

Between altruism and self-interest: Beyond EU's normative power.

An analysis of EU's engagement in sustainable
ocean governance

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Abstract

With the majority of the oceans lying outside the borders of national jurisdiction, it is not easy to preserve them healthy and secure as the 'shared responsibility' is not recognized unambiguously in the global world. The recent turn to the maritime sphere is visible in the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development that has been widely advocated by the EU. The latter's commitment to sustainable ocean governance involves action beyond borders, which has a considerable impact on the global maritime sphere as well as on developing countries depending on the seas. On the one hand, the EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance is informed by the norms and values that the organization possesses and tries to promote in its response to global challenges. On the other, the normative principles and the EU's flowery rhetoric serve as a mean to rationalize Union's pursuit of self-interest. This study analyses both dimensions of the organization's engagement in the maritime sphere, considering oceans as a 'placeful' environment that has to be treated in the same way as the land is. By exploring the external dimension of EU's action in the field, the thesis allows to see that EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance has to be understood as a process in which the strategic aims are imbued with genuine moral concerns. Nevertheless, those can sometimes be undermined by the material policy outcomes visible in the West African coastal states such as Mauritania and Senegal.

Keywords: sustainable development, ocean governance, European Union, maritime policy, blue economy, maritime affairs, developing countries, normative principles, interests

List of abbreviations

CME:	Critical Moral Economy
DG:	Directorate-General
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPA:	Fisheries Partnership Agreement
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IUU:	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NPE:	Normative Power Europe
PCD:	Policy Coherence for Development
PRC:	Piracy Reporting Centre
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
SFPA:	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement
TEU:	Treaty on European Union
TFEU:	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN:	United Nations
UNCLOS:	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

Sustainable ocean governance has been advocated by various international actors for the past years. Not only is it believed to be crucial for maintaining oceans' integrity but also to contribute to human well-being and socio-economic development. With 60% of the oceans lying outside the borders of national jurisdiction, it is not easy to preserve them healthy and secure as the 'shared responsibility' is never recognized unambiguously in the global world.

In order to address these and other global challenges, on 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of those goals, SDG14 is especially interesting as it is believed to be the cornerstone in addressing the importance of oceans by the international community together with other sustainability challenges. Recognizing that over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, the target aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (General Assembly, 2015). Its achievement has swiftly become the objective incorporated into many political agendas. Also, the European Union (EU), having been an active player at the forum of the United Nations (UN), quickly announced its commitment to implement SDG14 into its strategy on ocean governance. Furthermore, it included a pledge to increase its efforts in supporting sustainable development outside European borders.

As the EU is now one of the main global actors, maintaining an impact on policies around the world, it is both intriguing and necessary to explore its role in the presented field. Like every political actor, the EU has certain strategies, motivations, and interests while engaging in global governance of the seas. Its marine territory, being the largest in the world, covers nearly five times more than its land area. Moreover, maritime accounts for 90% of its international and 40% of internal shipping, let alone the fact that the EU is currently the world's biggest seafood market by value (EUMOFA, 2018). Therefore, we can expect the EU to give much more importance to the sea than other nation states do. This, in turn, can lead to the emergence of potential conflict between the great ideals that the organization has with its strategic interest. The EU's nominal norms that are believed to shape its role as a normative power might also be used to overshadow other aspects and motives of the Union's action.

1.2 Research problem

Over the years, the Union has established a prominent global standing in many policy fields, actively promoting sustainable ocean governance as part of its sustainable development agenda and

reiterating its commitment to poverty eradication in the poorest countries (Bretherton & Vogler, 2012, p. 153). In the meantime, the uniqueness of the EU and its ability to pursue various interests has been frequently debated by scholars trying to establish what kind of global actor the EU actually is and what it is able to achieve (Diez 2005; Bretherton & Vogler 2005; Manners 2002). On the one hand, the EU presents itself as a “reliable international leader for further ocean action” (European Commission, 2019a), having norms and values at the core of its identity and being driven by altruistic reasons:

The European project is a living example of how shared values and aspirations such as peace, freedom, tolerance, solidarity, inclusive economic growth and environmental protection can serve both national and collective interests. Sustainable development is firmly enshrined in the EU Treaties and we are fully committed to being frontrunners in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (Eurostat, 2018, p. 4)

On the other, this rhetoric is often being challenged by the critical assessment of EU’s actions, practices and its actual impact on the well-being of the ‘poor’ (see, for example: Falkner 2007; Bretherton & Vogler 2008). Thus, also the EU’s engagement in sustainable ocean governance cannot be immediately treated as an obvious attempt to pursue the promotion of norms and values externally ‘for the force of good’. There is also a need to consider other aspects of EU’s action, namely what its strategic aims and self-interest are. Public legitimization and self-rationalization can explain the agenda to some degree, however, a detailed and complete analysis of the bigger picture is necessary. Hence, this work will be relevant and beneficial to the discipline of European studies, exploring a new dimension of EU’s role in the world and the complex reality of sustainable ocean governance.

1.3 Aim and research question

In this thesis, I would like to take a closer look at the reasons for EU’s pursuit of sustainable ocean governance. The aim of my study is to examine the EU’ engagement in the field, by critically assessing why the organization sets out such an ambitious agenda on governing the seas. While the studies on EU’s policies, in general, are focused on explaining how those work and concentrate on assessing their effectiveness (see for example: Orbie, 2008), the motivation driving them is yet investigated only to a limited degree. Moreover, sustainable ocean governance is a relatively new concept that has not been actively engaged by scholars yet, perhaps because of the traditional view that considers oceans as ‘placeless’ (Bush & Moll 2015; Steinberg 2001). In order to fill the gap in the studies of EU’s role as a sustainable development actor and to pay greater attention to the sea being a ‘placeful environment’, the following question will be employed in my work:

How can we understand the motives behind EU’s engagement in sustainable ocean governance?

1.4 Thesis outline

By analyzing the external dimension of EU's policy, the study will be looking for an explanation of EU's pursuit of being a strong global actor in this particular field. In order to do so, both the arguments deriving from the image created by the EU itself and also not explicitly expressed self-interests of the organization will be examined.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is established on the basis of Normative Power theory which constitutes one of the most significant complements to the debate on EU's role in international politics, being an optimistic vision of the EU as a global actor (Manners, 2002). Manners' claim of the normative foundation of the EU and its "predisposition to act in accordance with embedded ethical principles concerning human well-being" (Langan, 2012, p. 244) seems to fit well into EU's rapid pursuit of sustainable ocean governance. Nevertheless, it does not account for Union's geopolitical and commercial interests in relations with third countries. In considering those, the Critical Moral Economy (CME) perspective will add important aspects to the theoretical framework of this study, allowing for a critical reorientation of the concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE). It can help to understand how ethical norms and narrative are being used for self-rationalization of EU's agenda on sustainable ocean governance.

As for the structure of this thesis, in the next section, a critical literature review will be conducted which will allow to present central discussions and approaches to EU's role and presence in international politics and place the study within the wider literature. The gap in the research on ocean governance and the rationale behind sustainable development that guides this study will be then presented. In the third section, I will outline the theoretical framework of the research, elaborating on both NPE and critical approach in Moral Economy theory. Also, the important concepts used in the study will be discussed and operationalized. Later on, I will introduce the methodology employed in the thesis as well as sources allowing to answer the research question. The main part of the study – an analysis of the motives behind EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance will be conducted in section 5 and will be divided into three key parts. The first part will look into the self-proclaimed motivation of the EU and the next one will reveal the material policy outcomes and the organization's self-interests. The analysis will be then followed by two illustrative cases of the clash between interest and norms with regards to EU's action in relation with developing countries – Senegal and Mauritania. Finally, in section 6 I will synthesize the findings and interpret them in line with the earlier established theoretical framework. The conclusion will also provide an answer to the posed question and discuss the possible implications and suggestion for future research on the topic.

2 Previous research – critical literature review

The existence of extensive academic literature concerning ocean governance is not as obvious as one might expect. This is partly due to the fact that the sea used to be treated as an unknown, lawless, unregulated and infinite ‘other’ of the land (Germond & Germond-Duret, 2016, p. 2). Nevertheless, in the recent years the EU has shown that it treats the ocean realm as an important sphere of its action, paying to it more and more attention. Its current pursuit of sustainable ocean governance opens up a new dimension to the Union’s global engagement. This involvement should be explored on the basis of the existing considerations on EU’s role in the world and its distinct identity. Consequently, the literature review is divided into sub-paragraphs that allows to systematically introduce scholars’ approaches to the sea as well as different perceptions on the EU which are important for this study.

2.1 Common approaches to the oceans in the literature

Even after the adoption of the well-known United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which created territories in the marine environment and became a ‘constitution’ for the seas, the oceans have still been getting less attention than other subjects in social sciences. In turn, the natural sciences were left to deal with the maritime sphere. Meanwhile, the latter was and still is being analyzed as ‘placeless’. Many scholars tend to see the oceans in a traditional way - as placeless void and do not consider them as a likely space (Relph 1976; Gui & Russo 2011; Bush & Mol 2015). On the contrary, some academics perceive the oceans as ‘social space’ (Cusack, 2014) and emphasize their placefulness (Tyrrell, 2006). This ‘social space’ is considered to be a crucial factor in the identity building process for communities depending on the sea (Mack, 2012). Furthermore, oceans are believed to play a crucial role in the lives of fishing communities, especially in developing countries, as they constitute means of livelihood. This argument was confirmed by the work of Charles (2012) who showed the vulnerability and problems connected with the Caribbean marine-dependent livelihoods. Also, the study conducted by Glavovic and Boonzaier (2016) on the coastal communities of South Africa, demonstrates the centrality of the ocean as a sphere of human experience for ‘the poor’.

