

Energy policy-making in the shadow of an economic crisis

An application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Theory

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Abstract

When concepts change in order to combat submerging problems on a global level, conclusively, the interpretation of these concepts will change as well. Green economy is replacing Sustainable Development as the basis for environmental discussions, with a focus shift between concepts that depicts an environmental approach more inclined towards economic growth and development, rather than environmental protection and sustainability. The principal interest of this study lies in detecting the same type of priorities, as the concepts are put into practice through national policies.

Using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis as the underlying theory and method for analysis, this thesis will search for similarities between concept and policy, focusing on energy policy and its environmental aspects as adaptations of the leading environmental discourse at the time that the policies were made.

The analysis of two distinct electoral party programs of Partido Popular, the now ruling party in Spain, will provide an insight in how a political party would interpret such a shift in priorities. Since the 2011 party program was produced for the election that put Partido Popular into power it is of special interest, as the policies within it are the ones that serve as the foundation of the national policies formed today.

Key words: Sustainable Development, Green Economy, Energy Policy, Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse Shift

Words: 9802

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1 Introduction

*“You can laugh and take it as a joke if you wanna’ [sic]
But it don’t [sic] rain a full week some summers
And it’s about to get real wild in the half
You will be buying Evian just to take a /.../bath
Head is acting wild, sipping poor, puffing dank
Competing with the next man, for higher playing rank”*
(Mos Def – New World Water)

The idea of the tragedy of the commons shows us that the self-interest driven strive for an increase of personal benefits leads to the imminent depletion of the common resources of our planet. Environmental issues are a fact and their frequent transboundary nature as well. Climate change, ozone reduction and marine pollution are all examples of how all of us are affected by the effects of the unsustainable consumption of our common goods. (Carter 2001:185)

In times when the severe implications of our past and current environmental policies show us that we are in a more dire need of sustainable energy consumption than ever. The actions of one state is intertwined with the faiths of others, making the political decisions made by the single state a matter that is as important to other states as to themselves. If one state chooses to follow a line of policy that changes a currently green way of thinking, for one more oriented towards economic growth, we might find ourselves the spectators of a widespread phenomenon, carried out through a chain reaction.

As the world faces one of the worst financial crises of the last century, countries in a more disadvantaged situation than others have been given financial models and policy instruments to be able to turn the twist of faith.

The Green Economy¹, or the Global Green New Deal, came as an adaption of earlier concepts to combat the, still ongoing, crisis of 2008/2009 in a *green way*. Across Europe we see a lot of new policies that stem from this concept. However, while these policies come dressed in the uniform of well meaning, one cannot help to wonder how the results of the policies seem to take a long step away from what earlier concepts promised. Some would even like to consider them a sort of greener rebranding of more neo-liberal ideals for the global economy, going from earlier concepts to newer, rebranding and dressing them in a “neo-liberal economy

¹ As defined by (UNEP 2011):
<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/AboutGEI/WhatIsGEI/tabid/29784/Default.aspx> (Green Economy Initiative 2013) 30th of December 2013

cloak”, with an evident focus on production/manufacturing, financial services and public procurement (Bauer et al. 2012).

In Spain, the governing party since the government shift in 2011, *Partido Popular*, could be seen as a keen adaptor of policies mirroring the Green Economy concept but as disharmony in the economy makes more expensive green energy production a less viable choice, the idea of a sustainable approach to energy seems distant.

Language, and the interpretation of it, is the storyline of this thesis. As concepts change, so does the language and discourse produced by them. The effect that language has on the interpretation that society makes of a concept is crucial in understanding the factors that move behind discourse. In line with this reasoning Wodak & Meyer presents the Foucaultian idea that, discourse is, in a complex way, determined by society. (2009:17)

1.1 Problem definition

The main focus of this study will revolve around environmental sustainability and how environmental politics can be affected by factors not directly related to the environment, mainly the ongoing economic crisis. With ever-changing conditions for creating a fully sustainable energy production every negative turn is a huge setback, it is of the essence to put focus into meticulously studying each of these cases to fully determine the underlying factors behind changes in policy, both on national and international levels.

I wish to take an in-depth look at the change of the energy policy in the Spanish environmental politics, taking into mind the development of a new surge of taxations or tolls on green energy, specifically on smaller, often private, solar energy producers; as portrayed by BBC in the article *Spain’s sunshine toll: Row over proposed solar tax* (Galanova 2013). With the assumption that these new turns in policy is a response to the financial crisis as an interpretation of the Green Economy concept, this study will use a political discourse analysis approach to Norman Faircough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) as the underlying theory and method for the research. The focus will lie on the now ruling party; *Partido Popular* (PP), and their policies for renewable energy.

Seeing how many diverse factors have become evident in Spanish politics over the last few years, hypothetical explanations to the policy changes are many and it may prove hard to determine or exclude any of them. Spain’s heavily induced policy-packages, have been implemented and the expected short term return (in macroeconomic terms) could be considered a neo-liberal solution to the financial crisis to return to “business as usual” (Fairclough 2013:189).

- Can an eventual shift in Partido Popular energy policy be linked to the interpretation of concepts, going from Sustainable Development to Green Economy?

