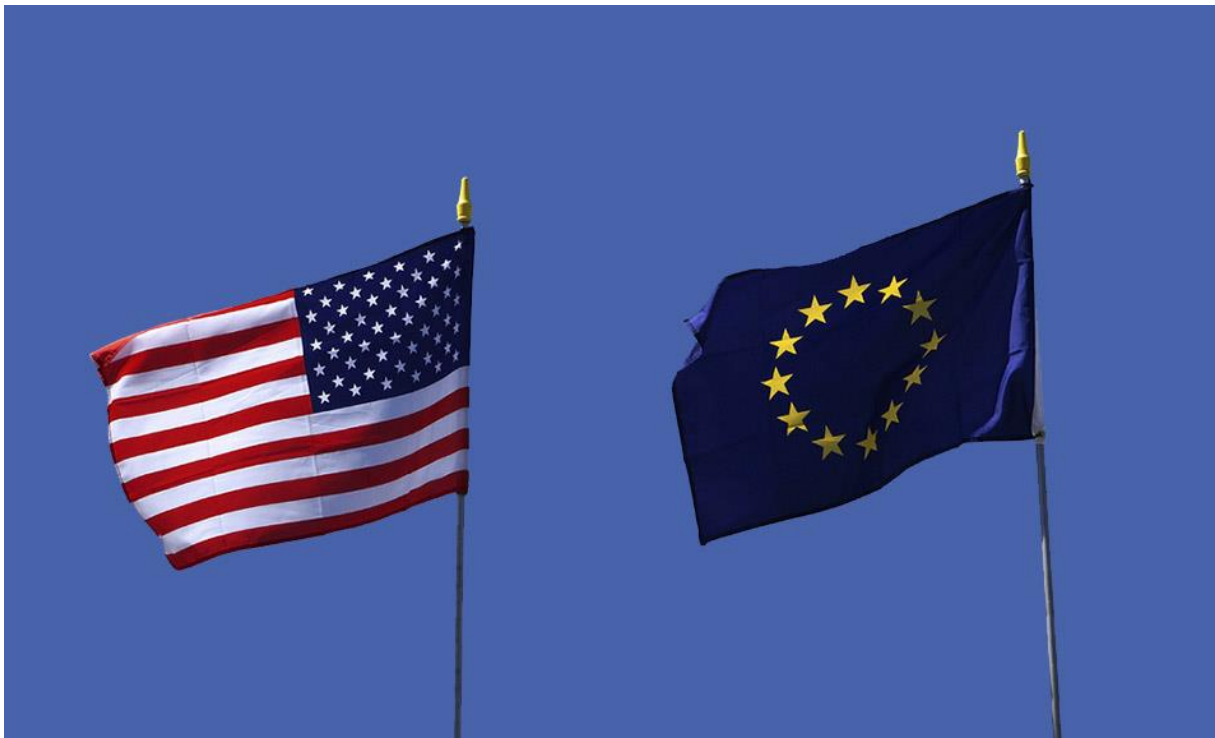# Sustainable Superpowers

A comparative historical analysis of the Green New Deal from the United States and the Green Deal from the European Union, 1990-2020

MA-Thesis History of Politics and Society

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Abstract

Global warming and climate change are part of one of the biggest crises of our time. Biodiversity loss, deforestation and overfishing is exhausting our earth. Humans have realized these problems must be handled for decades, but there is little consensus on how. The term 'sustainable development' refers to providing solutions for these environmental problems, while also ensuring economic growth and providing for future generations. Both the European Union and the United States have formed plans to tackle climate change and environmental issues, by transforming the economy. The Green New Deal in the US was presented in February 2019, but it failed to advance in the Senate. In December 2019, the European Green Deal was presented, and in January 2020 it was accepted by the European Parliament. This raises the question why this plan was accepted in the EU, but a similar plan was not accepted in the US. In this thesis, three possible explanations are analysed, that led to the following conclusions. The discourse has developed similarly in the EU and the US since the 1990's. A SMART-analysis has shown that the goals in the Green New Deal are formulated less detailed. The biggest difference is seen in the measurability, most goals in the GND are not measurable at all. Lastly, a network analysis has shown that climate change denial is very apparent in US politics, which explains the resistance against the plan.

Keywords: sustainable development, European Union, United States, Green Deal, Green New Deal

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Introduction

Polar ice is melting, sea levels are rising, and forests are disappearing at a fast rate. Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to our world. There are different ways to tackle the environmental crisis that is currently happening, from local bottom-up initiatives, to NGO's, to supranational treaties. This research will focus on (inter)national, big scale policies on sustainable development in the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). It is socially relevant, because it will contribute to the debate on how to fight climate change and reach the Paris Agreement goals quickly and efficiently.

The European Green Deal (EGD) is a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. Following from the Paris Agreement, the EU developed climate goals for the future. These plans were edited and changed along the way and in December 2019 the EGD was officially proposed. The biggest goal in the Deal is no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. To achieve this, economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The transition aims to be just and inclusive, by providing financial support for those that are most affected by the move towards green economy. In addition, the EGD aims to restore biodiversity and cut pollution. The EGD has been approved and implementation has already begun.

In the US a Green New Deal (GND) was proposed to combat climate change whilst fighting economic injustice. Different versions have been developed since the early 2000's, but in 2018 the effort gained popularity among a group of Democrats. In February of 2019 a resolution was presented by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Edward Markey. The GND proposes to make the US 100% climate neutral by 2030 by using only renewable sources. The Deal focuses on vulnerable communities, which include poor and disadvantaged people. The resolution also calls for universal health care, increased minimum wages and preventing monopolies. The most important difference is that the EGD has been accepted and the GND has not. The research question is as follows: why could the European Union implement its Green Deal, while the United States met so much opposition and how was this influenced by the policy processes of the Green New Deal and the Green Deal from the 1990's until now?

The method used in this thesis is a comparative method, with the US and the EU as case studies. More specifically, it uses the method of difference of a Millian comparison, where cases have similar variables, but a different outcome.[1] This method focuses on finding the variable that sticks out and thereby explains the different outcome. The within-case method for both cases

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[1] Matthew Lange, *Comparative Historical Methods.* (London 2013) 133-135.

will be process tracing, as explained by Lange.[2] This is a technique used to explore potential causal processes linking two related factors.

These cases were selected because they have similar sustainable development plans. Both have goals to combat climate change based on the Paris Agreement, combined with goals in economic development. On top of that, both the EU and the US are, or consist mostly of, developed countries, which operate in the Western world. In both cases there is also a central or federal government, that has to cooperate and take into account the smaller nation or state governments.

This research takes place in a bigger debate, that looks at whether US policy making and American politics are failing.[3] The world's biggest superpower for many years has launched itself from crisis to crisis in the last few decades. Financial crises has led to 40 million people living in poverty in 2018, and levels of police violence and violent crimes are much higher than in other developed countries. [4] Then, the COVID-pandemic also showed that the US is not capable of handling more acute crises, with infections and death rates rising to the roof. Many studies claim that American politics are growingly dysfunctional, which is attributed to different explanations and causes in literature.[567] Explanations for this phenomenon start at the Constitution that was formed more than 230 years ago.[8] Some scholars are highly critical, stating that "the Constitution imposes on us a dangerously dysfunctional political order that presents a clear and present danger to our collective future".[9] There are different reasons mentioned why, but the overarching theme is that it is simply outdated. General ideas about human rights and legislation in 1787 do not fit present times. This is clear when looking at thoughts on slavery or women rights, but also the system of the Electoral Vote, which regularly leads to White House candidates that did not get a majority of popular vote.[1011] However, there

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[2] Lange, *Comparative Historical Methods,* 45- 50.

[3] David McKay, *American Politics and Society* (Hoboken, 2013). In this book there are several chapter attributed to the possible causes for political dysfunction that are discussed here.

[4] Bhasker Sunkara, 'America is a failing state. And establishment politics can't solve the crisis', *The Guardian,* 1 November 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/01/us-politics-state-government-democrats-left (18 April 2021).

[5] McKay, *American Politics and Society.*

[6] Jack M. Balkin, 'The Last Days of Disco: Why the American Political System is Dysfunctional', *BUL Rev* 94 (2014), 1159-1199.

[7] Morris Fiorina and Samuel Abrams, 'Political Polarization in the American Public' *Annual Review Political Sciences* 11 (2008), 563 – 588.

[8] McKay, 'Constitutional Government' *American Politics and Society* (Hoboken, 2013).

[9] Sanford Levinson, 'So Much to Rewrite, So Little Time' *Const. Comment.* 27 (2010): 515 – 526, 515.

[10] Sanford Levinson, *Our Undemocratic Constitution: Where the Constitution Goes Wrong (and How We the People Can Correct It)* (Oxford, 2006).

[11] Larry Sabato, *A More Perfect Constitution: 23 Proposals to Revitalize Our Constitution and Make America a Fairer Country* (New York, 2007).

are also studies claiming that constitutional tradition is not necessarily the cause and that there is value in it. Changing the constitution would be difficult and could have unintended consequences.[12] It could also be said that what looks like constitutional dysfunction is actually constitutional transition, and that there is already a movement going on from the old constitutional system to a new one.[13] This transformation is characterized by another frequently mentioned problem: growing polarization.[14][15][16] The gap in socioeconomic factors such as education and wealth has been growing over the last few years. This has led to an increasing polarization between the two major political parties, the Republicans and Democrats, and their voters. This polarization is nearing its peak.[17] Strong opposition between the two parties leads to slow and paralyzed politics, legislation does not get passed easily. This polarization also raises the stakes of transitioning to a new constitutional system, because defenders of the old system are motivated to resist emergence of the new system. One way that the polarization might end is when voters reject the current Republican Party, which will lead both Republicans and Democrats more to the centre.[18] As prioritizing environmental policy is generally considered a left-wing opinion, this polarization has a considerable effect on passing sustainable development policies.

Regarding environmental policy, the EU has taken on the role of leader in climate change policymaking since the Kyoto-protocol. In some ways it has taken over that role from the US who played a leading role in the case of ozone depletion.[19] This research contributes to this debate by analysing why sustainability policy in the US does not get implemented easily. Consequently, this contributes to the bigger debate why the political system in the US seems to be dysfunctional. In literature, there are comparisons between the US and the EU on different topics, from foreign aid to responses to crises. In the book *Transatlantic Divide: Comparing American and European Society* a holistic comparative study is done on the EU as a whole and the US, from economics, to welfare and politics. [20] This thesis adds to this literature by

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[12] Richard L. Hasen, 'Political Dysfunction and Constitutional Change' *Drake Law Review* 61 (2013).

[13] Balkin, 'The Last Days of Disco: Why the American Political System is Dysfunctional', 1160-1161.