Those two contradictory views have been investigated by Germond and Germond-Duret (2016), whose work constitutes a very important contribution to the studies on ocean governance. The scholars strongly advocate for the second, ‘placeful’ approach to the sea, presented before. In their argument, the sea represents a “place just like the land, and must be governed and controlled, just like the land must be” (ibid., p. 4). Their critical stance towards the traditional view on oceans expresses the urgent need in social sciences to turn to the question of ‘how’ to study the sea, instead of asking ‘why’ to study it. According to this view, the complex reality of the ocean governance should be then devoted

much more attention since the desire to control the seas is nowadays present in the global discourse about the maritime sphere and has moved high on the global political agenda (ibid., p. 15). As most recent literature suggests, the particularly visible acknowledgement of the oceans' importance, as well as human responsibility towards them, is seen at the EU level (Germond 2018; Pyc 2016).

2.2 The European Union as a global actor

The role of the EU in the global sphere has been widely discussed by scholars (see, for example: Bretherton & Vogler 2005; Cameron 2005; Cremona 1998; Hill & Smith 2011; Pienning 1997; Zielonka 1998; Youngs 2010). Nowadays, Bull's famous claim that "Europe is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem likely to become one" (1982, p. 151). seems to have no place in the academic debate. In fact, quite the opposite stance has been developed in social sciences. The EU is believed to be one of the most influential actors and the largest financial contributor of development aid in the world (Tache, 2015). Thus, its increasingly rising 'presence' in the world is examined in areas such as development, trade, climate change, human rights or security policy.

The idea of EU's 'presence' has been leading some scholars' arguments, who concluded that organization's activity is felt almost everywhere in the world but to a different degree in various sectors and regions (Bretherton & Vogler, 2005). Such a conceptualization of the EU as a global actor 'sui generis' was also employed in the work of Jupille & Caporaso (1998). Nonetheless, this tendency in European Studies was later criticized by scholars seeking to re-consider EU's actorness and effectiveness in relation to other powerful international actors and developing countries (Niemann, 2013, p. 262). While this relation and EU's external action have usually been discussed with regards to its neighborhood, development or trade policy, the Union's activity connected with the agenda on international ocean governance has not been the common subject of the debates. With the existence of such a vast range of academic texts on EU's presence in the world, surprisingly, its engagement in sustainable ocean governance has not received the attention of that many scholars. As argued before, this is best understood as the lack of a continuous narrative embracing the placefulness of the sea (Germond & Germond-Duret, 2016).

2.3 European Union and international ocean governance

The discussion on the topic is mainly concerned with security and economic issues connected with oceans and does not often go beyond an analysis of single aspects of ocean governance. Trade agreements, maritime transport, tackling piracy or regional strategies are examples of the most common subjects in the realm of ocean governance that scholars examine (see, for example: Morgan 2018; Papa 2013). However, this is a fragmented way of tackling the issue, which does not allow to

grasp a complex reality of EU's role in ocean governance. As Germond & Germond-Duret argue, the 'disciplinary boundaries' within social science can be overcome by considering the oceans as a placeful environment (2016, p. 15). As for now, EU's engagement in ocean governance is still an emerging research problem. Some scholars treat the Union's high priority of ocean agenda as a response to the impacts of globalization and emerging economies (Suarez-de Vivero & Rodríguez-Mateos, 2010). This approach is, however, lacking the consideration of EU's distinct role vis-à-vis other actors in the international system (Falkner, 2007). Also, the vision of EU's idea of a maritime empire (Suárez de Vivero, 2007) reveals the authors' bias and seems to be missing the point of EU's more complex role in the world.

2.4 European Union's uniqueness

The acceptance of EU as a major global actor usually involves an emphasis on EU's distinct global relevance. It has been said that the EU represents a 'civilian' (Duchene, 1973), 'ethical' (Aggestam, 2008), 'smart' (Nye, 2010), 'transformative' (Börzel & Risse, 2009), 'soft' (Nye, 2004), 'super' (Galtung, 1973) or 'normative' power (Manners, 2002). Considerable efforts were devoted to understanding what kind of power the EU actually is in international politics. The concept of NPE has gained particular attention in recent years. It suggests that "not only is the EU constructed on normative basis but importantly that this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics" (Manners, 2002, p. 252). Therefore, the EU is not allegedly driven by geopolitical interests as other global actors and, as a consequence, deals with the external world differently. The promotion of values such as democracy or peace takes place not only within the EU but also in its external relations. Also, the argument extends the EU's normative scope to the promotion of "wider social rights, sustainable development, global solidarity, and good governance" (Tonra, 2008, p. 15).

While academics agree that EU leaders, so the EU itself, perceive the organization as 'a force for good' in the world (Aggestam 2008; Mayer 2008), with norms and values enshrined in its treaties, they neither support this rhetoric nor Manners' argument. In a sense, the latter does not sufficiently account for potential gains and self-interest. Consequently, the concept of NPE has often been challenged by scholars examining how the EU acts in certain external policy areas (see, for example: Staeger, 2016). Also, in this study, the pertinence of Normative Power Theory is not taken for granted. However, rather than considering if Manners' reasoning is legitimate or illegitimate (for this see: Sjørusen, 2006), it considers EU's norm-laden pursuit of sustainable ocean governance by adding a CME perspective (Sayer 2007; Langan 2012).

Drawing from previous research on the EU's predisposition to act in the international system, the study takes a different approach to the research topic presented earlier on. It seeks to find out 'why' the EU is acting, what are its driving forces, instead of considering its action as an 'obvious' response to the challenges of global politics. The effectiveness of the EU is thus a secondary problem in this thesis. Essentially, there is a gap in the literature to be filled by asking for the explanation of EU's undertakings. The normative power argument which is being actively engaged in social sciences has not been explicitly applied in the discussion of EU's action in the field of ocean governance yet. Having in mind that the EU's interest in the international ocean agenda is based on sustainable ocean governance, we can, therefore, approach the topic of the thesis deriving from the liberal-idealist perspective on the EU as a 'uniquely capable' and 'uniquely benign' actor (Hyde-Price, 2006, p. 217). Importantly, by adding the viewpoint that 'the EU is a comprehensive maritime actor with a particular interest in securing the sea' (Germon & Germond-Duret, 2016, p. 13), it is possible to critically re-orientate the concept of NPE using the CME perspective (Langan, 2012).

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Normative Power Theory

As outlined before, there are no particular theories applied by scholars to explain EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance. Therefore, the study starts with the most extensively debated theory on the EU's international role that has already been applied to other areas of EU's action – NPE. The theory builds on the assertion that the EU represents a new and unique kind of polity in the international system and that due to this particular difference it is pre-disposed to act in a normative way (Manners, 2002, p. 242). This normative difference lies in its "historical context, hybrid policy and political legal constitution" (ibid., p. 240). All those features have contributed to placing the norms and principles at the heart of EU's external relations (Smith, 2001). While engaging in global affairs the EU is then well-equipped to make a positive contribution by directly and indirectly influencing others. EU's willingness to achieve international progress stems from its normative construction which allows it to act in accordance with values and diffuse them beyond borders.

One of the universal values that have been identified as supplementing EU' normative structure is the principle of sustainable development which plays an "increasingly important role in the EU self-definition vis-à-vis the outside world" (Falkner, 2007, p. 6). This concentration on the EU's ability to (re)shape actor's behavior and their understanding of what, in this case, constitutes sustainable ocean governance is crucial in this study. However, it is important to note that sustainable development was

embraced relatively late to the group of EU's core principles such as democracy or human rights. As Zito (2005) points out, it may be competing with other, more dominant economic principles and particular policy agendas. From the neo-realists' point of view, those values would become then a "second order concern" in EU's pursuit of seizing its power and resources in order to achieve things without relying on others (Hyde-Price, 2007, p. 222). Undermining the normative and ethical foundations of the EU, the neo-realists' argument also calls to reconsider the rightness of EU's claim that "what is good for Europe is good for the world" (Hyde-Price, 2008, p. 32). However, such an instant dismissal of norms shifts the focus from the latter's capacity to their influence on policy processes (Langan, 2012, p. 247). Although neo-realism facilitates identifying limitations and shortcomings of applying the Normative Power Theory to EU's external action, this study does not necessarily follow this approach. From an innovative angle than the of common critics of NPE, it will add a CME perspective which purpose will be to account for the interaction between norms and interests (ibid, p. 249). It is the objective of this thesis to combine both theories to better explain and understand the motivation behind EU's promotion of sustainable ocean governance.

The thesis tests NPE's explanatory power by applying it to EU's external action towards safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans (European Commission, n.d.). In this sense, the purpose of introducing this theory is not to find out how the EU is pursuing sustainable ocean governance but rather to provide a better understanding of why it is engaged in the field. As it would be quixotic to expect that even a normatively based actor operates in its relations with external partners pursuing only norm-laden policy objectives, there is a need to consider how the EU can benefit from the promotion of sustainable ocean governance. Importantly, having certain self-interest does not preclude the normative dimension of EU's project – "After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security" (European Commission, 2000, p. 3).

3.2 Critical Moral Economy lenses

By exploring EU's motivation through the critical lens of the moral economy, the "strategic functions of norms within a historical treatment of EU external engagements" (Langan, 2012, p. 249) can be recognized. Hence, CME's function is to better assess the justification for the validity of actors' action instead of focusing simply on what happens in the international system. Moral economy considers

the ways in which economic activities – in the broad sense – are influenced by moral–political norms and sentiments, and how, conversely, those norms are [potentially] compromised by economic forces – so much so that the norms represent little more than legitimations of entrenched power relations (Sayer, 2002, p. 2).

