significant returns that can compensate for the extra costs of production, and the perceived ideological rather than scientific foundation. The aims of these organizations' contestation towards FTAs can then be understood as attempts at protecting the sector and its most vulnerable links (farmers), as identified by Nepstad, Stickler & Almeida (2006), through the reduction of uncertainty and instability but without addressing the configuration and power asymmetries

¹¹ Annex II - COPA COGECA, Text 1.12, p. 53

embedded in the global economy and food system nor the fact that, according to McMichael (2016), Rodrigues (2008), and others, it inherently fosters said conditions. Their contestation is therefore not oriented towards system reformation, be it in terms of production and consumption, trade or both, but rather to the adjustment of these models and the policies that govern them so European farmers can be protected from the effects of the market while reaping fair benefits.

*“I think you know you said about farmers being shocked... **They’re angry. They feel let down by the EU politicians.** (...) This has been the **busiest time and the biggest reaction that we’ve got from farmers on the ground.** They feel that **they’ve been sold out by the EU Commission.**”¹²*
(Emphasis added)

This suggests a bubbling frustration and underlying struggle for the re-appropriation of sovereignty and affirmation of citizenship, highlighting the need to re-gain control over the future of the sector instead of being politically and spatially marginalized and left to bear the consequences of high-level decision-making. From the perspective of populism presented (cf. 2.3.1.), this appears a claim to attend popular will through lenses of protectionism and nationalism. Although showing that democratic functioning is fundamentally contested, IFA and COPA COGECA do not gear these arguments, as stated by Park (2009), towards challenging the logic of capitalism.

FUGEA, Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB diverge from this by explicitly formulating in their discourses that there are fundamental problems in the way that the production-consumption nexus and trade currently work. They all acknowledge the fragility of the current global economic and food production systems, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, just as stated by Horn (2020). Thus, they advocate for wider and more radical changes that allow for the setup of an alternative economic and development model. In line with the arguments presented by McMichael (2016) and Conversi (2016), these groups recognize the need to address the root problems created by the current economic model, neoliberal globalization, and food regime geared towards agro-industrial production and mass distribution while under the power grip of TNCs, which appropriate most of the economic benefits derived from trade while leaving externalities behind for which they are asked little to no responsibility. This has been acknowledged as a source of current and future problems related to the reproduction and protection of social and economic sectors, such as agriculture. Trade liberalization is seen as a key enabler and accelerator of the processes and models considered problematic in terms of production and consumption and contributing, according to Fern and APIB & COIAB, to the maintenance of dependency relations between the North and the South, just as stated by Moreira & Brites (2018). In line with the ideas of Dicken et al. (2001), the acknowledgment of the relational and global nature of these processes and of the conflicts they occasion is also shown on how these groups organize their opposition against the EU-Mercosur FTA. The broad, transnational coalitions they have endorsed and are an active part of suggest that these groups recognize the need to promote collective efforts that can garner the necessary “power in

¹² Annex II - IFA, Text 3.7, p. 76

numbers” that can potentially put an end to globally ingrained dynamics such as the ones that guide trade liberalization and agro-industrial food production.

“Citizens across Europe and South America are uniting against the EU-Mercosur agreement and working towards a better future. We, the undersigned organizations, are part of this movement that demands governments stop the EU-Mercosur agreement!”¹³

All the four organizations mentioned above advocate for alternative food production systems that can ensure the social, economic, and environmental justice they see lacking in the current structures. They all support the principles of food sovereignty, which are oriented by the values mentioned, and consider important the decentralization of the food production system, curbing the current hegemony and also the homogeneity imparted in our food consumption patterns. As mentioned by McMichael (2016, p. 9), their standing *“in politicizing the assumptions, architecture and consequences of the food regime, reaches beyond itself to appeal to a broader political program, geared to safeguarding the future (of humanity, and of non-human nature)”*