[14] David McKay, 'Government and the People in a Polarized Society' *American Politics and Society* (Hoboken, 2013).

[15] Nolan McCarty, 'The Policy Effects of Political Polarization' *The Transformation of American Politics* (2011), 223 – 255.

[16] Morris Fiorina and Samuel Abrams, 'Political Polarization in the American Public' *Annual Review Political Sciences* 11 (2008), 563 – 588.

[17] Balkin, 'The Last Days of Disco', 1160-1162.

[18] Hasen, 'Political Dysfunction', 995.

[19] A. M. Sbagria and C Damro, 'The Changing Role of the European Union in International Environmental Politics: Institution Building and the Politics of Climate Change', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 17 (1999) 1, 53-68, 54-55.

[20] Alberto Martinelli, *Transatlantic Divide: Comparing American and European Society* (Oxford, 2008).

comparing their sustainability policies, which has not been done yet. By performing a comparative analysis, the determining factors that will explain the difference between the two cases can then be used to make more general statements, that can be applied to other cases. It will also provide more insight on political science on the US and the EU.

To answer the research question, three main hypotheses have been developed based on the secondary literature mentioned above. Firstly, the difference could be explained by how the discourse around sustainable development has evolved in the EU and the US. A different discourse leads to different views on the subject, which could influence the policymaking process surrounding the subject.[21] Then, the GND might not be approved yet because the contents are not realistic, achievable or sufficient enough. A third hypothesis is that the network of politicians, actors and organizations and their relations in the EU and the US is fundamentally different. The power of climate change deniers in the US might be much bigger than in the EU, which could influence the politics surrounding sustainable development.[22] *Voetnoot* These three hypotheses form the basis for the three sub-questions:

- Has the discourse on sustainable development developed differently in the US than in the EU from the 1990's until now?
- Are the goals in the Green New Deal of less quality than the goals in the European Green Deal?
- Which actors and organizations influenced the policymaking process of the Deals and how do they differ in the EU and the US?

The political background of the EU and the US is not entirely the same and can therefore not be ignored in this thesis. The first chapter of this thesis consists of an analysis and comparison of the political background in the EU and the US.

Policy cycle

To order and organize the complexity of policymaking, the policy cycle framework is a useful tool. It will be used as the theoretical framework in this thesis.

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[21] Teun van Dijk, *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (London, 1996).
[22] Riley E. Dunlap & Aaron M. McCright, 'Climate Change Denial: Sources, Actors and Strategies' *Routledge Handbook of Climate Change and Society* (2010), 240 – 259.

In Figure 1, a policy cycle, interpreted by Tomas Hak et al. (2016) is shown.[232425] When put into a policy framework, the GND has not yet passed the 'policy implementation' phase, and hangs between 'policy formulation' and policy legitimation'.
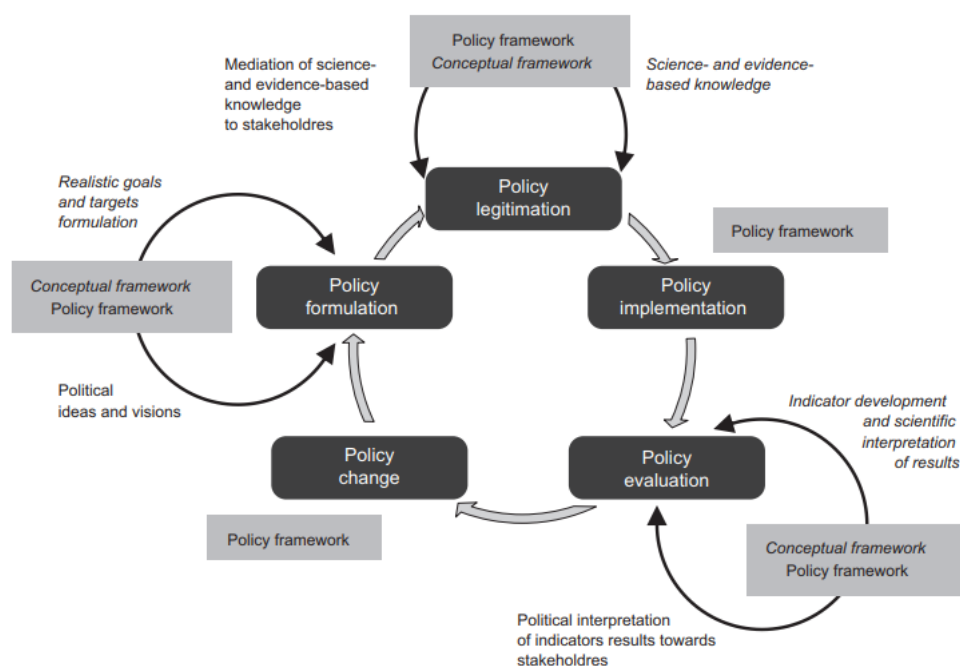

Figure 1: A policy cycle linked to policy and conceptual frameworks (Hak et al., 2016).

Starting at the left side of the cycle, there is policy formulation. Influenced by political ideas and visions, realistic goals and targets are formulated. After this, formulated policy is legitimized, by science- and evidence-based knowledge. When policy passes this stage, it gets implemented. After implementation, evaluation of policy takes place, when results are analysed and political and scientific interpretation of results takes place. Then, the policy can be changed, which leads back to policy formulation. Hak et al. (2016) argues that three of these stages, formulation, legitimation, and evaluation, should not only be influenced by the policy framework, but also by a conceptual framework. This framework is independent from political priorities and instead focuses on concepts and indicators that can provide measurement to assess the policies. The three hypotheses can be placed in this policy cycle, which is shown in Figure 2.

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[23] Harold Dwight Lasswell, *The Decision Process: Seven Categories of Functional Analysis* (Maryland, 1956).
[24] Tomas Hak et al., 'Sustainable Development Goals: A Need for Relevant Indicators' *Ecological Indicators* 60 (2016), 565-573.
[25] The policy cycle was originally proposed by Lasswell (1956), in Figure 1 the interpretation by Tomas Hak et al. (2016) is shown. It shows the different stages of policymaking, specifically with the SDG's in mind.
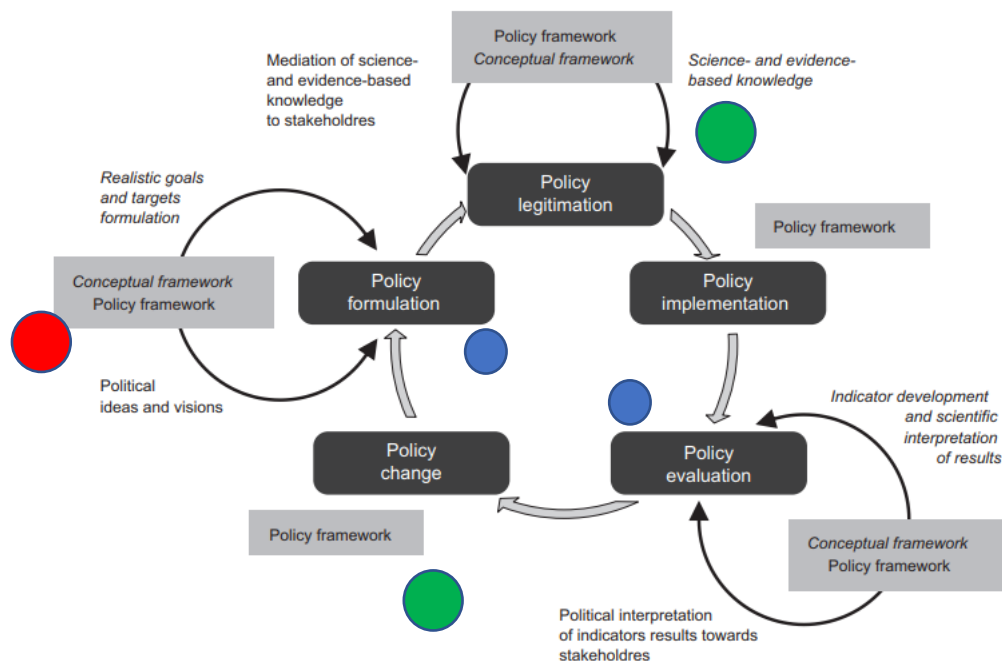
Figure 2: Policy cycle with the three variables.

The red circle represents discourse. The discourse on sustainable development plays a determining factor in political ideas and visions on that topic. It is located outside of the policy cycle, because it is an external factor, influencing formulation of policy. The blue circles represent the variable that will assess the contents of both Deals. This variable takes place at the formulation and the evaluation stage, inside the policy cycle. As shown in the cycle, when formulating policy, formulating realistic goals and targets is essential. When policy is evaluated, the results will show whether targets were met and goals were reached, which also gives an insight in the quality of the goals. It takes place inside the cycle, because it is done by actors involved in policymaking. Lastly, the green circle represents the network associated with the policy and how it influences that policy. This variable also takes place at two places, in between the legitimation and implementation phase, and in between the evaluation and change phase. The politicians and actors involved in the policy will decide at the legitimation phase whether science and evidence backs up the policy. They are influenced by scientific and societal organizations and stakeholders involved in the subject. The same happens at the evaluation and change phase. This thesis will be structured around these three variables. The theories and methods used for these variables will be explained next.

Discourse

Discourse analysis is understood in many different ways in different places. There is the linguistic and psychological approach to discourse, explained by Van Dijk[26], and a more post-structuralist approach, based on the work of Michel Foucault. The second tradition explains how discourse is central to action and how it constitutes practices and organizations.[27] Maarten Hajer has introduced discourse analysis as a way to analyse the policy process, more specifically with regards to the environmental discourse. He explains that in environmental discourse, "discourse analysis primarily aims to understand why a particular understanding of the environmental problem at some point gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited".[28] He claims that discourses that determine the definition of environmental problems are best analysed as storylines. Then it is defined as an ensemble of ideas and concepts, produced and reproduced in a set of practices. Environmental discourse is not necessarily coherent, because typically an environmental problem involves many different aspects and sciences, and therefore different discourses.

In policy domains, story-lines play an essential role in reproducing and transforming discourses. Story-lines are narratives on social reality, where elements from different domains are combined. As a result, relevant actors are provided with a common understanding of the discourse. It reduces the discursive complexity, because actors from various backgrounds can relate to them. In environmental politics, there appears to be conflict over the exact meaning of physical and social phenomena. This is where story-lines fulfil a key role, they determine interaction between physical realities, for example the physical effects of increased greenhouse gas emissions, and the social realities, what this means for society.[29]

In this thesis, a discourse analysis will be performed, based on the concept of story-lines. Sustainable development that have taken place over the last few decades, starting from the 1990's, will be analysed on language that is used, ideas, and actions that were taken. The analysis starts in the 1990's, because this was just after the Brundtland report was published, which started the use of the term 'sustainable development' in this way. The policies are an interdisciplinary product, combining physical science and phenomena with social and economic interactions. It will show what was prioritized and how this has changed over time. The EGD

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[26] Teun van Dijk, *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (London, 1996).