The critical approach was advocated by Sayer who argued that the political economy has to focus on the possible divergence between moral norms and the outcomes of economic undertakings (ibid.). Norms are believed to be frequently used as a means of public and self-rationalization in actor's pursuit of interest. The latter can then constitute the reason for arising inequalities and transgress the ethical boundaries instead of providing the objectives embedded in those norms. The idealistic and flowery narrative is crucial for the moral economy as it is believed to shape also the views of those who pursue such discourses. After embracing the latter, the actors are themselves constructed by the normative narrative they present and the principled goals they recognize (Langan, 2012). Consequently, it is necessary to investigate the legitimations that are given for the institutions and their activities. Adopting a CME approach as a complementary to the Normative Power Theory provides a significant corrective to the view that norm-driven policy agendas are unquestionably 'moral' in their operation (ibid., p. 251). It allows to explore how the moral norms and interests interlace in EU's external agenda on sustainable ocean governance. Importantly, the purpose of this re-orientation is not to undermine the utilization of norms in its building of a "Sustainable Europe for a Better World" (European Commission, 2001, p. 1). It is rather to point out that those norms "may construct and govern elite understandings of their actions and, in some cases, close down their ability to perceive and redress injustices arising within asymmetric economic systems" (Langan, p. 253).

Importantly, CME does not imply that norms and interests are separable but allows to identify the possible clash between those two in some areas of politics. It recognizes the embeddedness of values and principles in the EU's structure and policies but also focuses on the tensions that arise due to the existence of "exploitative economic structures" (ibid., p. 264). The motivation behind EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance is thus best explained by the combination of its normative power, being displayed in the political rhetoric of the organization and the self-interest stemming from its agenda. What is needed is the account for political-economic foundations and limitations of EU's self-ascribed role as a sustainable development champion in the maritime domain (Falkner, 2007).

3.3 Conceptual assumptions

3.3.1 Sustainable development – the normative dimension

In exploring the motives behind EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance, we need to define what the principle of sustainable development entails. The thoughtless and misleading use of the concept often results in undermining its credential and false inferences. Yet, there is no legal definition of sustainable development produced by the EU. Although it frequently uses this term in its rhetoric - treaties and other documents - the exact meaning remains unclear (Kening-Witkowska, 2017).

Considering that nowadays the EU recognizes the importance of sustainability with reference to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we should thus turn to the definition adopted at this organization's level. The concept of sustainable development was first formulated by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 laying the foundations for the declaration adopted in 1992 at the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The commission's report states that:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987, p. 43).

It seeks to reconcile the environmental requirements with the socio-economic requirements of development in order to achieve long-term stability. The UN highlights that sustainable development should be treated as a framework for the integration of environmental policies and development strategies (ibid). Indeed, in this study, the sustainability aspect of ocean governance will be recognized through the key principle of sustainable development – the integration of environmental, social and economic concerns into all aspects of decision making. Account must be also made for the normative dimension of the concept. As Sadeleer points out “while significant uncertainties remain regarding its meaning, it is doubtless that sustainable development is a normative concept rather than a mere policy guideline” (2015, p. 39). The normative dimension implies the compatibility between social, economic and environmental goals at all stages. It includes ethical values and principles that define how the desirable future should look like. In a sense, it designates the objectives that a society (or an actor) tries to acquire. In the case of the EU, the choice of those objectives derives from the embeddedness of social values and ethical norms in its core. The EU's judgment on this alternative should be expected to constitute an expression of its normative identity. Consequently, it is the intention of this study not to treat sustainable development as a scientific concept but as a fundamentally normative one.

3.3.2 Sustainable ocean governance

After explaining how the thesis defines sustainable development it can be then applied to the area of ocean governance. To put it simply, ocean governance concerns the way oceans are managed and used. This study will thus understand the EU's engagement in international ocean governance as its conduct of policy, actions, and affairs regarding oceans. In turn, sustainable managing and using the oceans aims to keep them healthy, productive, safe, secure and resilient (European Commission, n.d.). Importantly, the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable governance are interconnected - without sustainable ocean governance, there cannot be a successful, sustainable development. As the UN puts it, “careful management of this essential global resource [oceans] is a key feature of a sustainable future” (UN, n.d., para. 2).

4 Methodology

4.1 Methods and material

Since the thesis is focused on identifying the motives behind EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance the study takes a descriptive approach. Descriptive research is "aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method" (Fox & Bayat, 2007, p. 45). Also, it elucidates the issues and aspects that may have otherwise been overlooked. The advantage of this research design is that it allows to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

The study makes use of the triangulation of methods in order to illustrate a more complete understanding of EU's action in the field of ocean governance. The purpose of methodological triangulation in this thesis is not necessarily the cross-validation of data but rather "capturing different dimensions of the same phenomenon" (Honorene, 2017, p. 93). Consequently, the study utilizes the mixed-methods research and combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to make the research findings more reliable and mitigate possible biases. Regarding their priority, qualitative parts constitute the majority of the thesis which results from the need to capture one form of data before proceeding to the next one. According to Cresswell (1994), if one methodology is clearly used predominantly, we can talk about dominant-less dominant design. In this work the dominant model of a qualitative study is visible, supported by the use of quantitative data.

In order to explore the problem of this thesis, the qualitative policy narrative analysis is applied as the main research method. This textual analysis is used to examine EU's documents, its rhetoric and self-image related to sustainable governance of the seas. Through such a document analysis we can "produce empirical knowledge" and "develop understanding" (Bowen, 2009, p. 33). Importantly it is necessary to maintain a high level of objectivity to ensure the credibility and validity of the research.

In like manner, in the second part the qualitative content analysis is conducted by scrutinizing EU's strategies on sustainable development with regards to oceans from the perspective of EU's gains. It is then combined with the analysis of gathered numerical data. The reason for including the latter is the interest in economic aspects of EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance. Those would be best captured by the empirical investigation of EU's economic interests with application of the statistical techniques. The benefit of collecting quantitative data is that the numerical outcomes result in data that can be statistically analyzed that may be viewed as credible. Indeed, thanks to the combination of methods we can obtain a variety of evidence on the same issue.

Considering the sources selected for this thesis, there are two types of them presented in the study - primary and secondary. The former are constituted by EU's official documents such as treaties, regulations, and reports. However, those are not sufficient to provide the answer to the stated research question. Following Atkinson & Coffey:

We should not use documentary sources as surrogates for other kinds of data. [...] We have to approach them for what they are and what they are used to accomplish. (1997, p. 47)

Therefore, the official documents serve as a means for exploring the motives guiding EU's action which the organization highlights and wants us to comprehend. The image promoted in the documents and the missions described in them provide us with one angle. Apart from those the study uses other sources which provide first-hand evidence about EU's action in the explored field – speeches given by high-ranked politicians, official statistics, agreements and reports. Conversely, the secondary sources such as academic articles, newspaper articles, independent reports or political commentary bring a wider perspective than primary sources and thus are useful in the analysis. They allow to discern the self-interests that the EU may have but which is not always explicitly declared by the organization.

4.2 Limitations

First and foremost, the policy area connected with oceans and seas is a relatively new sphere of global actors' action and thus has not been explored to a large degree yet. Consequently, the study has to take an innovative path and encompass only the elements of the sustainable ocean governance that it perceives as crucial in answering the research question. This, in turn, may be seen as a possible limitation due to the probability of being "impressionistic and subjective" (Bryman, 2012, p. 405). Also, as with all EU policy-related studies, the analysis of the pursuit of sustainable ocean governance is facing the problem of constantly changing policy agendas, strategies and approaches to the field.

While the thesis' intention is to avoid any confirmation or selection biases, the mainly qualitative nature of this thesis calls for mentioning such a possibility. In particular, there exists a need for further development in the area of this study. Another limitation is that due to the scope of this paper, only a limited number of documents was analyzed as well as only two illustrative cases were presented. The generalization of the research findings may not be possible, but the narrow character of this research seeks to enable answering the stated question without the intention to make further claims.

5 Analysis

5.1 EU's self-perception

The treaties of the EU constitute the most important source of its law, serving as the foundation of the organization and setting out its constitutional basis. Hence, the normative values and principles that they entail are seen to shape its role in the international arena. The objective that the EU included in the treaties should thus also guide its action in the sphere of sustainable ocean governance. In this view, the primary law of the EU is desirable to come to the forefront of the analysis.

As for the time being, the term sustainable ocean governance does not appear in any of the EU's treaties. It may not be surprising, considering that the last revision of the latter occurred no later than in 2009 when this particular policy field was not widely popularized. Indeed, the documents specifically including the oceans as an area of action for sustainable development are yet relatively new. Before, when the Millennium Development Goals were introduced in 2000, the actions in the ocean's field were not advocated to the same degree within the international arena as they are in the light of the new 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Despite this lack of direct indication for the marine realm, it was still important from the perspective of sustainable development since the EU had committed itself to its pursuit. As argued earlier - without sustainable ocean governance there cannot be a successful, sustainable development.