The goal will be to try to identify a discourse shift, through the neo-liberal side of interest. This will be done by comparing how the discourse looked just prior to the change of government from left-wing to right-wing in 2011 with that from the election of 2008. By using this hypothetical example of discourse shift in energy policy, as a qualitative case study, this thesis aims to test Fairclough's CDA and use it as an explanatory model to the policy shifts adapted by the Spanish government, putting it into context with the differences in concepts between Sustainable Development and Green Economy as identified in the article *History repeating? Green Economy and the Global South*. (Bauer et al. 2012)

The principle interest of the study lies in discovering if a country would set aside a sustainable approach to energy production in the face of political difficulties, as in context to not doing so. By using the discourse as a base for analysis the thesis claim to label the new concept as a neo-liberal approach to "fix" the financial crisis, criticizing it through the theoretical approach of CDA, together with other noted work in the social-green genre, and at the same time using the case study as a meaning of testing the validity and reliability of the methodology in Fairclough's CDA, leading to a sub-question that can further evolve the intention of this thesis:

- *In what way can Fairclough's CDA contribute to the analysis of environmental discourse?*

Many examples exist of contrary approaches, to that of Spain's, in policy-making, e.g. Sweden's choice of developing hydroelectric production in time of dire economic conditions during the first half of the 20th century, reaching a 95% peak in representation of hydroelectrically produced electricity out of all electricity produced in Sweden in 1965 (Statistiska Centralbyrån 2009:168). However, this thesis will not take the form of a multiple case study but will, as earlier mentioned, instead focus on the case of Spanish policy and the implications that the discourse in concepts like Sustainable Development and Green Economy have had on the evolution of *Partido Popular's* approach to renewable energies by looking for a discourse shift in the party's energy policy.

Since the aim of this study is to uncover some of the hidden motives and meaning in the shift of discourse in energy policy the focus must lie on the discourse itself. The goal will be to determine what the leading arguments in the discourse of the concepts are and then use the PP produced discourse as units of analysis. Hence, the comparative nature of the study lies not in the comparison of similar cases in general but instead comparison will be made between the conceptual framework of the development concepts and their impact on discourse.

The theoretical approach used will rely on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, including an adaption of neo-Marxist critique against political economies. Through this theoretical background the thesis *hypothesis* is determined, in other words, that *environmental policy-making in the wake of the current financial crisis is often based on a neo-liberal concept that puts economy before environment*.

1.2 Thesis disposition

The first part of this thesis has provided the reader with a brief introduction on the thesis topic and a definition of the problem, together with a main research question followed by additional sub-topics of interest to this study. In the next chapter, the theoretical and methodological framework that will compose the basis of analysis for the thesis is presented. Going from an introduction of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), including an account of some of the theoretical background of discourse analysis, and continuing with a description of the analytical framework; the goal is to shed a light on the often interlaced nature of theory and method within discursive analysis.

In the thesis' third chapter the empiric material used to conduct the research is disclosed, starting with an account for the concepts Sustainable Development and Green Economy, including a presentation of the differences between them, and followed by the material that will be analyzed in the following section.

Based on the analytical framework from Norman Fairclough's CDA approach the next section analyzes two consecutive electoral party programs from the Spanish ruling party Partido Popular. The main component of this analysis is a text analysis, but true to the nature of Fairclough's analytical framework, this analysis is incorporated in a broader one. Also looking into the discursive and social practices in which the text was produced, these additional dimensions give the analysis further depth.

The last and concluding chapter of the thesis presents the results and further articulates the analysis from the previous chapter, connecting it with theory and concepts. Furthermore, the chapter provides explanations to some of the limitations that the research has been confronted with as well as providing the reader with answers to the research questions initially formulated in the opening chapter of the thesis.

2 Critical Discourse Analysis

By incorporating both the methodological and the theoretical perspective of this essay under one chapter, I wish to gain the advantage of certain coincidence as discourse analysis is, in itself, an integration of method and theory. Furthermore, separating the two would amount for superfluous work that most likely would prove illogical. The chapter will take us through the founding ideas of discourse analysis and to the actual application and method aimed to be used in this essay; from social constructionism to critical discourse analysis. Moreover, the chapter will include an account for the limitations of the theoretical and methodological compounds of this discourse analysis.

2.1 Theoretical concepts

It starts from social scientific questions, seeking to rework them as questions partly about discourse/.../. It is used in conjunction with other methods, such as ethnography and political economy, to address such social themes. It aims to show specifically how discourse/.../figures in social process, social change, in dialectical relations with other elements of the social. It is critical in the sense that it aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social life, including power/domination, and in ideology; and point to possibilities for change. It works in a “transdisciplinary” not just “interdisciplinary” (or even “postdisciplinary”) way: it aims to develop theoretically and methodologically in dialogue with other areas of social theory and research. (Fairclough 2010:418)

Although the framework for this thesis will be based upon Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, the theoretical background for this framework is deeply rooted in social constructionism and deliberative democracy and scholars such as Foucault and Habermas. Within social constructionism four key compounds of the general philosophical assumption of the theoretical approached within the field, can be made.