[27]Michael Arribas-Ayllon and Valerie Walkerdine, 'Foucauldian Discourse Analysis' *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (2008), 91-108.

[28] Maarten A. Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process* (Oxford, 1995), 45.

[29] Hajer, 'Politics of Environmental Discourse', 56 – 72.

and the GND are the final product of this changing discourse, and they will be analysed in the same manner. There will also be an analysis of how these deals are presented in (social) media, to get an idea about how the general public views them. The primary sources used in this variable are the sustainable development policies, the Deals, and (social) media articles.

From Discourse to Action

The term 'sustainable development' was popularized after the publication of *Our Common Future*, where it is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".[30] Since then, different goals within the framework of sustainable development have been composed. Most recent are the goals in the Paris Agreement, from December 2015, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the United Nations.[31][32] These formed the base for the EU's and the US' policymaking, leading to their Green Deals. Figure 2 also includes conceptual frameworks, criteria to evaluate the quality of the goals. It shows that in the formulation and legitimation phase, creating realistic goals is essential. This is relevant for the cases in this thesis, because it will show how the policy process was influenced by the formulation of the goals. Setting realistic goals is also part of the SMART-criteria. The SMART-criteria are used for setting goals in management, also applicable to public policy. Ideally speaking, every goal and objective should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. To determine if a goal is specific, the five "W" questions must be considered, who is involved in this goal, what should be accomplished, where the goal is to be achieved, when it should be achieved and why it should be achieved. To make a goal measurable, there should be indicators, to make clear when the goal is achieved. For a goal to be achievable, resources and capabilities should be at hand to achieve said goal. It can also be considered if others have done it successfully. The fourth criteria says that a goal must be realistic, can it realistically be achieved with the available resources and time. Lastly, a goal must be time-bound, have a clear deadline.[33]

A SMART-analysis will be conducted in this thesis for both the EGD and the GND. All goals that are mentioned in both Deals will be discussed. Only primary sources are used for this variable.

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[30] Gro Brundtland et al., *Our Common Future* (New York, 1987) 41.
[31] United Nations Climate Change, 'The Paris Agreement' (version 2015), https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf (18 January 2021).
[32] United Nations, 'The 17 Goals' (version 2015), https://sdgs.un.org/goals (18 January 2021).
[33] Corporate Finance Institute, 'What is a SMART Goal?', (version 2015), https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/smart-goal/ (20 January 2021).

Key Actors and Networks

The general influence of lobbying and interest groups on politics will provide an insight in how networks of actors and organizations have affected the policy processes in the EU and the US. The political influence of interest groups are often centred around money. Business and interest groups participate in campaign finance, both in hard and in soft money.[34] When elections are privately funded, policymakers are most responsive to the wealthiest lobbyists and their interests.[35] However, many studies argue that information is a more influential instrument on policy outcomes than campaign contributions. This transfer of information between interest groups and policy makers, lobbying, occurs in all levels of government. Assuming that a politician's objective is re-election, they seek information on how their opinion on certain policies will affect the outcome of the next election.[36] The information that is exchanged is influenced both by science and by social factors.

The crisis regarding climate change is an example of how these two do not always align. Where scientists have gained consensus on anthropogenic climate change (ACC) over the past decades, public perception seems to remain sceptical. Studies by Anthony Leiserowitz show that in 2010, 57% of Americans thought global warming was happening, and 47% of those people believed it was caused mostly by human activities.[37] More importantly, 66% of Americans were unsure about the consensus among scientists about climate change. In 2019, more than half of Americans understood most scientists think climate change is happening, but only about one in five understood that more than 90% of scientists agree on it.[38] Climate change deniers aim to sow doubt among the people. Sowing doubt about scientific research is not a new phenomenon, something similar has happened in the tobacco industry. It had been known since the 1950's that smoking causes cancer, but quickly after, the industry began to use science to fight science. "The industry had realized that you could create the impression of controversy simply by asking questions".[39] They did not have to convince people that science was wrong, they only had to create doubt. Interest groups that benefit from the fossil fuel industry are using similar tactics to change public opinion, which indirectly influences policymaking.

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[34] John de Figueiredo, 'Lobbying and Information in Politics' *Business and Politics* 4 (2002) 2, 125-129.

[35] Christine Mahoney, 'Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union' *Journal of Public Policy* (2007), 35-56.

[36] De Figueiredo, 'Lobbying', 125-126.

[37] Anthony Leiserowitz et al., 'Climate Change in the American Mind: Americans' Global Warming Beliefs and Attitudes in May 2011' *Yale University and George Mason University* (2011).

[38] Anthony Leiserowitz et al., 'Climate Change in the American Mind: November 2019' (2020).

[39] Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York, 2010), 18.

Political systems are characterized by the coexistence and interdependence of policy networks. A network analysis is a method to give insight in these networks, which will be used for this thesis. Firstly, politicians that were involved in making and passing the bills will be analysed. In the EU these are members of the European Parliament, in the US these are members of the Senate. Then, the two organizations that influenced the opposers and proposers of the deals will be analysed, based on their size, resources and power.

In the first chapter, the political background of the EU and the US will be analysed to provide context for this thesis. Then, a chapter on the EU will follow, where the three variables will be discussed, to form a conclusion about the conclusion in the EU. Thirdly, the same will be done for the US. Then, there will be a chapter to compare the two cases. The most important similarities and differences will be set out and then analysed using the relevant literature. Lastly, there will be a conclusion that summarizes this thesis and gives places it in context.

The political background of the European Union and the United States

When trying to achieve successful sustainability policy, political background plays a crucial role. When it comes to policymaking, especially when it is as transformative and progressive as tackling climate change, the state of the political system can determine how easily policy gets implemented. In a democracy, where there is constant change in who is in office, it can be hard to push big change, especially when views of opposing parties are divergent. For this reason, some background on the political systems and situation in the EU and the US will be given in this chapter.

Many scholars have approached the European Union (EU) as a political system similar to other domestic political systems. This was seen in work of federalist writers, who compared the EU to federal and confederal systems in Switzerland, Germany and the US, but also in work of systems theorists. They viewed the EU as a political system, characterized by governmental actors, public policies and political demands. Much of the comparative work on EU politics is based on the assumption that the EU is not a political system on itself, but a variant on existing political systems.[40] In this research the focus will be on two dimensions of politics, namely vertical and the horizontal separation of powers, because these are in place for both the EU and the US.

Vertical

The vertical separation of powers refers to the federal arrangement between nations and states, or in the case of the EU, between member states and the Union.[41][42] R. Daniel Kelemen (2003) defined federalism by the following three elements: "public authority is divided between state governments and a central government; each level of government has some issues on which it makes final decisions; and a federal high court adjudicates disputes concerning federalism."[43] In this sense, both the EU and the US constitutes a federal system. Also, in most federal systems, the structure of representation is twofold, with popular interests represented directly through an elected lower house, while territorial units are represented in an upper house. In the EU, this lower house is the European Parliament, consisting of 705 directly elected members. The

[40] Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollock and Alasdair R. Young, *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford, 2015) 26-27.
[41] Wallace, Pollock and Young, *Policy-Making in the European Union,* 28-29.
[42] Richard Albert, 'The Separation of Higher Powers', *SMUL Rev.* 65 (2012) 1, 6.
[43] R. Daniel Kelemen, 'The Structure and Dynamics of EU Federalism', *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (2003) 1-2, 184-208, 185.

Council of Ministers consists of the 27 leaders of the member states. However, in the EU, fiscal federalism is weak. The EU mainly works with economic regulation, such as the European Single Market, to influence the member states. However, these far-reaching regulations are prone for controversy, considering that the EU's aim is to govern as close to the citizen as possible and should only engage in regulation where necessary. All in all, the vertical separation of powers in the EU is highly fluid, EU and member states are intertwined and concurrent.[44]

In the US, there is also a vertical separation of powers. As stated in the Tenth Amendment, all powers not granted to the Federal Government are reserved to the States or the people.[45] This means that in the hierarchy of constitutional authority, national institutions stand above State Governments, and secondly, states can always be overruled by the reach of national government, when necessary to national interest.[46] Most United States citizens have more frequent contact with their State and local governments than with the Federal Government. Examples of matters handled by State Governments are education, police departments, family law and most crimes.[47]

Horizontal

The EU is defined by a horizontal separation of powers, following Montesquieu's famous trias politica. The legislative, executive and judicial functions are led by three distinct branches of government. However, one institution does not have single control over one of these functions. The legislative function for example is shared by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.[48][49]

In the US, both Federal and State Governments are defined by three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. In Federal Government, the legislative branch consists of the House of Representative and the Senate, which together form the United States Congress. Their primary job is to enact legislation, anyone can write a bill, but only members of Congress can introduce legislation. When a bill is introduced in the Congress, both the House and the Senate must pass that bill by majority vote. Both members of the House and the Senate are elected by the American people.[50] The second Federal branch is the executive. The power of the executive branch is vested in the President, who is responsible for implementing and

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[44] Wallace, Pollock and Young, *Policy-Making in the European Union,* 29.
[45] United States Congress, 'Tenth Amendment' *Constitution of the United States*.
[46] Albert, 'The Separation of Higher Powers', 6.
[47] The White House, 'State and Local Government' *Our Government.*
[48] Ibidem, 30.
[49] Gerard Conway, 'Recovering a Separation of Powers in the European Union', *European Law Journal* 17 (2011) 3, 304-322, 306-307.
[50] The White House, 'The Legislative Branch' *Our Government.*

enforcing laws that are written by Congress. The Vice-President is also part of the executive branch, ready to assume Presidency if necessary.[51] Thirdly, there is the judicial branch, the only branch whose members are not elected, but appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest court in the land. Federal courts enjoy sole power to interpret the law, determine constitutionality of the law, and apply it to individual cases.[52]

The growing polarization that is occurring in the US is also prevalent in the EU. Climate change seems to have become the battleground for far-right and left parties and groups to disagree on. In the US this is visible by the presidency of Donald Trump, who has stopped every policy and action on climate change, followed by the presidency of Joe Biden, who reversed all Trump's actions and signed back onto the Paris Climate Agreement. In the EU, this is visible by the increase in popularity of far-right parties, like the Forum for Democracy in the Netherlands, or the Alternative for Germany party. At the same time, green parties also grow in popularity in the EU. The majority of voters in both cases are still in the middle, but there is a battle going on between these two ideas, that form the background of this thesis.