The discourse of APIB & COIAB is the one where criticism towards the current hegemonic frameworks figure most prominently and explicitly. They systematically referred to the issues of capitalist developmentalism and its inherent (neo)colonial relations. Their indigeneity and experience as colonized peoples in Brazil provided them with particular perceptions and lived insights on commodification, calculability, progress, neoliberal rationales, and the importance of re-thinking globalized and hegemonic paradigms and systems. Besides the first-hand experience of the consequences of the latter, these groups also approach issues such as the EUMAA as historical continuations of erasure, dominance, and corruption of (ancestral) sovereignty. They expose in their accounts the maintenance of the disregard for their modes of life and acquired rights, namely the demarcation of their territories and their participation in decision-making, revealing thereby the imposition and intrinsic contradictions found in liberal democracies. These views are a red thread in their discourse wherein shared responsibilities for the future are demanded while exposing the shaky foundations of our taken-for-granted systems and structures. They also referred to people’s closed minds and conscious disregard for the problems denounced and their roots, pointing thereby towards the figure of the *homo oeconomicus* mentioned by Brown (2015) and to the individualization and economization of life to the detriment of life itself. In exposing this, APIB & COIAB reinforced the importance of care and humanity as well.

“Within a history of colonization, this is collusion. I say that it is conniving because if our society reacted and gave an answer in the face of all these attacks and yet another attempt at the genocide of the indigenous peoples of Brazil, we would have more strength and other possibilities to fight for our rights. We would have more people caring about all the losses of

¹³ Annex II - Fern, Text 2.3, p. 113 (coalition statement, also endorsed and signed by FUGEA and Greenpeace)

these lives. We need to look inside and start caring more for the lives of others. We need to be more humane in order to truly fulfill our human intents of closeness and solidarity.”¹⁴

5.6 Concluding Remarks

As mentioned, the goal of this research was to address discourses that different civil society organizations have developed towards the EUMAA, considering possible interrelations and how they connected to larger societal frames, such as neoliberal globalization, trade, populism, and food sovereignty. The analysis has shown that, although aspiring towards the equal goal of curbing the ratification of the EUMAA, the groups and their corresponding discourses have deeper commonalities and differentiations to take account of. Fig. 4 provides a model of the logic that could be found in all discourses, addressing different layers of meaning across the three main thematic focuses. The most superficial layer, that of the objective contestation raised against the EU-Mercosur FTA, showed the existence of relatively similar arguments directed at environmental, social, economic, political concerns. In many of them, as stated by Woods (2003, p. 317), the defence of rurality comes to the fore and is expressed in the *“language and ideas of environmentalism and the anti-globalization movement, as well as the values of liberal consumerist society”* while being closely entwined with other discourses, namely on rights, liberty, and freedom, particularly from bureaucracy and governmental interference (Woods, 2003).

From this level and crossing through the contradictions and inconsistencies also found and referred as problems in themselves, it was possible to access the views of the different groups on production and consumption, trade, democratic functioning and sovereignty.

Regarding production and consumption, as well as trade, two general positions were presented and the organizations in each of them tended to use similar collective action frames, as referred by (Caraway, 2018). COPA COGECA and IFA aligned with regards to the support for the current production systems as they perceived them to be in the EU (family farms), considering them adequate and producing at best possible practices. In relation to trade, they showed general support for EU trade policy, emphasizing however the need to protect the EU internal market and the sensitive agricultural sectors, such as that of beef, due to the competition faced in view of the different production standards and costs. Their take is thus that the possible reforms must be done cautiously and have in view creating a better economic sustainability for the beef sector within the *“rules of the game”* of the current economic structures and production systems. This demonstrates that their discourse is guided by neoliberal values (Brown, 2015) and ideals and imply not considering the existence of a corporate food regime as such and along the lines defined by (McMichael, 2016). The fact that they acknowledge the dominance of agribusinesses and TNCs in Brazil implies, however, that they perceive corporate-driven production as a regional characteristic and set out to normatively differentiate the EU and Mercosur. As for FUGEA, Greenpeace, Fern, and APIB & COIAB, the views on production, consumption, and trade were diametrically opposed. They specifically make references

¹⁴ Annex II - COIAB, Text 2.5, p. 19

to the harmful dominance of agro-industrial corporations over food systems, independently of place and space, and to the equally problematic principles of trade liberalization fostered by neoliberal globalization. Following this, they claim for alternatives that represent structural shifts in these fields, advocating therefore for food sovereignty, short production chains, and local development, upholding thereby a socially and environmentally just system. Nonetheless, they do not reject the trade agreement adamantly and by principle (except for Greenpeace), suggesting instead that it should be adjusted, and mechanisms should be found to allow it to continue while respecting the values deemed fundamental. This also shows nuances that speak of the need to reconsider the binarism often present in food sovereignty discourses (Burnett & Murphy, 2014; Naylor, 2014).