The topic of sustainable development appeared in EU policy-making with the beginning of the 90s. Nevertheless, it took almost a decade to include this normative principle into EU primary law. While the Amsterdam Treaty led to the formal recognition of sustainable development as a legal objective, it was only the Treaty of Lisbon (known as the Reform Treaty or Treaty on European Union) signed in 2007 that substantially changed the setting. It enshrined the notion of sustainable development of Europe and Earth as one of the primary goals of the Union. Article 3.5 of this Treaty states that:

In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth (...) (European Union, 2007)

Importantly, the revisions introduced by this Treaty are believed to have settled the legal basis of EU's engagement in sustainable development (Grimm et al., 2012). This involvement is presented in the document as EU's natural response to global challenges. In this sense, it is a "normative quality" determining that the EU "should act" to extend norms (Manners, 2002, p. 252). The organization's explicitly expressed aim is to promote peace, values and human well-being (European Union, 2012a,

Art. 3.1). Pursuing sustainable development should serve it as a mean to contribute to the increased prosperity of developing countries. EU's action is thus guided by its commitment to support the poor and eliminate poverty. Following Article 21(2d) of the TEU, the EU

shall foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty (ibid.).

That implies acknowledgment of three dimensions of sustainable development which must be integrated by the EU to achieve its far-reaching objectives. Consequently, short-term economic gains at the expense of the environment must be put aside for the sake of a more future-oriented and altruistic approach to economic and social development. Another paragraph of this Article is even more relevant in the context of sustainable ocean governance. It introduces that the EU commits to

develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development (ibid., Art. 21.2f).

As oceans constitute an essential global resource, the article implies that the EU is hereby concerned with sustainable ocean governance. Despite the lack of such an explicit expression, oceans are in fact encompassed by the scope of this Treaty. Moreover, EU's motivation to eradicate poverty is interconnected with governing seas which are believed to contribute to this aim by creating "sustainable livelihood and decent work" ('Oceans and Seas', n.d., para. 1). The EU presents itself in TEU as a 'determined' and altruistic actor whose driving force are the values that are common to the Member States. They allow the organization for the promotion of economic and social progress for the people and implementing policies that advance economic integration and simultaneously enable progress in other fields (European Union, 2012a, Preamble).

The concept of sustainable development has also been employed in the Preamble and Art. 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (European Union, 2012b). The latter is binding the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the Member States when they implement EU law (Van Hees, 2014, p. 61). Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the charter was given the same value as EU primary law. The preamble to the document lists the common values that the Union preserves and develops whilst ensuring sustainable development. Moreover, the emphasis is put on the assertion that the EU should promote sustainable development and take into account its objectives in its policy-making (European Union, 2012b, Art. 37). The environmental considerations and environmental protection are in line with EU's wider aim and reflect the global concerns that it has.

Sustainable development serves in the primary law as “the legitimizing principle for EU environmental policy” (Hill & Smith, 2011, p. 356) and is meant to play a central role in the Union’s policy.

After establishing how the EU places the normative principle of sustainable development in its primary law, we can now turn to the analysis of EU’s motivation to pursue sustainable ocean governance. In 2016, the European Commission and the EU’s High Representative issued a Joint Communication on International Ocean Governance which determines EU’s action in the field. The undertakings that the Union sets out in this document constitute its active attempt to align to the UN 2030 Agenda. What is noteworthy, this response stems from EU self-obligation outlined in Article 21 of TEU – to pursue multilateralism and resolve common problems in the framework designed by the UN (European Union, 2012a). The EU claims that it is consequently “fully committed” to the SDG14 and its implementation (European Commission, 2016a, p. 2), which guides its engagement in sustainable ocean governance. The organization highlights the prominent responsibility towards the seas and portrays itself as a “champion of sustainable development” and “a global actor in the ocean governance framework” (ibid., p. 16). The self-ascribed role of the EU is thus a normative one and allows it to act for the “benefit of current and future generations” (ibid.). In the document, the EU frequently refers to the advantages that the sustainable ocean governance can guarantee its citizens, but also to the improvements that it brings worldwide. The self-proclaimed motivation of the Union seems to be based on universal values such as equality or social security, and its assertion of responsibility for the ‘shared space’ – the maritime area.

Two years after the adoption of the EU’s ambitious agenda on the oceans, the Commission published a joint report outlining the progress made in the field. Noticeably, the organization reiterates its commitment to the sustainable management of oceans and claims its leadership in ocean policy (European Commission, 2019b). The document presents the EU as a “reliable”, “committed”, “strong” and “dedicated” frontrunner in delivering changes within and outside Europe, especially in the light of targets entailed by SDG14 (ibid., pp. 1-6) Again, the shared ethical values are being put forward in the report. As can be observed, they provide the rationale behind EU’s “determination to bring the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans to the highest political level” (ibid., p. 4). Being a value-based actor gives the Union the opportunity to actively engage in the field and promote an even more holistic approach to the seas. Also, the Union acknowledges its willingness to work with external partners and advocates multilateral dialogues. Through that, the EU seeks to influence the behavior of other actors since “no country can succeed alone in reversing the worrying trends of today” (ibid., p. 3). Indeed, Union’s determination and obligation to take action at a global level is rationalized by the essential place that oceans take in human life and well-being, especially in developing countries.

The latter constitute an important aspect of EU's motivation to be engaged in sustainable development and particularly in sustainable ocean governance. The objectives that the organization has are recognized as compatible with the needs of developing countries. Hence, the considerations included in Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and this principle are fundamental in EU's contribution to achieving SDG14 and other goals. The 2019 EU report on PCD reaffirms that the EU is concerned with the effects that its policies have on developing countries. In implementing its external policies that are likely to affect the poor, it "takes into account the objectives of developing cooperation" (European Commission, 2019a, p. 2). The Commission's report ensures that the "leaving no one behind" principle (ibid., p. 3) guides EU's action and presents its involvement in the maritime sphere as necessary to support those whose lives depend on oceans. As can be observed, the shared values and obligations are repeatedly brought up in the document. In this way, the EU promotes itself as a normative actor. Such an assertion can also be traced in the political narratives presented by EU's representatives. Many scholars agree that EU leaders view the Union as a 'force for good' in the international system (Mayer 2008; Diez 2005; Aggestam 2008) and that is also evident in the realm of ocean's policy. When the adoption of EU's oceans strategy took place, EU representatives expressed their concerns about the current state of the oceans and assured that the Union is on a right track to tackle global challenges in the maritime area. Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission, said that the EU ocean agenda confirms its "engagement to be at the frontline in the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for the benefit of EU citizens and the whole world" (European Commission, 2016b, para. 3). The politicians' intention is to present the Union as a strong actor in the oceans' field, acting for the prosperity of all nations. Karmenu Vella's words seem to support this narration:

The EU is taking the lead to create a stronger system of ocean governance around the globe. We are announcing an agenda for improving the way oceans are managed (...), ensure that marine resources are used sustainably, for healthy marine eco-systems and a thriving ocean economy" (ibid., para. 4)

Being a Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Vella has a very important position when it comes to EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance. In his speeches, the Commissioner frequently emphasizes that sustainable development is unthinkable without the oceans (European Commission, 2017a; Vella, 2017). He also points to the EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance as a means of achieving economic growth, which is referred in this context as "blue growth" (Vella, 2017). It should be environmentally sustainable and guarantee the good conditions of work as well as human well-being and provide high social standards (ibid.) Better ocean governance is crucial from the perspective of sustainable development but also "makes eminent business sense"

(European Commission, 2017a, para. 40) However, the latter aspect seems to be less frequently emphasized by the EU than shared values and morals. The justification for EU's pursuit of sustainable ocean governance is rather idealistic in a sense that it does not include the account for the organization's pursuit of longer-term interest. The policy narrative analysis shows that it is the moral dimension of EU's engagement with the oceans that is the most prominent in its rhetoric. Also, the 'leading by example' principle seems to be widely promoted by the EU which seeks to export its norms to other parts of the world. This is best captured in the words of Commissioner Vella:

We don't just tell others to keep the world's oceans healthy. But that we lead by example and practise what we preach. That is our strength. It's what makes us a real, credible ocean power (European Commission, 2017a, para. 41)

Such rhetoric helps to establish an acceptable public image and to promote the EU in the international system. However, the self-manifestation of normative power lacks a critical reflection on the strategic aims and materialistic policy outcomes. If we take only this perspective, we could easily identify the motives behind EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance following its ethical narrative. In order to add the necessary critical reflection, we need now to turn to the analysis of strategic interest and economic structures as this can shed a different light on the organization's undertakings.

5.2 EU's self-interest

EU's commitment to sustainable ocean governance is reflected in the number of references to ocean governance in its documents. In the past years, the organization has passed a substantial amount of legislation concerned with the maritime sphere. *Figure 1* illustrates how the importance of ocean agenda has risen over time. Both terms, 'ocean governance' and 'sustainable development of seas and oceans' have appeared in the documents more often than in the previous years.