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[51] The White House, 'The Executive Branch' *Our Government.*
[52] The White House, 'The Judicial Branch' *Our Government.*

The European Green Deal: an example of a smooth policy process in the European Union?

The following chapter is about the EU, it includes analyses of three variables, which will provide insight in the policymaking process in the EU. First, there will be a discourse analysis of the sustainable development discourse in the EU over the last 30 years. Then, a SMART-analysis will be conducted on goals that are in the European Green Deal (EGD). Finally, there will be a network analysis of proponents and opponents of the EGD in the European Parliament. These three analyses will show to what extent the policymaking process in the EU is successful.

Discourse analysis

One way to analyse discourse on sustainable development is to examine policies regarding the subject, to find terms that were used, what priorities were set and what action was taken. This will form story-lines, as discussed in the theoretical framework. In 1992, the Maastricht treaty was signed, which formed the base for the European Union and the Economic and Monetary Union. In this treaty, the term 'sustainability' was already mentioned. The goals of that treaty are described in Article B, where the first goal starts with: "to promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable".[53] On a later page, it is mentioned more extensively: "to promote … sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment, … the raising of the standard of living and quality of life".[54] Objectives that were pursued focused on quality of the environment; human health; utilization of natural resources; and promoting international measures to deal with regional and worldwide environmental problems. The diversity of situations in various regions in the EU were already taken into account. The policy was based on the precautionary principle, environmental damage was to be rectified at the source, and the polluter had to pay.[55] In the Treaty of Maastricht, sustainable development is definitely mentioned and has a high place on the list, but the exact meaning of it stays vague. It follows the lines of *Our Common Future,* there should be economic growth, but with special attention to the environment, use of natural resource, and environmental problems. However, there is no elaboration on what those environmental problems are exactly. The difference between different regions and their ability to help with this transition is already mentioned here. This is an important aspect of today's Green Deal.

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[53] Official Journal of the European Communities, *Treaty on European Union* 191 (Brussels, 1992), 4.
[54] European Communities, *Treaty on European Union,* 5-6.
[55] Ibidem, 28-30.

The next important policy report was published in 2001, when the Commission published a proposal for a EU strategy for sustainable development. In here, six threats to sustainable development are described. Those six threats are global warming; ageing of the population; food safety; poverty; loss of bio-diversity; and transport congestion/regional imbalances.[56] These six threats are not explained in much detail, rather they are mentioned shortly, with an emphasis that urgent action is needed. The proposal for sustainable development from 2001 is considerably more specific than its predecessor. There is still a strong emphasis on economic growth, but it should go hand in hand with social cohesion and environmental protection. In this document, global warming is mentioned as the first threat to sustainable development, which was not mentioned in the Treaty ten years earlier. The other five threats are also specific examples, that vary and do not just entail environmental and economic problems, but also social problems, such as ageing of the population.

Building furthermore on these plans, a proposal was published in 2013 by the Commission on sustainable development. By this time, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals were published, on which the EU's policy-plan was largely based on. In this proposal, different components are explained in much more detail than the previous report. Besides the problem areas that were already mentioned, many new problem areas were added, such as water and sanitation, oceans, consumption and life cycle accounting, and chemicals. More societal issues were also added, like tourism, gender equality, justice and human rights, and social inclusion and eradicating poverty.[57]

The EGD that has been accepted in 2020, contains many key actions, that can be divided into the following categories: transition to a circular economy; climate ambitions for 2030 and 2050; supplying clean, affordable and secure energy; a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system; preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity; a zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment; and a just transition for everyone.[58] The EGD is the most inclusive document. Clean energy has a high priority, which is not mentioned in the first two documents and only briefly in the document of 2013. It contains plans for various environmental problems, that are all specified, ranging from clean energy, to biodiversity,

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[56] Commission of the European Communities, *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development* (Brussels, 2001).

[57] European Commission, 'A Decent Life for All: Ending Poverty and Giving the World a Sustainable Future', *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions* 92 (2013).

[58] European Commission, 'The European Green Deal', *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions* 640 (2019).

pollution and the food chain. Economic development is still a very important part of the policy, but the focus has shifted since 1992, from simply economic growth, to a focus on a circular and clean economy. There is also a strong focus on the importance of making the transition just and fair for all member states, and making sure everyone can participate in this change.

To conclude, the description and characteristics of sustainable development grew and got more detailed over time. In the 1990's, it was not quite clear what would fall under 'sustainable development' and the term was vague. It included economic growth, but with attention for the environment. Over time, the specifics of those environmental problems became clear, and plans for sustainable development contained increasingly more issues. More comprehensive environmental and social issues were added and each got their own agendas.

SMART analysis

A SMART-analysis of all the goals in the EGD will follow, to show whether goals were developed and formulated in the most efficient way.
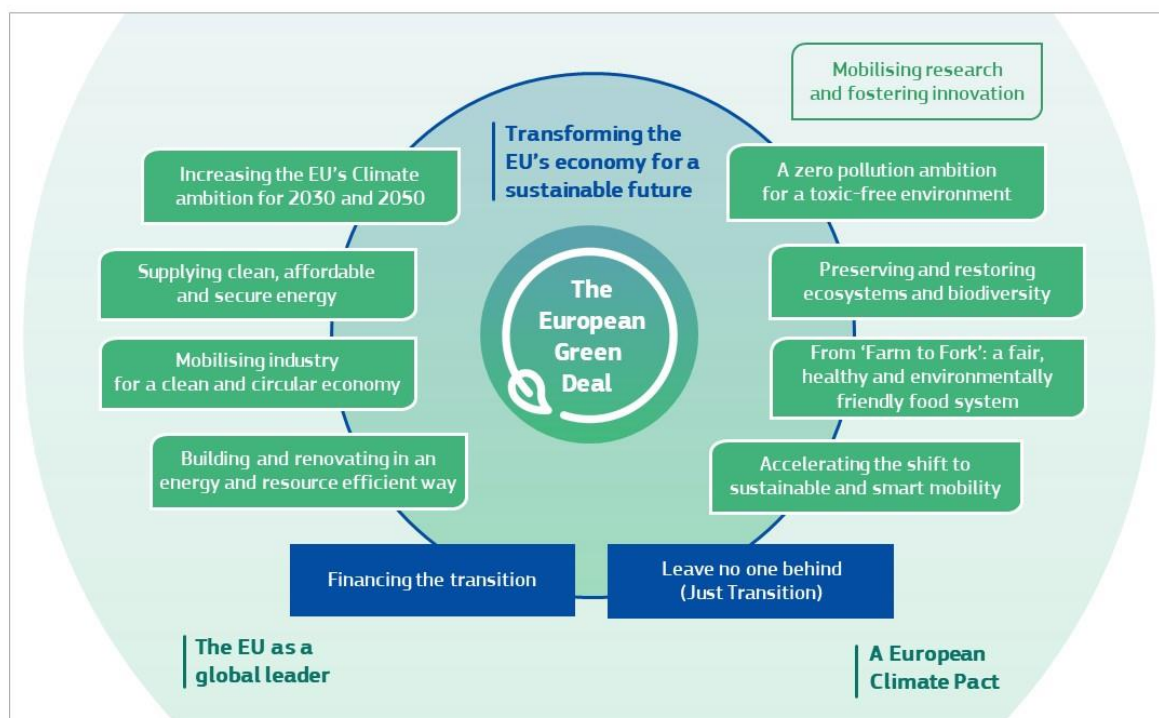

Figure 3: The European Green Deal, European Commission (2019)

Specific

To determine whether the EGD's goals are specific, the first question to answer is 'what do they want to accomplish?'. Shortly, the answer is to make the EU's economy sustainable. The EU aims to overcome climate and environmental challenges and turn them into opportunities. Why this goal is important is clearly stated. The first paragraph in the document explains that the atmosphere is warming and climate is changing more with each year. They refer to reports from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), stating that one of eight million species on earth are at risk of being lost, and oceans and forests are being polluted and destroyed. They call it this generation's defining task to tackle these problems. They also emphasize that it is important the EU takes on the role of global leader in these issues. A reason for this is that they aim to influence and mobilise neighbours and partners to follow the same sustainable path. The third question entails who is involved. In this case, all member states of the EU are involved, more specifically, their governments. However, it is emphasized that tackling these challenges is a global issue and the means to achieve these goals reach further than just the member states.

They mention that cooperation and engagement with partner countries will be increased. They will continue to be involved with economies of countries that are responsible for 80% of the global greenhouse emissions, and will put emphasis on supporting neighbouring countries, such as the Western Balkans.[59] There are also plans for collaboration with African and Asian countries. So directly, only member states of the EU are involved, but indirectly, other countries will also be affected by this policy. The goals are set in the EU. The 'what, why, who, and where' questions can easily be answered, so the goals are specific.

Measurable

There are a lot of different subgoals in the EGD, seen in Figure 3, and not all of them are equally measurable. The subgoals are visible in Table 1, where a short summary of the goals is given, with specific measurable indicators, if they are present. The goals that are marked green are highly measurable. Red boxes are not measurable at all and orange boxes are in between.

Subgoal	Measurable
Increasing the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050	Greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by 50-55% in 2030, compared to 1990. The EU should be climate neutral by 2050. [60]
Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy	A power sector that is largely based on renewable sources, rapid phasing out of coal and gas. Member States will present energy and climate plans.[61]
Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy	Stimulate climate neutral and circular products. All packaging in the EU market is reusable and recyclable by 2030. Reduce the risk of green washing.[62]
Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way	A 'renovation wave' of public and private buildings, improve energy performance of buildings.[63]
Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility	By 2050, there should be a 90% reduction in transport emissions. Boost multimodal transport; a substantial part of the 75% of

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[59] European Commission, 'The European Green Deal', 20.
[60] Ibidem, 4-5.
[61] Ibidem, 6.
[62] Ibidem, 7-9.
[63] Ibidem, 9-10.

	road transport should shift into rail and waterways. Prices of transport should reflect the environmental impact it has. By 2025, 1 million public recharging and refuelling stations will be needed on European roads.[64]
From 'Farm to Fork': designing a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system	At least 40% of the common agricultural policy's budget and at least 30% of the Maritime Fisheries Fund should contribute to climate action. Reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics.[65]
Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity	Present a Biodiversity Strategy by March 2020. All policies should contribute to preserving and restoring Europe's natural capital. EU's forest areas should improve in both quality and quantity.[66]
A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment	The EU needs to better monitor, report, prevent and remedy pollution from air, water, soil and consumer products. Adopt a zero pollution action plan in 2021. The natural function of ground and surface water must be restored. Present a chemicals strategy.[67]

Table 1: measurability of the goals in the European Green Deal

In many goals responsibility is shifted to Member States, and they, and the EU itself, are required to present plans in 2020 and 2021 to achieve the goals. This shows that all though the subgoals are thought out and detailed, not all of them are highly measurable yet. However, they should be in the future, when either the Member States or the EU present more concrete plans.