Regarding democratic functioning and sovereignty, the general picture showed more unanimity. All the organizations' discourses revealed a deep frustration with the lack of respect for their concerns and for their role as part of the sovereign body of liberal democracies – the demos. This general perception and manifestation by all groups reiterates the conception of populism developed by Laclau (1977, 2005) and Ganesha (2016) wherein subaltern or rather 'subalternized' interests are articulated in spite of and beyond the presence of group homogeneity in an antagonistic synthesis. The discourses also let transpire other populist elements or associated features, namely the existence of a perceived external threat (the FTA, Brazil) and the presence of nationalist and protectionist tendencies, as described by Brubaker (2020) and Mudde & Kaltwasser (2013). Contrary, however, to what is mentioned by Norris & Inglehart (2016), the organizations did not show anti-establishmentism and in fact rather keen on engaging with the institutional actors and willing to work with them towards a solution. Populist inclinations, although not self-acknowledged in any of the discourses, were present and the references made by Fern and COPA COGECA to the rise of right-wing populism also show that populism is closely correlated to the processes under scrutiny in this research.

According to Woods (2003, p. 318), "*the dynamism of social movements makes the determination of boundaries impossible*", which neatly applies to the present study case in which it has become clear that these groups' discourses are not categorically discrete but intersect in multiple points. At the same time, the differences should not be dismissed or erased under the guise of depthless homogeneity. Considering the continuous classification provided by Polanyi (2001) (cf. 2.3.), IFA and COPA COGECA would be placed on the reactionary side of the spectrum, while FUGEA, Fern, Greenpeace, and APIB & COIAB rather on the progressive side. However, this research did show that it is important to 'think beyond Polanyi' (cf. 2.3.) to appreciate the diversity within social struggles, their points of departure and aspired places of arrival.

The added value of this research was precisely to unveil these intrinsic ambiguities, tensions, and complementarities within the opposition front against the EU-Mercosur FTA, revealing their underlying meanings and particular views, as well as the aspirations, in relation to hegemonic structures and important frames in the rural context nowadays, such as populism. The fact that this research focused on organizations instead of individuals also offers an angle that is rather missing on the literature, although this requires caution the extrapolating conclusions to similar organizations and/or to individual members/supporters of the organizations tackled. In this sense, further research into CSOs and their alliances in the context of trade agreements would be pertinent to conduct, as

well as performing a comparative analysis between these CSOs and their member-bases in regard to the same context (or a similar one) and societal frames.