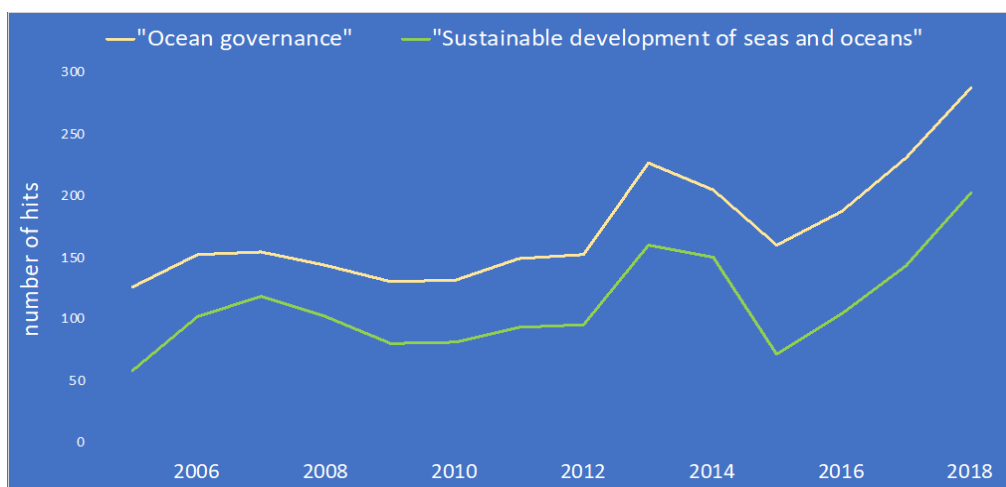


Figure 1: The importance of Ocean Agenda in EU documents; source: EUR-Lex

In 2018, the EUR-LEX search engine recorded 289 number of hits for the first term and 200 hits for the other. The importance of the sea from both an economic and security perspective is undoubtedly recognized by the organization, but this is not as clearly visible in its policy narrative as the legal, political and ethical responsibility to govern the seas in a sustainable way are. Considering that sustainable ocean governance is now high on EU's political agenda, it is desirable to assess the extent to which it contributes to the EU's political and economic prosperity. The latter is particularly important when it comes to EU's long-term Blue Growth Strategy which objective is to "support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole" ('Blue Growth', n.d., para. 1). It is supposed to combine the objectives of economic growth of the maritime sector and the improvement of livelihoods whilst ensuring environmental sustainability.

Nevertheless, its economic imperatives are perceived as outweighing the environmental considerations (Germond, 2018). The EU's economy is the second largest in the world and has the largest trading bloc. Importantly, the Blue Growth has become the most prominent feature of this economy - according to the Commission's 2018 Annual Economic Report on Blue Economy, with a turnover of €566 billion, the blue economy generates €174 billions of added value and provides jobs for nearly 3.5 million people (DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, 2018) With such an impressive contribution, one could realize that the oceans are supporting the EU's economy to a large degree and their assets are crucial for the organization. Constituting an 'asset base' for the Union, oceans must be governed in a sustainable way. In 2015, the Economist's article remarked:

Talk of the ocean as a new economic frontier, of a new phase of industrialization of the seas, will become widespread in 2016 ('The Ocean Business', para. 1)

In fact, this assertion seems to perfectly fit into the current pursuit of sustainable ocean governance by international actors including the EU. Controlling the maritime and coastal resources, the access to them and the terms of their use reflect the "hegemonic nature of the blue growth discourse". (Barbersgaard, 2017, p. 145).

Considering the changes in value added for certain activities (*see Table 1*) it is logical that the economic growth is the principal driver for the EU. Healthy, clean and sustainably managed oceans provide the EU with the long-term possibility to maintain such economic activities. The Blue Growth strategy as part of EU's wider approach to oceans and its response to SDG14 is driven by the increasing needs that the Union has. The energy needs (energy derived from oceans), the needs for fuels, fish, marine minerals and business (coastal tourism) undoubtedly enhance the growth model (Hadjimichael, 2018, p. 12). This is not to deny that EU has genuine ethical concerns, but it is the economy that is considered

here as part of EU's strategy. Thus, the self-centered and gains-oriented dimension of the engagement in sustainable ocean governance cannot be taken for granted.

SECTOR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	change in % (2009-16)
Living resources	15,209	15,856	16,521	16,777	16,33	17,521	18,082	18,563	22,1%
Marine extraction of oil and gas	28,082	30,243	30,552	30,876	29,341	26,444	26,398	26,398	-6,0%
Ports, warehousing and water projects	17,422	16,949	20,77	17,009	17,722	17,85	19,547	19,546	12,2%
Maritime transport	22,897	24,832	21,511	21,744	23,103	23,282	27,43	27,428	19,8%
Shipbuilding & repair	10,674	11,617	11,432	11,463	10,955	11,934	11,917	11,878	11,3%
Coastal tourism	64,524	64,524	64,524	64,524	67,569	67,137	67,472	70,41	9,1%
Total BE GVA	158,808	164,021	165,31	162,393	165,02	164,168	170,846	174,223	9,7%

Table 1: Statistics for the EU blue economy by sector for the period 2009-2016;
source: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. 2018

Another noteworthy aspect of EU's economic interest in pursuing sustainable ocean governance are the fishery industries. Currently, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities are believed to be the main factors for existence of unsustainable fisheries around the world ('Illegal fishing', 2013). Empirical studies suggest that the EU has taken a leading role in fighting IUU fishing by making use of its normative power to move forward the Council's 1005 Regulation (Council of the EU, 2008) and other aspects of sustainable development of its extraterritorial seas (Miller et al., 2014). The EU is now the world largest market for fisheries and aquaculture products and importantly, their net importer (EUMOFA, 2018). According to data from 2017, the value of the EU trade flows of seafood products is estimated for €30,3 billion making it to the highest turnover in the world. Considering only imports, they account for around 70% of the Union's domestic consumption (ibid.). Even though, as the report on The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (FAO, 2018) suggests, the global fish stocks are currently being overfished, the EU has maintained a high level of seafood consumption. *Figure 2* illustrates the consumption of fisheries and aquaculture products in Europe in the period 2005-2016.

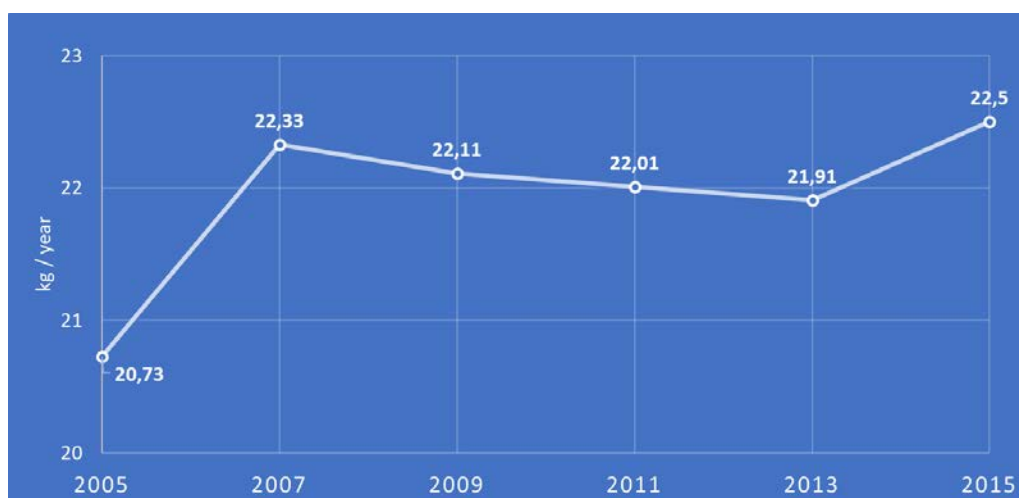


Figure 2: Per capita food fish consumption in Europe; source: EUMOFA, 2018

The growing trend that can be observed in recent years led to the situation in which the Europeans consume about twice as much as they produce (EUMOFA, 2018, p. 13). The next figure (*Figure 3*) presents this trend by illustrating the changes in the ratio between EU's production and domestic demand (total apparent consumption).

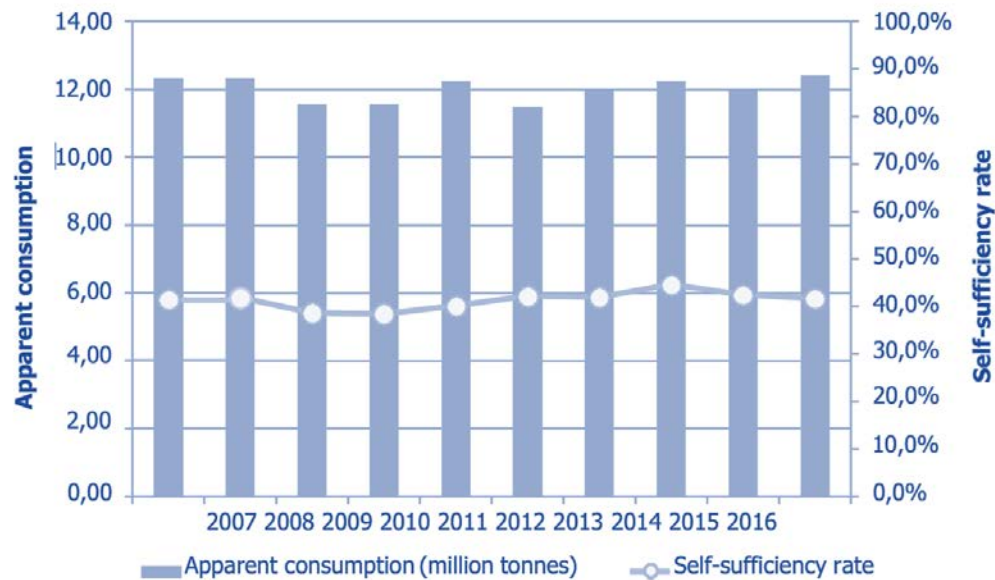


Figure 3: EU market trend and self-sufficiency rates; source: EUMOFA, 2018

In the Union, this ratio declined by 1,4 percentage points (from 47,4% in 2014 to 46,0% in 2015) which means a decrease in the organization's self-sufficiency. In fact, more seafood consumed by Europeans was imported from outside the EU than produced (counting catches and aquaculture) within its borders. In the same time, the organization was able to raise its level of consumption of fisheries and aquaculture products as illustrated by *Figure 2*. For that reason, the EU has a particular interest in ensuring sustainability of its fishing practices as well as the organization's trading partners. The high levels of overfishing in the North Atlantic (including the Baltic and the North Sea) and an even worse situation in the Mediterranean Sea where the majority of stocks are overfished or in danger of collapse (European Commission, 2019b) makes the EU largely dependent on other regions around the globe. As a net importer of fish and aquaculture supplies, it is both crucial for its food security and economic advancement to ensure its global market presence. Thus, the EU has particular interest in promoting sustainable management of the world's fisheries and fighting IUU. As NGO OCEANA points out:

Overfishing damages the environment as well as the wider economy. Mismanaging natural, renewable resources ruins our natural marine heritage and costs us jobs, food, and money (2018, para. 3)

The IUU fishing policy, which is part of EU’s agenda on sustainable management of the seas, establishes a link between trade and sustainability interests. As the report issued by the World Bank Group reveals, without IUU fishing, an additional \$83 billion (€74 billion) for the fisheries sector could be globally generated each year, yielding significant benefits for the developing countries and enhancing world’s food security (World Bank, 2017). The “Sunken Billions Revisited” report shows also the losses in economic benefits juxtaposed with what could have been obtained in the ideal circumstances (ibid.). Especially for the EU, the deficit is considerable. *Figure 4* presents the distribution of so-called “sunken billions” by world regions:

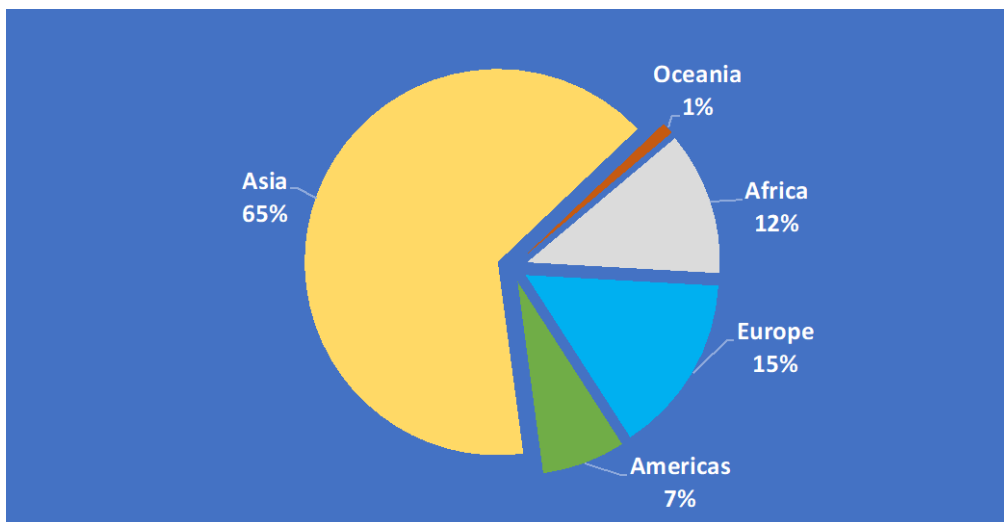


Figure 4: Distribution of ‘sunken billions’ by region; source: World Bank, 2017

As can be observed, Europe’s share in losses is estimated for around 15%. That means that the mismanagement of fisheries costs the European countries nearly €11 billion annually and leads to the decrease of jobs and income in the fishing sector. Another study conducted by OCEANA concludes that the GDP of the EU could increase by €4.9 billion yearly through recovering the fish stocks to a sustainable level (2017, p. 7). *Figure 5* illustrates the anticipated increase in GDP by sectors provided that the fish stocks will be restored to sustainable levels in less than 10 years since 2017.

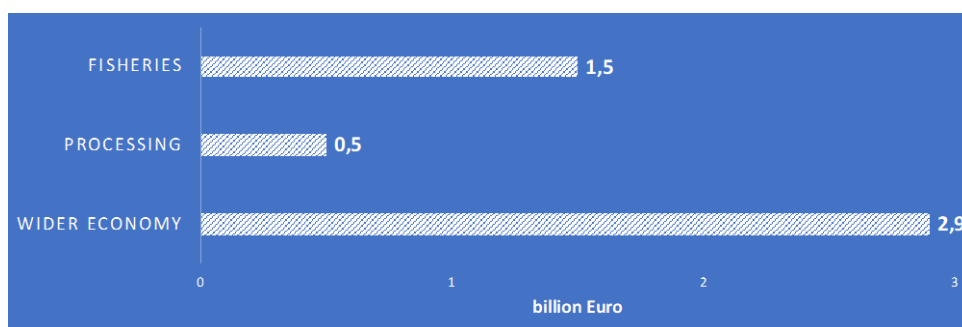


Figure 5: Net GDP increase in a recovery scenario; source: OCEANA, 2017

Rebuilding fisheries to a sustainable level is also predicted to create 92,000 jobs and therefore enhances employment opportunities (ibid., p. 4). Well management of fish stocks is believed to have a great impact on socio-economic development (FAO, 2018). Consequently, the EU is even more eager to support the sustainability of fisheries both externally and in Europe. The economic benefits and the amounts of losses are considerable, especially for the Union, being the “world’s largest trader of fishery and aquaculture products in terms of value” (EUMOFA, 2018, p. 11). Without doubt, EU’s drive for sustainable ocean governance is well-underpinned by socio-economic benefits and self-interest.

EU’s pursuit of sustainable ocean governance entails its engagement in promoting the rule-based international approach to oceans. In order to achieve the objectives of SDG14, the EU fosters maritime security and stability by using the framework provided by UNCLOS which regulates all activities in the ocean sphere. In light of transnational threats and new global challenges, the Union recognizes that the maritime sphere needs to be safe and secure in order to integrate the economic prosperity with environmental considerations and achieve the objectives of sustainable development. However, EU’s involvement in sustainable ocean governance is also a way to exercise control over extra-national spaces (Germond & Germond-Duret, 2016, p. 5). As Corbett already pointed out in 1911, the oceans are uninhabitable and therefore they can only be controlled (Corbett, 2006). The Maritime Security, a “buzzword” in the international relations (Bueger, 2015), can represent the linkage of EU’s agenda on sustainable ocean governance to various threats - from IUU fishing to piracy and maritime crimes.

The EU Maritime Strategy seeks to respond to risk and threats in the ocean sphere. Those include illegal immigration, organized crime, piracy as well as human, arms and narcotics smuggling. Piracy, for instance, constitutes a more significant threat to both the global and European maritime security than one would expect. It brings about serious risks since most of the global trade is conducted through international waters. Currently, maritime transport is an integral part of European prosperity as around 90 percent of the world trade is carried by sea (‘Shipping and World Trade’, n.d.). With the majority of waters being beyond national jurisdiction, pirates undoubtedly have the opportunity to carry out attacks. Only in 2018, 201 incidents of piracy and armed robbery were noted by the Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC). By comparison, in 2017 there were 180 reported incidents (ICC IMB, 2018). For the EU, the direct security concerns relate in particular to the Gulf of Guinea. It has become a dangerous area with its geo-strategical location being imperative for the Union. The EU Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea seeks to improve the maritime security in the region and develop local capacities of coastal states, it has to “contribute to the sustainable development of West and Central African coastal States’ economies by promoting the significance of a well-governed, safe and secure maritime sector” (Council of the EU, 2015, p. 16).

First and foremost, it is a crucial territory for EU trade, transit route and the lanes of energy supplies (Mills et al., 2017). Considering the latter as well as Europe's dependence on Russian hydrocarbons, the region serves the Unions as an alternative source of supplies. The form of a maritime crime called 'petro-piracy' that involves stealing crude-oil from vessels and pipelines, reduces the potential to increase EU's imports and prevents local communities from deriving profits through their natural resources (Pichon & Pietsch 2019). Moreover, the criminal activity, pirates and illegal fishing within this area causes not only potential harm for humans but also for the environment and economy. The region is also called the "cocaine triangle" being the main point of supply for drug flows connecting Europe, South America and Africa (Ejdus, 2017). Lastly, there are about 30 EU flagged or owned vessels in the region at any one time being exposed at risk (Council of the EU, 2014). Out of the 201 piracy incidents reported in 2018, 79 happened in the Gulf of Guinea. The reported attacks almost doubled in comparison to 2017, which determines a trend that is worrying both for the states in the region and for the EU. Considering this year (2019), *Figure 6* marks all acts of piracy reported to IMB Piracy Reporting Centre as for 15 May.



Figure 6: IMB Piracy & Armed Robbery Map 2019 (state for 15 May 2019); source: ICC-CCS

Notably, the official statistics underestimate the actual spread of since about half of the attacks are unreported (MarEx, 2019). Nowadays, criminal and terrorist activity pose a serious threat to the EU. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Union actively engages in this strategic area – without maritime security and stability, no actor is in a position to grow its maritime activities and control the sea. From the example of this region, it can be drawn that promoting and pursuing sustainable ocean governance contributes to strengthening the link between EU's internal and external security. EU has thus even more reasons to actively engage in sustainable ocean governance, not only in the name of the freedom of the sea but also due to political interest in securitization of the sea.

The interest and involvement of the EU has been present in another part of Africa for many years - as the Somali Peninsula experienced many developments, the geopolitical competition has regained its intensity around the Red Sea. EU's involvement in this region constitutes an example of the organization's role of a sea-power beyond its waters. In fact, the launch of maritime capacity-building missions in developing countries, such as EUCAP Nestor on the Horn of Africa is informed by geopolitical interest of the EU (Germond, 2015). In light of SDG14, the Union shall foster local maritime security capabilities of third countries. Supposedly, the EU is motivated by the need to strengthen coastguard and ocean governance capabilities of 'the poor', stemming from UN Agenda but also in line with EU's development policy. However, extending security beyond EU's jurisdictional waters has also a political dimension - through addressing the instability and the maritime insecurity in the African region, the EU can promote its leadership in the global maritime affairs and can become a strong global actor in this field. Union's action outside its borders for the sake of contributing to sustainable ocean governance can also help to control the seas and strengthen its unique role in international affairs.