As a criticism to the notion of evident knowledge, the statement is made that our view of the world is dependent upon how we speak of reality, thus making this knowledge, in itself subjective. Secondly, the cultural and historical perspective of human beings makes our view of the world tinged with a pre conceived notion of this. The social compound of our view of knowledge also stretches to our notion of the world, making this perception both created within as well as maintained by social processes, stipulating our notion of what is the “truth” and consequentially what is “right and wrong”. Last but not least, the connection between knowledge and social actions makes for some actions to be

considered as natural while others are not, leading to social consequences due to the social construction of knowledge and truth. (Burr 1995:3-4)

One of the main features of discourse analysis is that it looks to the structures of language; in these structures we can find patterns that make a difference in our social life. Discourse is a manifestation of this idea, reenacting itself in the way we use our language and how we incorporate it to the world around us, the society. (Winter et al 2002:1)

For a better understanding of the true meaning in discourse, we have to look beyond the intention of actors and put more focus on the social structure of the texts produced in discourse. Wagenaar claims that “*the tenor of discourse is language*” but at the same time points us towards the fact that most discursive analysis methods look beyond this and gives it a broader definition by focusing more on practices in human experience, and the organization of these. The main assumption of this type of analysis regards language as the factor that determines the meaning, experience and even our notion of the reality around us. One could translate this to an idea that the reality that surrounds us is constructed through language; the social compound of our reality is structured by it. (Wagenaar 2011:107)

Although fairly new in modern politics, the thought of deliberative democracy is not in any way a recent invention. With ancestry going back to the birth of democracy itself, the inputs over the ages, and especially recent ones, have amplified the characteristics of the theory (e.g. Habermas’s discourse ethic).

Habermas argues that only through free and undistorted argument can points of view compete on fair ground, creating a mutual understanding where the reasoning behind the better argument is given an unconstrained opportunity to prevail. To be able to enter into dialogue with the mindset that your point of view will be altered and transformed during the course of it requires a flexibility and openness only possible with unconstrained dialogue. Here, the adaptability and self-correcting treats of interactions makes way for an educative and social learning potential. (Eckersley 2004:115-19)

The argumentation analysis of CDA, according to Fairclough (2013:178,193), does commit to Habermasian deliberative democracy, claiming that political discourse in itself is always deliberative or as Fairclough chooses to put it “Discoursal democratization is of course linked to the political democratization, and to the broad shift from coercion to consent, incorporation and pluralism in the exercise of power.” (Fairclough 2010:65) However, he also stresses the fact that by employing an analysis of argumentation you do not necessarily commit to deliberative democracy (2013:193).

Like Foucault, CDA analysis sees claims of power in acts as languages and practices in our otherwise neutral world. It is an important part of policy analysis as it puts the struggle and conflict of power in focus in its analytical approach. Norman Fairclough is somewhat of a founder of this discipline, he has developed theory and procedure for CDA through a number of papers and books. Heavily influenced by (neo-) Marxism, although in later works and formulations, Fairclough shows a more open side towards ideological diversity, CDA takes an initial standpoint in class and social differences. It is important in policy analysis

because it brings with it a claim of power, conflict and struggle. Moreover, it provides the user with a systematic approach for textual analysis (Wagenaar 2011:158).

In relation to this study, Fairclough mentions an important dimension of governmental policy response to the financial crisis, that of increasing the competitiveness of a country. Therefore, in addition, the discourse analysis will include an analysis of the use of the concept of *competitiveness* between countries on an international level, something that critics have perceived as an *extension of concept*, as the leading countries of the world are not in an economic competition with each other, as that portrayed by the micro-economic concept used to defend this choice of policy. (Fairclough 2013:181).

One of the many controversies with discourse analysis, in general, is that it relies heavily on the subjectivity of the analyzer. Thus making it important for an author making use of the theoretic approach to be aware of the risks of subjectivity and try to refrain from applying it too often, in order to maintain *intersubjectivity* throughout the study.

CDA shares common ground with other approaches to discourse theory, mainly poststructuralist discourse theory (PDA) and cultural political economy (CPE). The focus of these approaches lies on the discursive character of policy making and policy process. Fairclough positions all three in line with anti-positivist and interpretative views within policy studies. However, for CDA and important difference to other approaches is the analytical focus on relations in social life, between its material and discursive compounds. In CDA a lot of weight is given to language, as an object of analysis, something that should be interpreted as “text analysis”, within the analysis of discourse. Furthermore, the “argumentative turn” in policy studies, is incorporated in CDA and makes up a great part of the theoretical side of the analysis approach. Focusing on discourse and its relations to social elements, CDA evaluates and criticize existing realities but it is also explanatory in the sense of trying to explain realities. By using the analyst’s hypothesis of certain realities as effects of structures, mechanism or force the analyst shows that they can be explained (Fairclough 2013:177-82).

In contrast to more traditional discourse analytics, Norman Fairclough differentiates between discourse in text and speech and other subjects of analysis connected to discourse. He claims it is imperative to separate text and speech from other action, often interpreted by other methods of analysis. According to Fairclough, discourse contributes to social identities and groups, the social relations between these and also the bigger context that they figure within. Nevertheless, Fairclough simplifies this by giving discourse three dimensions: text, discourse practice and social practice. These are perspectives that can be used to analyze discourse and they make up the elements that are discourse. (Fairclough 2010:59, 94)