6. Reference List

- Agence Europe. (2020, October 6). Small majority of MEPs reject ratification of EU/Mercosur agreement as it stands. Retrieved November 5, 2021, from <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/12575/16>
- APIB. (2021). APIB. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://apiboficial.org/apib/?lang=en>
- Aslanidis, P. (2017). Populism and Social Movements. In *The Oxford Handbook of Populism* (pp. 1–24). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.23>
- Ayres, J., & Bosia, M. J. (2011). Beyond global summitry: Food sovereignty as localized resistance to globalization. *Globalizations*, 8(1), 47–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2011.544203>
- Bak-Filipek, E. (2018). Changes in the EU Beef Market. *Problems of World Agriculture*, 18(4), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.22630/prs.2018.18.4.101>
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Berndt, C., Werner, M., & Fernández, V. R. (2020). Postneoliberalism as institutional recalibration: Reading Polanyi through Argentina's soy boom. *EPA: Economy and Space*, 52(1), 216–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X19825657>
- Biekart, K., & Fowler, A. (2013). Transforming Activisms 2010+: Exploring Ways and Waves. *Development and Change*, 44(3), 527–546. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12032>
- Blühdorn, I., & Butzlaff, F. (2019). Rethinking Populism: Peak democracy, liquid identity and the performance of sovereignty. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 22(2), 191–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431017754057>
- Borras, S. M. (2020). Agrarian social movements: The absurdly difficult but not impossible agenda of defeating right-wing populism and exploring a socialist future. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 20(1), 3–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12311>
- Brand, U., Görg, C., & Wissen, M. (2020). Overcoming neoliberal globalization: social-ecological transformation from a Polanyian perspective and beyond. *Globalizations*, 17(1), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1644708>
- Bronk, R., & Jacoby, W. (2020). *The Epistemics of Populism and the Politics of Uncertainty* (LSE Europe in Question No. 152). *LSE Europe in Question*. London. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/103492/>
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. (W. Brown & M. Feher, Eds.), *Near Futures Series*. New York: Zone Books.
- Brubaker, R. (2020). Populism and nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, 26(1), 44–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12522>
- Burnett, K., & Murphy, S. (2014). What place for international trade in food sovereignty? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6), 1065–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.876995>
- Cañas, J. (2021). EU-Mercosur Association Agreement: Legislative train. Brussels: European Parliament. Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-stronger-europe-in-the-world/file-eu-Mercosur-association-agreement>
- Canuto, A., Luz, C. R. da S., & Andrade, T. V. P. (2017). *Conflitos no Campo - Brasil 2017*. Goiânia, GO. Retrieved from <https://cptnacional.org.br/component/jdownloads/?task=download.send&id=14110&catid=0&m=0&Itemid=0>

- Caraway, B. (2018). Collective action frames and the developing role of discursive practice in worker organisation: The case of OUR Walmart. *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalisation*, 12(1), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.13169/workorgalaboglob.12.1.0007>
- COGECA, C. (2021). Copa Cogeca. Retrieved November 25, 2020, from <https://www.copa-cogeca.eu/>
- COIAB. (2020). Portal da COIAB. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://coiab.org.br/>
- Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Cimi). (2018). *Violência contra os povos indígenas no Brasil - Dados de 2018*. Brasília. Retrieved from <https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/relatorio-violencia-contra-os-povos-indigenas-brasil-2018.pdf>
- Conversi, D. (2016). Sovereignty in a Changing World: From Westphalia to Food Sovereignty. *Globalizations*, 13(4), 484–498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2016.1150570>
- Coronil, F. (2000). Towards a Critique of Globalcentrism: Speculations on Capitalism’s Nature. *Public Culture*, 12(2), 351–374. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/26197/pdf?casa_token=wJVktfwlq8YAAAAA:zbAbyBXSKDxkX2QIZXNCGxz-MRqz-7qDFOWKe6uGG9XESiHw84ff7ZtdcepBREIxF7JNGjTOnA
- Deutsche Welle (DW). (2019, August 24). Europeus divididos sobre acordo com Mercosul. *Deutsche Welle (DW)*. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/pt-br/europeus-divididos-sobre-acordo-com-mercosul/a-50153659>
- Dicken, P., Kelly, P. F., Olds, K., & Wai-Chung Yeung, H. (2001). Chains and networks, territories and scales: towards a relational framework for analysing the global economy. *Global Networks*, 1(2), 89–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0374.00007>
- EUobserver. (2020, January 20). Belgian region threatens to block EU-Mercosur trade deal. Retrieved January 19, 2021, from <https://euobserver.com/tickers/147195>
- EURACTIV. (2010, May 8). Farmers oppose relaunch of EU-Mercosur trade talks. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/farmers-oppose-relaunch-of-eu-mercosur-trade-talks/>
- European Commission. (2021a). Impact assessments. Retrieved May 1, 2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/impact-assessments_en
- European Commission. (2021b). Income support explained: Overview of direct payments for farmers. Retrieved May 1, 2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/income-support/income-support-explained_en#howitworks
- European Parliament. (2020). Resolution on the implementation of the common commercial policy – annual report 2018 (2019/2197(INI)). Brussels: European Parliament. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0252_EN.pdf
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language*. New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2004). *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. *Comunicación y Medios* (Vol. 0). London: Routledge.
- Farm Europe. (2018). Beef & Dairy Sectors: Sectorial strategies to secure economic dynamism in the EU cattle sector. Brussels: Farm Europe. Retrieved from <https://www.farm-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Note-GFF2018-Beef-Dairy-sectors-strategies.pdf>
- Fern. (2021). Fern - Making the EU work for people & forests. Retrieved October 29, 2020, from <https://www.fern.org/>