5.3 The two types of motives compared

After analyzing EU's motivation in its engagement in sustainable ocean governance it has become apparent that there are in fact two wider categories under which the drivers for EU's action can be divided. The first group consists of the motives which result from Union's distinct identity, which predisposes it to exert normative power and promote values, standards, and principles in the international context. This is also the category of motives, that the organization wants to emphasize and therefore brings to the forefront. As the analysis shows, the vision of the EU acting for the sake of the wider objective of global sustainable development is embedded in its law. Even though the sustainable maritime domain is not directly mentioned in the Treaties, oceans, being a global resource, are encompassed by those documents and predetermine EU's maritime action. It is the obligation and responsibility stemming from Union's self-perception, imbued with a universalist normative dimension. The current pursuit of sustainable ocean governance is indeed compatible with EU's emergence as a 'principled actor' (Falkner, 2007, p. 3).

The engagement in achieving SDG14 is also justified by concerns about the well-being of developing countries and the prosperity of the planet. This narrative is also in accordance with EU's political rhetoric in speeches and comments given by Union's leaders. The politicians tend to stress the importance of multilateral action in the maritime sphere under the UN framework and the need to act not only for the individual but also for global interest. This is reflected in the normative power argument, which considers the EU's global impact. As Manners (2008) argues, the normative actor takes into consideration the impact of its policies on other countries and aims for "other empowering"

(p.79) in contrast to self-empowering actions. Nevertheless, in EU's external relations, the pursuit of sustainable ocean governance is embedded in the wider political-economic context. In this view, there exists another category of motives behind EU's action - its self-interest and materialistic gains. Acting in line with its own moralized common-sense assumptions, the Union is well-aware of the opportunities that its undertakings bring. The economic interest comes to the forefront in the analysis as it shows that the sustainability of the oceans and a blue economy approach is indeed profitable. Oceans serve the Union as a means of fostering blue growth, enhancing its trade opportunities, contributing to the GDP rise and providing jobs for its citizens. Also, the sustainability of the oceans is interconnected with Union's materialistic interests - without supporting and protecting the management of global fisheries the EU would not be able to import that many seafood products and ensure its self-sufficiency. The potential losses deriving from the mismanagement of the oceans are also considerable and prompt the organization to engage in the sphere. Moreover, the self-interest has a geo-political dimension - the most critical regions such as the Gulf of Africa or the waters outside national jurisdiction are of great importance for the EU, not only from the economic but also geo-strategical and political perspective. Simultaneously, the pursuit of being sea-power and the security perspectives constitute substantial drivers for the organization and allow it to secure a prominent role in the international system.

5.4 Clash between norms and interest

Hence, the pursuit of sustainable ocean governance has two dimensions: one that stems from EU's normative outlook and the embeddedness of universal principles in its structure, and the other one, which follows political-economic logic. The interaction of those two is indeed worth considering. On the one hand, EU's actions are believed to respond to the global challenges in the maritime domain, on the other they also rationalize the organization's pursuit of interest. In a sense there exists a tension between the identified motives. Normative aspirations are indeed of great importance but as the CME perspective implies, they can serve as a justification for self-interest, trying to enhance EU's profits at the same time. Moreover, they might not be actually 'moral' in their utilization (Langan, 2012) if they lead to uneven distribution of benefits. This may be revealed drawing on the examples of SFPAs.

5.4.1 Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with West African states

Mauritania and Senegal represent the two African countries in which EU' engagement in sustainable ocean governance intertwine with organizations not explicitly acknowledged interest. Through PCD, the EU is obliged to reflexivity on the impact that its policy has on developing countries. This is especially important when it comes to supporting the economic development and sustainable fisheries in coastal states. With the establishment of UNCLOS in 1982 which guaranteed exclusive economic

zones, the foreign fishing fleets became obliged to sign agreements with coastal states in order to reimburse them for using fishery resources. It was already in 1979 when the EU signed the first fisheries agreement with Senegal, which was followed by more than 30 agreements, mainly with African and Pacific countries (Mills et al, 2017). Nevertheless, those contracts were often criticized in light of the sustainability issues and their social consequences. Even though the organization has claimed that “EU access to fish stocks in third countries should not in any way be a condition for development assistance to those countries” (European Parliament, 2010, Art. 13), this common sense rhetoric was confronted with the agreements remaining commercial in nature (Mills et al, 2017).

It was only recently that the EU has changed their name to ‘Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements’. The stated intention of the latter is to reflect Union’s sustainable ocean governance agenda and to help “developing countries to ensure sustainable fisheries and food security” (European Commission, 2015, para. 1). Currently, there exist two main categories of those agreements: tuna agreements (allowing the EU vessels to follow migrating tuna stocks along the African coast), and mixed agreements (providing EU’ access to a wide range of fish stocks in the third country’s exclusive economic zone). Regardless of their type, those agreements provide monetary compensation for developing countries that is supposed to enable the achievement of SDG14 and sustainable ocean governance. Yet, EU funds the bulk of the costs of SFPAs, simultaneously generating substantial benefits for Member States’ fishing industries (Mills et al., 2017).

5.4.2 SFPA Senegal

Only in West Africa, more than 3 million people’s lives depend on the fisheries sector, including 600 000 people in Senegal, which represents one-fifth of its total population (Grun & Vanneste, 2017). The fishing industry is also crucial for the country’s economy, providing 15% of jobs. Following the droughts that took place in the late 80s and which damaged Senegal’s agricultural sector, the population started to move to the seaside and took up fishing. For them, the sea constituted and still constitutes the only substantial resource, the mean of livelihood and the biggest source of protein (ibid.) Nonetheless, the situation at Senegal’s coast has dramatically changed over the years. The developments in the country are best reflected by the headline of Equal Times, stating: “The Senegalese fishermen trapped between hunger and exile” (Grun & Vanneste, 2017). According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Senegal’s example shows the tragic example of the crisis visible in the world. Namely, 90 percent of fisheries are fully fished or facing collapse (Beatley & Edwards, 2018). In fact, foreign fleets - mainly European and Asian - have aggravated the situation, with both continents being Senegal’s nearest big markets with extensive and unsatisfied demands (Keijzer, 2010).

The studies show how the fisheries agreements, which according to EU's PCD were supposed to have a positive socio-economic impact on developing countries, put great pressure on the fisheries sector and contributed to the depletion of stocks. In the course of more than ten years (between 1994 and 2005) the amount of catches dropped from 95 to 45 million kilograms (Mills et al. 2017). Fishery subsidies are believed to be overexploited due to the presence of foreign fleets which led to a decrease in the profits of the national fleet. The number of pirogues or other small boats in Senegal declined by almost 50% between 1998-2008 (ibid.). In fact, local fishermen could not compete with the foreign, including EU's vessels, and that is the case to the present day. This forces people to leave the country being immersed in the crisis which is accelerated by poverty, conflicts and climate change.

Whilst foreign mega trawlers' catches can reach up to 20,000 tonnes yearly each, this amount equals the annual capacity of almost 1,700 local boats (Benavides, 2018). After 27 years of Senegal's and EU' fisheries agreements being in place, the local community opposed its renewal in 2006 as a response to the collapse of the country's fish stocks. Even though the EU has offered the country a substantial amount of funds, which following its narrative was supposed to enable the sustainable development of Senegal and the well-management of its maritime sphere, the agreement was more often seen as a tool enabling the achievement of EU's self-interest, particularly fostering economic development. The money paid by the Union did not bring much of the improvement in the maritime sphere. According to the ocean policy brief it was the EU that has generated much more profit through those contracts than the African countries have (Mills et al., 2017). The 'pay, fish and leave' agreements were indeed not consistent with the organization's normative objectives. EU's flowery legalese did not meet the expectations of neither the fishing communities nor the international organizations (see, for example: Karlsson & Garpe, 2009). On the contrary, without taking into account the objectives of development cooperation and the possible impact on developing countries, the agreements were proved to threaten local food security, the employment and the sustainability of the sea (ibid). It was for this reason that there has not been any protocol in place for 8 years after the FPA expired in 2006. Only in 2014, the new agreement was concluded – this time, under a changed name – Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement.

The new SFPA and the implementation protocol is valid for the period of 2014 to 2019. Importantly, its scope has changed in light of the resistance from fishing communities and civil society organizations. The current 5-year agreement encompasses only tuna and - to a smaller degree - hake, which fishing is only allowed for Spanish and French vessels (European Union, 2014). Adding the sustainability provision to the contract seems to reflect EU's commitment to achieve SDG14 and its pursuit of sustainable ocean governance of seas and oceans. The organization's annual contribution amounts to

€1,808,000 from which €750,000 is dedicated to support the fisheries sector. This constitutes a considerable difference in comparison with the previous agreement valid from 2002 until 2006, in which from €64 million, only 19% was earmarked to support small-scale local fisheries while the remaining 81% was directly paid as a compensation for the Senegalese government (Stilwell et al., 2010, p. 617). Essentially, this remaining amount was believed to be spent on corruption and other activities defeating the purpose.