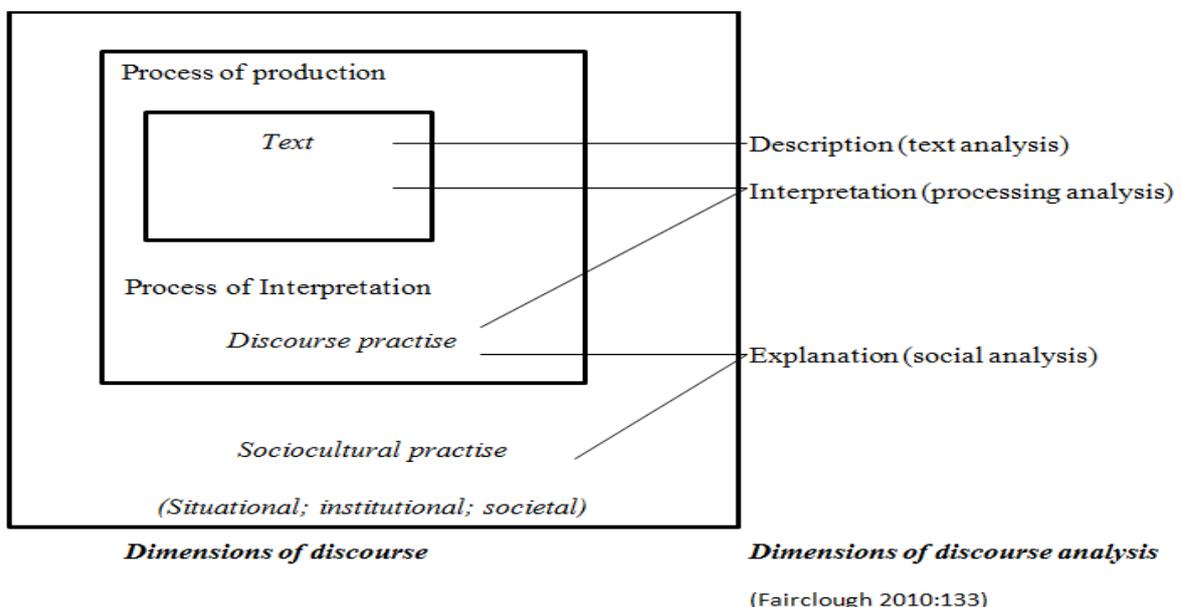
2.2 Framework for analysis

The focus of the discourse analysis in this research will come from Fairclough's views on critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) and the methods developed through this work. One of the key features of this work is the application of CDA on political responses to the financial and economic crisis that began in 2007 and that continues until today, especially noticeable in southern European countries like Spain. What makes this approach interesting is its claim that political discourse is mainly argumentative and therefore, the analysis of the same should focus on practical argumentation. Also, it addresses that policy-making in uncertain and multiple-value surroundings needs to be systematically analyzed.

As a field of study CDA has received a lot of critique of not being enough concise in how to operationalize its methodology, leading Fairclough to strive for providing scholars with a practical framework for argumentative political discourse. (Fairclough et al 2012:1-3)

2.2.1 The three dimensions of CDA

As per Norman Fairclough's CDA definition, three interrelated dimensions of discourse exist: one is the object of analysis (verbal, visual speech or verbal, visual text), the second is the means of which the object is produced (e.g. writing/speaking/designing or reading/listening/viewing), the third dimension is the socio-historical conditions that govern the processes. For each of the dimensions, a specific process of analysis is needed. The method includes a *description* of the textual language, an *interpretation* between discursive process and the text, followed by the *explanation* of the relationship between social and discursive practice. It aims to look at how a text is produced and interpreted by the influence of the sociocultural practice it makes part of (Fairclough 2010:94,132). The model below shows you a model of how the three dimensions can make part of one another.



As a way of critique, Fairclough poses the below comment on Foucault's structuralist leaning in discourse analysis, comparing it against his own rather polyvalent concept of discourse (Wagenaar 2010:16). It is of interest since where in theory CDA is very similar to Foucaultian ideas, but whereas method is concerned, Fairclough distances himself from Foucault.

[W]hat is missing [in Foucault] is any sense that practice has properties of its own which (i) cannot be reduced to the implementation of structures; (ii) imply that how structures figure in practices cannot be assumed, but has to be determined; and (iii) ultimately help to shape structures. [Fairclough 1992:58] (Wagenaar 2010:165)

In order to analyze each practice separately, although each of the practices also incorporates the others as described above, the below account provides a framework for all three dimensions of discourse, later to be used in the analysis of the thesis discourse material.

Text analysis

Perhaps a bit bluntly put, Fairclough describes text as “the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event” (2010:95). The analysis of text is the analysis of the texts for and meaning. The goal in this analysis is to determine what background our ideological conviction that the text is a representation of (Fairclough 2010:73) According to Fairclough the analysis of text can, in CDA, be divided into three parts: textual composition, grammar and vocabulary (2010:94). This study will use a vocabulary approach to the text analysis; this since it takes on the assumption that in analyzing documents of discourse with using development concepts as a base for the analysis, looking at the vocabulary used in the party programs will be the most efficient approach to draw conclusions on the similarities between concept and policy.

The object of this text analysis will be to identify the key concepts in the party program that mirror the concepts of SD. This will be achieved by analyzing the vocabulary used in the party program to that used to coin the concept. Understanding that such an analysis can be subject of controversy as the text was produced in a different language to that of the documents used to define SD as a concept. However, as the text analysis only uses the conceptual structure of SD as a background to the analysis, in contrast to actual vocabulary, this should not be an issue as it is the independent meaning of the vocabulary will be analyzed in the text. The text analysis will highlight the properties of the text through the linguistic structure in its use of vocabulary.

Discourse practice

When a text is produced, it is based on something. That something is the idea that sparked the writer to produce the text. All texts are created with a purpose and depending on the nature of the text that purpose may differ, along with the idea behind the text.

Fairclough speaks of the interlaying relationship between discursive process and social practice, the former being a part of the social practice. When we look at discourse practice focus lies on the way a text has been produced and the way in

which it may be consumed (or interpreted). The interpretative process operates, by looking for suggestions in the text which may have been shaped by the nature of social practices or the production process in itself, *intertextuality* (Fairclough et al 2010:94).