- Ferrari, C. A. (2020). Contemporary Land Questions in Sweden, Far-Right Populist Strategies and Challenges for Inclusionary Rural Development. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 60(4), 833–856. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12319>
- Friedmann, H. (1993). The Political Economy of Food: a Global Crisis. *New Left Review*, (197), 29–57. Retrieved from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i197/articles/harriet-friedmann-the-political-economy-of-food-a-global-crisis>
- FUGEA. (2021). FUGEA – vers une agriculture durable. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <https://fugea.be/>
- Gandesha, S. (2016). Understanding Right and Left Populism. In J. Morelock (Ed.), *Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism* (pp. 49–70). London: University of Westminster Press. <https://doi.org/10.16997/book30.d>
- Gereffi, G., Korzeniewicz, M., & Korzeniewicz, R. P. (1994). Introduction: Global Commodity Chains. In G. Gereffi & M. Korzeniewicz (Eds.), *Commodity Chains and Global capitalism* (pp. 1–14). London: Praeger.
- Germani, G. I. (2006). Condições históricas e sociais que regulam o acesso a terra no espaço agrário brasileiro. *GeoTextos*, 2(2), 115–147. <https://doi.org/10.9771/1984-5537geo.v2i2.3040>
- Ghiotto, L., & Echaide, J. (2019). *Analysis of the agreement between the European Union and the Mercosur*. Berlin, Buenos Aires, Brussels. Retrieved from <https://www.annacavazzini.eu/wp-content/uploads/Final-REPORT-EU-Mercosur-26.10.2020.pdf>
- Gibbs, G. R. (2007). Thematic coding and categorizing. In *Analysing Qualitative Data* (pp. 38–55). London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli, Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gill, S. R., & Law, D. (1989). Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital. *International Studies Quarterly*, 33(4), 475–499. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600523>
- GRAIN. (2019). *Eu-Mercosur Trade Deal Will Intensify the Climate*. Barcelona. Retrieved from <https://grain.org/en/article/6355-eu-Mercosur-trade-deal-will-intensify-the-climate-crisis-from-agriculture>
- Greenpeace. (2021). Greenpeace International. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/>
- Hajdu, A., & Mamonova, N. (2020). Prospects of Agrarian Populism and Food Sovereignty Movement in Post-Socialist Romania. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 60(4), 880–904. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12301>
- Harrison, J., & Paulini, S. (2020). *The Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter in the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement: Is it fit for purpose?* London. Retrieved from <https://www.documents.clientearth.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2020-07-15-the-trade-and-sustainable-development-chapter-in-the-eu-Mercosur-association-agreement-ext-en.pdf>
- Hay, C., & Rosamond, B. (2002). Globalization, European integration and the discursive construction of economic imperatives. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(2), 147–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760110120192>
- Hewson, C. (2015). Research Methods on the Internet. In J. A. Danowski & L. Cantoni (Eds.), *Communication and Technology. Handbooks of Communication Science Series* (pp. 277–302). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. Retrieved from https://oro.open.ac.uk/42130/1/Hewson_2014_Research_methods_on_the_internet.pdf
- Hocquette, J.-F., Ellies-Oury, M.-P., Lherm, M., Pineau, C., Deblitz, C., & Farmer, L. (2018). Current situation and future prospects for beef production in Europe - A review. *Asian-Australasian Journal of Animal Sciences*, 31(7), 1017–1035. <https://doi.org/10.5713/ajas.18.0196>