With the new agreement, the EU has claimed to reform its policy, making it able to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks, protecting the local fishermen and food security as well as fighting IUU fishing (European Union, 2014). Although the organization has tried to make its aim clearer and promote action for development, the reformed agreement is still believed to “involve commercial relationship and unequal power relations” (Mills et al., 2017, p. 10). The testimony of the local fishermen and coastal communities sends a clear message: “[the state] sells off our coasts for money. This is very dangerous...because here it is the sea that feeds our families” (quoted in Grun & Vanneste, 2017, para. 21). Years ago, they were able to catch fish within the distance of 10-15 kilometers from the coast – now there are no fish left and in ten years there may be no fishing community (Beatley & Edwards, 2018). The proclaimed rightfulness of SFPAs and the enormous financial contribution do not significantly contribute to the sustainable development of Senegal and its maritime sphere. They rather reflect the conflicting impact of EU’s self-centered fisheries agreements with the organizations normative objectives.

5.4.3 SFPA Mauritania

Also in Mauritania, the seemingly mutually beneficial agreements with the EU are proved to hinder the development of national fishing capacities (see, for example: Mills et al., 2017). The partnership is indeed dominated by the EU, considering that nowadays the African waters experience over-fishing due to the needs of foreign powers. Although, the situation in Mauritania is yet not as dramatic as in Senegal, there are still many problems with allegedly sustainable contracts between the country and the Union. In 2017, the EU paid almost €115 million for access to African waters, from which the mixed agreement with Mauritania accounted for the largest compensation worth €62 million (European Commission, 2017b). The pact, reaching back to 1987, is indeed significant, being so far the most comprehensive partnership between the EU and an African country. As the EU puts it, all the subsequent agreements have shared the same objectives of “sustainable conservation of marine resources; integration of fishing into the economy to maximize jobs; and added value” (Martin, 2010, p. 21). In reality, the Union tried to combine commercial interest with development aid, which brought about a highly controversial deal. Over the years, the organization has provided the country with €1.5

billion in access payments (Talabi & Debruyne, 2017) but the proportion of funds for fisheries sector reforms has been on decline. As for 2018 it constituted only 15% of EU's financial contribution (Standing, 2016) while the rest of the fees was directly received by the government. Such a distribution of money led to the situation in which Mauritania has become highly dependent on foreign investment. The need for state-channeled budgetary support has become more desirable than the sustainable use of the oceans and the protection of the local fishing communities (Mills et al., 2017). This, in turn did not lead to progress in EU's achievement of SDG14. Furthermore, the current SFPA valid from 2015 until November 2019 still lacks a transparency clause on EU's access to information regarding the fisheries industry (Failler, 2015). Taking into account that the data on the fishing sector is insufficient and the agreements cannot be actually monitored, it is doubtful that the Mauritanian government actions are truly legitimate. Likewise, in the case of Senegal, the links between national and international corruption pose an undeniable threat to the country's prosperity.

Lastly, having the most abundant fish stocks in the world, Mauritania is gradually selling its resources to the EU. The latter's vessels catches are very rarely processed locally. With the SFPA protocol coming this year to an end, Mauritania is trying to ensure that with the new protocol all EU fleets fishing in its seas will be required to land their catches in the country (Mills et al., 2017). Without this requirement, the redistribution of benefits is indeed uneven. Although EU's profits from catches and fish processing are much bigger than of local communities, the Union does not seem to be determined to change this situation (ibid.) Thus, the expectations of EU's reformed fisheries agreements embracing all aspects of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - are far from being met.

6 Conclusion

EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance poses a very problematic phenomenon. Since the implementation of the UN 2030 agenda, the organization has been promoting itself as a frontrunner in pursuing the objectives of SDG 14 - conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (UN General Assembly, 2015). Considering of the current state of the oceans, where global fisheries are considerably threatened by overfishing, IUU fishing, environmental degradation and more comprehensive problems such as poverty or insecurity, leadership towards sustainable management of the seas is certainly needed (Guggisberg, 2018). In this context, EU's activity is well-justified.

Nevertheless, the study identified several controversies around EU's global involvement in the maritime sphere. On the one hand, EU's action is driven by normative principles that are enshrined in its treaties and subsequent policy documents, on the other it is driven by self-oriented materialistic interests in preserving and controlling the oceans. This contradiction is problematic because the achievement of normative objectives is limited by EU's self-interest, and vice-versa – the Union's relative gains are limited by its altruistic norms embedded in the EU's identity.

As the analysis showed, EU's narrative seems to focus mainly on universal values, norms and principles, frequently referring to a common sense judgment. The organization extensively explains its accelerated pace of acting for the prosperity of the maritime domain in the recent years, justifying it by the urgent need to overcome global challenges. This engagement is presented as stemming from EU's unique role in the international system, its distinct identity and the values that it is based on as a polity. Moreover, the Union's self-attributed role as a sustainable development champion contributes to the intensification of its actions in the maritime sphere. This is in line with the liberal assumption to preserve and manage global commons (including seas and oceans).

The explored in this thesis motives behind EU's action are only partly explained by the Normative Power Theory. The Union, being infused by values (such as sustainable development), is predisposed to act in a normative way and thus pursues this core principle in its external relations (Manners, 2002). It seeks to export the global sustainability agenda to its partners and thus makes a positive contribution to international maritime affairs. Consequently, the EU introduced subsequent policies relating to its ocean agenda: Blue Growth Strategy, Maritime Security Strategy or the Regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU – they are indeed in place to enable this contribution. Also, the organization frequently repeats that the sustainable development of the oceans and seas is crucial for developing countries. Therefore, acting in line with its PCD, the EU tries to take into account the objectives of 'the poor' while pursuing its ocean agenda. This commitment is reflected in the majority of EU's documents and confirmed by the narrative of the organization's leaders. Union's moralized engagements with external actors prove its ability to shape policy agendas for achieving sustainable ocean governance. However, only by adding the CME perspective the study could encompass the complex reality of sustainable ocean governance. To understand the motives behind Union's engagement in the field, it needs to be realized that some of drivers are not explicitly indicated by the organization. EU's efforts to achieve SDG14 simultaneously serve the organizations strategic aims and self-interest. The ethical objectives are yet crucial, infusing policy processes and determining EU's self-perception vis-à-vis the outside world but the CME allows to recognize that the Union's identity and the interests are closely interweaved. By a recourse norm-laden ocean policy framework the EU can pursue the interests it has.

Those involve the geopolitical, economic and security concerns. For instance, the Blue Growth Agenda has notably a materialistic dimension, first and foremost, enabling EU to achieve economic growth. Although it has to embrace all three aspects of sustainable development, the economic considerations come to the front in the analysis and so has the Union's fight against IUU fishing. Through reforming world fisheries, the EU is able to ensure its food security and secure trade. Also, the interest in launching the missions such as EUCAP Nestor in the Horn of Africa came from the EU (Ejdus, 2017), being concerned with its trade and security threatened by the spread of piracy. Rising levels of consumption and growing dependence on other regions around the globe make the EU more and more interested in projecting its power into the maritime domain. The commercial opportunities are being pursued by the EU with the idealistic view that not only will they increase Union's profits but also contribute to achieving the sustainability objectives.

Importantly, this study showed that there exist discrepancies between EU norm-infused policy agenda and the material policy outcomes that have a considerable impact on the vulnerable communities. In a sense, ethical norms form politicians understanding of their actions and sometimes restrain them from perceiving and compensating the inequalities that arise in the course of their actions (Langan, 2012). The EU's possession of Normative Power allows it to make use of ethical norms in order to publicly justify its pursuit of different interests as presented in the study. In this sense, the normative claims add legitimacy to EU's self-oriented economic undertakings in the maritime sphere. Hence, the Union's moral economy is not completely 'moral' in its outcomes if we juxtapose the normative objectives with the consequences of EU's interventions abroad.

This is visible on the example of West African countries that have signed fisheries agreements with the EU. The two illustrative cases – SFPA Senegal and SFPA Mauritania showed that the consequences of Union's allegedly 'mutually beneficent' and creating 'win-win' scenarios undertakings are not necessarily contributing to the well-being of those coastal countries. In the case of Senegal, the EU's and other foreign powers' intense involvement in the maritime sphere led to the situation in which its marine habitats are destroyed, and the fisheries are dangerously depleted. This in turn, contributes to hunger, violence, and instability and definitely neither serves the collective interest nor the common good. Considering Mauritania, the EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance, despite the several reforms, still comes down to 'pay, fish and leave' policy reflected by the commercial agreements. The fishing rights provide the EU with considerable economic gains that are not equal to the financial support given to the coastal state. The proper redistribution of benefits remains a highly controversial issues let alone a threat to economic development as well as environmental sustainability of third countries.

Consequently, EU's engagement in sustainable ocean governance cannot be only understood as its benevolent pursuit of great ideals and a purely ethical pursuit of the UN 2030 Agenda and SDG14. The complex reality of the maritime sphere makes it necessary to take into consideration other aspects of EU's action. Without denying that the Union is also guided by ethical principles, the study identified several economic, political and strategic aims that the organization has. Notably, the EU is nowadays one of the most important global actors and its policy interventions are infused with more realist purposes. Calling itself "one of the most important, if not the most important normative powers in the world" (Barosso in Peterson, 2007, p. 4) the organization simultaneously pursues the sustainable ocean governance in order to become a strong maritime actor. This engagement should be understood as a process in which the strategic aims are imbued with genuine moral concerns which can sometimes be undermined by the material policy outcomes.

In continuing the research on the field of the maritime sphere of governance and the sustainability-related aspects, further studies should concentrate on assessing the effectiveness of EU's ocean agenda as well as the progress in achieving SDG14. In doing so, the 'placeful' approach to the sea should be maintained in order to grasp the complex reality of ocean governance. Only by treating the maritime sphere in the same way as the land is treated, it is possible to explore all the significant dimensions of sustainable ocean governance.

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