If we are able to identify the antecedent ideas that conjured the very source of thought for the idea behind a text, we can reach a broader understanding of its true meaning. However, there are limits as to how profound such *interdiscursivity* should be, as many of Fairclough's methodological approaches it can be adapted to its purpose. Like in the case of intertextuality, the intention is to perceive the discourses in a text and in its underlying concepts. (2010:93)

Are we able to establish a rank, or order, of the discourse in a text? As a text tends to emphasize discourses differently, varying levels of *order of discourse* exist. Looking at the literal meaning of the content of a text, its concept, and how it is construed. The illustration of concepts from earlier texts is also taken into consideration. (Fairclough 2010:93-6)

This thesis discourse practice will look at the similarities in the structure of the discourse and the way it has been produced in the Partido Popular party programs. It is conceivable that this dimension of the analysis will prove the most fruitful in the comparison with the development concepts as some of the core principles of the analysis lies in the correlation with other discourse, in this case SD and GE.

Social practice

Text as a product has the inevitable property of absorbing the characteristics of the social context in which it is produced. As social context changes over time, so does discourse. Analyzing the social practice stems from the attempt to uncover the reason to a change in discourse, having emerged outside the discourse itself.

The reason to the importance of this practice becomes clear when looking at the traits of the timeline of our study. For example, texts produced early in the timeline may play on a set of influences completely different from the ones at the end of the timeline; imagine a research carried out both with texts produced before the start of the Second World War and also with texts produced in its aftermath. The effect the surrounding social context had on each type of text at the time of writing them would look completely different, and failing to add this in our analysis would put the objectivity of the study at risk. As the actors, the authors of the text, are not impervious to influence from their surroundings, neither are their texts (Fairclough 2010:173).

The social context leaves its water print in texts produced within it, discourse is tainted by the ideas and thoughts of the time it was produced and by considering factors of social importance, important observations can be made by analyzing the social practice.

Seeing how the objects of analysis in this thesis were produced in social contexts vastly different from one another, contemplating on the impact that those contexts will have had on both the concepts as well as our objects of analysis since both of them would have been sensitive to one of the most unstable areas during the analysis time scope - the economy.

2.3 Limitations of the analysis

As there are many forms of applications, or methodology, of CDA there is also a vast difference in how some of them are operationalized. In this study, the focus has been to find an approach that could be deemed fit for its purpose, Fairclough opens up for and encourages this (Wodak et al. 2009:167), in his claim that the methodological approach should stem from the theoretical construction of the object of research. This has rendered us with exceptional advantage to choose from various models or approaches of analysis, always with the nature of our study close in mind.

CDA offers a myriad of descriptions of textual analysis, that are quite complex in a rather complicated dialectal sense. Nevertheless as the goal of this study is not a pure linguistic analysis, it holds the benefit of limiting the analysis from more complex approaches. Also, it is worth stressing the fact that such an analysis would most likely not suit the purpose of the study, as the empirical material that will be analyzed derives from a political purpose that does not encourage much freedom in a semantic or grammatical sense. Therefore, the decision to focus on the vocabulary produced in the text was deemed the more coherent of the alternatives.

3 Research Material

In this chapter, a presentation of the material used for the essay's analysis will be presented. The form and source of the material gathered will be discussed and important features of these will be addressed.

The concepts Sustainable Development and Green Economy will be presented together with their main objectives and differences. Additionally, the Partido Popular electoral programs will be presented; the objects of analysis.

3.1 Empirical Scope

The discourse analysis in this study will use, as a main object of analysis, the Partido Popular energy policies from the 2008 and 2011 electoral party programs. The concepts of Sustainable Development and Green Economy will be used as a base for the analysis, meaning that the concepts themselves will not be subjects of analysis but that the idea of a shift between the concepts, as portrayed by the article *History repeating? Green Economy and the Global South*, will be used as a reference point on which the analysis will be founded (Bauer et al. 2012).

The concepts will be used to identify some key characteristics of the change in the political focus of the discourse, going from one concept to another. These characteristics will be discussed in this section of the study and will later be used to help determine some key properties of the discourse in Spanish energy policy.

The objects of the discourse analysis that will be carried out in this study will be (1) the party program of Partido Popular, then not the governing party of Spain, from 2008 – before the national elections. Also included in the analysis will be (2) the PP's energy policy, from their party program, before entering into the elections of 2011, which the consequently won. The reason for this is to see how the party's energy policy has evolved over the years between elections and to determine if the shift in focus of the concepts, going from SD to GE is traceable also in the energy policy of the (now) ruling party in Spain, this is very probable considering that Partido Popular is a right-wing party, and many of the norms in the concepts are based with an acceptance of neo-liberal economic ideas (Bernstein 2012:2).

3.2 Concepts

Taking the shift of focus into mind, proceeding from one concept to the other, this research will concentrate on the change of importance of the main conceptual issues of the concepts. It does not take long to determine that issues like equity, gender focus and combating poverty have been set aside for more economically oriented issues like the transformative role of state, production and manufacturing, public procurement and financial services. Nevertheless, to determine a certain vocabulary and discourse used in each of the concepts, both concepts are presented here together with the differences between them.