Achievable

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[64] Ibidem, 10-11.
[65] Ibidem, 11-12.
[66] Ibidem, 13-14.
[67] Ibidem, 14-15.

Whether the goals in the EGD are achievable is perhaps the hardest question. Something similar certainly has not been done before, so there is no guarantee that it is possible. However, considering that the EU is a large union consisting of varying countries, some with plenty of capital and resources, the EU could be the best candidate for the job. It is the second largest economy in the world, following the United States, with an estimated GDP of more than $15 trillion. On top of that, between 1990 and 2018, the EU's economy grew by 61%, while the greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 23%.[68] This shows that the EU is capable of combining economic growth with reducing emissions. The main challenge here is to speed up that process. Achievability is not only measured by resources or money, there should also be enough support, especially from policymakers, but also from businesses and NGO's. This also relates to the next factor, realistic, and the level of support for the plans will be discussed in the network analysis.

Realistic

Whether the goals are realistic and within reach is up for debate. Especially the goal of being climate neutral by 2050 might not be realistic. The Member States and their representatives have different opinions on this question, this will be featured in the next chapter.

Timely

The goals in the EGD are clearly timebound. The two deadlines mentioned many times are 2030 and 2050. All subgoals work with these deadlines and some have additional deadlines as well, for example for plans that Member States have to come up with.

To conclude, the goals are specific and timely. The measurability differs with each subgoals. Some are completely measurable, meaning it will be simple to determine by 2030 or 2050 whether the goal has been reached. Some of the subgoals are not measurable yet, but for the majority of those, the EU aims to make more detailed plans in the next few years. For some, nations are responsible for providing more detailed and measurable plans in the future. The EGD is probably achievable, considering the resources and capital that are available. Whether or not the goals are realistic is hard to say, but the opinions on this will be analysed in the following chapter.

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[68] Ibidem, 4.

Network analysis

The EGD has been developed by the European Commission, led by Frans Timmermans, Vice President of the European Commission and Executive Vice President of the European Commission in the von der Leyen Commission. He and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission are the initiators of the European Green Deal. After a plan is composed by the Commission, they have to be approved by the Parliament and Council.

The debates show that there is consensus on the fact that something needs to be done about climate change and environmental problems, the debate mainly focusses on how. Prior to the debate on 11 December 2019, there were different opinions circulating about the expected proposal. Based on a report by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) that was published in December 2019, the Greens, the Socialists (S&D) and other leftist parties believed that a 50% emissions cut by 2030 would not be enough to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.[69] The Greens/European Free Alliance (EFA) even pledged a commitment to at least 65% emission cut by 2030. However, this initiative was quickly rejected by most Members of the European Parliament (MEP), mainly members of big parties such as Renew Europe, European People's Party (EPP) and the Conservatives (ECR).[70]

The debate on the EGD in the EP took place on 11 December 2019. After Von der Leyen's introduction, Esther de Lange was the first speaker, on behalf of the EPP. She emphasizes the importance of this deal, stating that their motivation is crystal clear, their moral obligation is to protect this planet. She mentions there should be a focus on four things, research and innovation; leaving nobody behind; consistency, and a strong policy for EU industry and businesses; and international cooperation. Secondly, Iratxe Garcia Perez speaks on behalf of S&D. She also emphasizes the importance of a Green Deal, calling it a paradigm shift. She talks about three pillars that the EGD should be based on, an environmental pillar, a social pillar, and a financial pillar. Again, she puts a strong emphasis on equal opportunities, through a fair tax system and leaving nobody behind. The first speaker that is heavily criticizing the plans is Silvia Sardone, a member of the Identity & Democracy Group (I&D). Besides saying that the MEP's were not given enough time to look at the documents before this debate, she claims that the plans for climate neutrality are pipe dreams. She continues to point out hypocrisies in earlier EU plans to prove that the plans are not achievable. Following Sardone is Ryszard Antoni

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[69] European Environment Agency, *The European Environment – State and Outlook 2020, Knowledge for Transition to a Sustainable Europe* (Luxembourg, 2019), 58-64.

[70] Elena Sánchez Nicolás, 'Green Deal targets pit Left against Right in parliament' *EUobserver,* 10 December 2019, https://euobserver.com/environment/146863.

Legutko, speaking on behalf of the Conservatives (ECR). He is also critical, saying that Member State governments are side-lined. He provides a perspective from Central and Eastern Europe, saying that the goals are not credible and achievable and that they would have dramatic consequences on their economies. He also emphasizes that he finds the plans, especially about gas, confusing.[71]

Jessica Stegrud, Member of the EP as part of the ECR, wrote an article explaining why she opposes the EGD. Her main argument is that the EU is such a small contributor to climate change, that even if the 50-55% emission cut by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050 is achieved, it will not make a difference if other, more polluting countries, do not follow. She argues that it is based on the idea that other countries will follow, which is not a given, and that for this little effect it costs too much money.[72]

Support

Dedicated to supporting climate change action, the European Climate Foundation is an organization at the forefront of a global movement that responds to the climate crisis. They support the climate community in shaping public debate, developing solutions, and activating political engagement. The Foundation employs over 200 people, working on different areas, from sector programmes like transport and energy systems, to cross-cutting platforms and initiatives. These initiatives also include working on the EGD. They aim to accelerate the transition, by translating the goals into concrete EU instruments and promote country policies for Member States to meet the EU's targets. The Foundation is funded exclusively by philanthropic sources that are engaged in climate change, and does not accept funding from government sources. Their funds are not used for political activities and do not support political parties.[73]

Opposition

Opposition against climate change plans is scattered around Europe, in most Member States there are parties that have similar opinions as the ECR and the I&D. However, it is not easy to find an overarching, specifically European organization that supports this view. Conservative European think tanks such as New Direction and the Centre for European Reform are critical

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[71] European Parliament, 'Debate on The European Green Deal', 11 December 2019.

[72] Jessica Stegrud, 'Why I oppose the European Green Deal', *The Parliament Magazine* (version 10 March 2020), https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/why-i-oppose-the-european-green-deal.

[73] European Climate Foundation, 'About' https://europeanclimate.org/the-european-green-deal/#:~:text=Practically%2C%20the%20European%20Green%20Deal,2030%20compared%20to%201990%20levels (20 May 2021).

of climate plans, but focus on the costs versus the effects.[74][75] They do not necessarily oppose the plans or claim that climate change is not a real threat. There is the European Climate Realist Network, a platform where European Climate Realist organizations from different Member States present themselves and can communicate. The organization was founded in 2018 and focusses on climate scepticism. They agree that climate change always occurs and that the global warming of the last decades is not necessarily due to human activity. This organization is small and does not have any immediate links to politicians or political activity. [76]
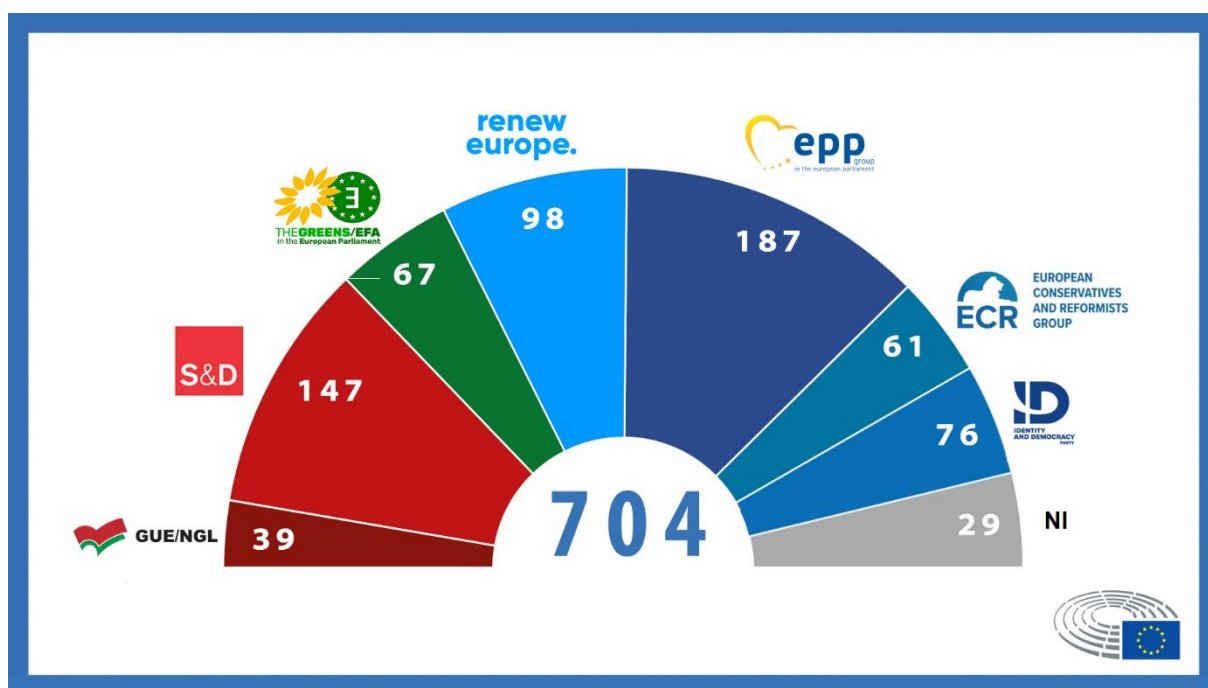

Figure 4: The European Parliament's political groups, European Parliament (2020).

To summarize, the support for the EGD in the European Parliament was and is strong. Every party has its own critiques, based on their values. The more liberal parties demand that it will not take too much from the industry and businesses and that there is a focus on innovations. For more socialist parties, the social and green dimension are very important. The green parties think that there should be even more ambitious climate goals. Harsh critiques and even opposition comes from more conservative and eurosceptical parties. Their main arguments are that the goals are not achievable and not consistent. They fear that the economic and social costs will be too big for the little effect that it will have. As can be seen in Figure 4, the ECR and ID together make up 137 out of 704 MEP's, which is not a large part. This shows that the

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[74] Centre for European Reform, 'About', https://www.cer.eu/about (20 May 2021).
[75] New Direction, 'About', https://newdirection.online/about (20 May 2021).
[76] European Climate Realist Network, 'About', https://ecr.network/contact/ (20 May 2021).

support base in the EP for the EGD was much bigger and stronger than its opposition. It also seems that it was already decided before this debate that the EGD was going to happen, there would only be room for adjustments and compromises. After this debate, the plan was changed to a 50-55% decrease by 2030, instead of 50%. The influence of the European Climate Foundation is quite big, and there is no organization as big or influential on the other side. This does not mean that there is no climate change denial or opposition against the EGD, but it is not organized in Europe.