- Horn, F. (2020). Of humans and cattle: Comments on Germany's upcoming EU Council Presidency against the backdrop of the planned EU-Mercosur trade agreement. *Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels*. Brussels. Retrieved from <https://www.rosalux.eu/en/article/1723.of-humans-and-cattle.html?sstr=Mercosur>
- Huchkin, T. N. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis. In T. Miller (Ed.), *Functional Approaches to Written Text: Classroom Applications* (pp. 78–92). Washington D.C.: English Language Programs.
- Iago, D. ab. (2020, June 4). EU mulls Dutch rejection of Mercosur deal. *Argus Media*. Retrieved from <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2111447-eu-mulls-dutch-rejection-of-Mercosur-deal>
- IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2017a). *Censo Agropecuário 2017: Agricultura familiar - Resultados definitivos. Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário. Ministério do Planejamento, Orçamento e Gestão*. Vitória de Santo Antão, PE. Retrieved from https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/3096/agro_2017_agricultura_familiar.pdf
- IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2017b). Em 11 anos, agricultura familiar perde 9,5% dos estabelecimentos e 2,2 milhões de postos de trabalho. Retrieved April 8, 2021, from <https://censos.ibge.gov.br/agro/2017/2012-agencia-de-noticias/noticias/25786-em-11-anos-agricultura-familiar-perde-9-5-dos-estabelecimentos-e-2-2-milhoes-de-postos-de-trabalho.html>
- IFA. (2021). Irish Farmers' Association - IFA. Retrieved December 1, 2020, from <https://www.ifa.ie/>
- Ihle, R., Dries, L., Jongeneel, R., Venus, T., & Wesseler, J. (2017). *Research for agri committee - the EU cattle sector: Challenges and Opportunities - Milk and Meat: Study*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2861/85585>
- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2016). *Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash* (No. RWP16- 026). *HKS Working Paper*. Philadelphia. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2818659>
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. (n.d.). Election of Jair Bolsonaro as President. Retrieved May 4, 2019, from <https://www.iwgia.org/en/brazil>
- Jalata, A. (2011). Indigenous Peoples and the Capitalist World System: Researching, Knowing, and Promoting Social Justice. *Sociology Publications and Other Works*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee. Retrieved from http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_socopubs/82
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630970180302>
- Johnston, H. (2013). Discourse analysis and social movements. In D. A. Snow, D. della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbespm071>
- Kaltwasser, C. R., & Van Hauwaert, S. M. (2020). The populist citizen: Empirical evidence from Europe and Latin America. *European Political Science Review*, 12, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773919000262>
- Karatepe, I. D., Scherrer, C., & Tizzot, H. (2020). *Mercosur – EU Agreement: Impact on Agriculture, Environment, and Consumers* (No. 27). Kassel. <https://doi.org/10.17170/kobra-202005111245>
- Kehoe, L., Reis, T., Virah-Sawny, M., Balmford, A., & Kuemmerle, T. (2019, April). Make EU trade with Brazil sustainable. *Science*, (6438), 341. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaw8276>
- Koch, F. (2012). Regional Impacts of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru: A Discourse Analyses approach. In E. S. Hung (Ed.), *Diálogos y desafíos Euro-Latinoamericanos: Ensayos sobre cooperación, derecho, educación y comunicación* (pp. 52–79). Barranquilla: Universidade del Norte.