3.2.1 Sustainable Development

Bernstein depicts sustainable development as to have emerged and gained ground in the 1980s as an expression of an ambition to institutionalize environmental governance, due to growing concerns for the future of environmental and social problems. Quickly becoming the dominant conceptual framework of the time, SD's main agenda became to "legitimize economic growth in a context of environmental protection". This is something that was, simply put, seen as sort of a bargain, giving preference to environment only to impede economic growth, something that particularly frightened countries of the south as this would mean a set of rules, going forward, that not were deployed in the development of the already developed countries (2001:3).

That Sustainable Development is a controversial subject is well known, as stated in the article *Sustainable Development: mapping different approaches* (Hopwood et al 2005), there are many different opinions of what the concept really is. Hence, there is also a discourse of discord within the concept that claims that it has lost its original meaning and purpose due to actors understanding the concept differently and thus being able to convey it in the manner they see fit. Initially, Sustainable Development's focus as a concept is entailed in three dimensions: that of economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

3.2.2 Green Economy

Launched in 2008, the Green Economy initiative was developed by UNEP and debated in connection to sustainable development. It came as a response to the financial crisis of 2008/2009. Short of a single definition for the concept, UNEP states that its goals are a general improvement in human well-being and social equity, achieved through means that reduce environmental risk and ecological scarcity (2011:13,15).

Green Economy has replaced Sustainable Development as the main concept for the debate around environment, something that became evident at RIO+20,

where the inputs from GE outlined the areas of discussion for the summit, highlighting potential green investments and their potential social and environmental effects. (Bauer et al 2012:5)

Evidently Green Economy has become the new “buzz-word” in environmental discussions, and with it comes a deeply rooted concern that in the attempt to “green” our current economy we will lose track of the main issues which the sustainability concepts initially targeted, such as environmental degradation and the struggle against poverty (Brand 2012:1-3)

Bauer et al. (2012) give us an overview of issues in UNEP’s definition of the GE concept, identified in their report. Seeing how some of these issues are coherent to this study’s view on GE they accounted for below and later adopted into the analysis of discourse.

3.2.3 The differences

Clapp et al. stresses how an internationalized economy has emerged over the past decade that has neglected the environment in preference to stronger economic structures of international collaboration. The short-term volatility of the neo-liberal concepts that have laid ground for the internationalization of the financial markets together with the introduction of big emerging economies (e.g. China) for whom the economic growth is prioritized before environment (2012:499-501). Trends that both the GE and SD concepts has shown to be inadequate to grasp, something the Eckersley points out as a structural failure of the capitalist economy, inducing crisis tendencies and thus provoking policy limitations and failures due to the interdependencies between capitalist economies and capitalist states (Eckersley 2004:56).

Looking into the differences of issue targeting going from one concept to another, it becomes clear that we might see a further step away from pinpointing the issues above is taken with the introduction of GE as the main concept for environmental discussions.

To be able to distinguish the preference of concept used in the produced text an analytic approach towards vocabulary will be used, as earlier mentioned. This will be used in order to analyze what is the dominating influence on policy making out of the two concepts. It will be done, not through counting the use, or presence, of certain vocabulary, but rather by the formulation of sentences and the semiotic structure in which the vocabulary is infused. In addition to the table of vocabulary, a search for traces of an increase of competitiveness, as a response to the economic crisis (Fairclough 2013:181), will be done to further amplify the dimension of the text analysis.

Seeing how a strong shift of focus is visible between the main sectors and conceptual issues targeted, this shift will be used to identify the presence of vocabulary connected to the targeted sectors and issues in our objects of analysis. The analysis will focus on environment and economy within energy policies but the social content within the concepts will be taken into consideration while analyzing both.

Notably, Bauer et al. have in their article a list of the differences in emphasis of the main conceptual issues and the main targeted sectors of SD and GE. Seeing how some of these vary a lot between the concepts, it becomes clear that there has been a shift in focus between the two concepts (Bauer et al. 2012:8-9). This is the shift of focus that is of interest to the following discourse analysis of the PP energy policies. If it possible to confirm a similar shift in priority in the written text of the party program, together with a discursive and social practice analysis that speaks for the same, it is highly conceivable that the energy policies have been produced through a large influence from the concepts.

The graph below depicts the comparison between the concepts; by highlighting the main conceptual issues and the main sectors targeted it provides the reader with a good overview of the differences and similarities. Together with the conceptual focal points depicted above, it will be of most essential importance for the summary of the thesis discourse analysis, providing a benchmark for proving the connection between policy and concept.

	SD	GE
Main conceptual issues		
Balance of environmental protection, social justice and economic development	XXX	XXX
Explicit focus on poverty reduction/pro-poor growth	XXX	XX
Technological information and transformation	XXX	XXX
Transformative role of state	X	XXX
Market-based instruments	XXX	XXX
Equity (inter- and intra-generational)	XXX	X
Focus on Gender	XXX	X
Role of indicators and result-based management	XX	XXX
Main sectors targeted		
Energy	XXX	XXX
Cities	XXX	XXX
Rural areas, farms, forests	XXX	XXX
Production and manufacturing	X	XXX
Financial services	X	XX
Public procurement	X	XXX

(Bauer et al. 2012:9)

3.3 Discourse material

The timeline of interest for this study is the time between the two Spanish governmental elections of 2008 and 2011. Within the time period between the two election, two major occurrences of influence took place; (1) the financial crisis with its start in 2008/2009 and that is still ongoing, (2) the introduction of the GE concept and the adaption of this, in exchange for SD, in the global environmental discussion.