Conclusion

This case study on the EGD provides insight in the policymaking process in the EU. The EGD is now at the 'policy implementation' phase on the policy cycle. The discourse analysis has shown how the discourse on sustainable development has developed in the EU, eventually leading to and logically followed by the EGD as it was formulated in 2019. The SMART-analysis has also shed light on the formulation phase. On most factors, the goals have a good score. There is room for improvement on the measurability, because not all goals are completely measurable. The support for the plan was big enough, this became apparent in the network analysis. This has probably contributed the most to the approval of the plans, pushing it into the implementation phase. Overall, the EGD is a good example of how the policy cycle works and shows that the policymaking process in the EU runs smoothly. In the coming years the evaluation and perhaps change phases will take place, and hopefully those too will lead to reaching all the goals in the EGD.

No Green New Deal in the United States, what is stopping them?

The Green New Deal (GND) in the United States has been topic of controversy for some years now. In this chapter, the policymaking process with regards to sustainable development in the US will be analysed, using the three variables of this thesis. The GND provides insight in the policymaking process in the US, showing what possible flaws could be. Firstly, a discourse analysis will be conducted, followed by a SMART-analysis and a network analysis.

Discourse analysis

In this paragraph a historical overview will be provided of environmental and climate laws and policies in the US. Which terms have been used and which priorities have been set will give insight on how the discourse on sustainable development has developed. The GND itself will be analysed in a similar manner, but on top of that media sources will also be analysed, to determine how the GND has been defined by the media and what this means for the discourse.

Sustainable development policies

Shortly after taking office, President Bill Clinton formed the Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) in June 1993 to advise him on "bold, new approaches to achieve economic, environmental, and equity goals". The PCSD started to examine the steps necessary to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", as formulated in *Our Common Future.* They established the following ten national goals: health and the environment; economic prosperity; equity; conservation of nature; stewardship; sustainable communities; civic engagement; stabilization of the population; international responsibility; and education.[77] A report from the PCSD from 1997 gives an overview of sustainable development activities that already took place, and strategies for the future. The Council describes that one of their biggest steps was to reach a common understanding about the compatibility of economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity. They mention the business community, NGO's, academic institutions, regional communities and the federal government, and how they have participated in the sustainable development efforts. Many different aspects of sustainable development come forward, such as wildlife conservation and infrastructure, but also recycle management and connecting citizens to implement programs and approaches. The Council concludes that to encourage more

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[77] The President's Council on Sustainable Development, 'Overview' (version 1993), https://clintonwhitehouse2.archives.gov/PCSD/Overview/index.html (12 May 2021).

sustainability efforts, there should be combined leadership from the private sector, NGO's, governments, and citizens. They also believed that there should be a focus for sustainable development in the highest levels of government, and encouraged President Clinton to assign responsibility for sustainable development to an entity within the White House.[78] In the third and final report of the PCSD in 1999, shortly before it was terminated, climate change is included for the first time. There is one chapter that focuses on this new issue, and three chapters that built on previous reports, about environmental management, strategies for sustainable communities, and international leadership.[79]

Environmental and climate policies

With the end of Bill Clinton's presidency, the PCSD also came to an end. However, President Bush shared similar goals. He committed to a comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 18% in 2012. He mentioned the common goal that the US and the world share: to foster economic growth in ways that protect our environment. To achieve this goal, he set two priorities, to clean the air and to address the issue of climate change.[80] The Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for supervising state implementation of federal environmental statutes and for enforcing provisions of the law.[81] It was officially formed in 1970, after President Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA established a broad national framework for protecting the environment. Its basic policy is to assure all branches of government give consideration to the environment before undertaking any major federal action.[82] In the next two years, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Ocean Dumping Act followed. In the 1980's there was a focus on nuclear and toxic waste, with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, a ban on certain pesticides and the discovery of a hole in the ozone layer. The Earth Summit in Rio of 1992 opens the possibility for a new era of serious environmental regulations, coupled with economic growth. Going into the 2000's, there is a growing realization of the dangers of greenhouse gases, which leads to fitting regulations. Over the last decade, the focus has been on clean power and regulations to cut carbon pollution from power plants. A defining moment has been when President Donald Trump decided to withdraw

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[78] PCSD, 'The Road to Sustainable Development: A Snapshot of Activities in the United States' (version March 1997), https://clintonwhitehouse2.archives.gov/PCSD/Publications/Snapshot.html#sustain (12 May 2021).

[79] John C. Dernbach, 'Learning from the President's Council on Sustainable Development: The Need for a Real National Strategy' *Envtl. L. Rep. News & Analysis* 32 (2002) 6, 10648 – 10666, 10656 – 10657.

[80] The White House, President George W. Bush, 'Council on Environmental Quality', https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/ceq/clean-energy.html (12 May 2021).

[81] Norman Vig et al., *Green Giants?: Environmental Policies of the United States and the European Union* (Cambridge, 2004), 139.

[82] Environmental Protection Agency, 'Summary of the National Environmental Policy Act' https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act (18 April 2021).

from the Paris Climate Accord in 2017, stating that compliance with the terms of agreement could undermine US competitiveness. In four years under the Trump administration, there is little EPA activity, especially on climate change. In March 2021, the EPA has, for the first time in four years, a website providing the public information about climate change and climate solutions. Besides the EPA, there are more departments that formulate regulations regarding sustainable development. An important example is the Department of Agriculture, but also the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor.

Green New Deal

The GND addresses multiple environmental topics, including climate change, clean energy, food chains, hazardous waste, and transportation and infrastructure. However, there is a focus on climate change. The first sentences of the GND describe that human activity is the dominant cause for climate change, and problems that climate change brings. Secondly, related crises are mentioned, which are of an economic and social nature.[83] This shows there is a strong focus in the GND on climate change action and on elevating the economy to unprecedented levels by creating jobs and focusing on vulnerable communities. In (social) media and many mainstream news outlets, the GND has been described mostly as a climate proposal, focusing on the goal of net-zero emissions in 2030, and the effects that would have on communities that depend on fossil fuel industries. There has also been a focus on the debate between Republicans and Democrats on this topic, and how each candidate's opinion on the GND would affect their positions in the election of November 2020. Meanwhile, the actual and basic contents and goals of the GND have not been communicated to the public clearly. Polls show that the general idea is quite popular among the American people, but a poll by the Washington Post and the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that many Americans simply do not enough about the GND to form an opinion.[84]

In the 1990's, first plans concerning sustainable development were formed under President Bill Clinton. In the decades that followed, the definition of the term grew and more issues were added on the agenda. However, each new President developed their own plans and approaches, which leads to an inconsistent timeline. Under Donald Trump, there was no mention of sustainable development and certainly not of climate change, as he openly debates that issue. Federally, there is no department that focusses on sustainable development as a

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[83] United States 116th Congress, 'Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal', H. Resolution 109, 7 February 2019.

[84] The Washington Post, 'Americans like Green New Deal, but they reject paying trillions to reach them', (version 27 November 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/11/27/americans-like-green-new-deals-goals-they-reject-paying-trillions-reach-them/ (8 May 2021).

whole. In (social) media, the GND is presented mostly as a climate action plan, when it is much more than that.

SMART-analysis

To evaluate the goals in the GND, a SMART-analysis will be conducted. When the GND is mentioned, it refers to the Green New Deal Resolution, released by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Edward Markey on February 7, 2019 (House Resolution 109). This chapter determines whether the goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

Specific

The first question to answer is what the goal(s) want to accomplish. It is an ambitious plan to reverse climate change by creating millions of wage jobs in new green industries and building new infrastructure. They want to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, create high-wage jobs and ensure economic prosperity and security, invest in infrastructure and industry, and secure for all people in the US clean water and air; healthy food; climate and community resiliency; access to nature; and a sustainable environment. Lastly it aims to promote justice by stopping oppression of vulnerable communities, ranging from indigenous people and migrant communities, to women and low-income workers. Early paragraphs of the resolution make clear why it is important that these goals are set. It explains that, according to the 2018 report by the IPCC, human activity is the dominant cause of climate change, that sea levels are rising, and that there is an increase in wildfires, droughts, severe storms and extreme weather conditions. Global warming at or above 2 degrees Celsius will also cause mass migration, $500.000.000.000 loss in annual economic output for the US, twice as much forest area in the US getting burned, a loss of more than 99% of Earth's coral reefs, more than 350.000.000 people exposed globally to deadly heat stress, and a risk of $1.000.000.000.000 damage to public infrastructure and real estate in the US. The US has emitted an excessive amount of global greenhouse gas emissions, being responsible for 20% of global emissions in 2014.[85] This, and the fact that the US has a high technological capacity, is why they claim that the US must take a leading role in reducing emissions. There is also an economic crisis, with hourly wages stagnating since the 1970's, great income inequalities, and an erosion of the earning and bargaining power of workers. Thirdly, the social injustice in the US is mentioned as driving factor, saying that many communities have been oppressed. The next question is who is involved in the plans. The resolution states that Federal Government should be responsible for

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[85] Green New Deal, H. Res. 109, 2 – 3.

the GND. Further involved are State and local government agencies, but also businesses, labor unions, worker cooperatives, civil society groups and academia in the US. There is no mention of collaboration with other countries, only the promotion of international exchange of technology, expertise, products and funding, to help other countries achieve a GND. The GND is set in the US. To conclude, the goals in the GND are quite specific.

Measurable

The next indicator is whether goals in the GND are measurable. The GND consists of multiple smaller goals, some more measurable than others. The five main goals that are set out in the *Specific* paragraph are explained in more detail further along in the GND. Those five goals should be accomplished within 10 years, so before 2030. In Table 2, the goals are explained shortly, accompanied by specific measurable indicators, if present. Goals that are marked green are highly measurable, goals marked red are not measurable at all. Orange boxes are in between.