- Krisch, N. (2017). Liquid authority in global governance. *International Theory*, 9(2), 237–260.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971916000269>
- Kristkova, Z., & García-Alvaréz-Coque, J. M. (2015). Competitiveness of the EU Beef Sector - A Case Study. *Agris On-Line Papers in Economics and Informatics*, 7(2), 77–92.
<https://doi.org/10.7160/aol.2015.070208>
- Kuepper, B., Steinweg, T., Piotrowski, M., & Arnould, J. (2020). *Brazilian Beef Supply Chain Under Pressure Amid Worsening ESG Impacts*. Washington DC. Retrieved from <https://chainreactionresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Brazilian-Beef-Supply-Chain-Under-Pressure-7.pdf>
- Kulke, E. (2008). Agrarian Clusters and Chains in Rural Areas of Germany and Poland. In C. Stringer & R. Le Heron (Eds.), *Agri-food Commodity Chains and Globalising Networks* (pp. 137–146). Hampshire, England: Ashgate. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.poltektegal.ac.id/index.php/siklus/article/view/298%0Ahttp://repositorio.unan.edu.ni/2986/1/5624.pdf%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jana.2015.10.005%0Ahttp://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/12/58%0Ahttp://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&P>
- Laclau, E. (1977). *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism*. London, UK: New Left Books.
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populism Reason*. London and New York: Verso.
- Lagoutte, J. T. (2020, May 15). The EU-Mercosur Trade Deal Must Be Stopped. *Green European Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/the-eu-Mercosur-trade-deal-must-be-stopped/>
- Lusa. (2019, July 15). Acordo UE-Mercosul abre mercados a exportações agrícolas portuguesas. Retrieved February 25, 2021, from <https://eco.sapo.pt/2019/07/15/acordo-ue-mercosul-abre-mercados-a-exportacoes-agricolas-portuguesas/>
- LUSA. (2019, April 29). Bolsonaro quer rever demarcação de terras indígenas e explorar a Amazônia com os EUA. *Público*. Retrieved from https://www.publico.pt/2019/04/09/mundo/noticia/bolsonaro-quer-rever-demarcacao-terras-indigenas-explorar-amazonia-eua-1868587?fbclid=IwAR2A4ZWVOp9pHEP80QKWigUrVuP3qo2_dgrH79SGXdwqLRX8kN_aKVjEe3o
- Mamonova, N., & Franquesa, J. (2019). Populism, Neoliberalism and Agrarian Movements in Europe. Understanding Rural Support for Right-Wing Politics and Looking for Progressive Solutions. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12291>
- Mamonova, N., Franquesa, J., & Brooks, S. (2020). ‘Actually existing’ right-wing populism in rural Europe: insights from eastern Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and Ukraine. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 47(7), 1497–1525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1830767>
- McCabe, S., Oliveira, D., McKenna, L., McFadden, C., Morrison, C., Cafferky, J., & Donnelly, T. (2020). *Assessment of the Social and Environmental Risks posed by the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement*. Dublin. Retrieved from <https://www.uplift.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/UPLIFT-TASC-Final-Mercosur-Report-4.pdf>
- McMichael, P. (2016). Food Regime for Thought. In *Global governance/politics, climate justice & agrarian/social justice: linkages and challenges* (p. 19). The Hague.
- Mercosur Secretariat. (2021). Mercosur in brief. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from <https://www.Mercosur.int/en/about-Mercosur/Mercosur-in-brief/>
- Messerlin, P. (2013). *The Mercosur-EU Preferential Trade Agreement: A View from Europe* (No. Policy Brief No. 377). Brussels. Retrieved from http://aei.pitt.edu/40233/1/WD_377_Messerlin_Mercosur-EU_Trade.pdf

- Mogalakwe, M. (2006). The Use of Documentary Research Methods in Social Research. *African Sociological Review*, 10(1), 221–230. Retrieved from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/34300950/Scott.pdf?1406487633=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Use_of_Documentary_Research_Methods.pdf&Expires=1603754948&Signature=Hqtlx2XBIAfBq3OFdKOvzfCgt2fig6~3YnPNSlw9SirTNWdBxwoiq5-EadzYSSv
- Moreira, M. B. (2002). The dynamics of the global capital and its consequences on agriculture and in rural spaces. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 10(1), 41–47. Retrieved from <https://www.repository.utl.pt/bitstream/10400.5/1259/1/REP-Moreira,M.B.-3-MBM-vol10.pdf>
- Moreira, M. C., & Brites, R. (2018). Acordo Mercosul-União Europeia à Luz da Teoria Heterodoxa da Integração. *Revista Perspectiva*, 11(21), 82–105. Retrieved from <https://seer.ufrgs.br/RevistaPerspectiva/article/view/80759/52357>
- Mudde, C. (2004). The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 541–563. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x>
- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2013). Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition*, 48(2), 147–174. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2012.11>
- n.n. (2004, October 22). EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.tni.org/en/article/eu-Mercosur-free-trade-agreement-0>
- Nadibaidze, A. (2020, December 1). The Uncertain Future of the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement. Retrieved January 8, 2021, from <https://globalriskinsights.com/2020/12/the-uncertain-future-of-the-eu-Mercosur-trade-agreement/>
- Naylor, L. B. (2014). *Decolonial Autonomies: Fair Trade, Subsistence and the Everyday Practice of Food Sovereignty in the Highlands of Chiapas*. University of Oregon. Retrieved from https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/18505/Naylor_oregon_0171A_11087.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Nepstad, D. C., Stickler, C. M., & Almeida, O. T. (2006). Globalization of the Amazon Soy and Beef Industries: Opportunities for Conservation. *Conservation Biology*, 20(6), 1595–1603. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2006.00510.x>
- Neslen, A. (2019a, August 23). Ireland threatens to oppose Mercosur trade deal amid Amazon fires. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/ireland-threatens-to-oppose-Mercosur-trade-deal-amid-amazon-fires/>
- Neslen, A. (2019b, November 27). Tractors block Paris streets as farmers protest trade agreements, low food prices. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/tractors-block-paris-streets-as-farmers-protest-trade-agreements-low-food-prices/>
- Nicolás, E. S. (2021, March 22). EU Commission “failed” on assessing Mercosur trade deal. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from <https://euobserver.com/climate/151302>
- Nimmo, R. (2011). Actor-Network Theory and Methodology: Social Research in a More-Than-Human World. *Methodological Innovations Online*, 6(3), 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.4256/mio.2011.010>
- Norberg, M. B. (2020). Agrofood Globalization: The Global Soybean and Beef Commodity Chains. In *The Political Economy of Agrarian Change in Latin America: Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay* (1st ed., pp. 117–163). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24586-3>
- Nyeléni Forum for Food Sovereignty. (2007). Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty. Selingué, Mali. Retrieved from <https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-es.pdf>