The objects of analysis will be the Partido Popular party programs from each of the respective elections. The scope of the analysis does not include the whole party programs; instead the object is to identify the parts that treat energy policy, this way the analysis will highlight those parts of the party programs that are of the principal interest of this thesis and that should have been most exposed to the development concepts, when being produced. This way the selectivity and subjectivity of the thesis becomes somewhat open for criticism. However, this can be defended by the argument that, as stated above, the choice of text for analysis is done on the basis of relevance rather than that of the author's own interest.

4 Discourse Analysis

Assuming that the idea behind the fact that the Spanish government is attempting to increase the competitiveness of their energy production and mean to draw more revenue out of renewable energy through a new turn in policy making is a discursive shift, similar to the shift in focus between SD and GE, this analysis uses Fairclough's analytical approach and framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. It uses the model of three dimensions (as presented in chapter 2.2), which are intertwined. True to Fairclough's analytical framework, the analysis will include an account on *how* the dimensions are interconnected, accounted for in each of the sections of the analysis.

The choice to focus on the energy policy in the party programs is due to the principle interest of this study, the want to see how a shift of focus in concepts can provoke a shift of discourse on national policy level. Taking other, unidentified, factors into consideration as strong contributors in provoking this type of change, the argument for using Fairclough's three dimensions of analysis is strong, as this provides an opportunity to further analyze the surrounding contexts of the discourse and bring these aspects into the analysis.

Putting this into context, it is plausible that if there was a shift in focus going from SD to GE we might be able to discover a shift in discourse in Spanish energy policy as well.

4.1 PP party program 2008

What we will look for in 2008 year's party program are similarities and coherence with the conceptual strategy of SD, highlighting and targeting the same main issues and objectives as SD.

4.1.1 Text

Faced with the mission to combine the environmental issues of the world with the challenges of development and at the same time battle both, the SD concept can already be distinguishable in the sub-heading of the proposals in the party program: "*Lucha contra el cambio climatico*", the struggle, or fight, against the climate change. An inclination to attacking the *problem* right from the start, demonstrates an adaption of the concepts ideology.

In the party program's national strategy for national strategy for foreign policy within the European Union it becomes evident that an approach towards SD as an accepted concept for environmental politics within EU has also reached Spain.

"The protection of the environment and the biodiversity should turn into a primary objective of the European Union. The economic development cannot be constructed through the destruction of the environment." (Partido Popular 2008:91) The quote constitutes one of the principle goals of SD, the environmental protection (Hopwood et al. 2005:49), stating that economic development cannot be prioritized before the environment. Looking into the key vocabulary used to form the text, the most notable components are that of *protection* and *development*.

Another choice of vocabulary with a clear influence from SD can be seen under the chapter "*Lucha contra la pobreza en el mundo y cooperación al desarrollo*", where PP gives its views on social development in contrast to a sustainable development of the environment. Again *priority* is used in the connection with a key concept of SD, in the Spanish sectorial cooperation for renewable energy and technology (2008:98).

Even more important in this text analysis, and more coherent to the central purpose of this study, is the section in the party program targeting reforms of Spanish energy policy, "*reformas en política energética*". Interesting is the formulation of the development of electric infrastructure to promote an improvement of quality in domestic supply and the *competitiveness* of the companies providing the services. Here, development and improvement of quality is given preference to that of competitiveness. (2008:124)

A number of objectives in response to the climate change are also of a principal interest to this analysis. A part from principal objectives coherent to that of SD, such as reductions of emissions according to the Kyoto protocol and general energy consumption, there are again some objectives that mix environment and economy but where the economic concepts give preference to the environmental ones. One example is, the lowering of energy consumption per unit of product in order to improve the national energy efficiency (2008:198-99).

The use of energy produced in a decentralized, rural scheme through renewable sources, promotes a more *efficient* energy production (2008:202). The use of the word efficiency here, in context of the promotion of renewable energy does not shadow an *economy before environment* approach but rather the opposite, something that could be portrayed by the influence of the SD concept, as interpreted as an example of "sustained economic growth" (Bauer et al. 2012:5)

4.1.2 Discursive practice

Here the protection of the environment is given preference to that of the development of the economy both in the direct meaning of the text but also in its structure, or composition. Relating this to the analysis of the discursive practice we can identify a general order of discourse. A vivid example of this is shown in the above text analysis where in more than one case environment, and its

protection or sustainability, is put first in order before an economic perspective in the energy policy.

Seeing how much of the discourse can be directly related to the main issues and sectors targeted by SD a certain interdiscursivity can be identified, it is conceivable that in producing the party program, its authors may have used much of the discourse in SD as a “template” for producing the party’s energy policy. The reoccurring words that empower the sentences, such as *fight* or *problem* clearly indicates an adoption of the more “aggressive” approach to environmental problems identified in SD, something that could be linked to intertextuality between the concept and the PP energy policy of 2008.

4.1.3 Social practice

Partido Popular entered the 2008 elections headed by Mariano Rajoy, the Spanish president at the time this study is carried out. Although PP did not win the 2008 elections, the party program that was produced at that time is of interest to this research due to the fact that the concept of GE had not yet been introduced, at least not on a broader scale. The popular concept at the time was instead SD. Taking this into consideration the party program of 2008, in comparison to the next object of analysis, the 2011 PP party program, contributes to the study by having been produced in a social context vastly different from that of the later of the two. This is mainly due to two factors; one is that although Spain was struck by some economic instability, the *financial crisis* of 2008/2009 had not developed, making its impact on the object of analysis null, the other factor is that, as mentioned above, the popular concept for discussions around environment at the time was SD, something that becomes very clear in our text analysis as vocabulary and ideas coherent to the SD concept can be identified in the party program.