Subgoal	Measurable
Climate change action	To achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in 10 years. Building resilience against climate change-related disasters by leveraging funding and providing investments.[86]
Repairing and upgrading the infrastructure	Eliminating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as much as technologically feasible, guaranteeing universal access to clean water, reducing the risks posed by climate impacts, and ensuring that any infrastructure bill considered by Congress addresses climate change.[87]
Clean, renewable energy	Meeting 100% of the power demand in the US through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources. This is done by rapidly expanding and upgrading renewable power sources and by deploying new capacity. Building and upgrading to energy-

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[86] Green New Deal, H. Res. 109, 3, 7.
[87] Green New Deal, H. Res. 109., 7.

	efficient, distributed and "smart" power-grids, and ensuring affordable access to electricity.[88]
Sustainable building	Upgrading all existing buildings and building new buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, water efficiency, safety, affordability, comfort, and durability.[89]
Clean manufacturing	Massive growth in clean manufacturing, removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing and industry as much as technologically feasible. Expanding renewable energy manufacturing and investing in existing manufacturing and industry.[90]
Healthy and environmentally-friendly food system	Working with farmers and ranchers to remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as technologically feasible.[91]
Transportation systems	Remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as much as technologically feasible. Through investment in zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing; clean, affordable, and accessible public transit; and high-speed rail.[92]
Atmosphere	Removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and reducing pollution by restoring natural ecosystems through proven

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[88] Ibidem, 7.
[89] Ibidem, 8.
[90] Ibidem, 8.
[91] Ibidem, 8 – 9.
[92] Green New Deal, H. Res. 109, 9.

	low-tech solutions, such as land preservation and afforestation.[93]
Ecosystems and biodiversity	Restoring and protecting threatened, endangered, and fragile ecosystems through locally appropriate and science-based projects that enhance biodiversity and support climate resiliency.[94]
Hazardous waste	Cleaning up existing hazardous waste and abandoned sites, ensuring economic development and sustainability on those sites.[95]
Others	Identifying other emission and pollution sources and creating solutions to remove them. Promoting the international exchange of technology, expertise, products, funding and services to make the US the international leader on climate action and to help other countries achieve a Green New Deal.[96]

Table 2: measurability of the goals in the Green New Deal

As seen in Table 2, goals in the GND do not score high on being measurable. The only measurable goal is to be climate neutral in 2030, but all other goals are vague and no exact numbers are mentioned. The deadline to reach these goals is in 10 years, but there are little to no indicators presented to check if they are accomplished by that time.

Achievable and realistic

For the US the same argument holds as for the EU, it is hard to determine whether it is achievable, because it has never been done before. With regards to resources, the US is the world's leading economy, with a GDP of almost $21 trillion.[97] Spending more on science research and development than any other country in 2017, the US is also a world's leader in

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[93] Ibidem, 9.
[94] Ibidem, 9 – 10.
[95] Ibidem, 10.
[96] Ibidem, 10.
[97] The World Bank, 'GDP (current US$) – United States', https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=US.

science.[98] Home to NASA, who are experts at climate and Earth science, they should be up for this task. However, as was mentioned earlier, achievability is also measured by the amount of support for the plans. This also holds for being realistic, there are people who say that the timeframe of 10 years is not enough to reach net-zero emissions, but there are also people who say that we have no choice, that it has to be this fast. This will be discussed in detail in the network analysis.

Timely

On page 6 of the GND it is mentioned that the goals should be achieved through a 10-year national mobilization. All goals should therefore be accomplished by 2030, there are no deadlines for subgoals before that.

To conclude, the goals in the GND are specific and timely. The main goal, to reach net-zero emissions by 2030, is completely measurable. Most of the other goals are not measurable at all, or to some extent. For example, one of the goals says 'upgrading buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency', this gives no number that must be reached by a certain time. Whether they are achievable and realistic is hard to say at this point, because it has never been done before. The support base for the plan plays a big role in these factors, which will be analysed in the next paragraph.

Network analysis

In this paragraph it will be examined who the important actors are in this proposal and what their influence is. The resolution for the GND was introduced by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in February 2019. In March 2019 it was defeated by the Senate in a 0-57 vote, with 43 Democrats voting present. Democrats called it a 'sham vote', saying that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell forced the vote, to put the Democrats up for re-election and running for president in 2020 in a tough spot. Due to the majority of Republicans in the Senate at that time, Democrats knew it was doomed to fail. Senator Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said that it was a trick by Republicans, because Democrats were not going to stand for a bill of which they know the other side is all voting no on.[99] Officially, there were no senators in favour

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[98] Ashley Strickland, 'The US was once the uncontested world leader in science and engineering. That's changed, according to a federal report' (version 17 January 2020), https://edition.cnn.com/2020/01/17/world/science-engineering-downfall-us-scn-trnd/index.html (12 May 2021).

[99] Rebecca Shabad and Dartunorro Clark, 'Senate fails to advance Green New Deal as Democrats protest McConnell 'sham vote'' *NBC News* (version 26 March 2019), https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/senate-fails-advance-green-new-deal-democrats-protest-mcconnell-sham-n987506 (29 March 2021).

of this bill. However, there are strong supporters and opponents of this plan, which will set out in the next paragraphs.

Supporters

The most important player in the GND is Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, who introduced the resolution with Senator Ed Markey, both Democrats. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez drew recognition after winning the Democratic Party's election for New Yorks district in 2018. She is the youngest woman ever to serve in US Congress and the youngest member of the 116th Congress. She supports progressive ideas including public healthcare and tuition-free public college. In 2018, a youth activist group called the Sunrise Movement laid out a strategy and held a sit-in outside the office of Nancy Pelosi to demand action on climate change. Ocasio-Cortez joined the protesters and set the groundwork for what ultimately became the resolution. The Sunrise Movement is a non-profit political action organization focused on stopping climate change and creating millions of good jobs in the process. Their goals are to make climate change an urgent priority across America, end the corrupting influence of the fossil fuel industry on politics, and elect leaders who stand up for the health and wellbeing of all people.[100] Members unite to educate citizens and organize campaigns for candidate leaders that support the movement and demonstrations against representatives that do not. There is no formal membership, but the number of activists is estimated around 80.000 who have participated in some way. They currently have almost 280 thousand followers on Twitter.

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[100] Sunrise Movement, 'Who We Are', https://www.sunrisemovement.org/about/?ms=AboutTheSunriseMovement (12 April 2021).

Sunrise Movement
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Audrey Denney
Ayanna Pressley
Beth Doglio
Cathy Kunkel
Cori Bush
Edward Markey
Ilhan Omar
Jamaal Bowman
Jon Hoadley
Julie Oliver
Marie Newman
Marquita Bradshaw
Mike Levin
Mike Siegel
Mondaire Jones
Paula Jean Swearengin
Qasim Rashid
Rashida Tlaib

Table 3: endorsement of the Sunrise Movement

Table 3 shows a list of politicians that the Sunrise Movement endorsed in 2020. They support leaders who, when elected, can make significant changes and breaks with the status quo in their district. Of all politicians on this list, ten are currently in office. Names marked in red and orange lost the general elections in November 2020, the difference being that the orange names have been in office before last elections, the red names have not. In March 2019 there was a total of 12 Senators and 90 Representatives that supported the GND. This shows that about 10% of the Senate and about 20% of the House of Representatives support the GND.[101]

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[101] Michael Palicz and Brenna Reach, 'Here's Every Democrat Who Supports Ocasio-Cortez's Crazy "Green New Deal"', *Americans for Tax Reform* (version 14 March 2019), https://www.atr.org/here-s-every-democrat-who-supports-ocasio-cortez-s-crazy-green-new-deal (20 April 2021).

Opposers

All Republicans in the Senate voted against the proposal. Comments made by Republicans often say the GND would crush rural and industrial communities, killing of entire domestic industries and winding down millions of jobs. They say it will blow a hole in the strong, healthy and growing economy in the US. Some Republicans do not believe global warming is real, led by Donald Trump, who confirmed the exit of the US from the Paris climate agreement. This was only one policy change among more than 90 others aimed at rolling back environmental regulations during his administration. There are over 130 members of Congress, before the 2020 election, who have doubted or denied human-caused climate change.[102] This means that in the United States Congress in 2019, 24% had expressed doubt or had denied climate change.

In the past, fossil fuel businesses have donated huge amounts of money to research that would support climate change denial. An organization that plays a big role in the rejecting the scientific consensus on climate change is The Heritage Foundation, which has been funded by ExxonMobil. The Heritage Foundation is a conservative think tank based in Washington, that advocates for individual liberty, limited government, free enterprise, traditional American values, and a strong national defence.[103] It is considered one of the most influential conservative public policy organizations in the US. Over the period of 1998-2005 ExxonMobil donated $460.000 to the Heritage Foundation, among many other organizations.[104] The Heritage Foundation works in three steps. Firstly, they provide research that they claim is timely and accurate on key policy issues. Then, they market their findings to primary audiences, and lastly pursue conservative policies and provide proven solutions. This method is coherent with Oreskes's argument about how climate change deniers use science to sow doubt. The Heritage Foundation has more than 620 thousand Twitter followers and over 500.000 members, who provide the financial support they rely on, as they take no money from the government.[105] Individuals of the organization have also donated money to politicians. An organization cannot contribute to candidates or party committees itself, so the money came from the organization's individual members, employees or owners. Table 4 shows the candidates that have received a considerable amount of money.[106]

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[102] Business Insider, 'These are the 130 current members of Congress who have doubted or denied climate change' (version 29 April 2019), https://www.businessinsider.com/climate-change-and-republicans-congress-global-warming-2019-2?international=true&r=US&IR=T (12 April 2021).
[103] The Heritage Foundation, 'About Heritage', https://www.heritage.org/about-heritage/mission (12 April 2021).
[104] James Lawrence Powell, *The Inquisition of Climate Science* (Columbia, 2011), 110-111.
[105] The Heritage Foundation, 'About Heritage'.
[106] Open Secrets, Center for Responsive Politics, 'Heritage Foundation', https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/heritage-foundation/recipients?id=D000034435 (20 April 2021).

The Heritage Foundation
Donald Trump
Kelly Loeffler
Chip Roy
Daniel Gade
David Perdue
Lindsey Graham
Mitch McConnell
Steve Scalise
Steven Daines
John James
Lauren Witzke
David Madison Cawthorn
Mark Meadows
Susan M Collins

Table 4: endorsement of the Heritage Foundation

The politicians marked in green have expressed support for some form of environmental policy. Marked in red are politicians that have not spoken out explicitly about the subject, the black names are politicians that have expressed doubt or disbelief in human-made climate change.

The network analysis has a few outcomes. First of all, support for the GND in Congress was minimal, with only 10% of the Senate and 20% of the House of Representatives supporting it. On top of that, 24% of the 116th US Congress had publicly doubted or denied climate change. Many Democrats had expressed concern for this phenomenon, also naming this as a reason for voting 'present' when the bill was proposed. They say there should be discussion first about climate change denial, to get that out of the way. Two organizations were examined, the Sunrise Movement and The Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Foundation is a much bigger and older organization, that focuses on funding research that will support climate change denial and on pushing policies to match. The Heritage Foundation has been described as "the most effective media operation in American politics" and they have had considerable influence over Republican politicians.[107] The Sunrise Movement is relatively new and does not generate any

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[107] Carl Deal, *The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations* (Emeryville, 1993).

income and focuses on demonstrating and supporting leaders that fit their cause. To conclude, the influence of conservative think tanks is still very strong in politics, mostly through funding, and research. The environmental movement is rather new and is fighting to win over more and more people and politicians. At this point, the conservatives and their climate change doubt and denial is still strong, but support for environmental policies and power of movements like the Sunrise Movement are growing.