- Oltermann, P. (2019, September 19). Austria rejects EU-Mercosur trade deal over Amazon fires. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/19/austria-rejects-eu-mercosur-trade-deal-over-amazon-fires>
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Rajão, R., Soares-Filho, B., Nunes, F., Börner, J., Machado, L., Assis, D., ... Figueira, D. (2020). The rotten apples of Brazil's agribusiness. *Science*, 369(6501), 246–248. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aba6646>
- Ribeiro, R. F. (2012). The Ox from the Four Corners of the World: The Historic Origins of the Brazilian Beef Industry. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 1(3), 315–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/227797601200100304>
- Ricart, S., Olcina, J., & Rico, A. M. (2019). Evaluating Public Attitudes and Farmers' Beliefs towards Climate Change Adaptation: Awareness, Perception, and Populism at European level. *Land*, 8(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land8010004>
- Rodrigues, T. E. G. (2008). Agricultural Explosion in Brazil: Exploring the Impacts of the Brazilian Agricultural Development over the Amazon. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 16(1), 1–12.
- Schmink, M., Hoelle, J., Gomes, C. V. A., & Thaler, G. M. (2019). From contested to “green” frontiers in the Amazon? A long-term analysis of São Félix do Xingu, Brazil. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 46(2), 377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1381841>
- Takahashi, B., & Meisner, M. (2012). Environmental Discourses and Discourse Coalitions in the Reconfiguration of Peru's Environmental Governance. *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 6(3), 346–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2012.700522>
- Tooge, R. (2019, July 16). Acordo UE-Mercosul abre porta para agronegócio brasileiro, mas setores mais competitivos ficam limitados, avaliam especialistas. *Agronegócio | G1*. Retrieved from <https://g1.globo.com/economia/agronegocios/noticia/2019/07/16/acordo-ue-mercosul-abre-porta-para-agronegocio-brasileiro-mas-setores-mais-competitivos-ficam-limitados-avaliam-especialistas.ghtml>
- Tsing, A. L. (2012). On nonscalability: The living world is not amenable to precision-nested scales. *Common Knowledge*, 18(3), 505–524. <https://doi.org/10.1215/0961754X-1630424>
- Weis, T. (2013). *The ecological Hoofprint: The Global Burden of Industrial Livestock*. New York: Zed Books.
- Wodak, R. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-Historical Approach. In K. Tracy, C. Ilie, & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction, First Edition* (pp. 1–14). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463/wbielsi116>
- Wolford, W. (2010). *This Land Is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Woods, M. (2003). Deconstructing rural protest: The emergence of a new social movement. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19(3), 309–325. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(03\)00008-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(03)00008-1)

7. Annex

Provided in a separate document.