Conclusion

In the US, the policy process on the GND has stopped at the 'policy legitimation' phase. The plan has not been accepted by the Senate and has therefore been shelved. The discourse on sustainable development has contributed to the formulation of the GND and it is not likely it has had a major impact on its failure. The formulation of the goals has also been analysed by the SMART-analysis, which is more likely to have contributed to the dismissal of the Bill. This plan would cost a lot of money and would cause such fundamental change, it would not get accepted unless the goals are very well formulated. In this case, most goals are not very detailed and not measurable, which makes it less realistic to some people. This clearly causes resistance, because an argument against it that is often mentioned is that it is not possible to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. The network analysis shows how and where the plan was stopped. The influence of conservative politicians and organizations was too big at the time to get the Bill passed. Generally speaking, it could be said that in the US, the policy cycle is heavily determined by the political climate at that time. On many issues, Republicans and Democrats are diametrically opposed, which means that whoever has the majority in Senate has the upper hand.

Comparing the European Union and the United States

In previous chapters, the sustainability policy of the European Union and the United States were analysed, based on three variables. Table 5 shows an overview of similarities and differences in all three variables. They will be explained in more detail in the next paragraphs.

	EU	US
Discourse analysis	Policy since the 1990's, based on Brundtland. Centred around climate change action, also includes other areas of sustainable development.	Policy since the 1990's, based on Brundtland, stagnated after the Presidency of Bill Clinton. Described and known in (social) media a climate change plan.
SMART-analysis	Specific and timely. Majority of goals are measurable. Achievable and realistic is hard to say.	Specific and timely. Most goals are not measurable. Achievable and realistic hard to say.
Network analysis	Growing polarization between left and right. The influence of the opposers is not big.	Growing polarization between left and right. Influence of the climate change denial industry is big.

Table 5: comparison between the EU and the US

Discourse analysis

The discourses have developed quite similarly. Naturally, both were influenced by the global discourse, and after the Brundtland report, policy plans on sustainable development arose in both the EU and the US. This term was vague in the beginning, but began to take shape in the years that followed. President Bill Clinton formed the PCSD to advise him on the subject. In both cases the definition of sustainable development grew more inclusive over time, and more issues were added on the agendas. A difference is with each new President in the US, new policy plans were formed. Donald Trump's presidency has made a substantial hole in this process, especially by choosing to withdraw from the Paris agreement. In the EU, the European Commission has always been responsible for coming up with these plans and proposals, so there is clear timeline in which each new plan follows logically from the previous one, eventually leading to the EGD. In the US, this process is not as linear, so the GND may seem less of a logical outcome.

When it comes to the discourse of the Deals themselves, there is also a slight difference. In both cases, there is a strong emphasis on climate action, when the plans are about more than that. In

the US, this focus is stronger. Not only in the media is this emphasis present, in the GND, the subgoals seem to be not as detailed and thought out as the main goal, to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. To conclude, the discourse in the EU has not developed very differently than in the US, but there has been more consistency in the EU. The current discourse on both Deals also differs a bit.

SMART-analysis

The goals of both the EGD and the GND are specific and timely. With regards to being achievable and realistic, they are also similar. It is hard to determine whether the goals are achievable and realistic. Both should have enough resources and money available, because they are part of the world's biggest economic superpowers. This does not necessarily mean the goals are realistic, which is also one of the most important arguments that opponents pose. Especially in the US, the deadline of 2030 is too soon according to many, which would make the plan unrealistic and unachievable. That the US has a deadline of 2030 instead of 2050 makes the plan more ambitious, but also more receptive for criticism. The biggest difference is visible in their measurability. There are some goals in the EGD that are completely measurable, and for the ones that are not, there is a plan to make them measurable in the future. Member states are expected to form plans for them in the next few years. In contrast, most of the GND goals are not measurable at all. The only clear one is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030, but all other goals remain quite vague. An example is "working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers … to remove pollution and greenhouse gases from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible".[108] When a goals is formulated like this, there is no way of telling whether the goal has been reached when it is 2030. To compare, a similar goal in the EGD is formulated as a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050. The result of this difference is that when it is 2030 or 2050, it is possible to determine whether the goals in the EU are met, but in the US it is not. The EGD is therefore more SMART than the GND, which means the goals in the GND are to some extent of less quality.

Network analysis

The politicians involved in the decision-making process in both the EU and the US were examined. The network analysis showed there is a big difference between the EU and the US when it comes to opinions of the politicians involved and organizations that have influence in this field. The debate in the US is highly influenced by the debate on whether man-made climate change is real. Climate scepticism is visible and frequent in Congress, with many Senators and

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[108] Green New Deal, H. Resolution 109, 2019, 8.

Representatives expressing their doubt, which is not beneficial for the passing of the GND bill. In the EU, the debate was more centred around the details of the plan, whether less developed countries would be disadvantaged, whether the costs would weigh up to the effects, and whether it was realistic. But in the US there is still a debate going on about man-made climate change, that is not very present in the EU. This phenomenon is enforced by organizations like the Heritage Foundation, a think tank with enormous amounts of influence, both on the public opinion and on political activities. On the other hand, climate action organizations such as the Sunrise Movement, are more focused on demonstrating and trying to elect certain leaders. They do not have the same influence as the Heritage Foundation. In the EU, this is different. Critiques on the plan in the European Parliament were mostly focused on financials, and whether developing countries would not suffer too much from the measures. Proper climate change denial is not that evident in these EU organs, and mostly exists separately in Member States. There is no European overarching organization that expresses these concerns that has real influence.

To summarize, the factors that could explain the success in the EU and the failure in the US are the measurability of the formulated goals and the presence or absence of an influential climate change denial industry. This thesis shows that formulation of goals is especially important for creating a support base. The two factors that are mentioned are linked, one of the reasons why opposers are against the GND is that they claim that the goals are not realistic and not formulated well enough. As the book by Oreskes explained, the climate change industry is using similar tactics as the tobacco industry in the 20th century. Conservative think tanks that benefit from, in this case, the fossil fuel industry, use science to sow doubt among people. Politicians that also benefit from the same industry use those so-called scientific researches to integrate these opinions in politics and stop progressive plans from happening. In the historiography the growing polarization between Republicans and Democrats was discussed. The results of this thesis are consistent with this idea, as it showed that polarization between the Left and the Right is a big factor in this debate. This topic is a perfect example of the effect of having a two-party system where the two parties are growing further apart. Supporting sustainable development plans is typically considered as left-wing, which immediately results in low support among Republicans. In a two-party system, a plan is quickly shut down if one of two parties is against it. This shows that it would be beneficial for US politics if Republicans and Democrats moved closer to the centre and to each other.

On the policy cycle, the EU is currently at the 'policy implementation' phase, whereas the US has not passed the 'policy legitimation' phase. They either have to go back to the

formulation phase and make changes there, or the amount of support for the plan has to change, to eventually pass the legitimation phase and have the plans implemented. The Republicans and Democrats are often polar opposites, which means that Bills only get passed if the supporting party has a majority in the Senate. Considering that the Democrats were not the majority party in 2019, but have a majority in the 117th Congress, the newly presented GND has a bigger chance of passing in 2021. The Presidency of Joe Biden gives more hope, but it also shows that a new president could reverse everything again.

The indicators that were different in the EU than in the US, that explain the different outcome, are the formulation of the goals and the existing network. These results can also explain or predict outcomes in other cases. An example could be Australia, where the number of climate change deniers is more than double than the global average, according to a survey.[109] A country or group of countries where there is a strong support base could be the perfect base for an ambitious sustainable development plan, as long as it is well though out and formulated in detail.

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[109] The Conversation, 'The number of climate change deniers in Australia is more than double than the global average, new survey finds' (version 16 June 2020), https://theconversation.com/the-number-of-climate-deniers-in-australia-is-more-than-double-the-global-average-new-survey-finds-140450 (18 June 2021).

Conclusion

After presenting the theoretical framework and methods, this thesis started with a description of the political background of the EU and the US. Then, an analysis of the policymaking process surrounding the EGD took place, followed by a similar analysis of the US. The comparison showed similarities and differences present between the two cases, these outcomes answer the sub-questions. The discourse analyses showed that the development of the discourse on sustainable development is similar in both cases. The most important difference is that the term has been much more extensive for a longer period of time in the EU than it has been in the US. There is a strong focus on climate change action in (social) media on the GND, as if that is all that it is. The SMART-analyses showed that the goals in the GND are less measurable than those in the EGD. Finally, the most important difference in the network analysis is that there is much more climate change denial and doubt in the US than in the EU.

These outcomes can answer the main research question: why could the European Union implement its Green Deal, while the United States met so much opposition and how was this influenced by the policy processes of the Green New Deal and the Green Deal from the 1990's until now? Development of the discourse from the 1990's until now is similar in the US and the EU. In the US, the process was a bit less linear, because with every new President, the policies changed a little bit, whereas in the EU, the European Commission has been responsible for publishing these plans the entire time. The formulation of the plans differs in the sense that the EGD is more extensive and more detailed. Critics of the GND often say the plans are not realistic and not achievable, this could be due to the fact that the goals are not as thought out and detailed as they should be. Lastly, probably the biggest reason why the GND did not get approved in the US, is the support in politics. There are many conservative Members of Congress who have a big influence on the outcome, who are against these plans. The Heritage Foundation shows how many people in the US share these thoughts and how influential the conservative idea is. The debate surrounding climate change also plays a big role. The discourse analysis has shown that the GND is mostly known for being a climate action plan, which opens up space for discussion. Perhaps if there was a bigger focus on other aspects of the Deal, like nature preservation and social issues, more people would agree on it.

There was a limited time scope for this thesis, which means there are many stones unturned. For each variable analysed in this research, more extensive research could be done. The network analyses in this thesis were done within a limited time frame, but there are possibilities for further research to expand on this and form a bigger network analysis to map

out all players involved in this debate. This thesis was started in December and does not take into account new developments that have occurred this spring. In April 2021, the GND has been relaunched. Newly elected President Joe Biden has announced in January that the US would re-join the 2015 Paris Agreement, and has promised to put the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This is a later deadline than the GND, so it is not certain he will support the plan. To reach the goals in the Paris Agreement, slow down global warming and preserve and restore biodiversity on this earth, these big and ambitious plans need to get implemented in the next few years. There is a lot more research that can be done on this topic, which will provide more insight in what makes a successful ground for ambitious sustainable development plans. Hopefully the European Green Deal will inspire others to follow.

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