4.2 PP party program 2011

The party program issued by PP in 2011 was drafted just around the introduction of the concept of Green Economy and hence, the influence of the GE concept should indeed be the one of the two that might have had influence in the formation of policies. Here, special focus will be given to the section of the party program treating energy policy (Partido Popular 2011:45-6) but will also include other text of relevance to the analysis.

4.2.1 Text

Already in the heading of the PP energy policy it is obvious that energy is now an economized topic. “Energía de calidad para impulsar la economía” (Partido Popular 2011:45), roughly translated it says: *qualitative energy to propel the economy*. Here, it is not the energy itself that is given preference; instead it is an agent that is used to promote something of greater importance, the economy. Also, it is notable that it is not a *sustainable* energy that will propel the economy, but rather a *qualitative* one.

In the diagnostic of the current energy situation it is notable that not a single reference is given to renewable energy or sustainability, instead the Spanish energy prices are compared on an international level; something that could be seen as an inclination towards *competitiveness* instead of cooperation (Ibis 2012:45). Furthermore, in the policy objectives PP announces that they will “define a new national energy strategy that will make use of all the *potential* in all available sources of energy through an equal mix, in order to counter the existing challenges of securing supply, economic *competitiveness* and *environmental sustainability*.” It makes for a very interesting choice of order of vocabulary as the preference of supply and economic competitiveness before a sustainable environment and will be further analyzed in the discursive practice. Moreover, the first mention of sustainability in the Party Program comes, not as a goal but instead as a *challenge*. Nevertheless, the next phrase of the policy objectives also makes it clear that efficient, sustainable formulas and sparse energy consumption are not areas where efforts can be spared. However, this is only a part of what defines what is needed for a *competitive* economy. In extension, in the next paragraph, PP makes the claim to promote that the energy sector will rise as a factor in the *competitiveness* and *economic development* of Spain. A need of maximizing the cost *efficiency* is also advertised. Also, further advancement in the process of *liberalization* and strengthening of *competence* in the electricity and hydrocarbon markets are mentioned in the PP energy policy objectives (2011:45-6). Here the use of vocabulary connected to neo-liberal market reforms is densely used, and again references to *competitiveness* are made in connection to economic development.

In the closing paragraph, PP states that they will make use of all the *potential* of Spain’s geostrategic position to create a market of reference in the field of biogases for the rest of the Mediterranean. Finally, PP presents the objective to “inspire the international energy connections in the European Union to facilitate an adequate integration of the potential of renewable energy and increase the competence in the markets.” (2011:46)

The section of measures that follow in the party program is a summary of the above expressed policies and bares no further significance to the analysis as the textual composition is the same as in the diagnose and objective sections of the energy reform, only in a shorter format.

4.2.2 Discursive practice

The predilection in the order of discourse in the 2011 PP party program is clearly toward economic growth and production. Although concepts such as sustainability and renewable energy indeed are present in the discourse they are frequently fronted by references to economy or induced in phrases around *competitiveness*. This shows for an order of discourse very different from that of the party program of 2008 as economy, production and *economic* development are given preference to renewable resources and environment in general.

Interesting is that the environment seems to be often regarded as a resource for efficiency and production capacity rather than an object in need of protection, something that could be seen as an example of an existing interdiscursivity to GE, at least when put in to light of the focus shift between concepts, as portrayed in Bauer et al. 2012. Furthermore, the frequent use of vocabulary that can be identified as prevalent in the GE concept also speaks for an intertextuality between concept and energy policy. In general, the vocabulary used is more connected to an economic terminology than an environmental one.

4.2.3 Social practice

Produced under times of severe economic regression, the party program of 2011 is evidently heavily affected by the social context of the time period. The references to economy and the labor market are many, even in the energy reform

Seeing how Partido Popular at the time was not an established ruling party in Spain, we will have to take into account the situation of popularization that the party stood in. Political views that deterred too much from the ruling party at the time, PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español), would not have been desired for public scrutiny; hence a slight modernization of some political views will have to be taken into consideration.

Seeing how some of the formulations of sentences in the 2011 energy policy show traces of a shift in priorities in comparison to that of 2008, it makes an adaption of the GE concept in connection to the production of the policies very credible. Nevertheless, as portrayed by Galanova (2013) in the article about tolls on solar panels, and accounted for in the introductory chapter of the thesis, some of the effects of the new energy policy depict a scrupulous approach redolent of a “selective greening of the economy”. A problem described by Ulrich Brand with the result of *green economic* policies being introduced at the costs of other sectors (2012:5), deluding the original purpose of the concept for that of a more economically driven ambition.

5 Results

Bauer et al. uncovers a shift in focus between SD and GE in their 2012 paper. The goal of the analysis in this thesis has been to identify the impact of this shift on environmental policy making, specifically concerning energy policy.

Through a CDA analysis on party programs of the today leading party in Spanish politics, the intention was to unravel similarities between concepts and policies by examining the discourse in the programs. The analysis, that was carried out on policies drafted before and after the introduction of GE as the new commonly accepted concept, shows that the concepts indeed have had an impact on the production of the policies. To what extent is somewhat uncertain, however, through Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis framework similarities between discourse and concepts were discovered, not just through the textual composition but also direct discursive concepts that were visibly transferred from concept to policy, something in the analysis referred to as *interdiscursivity*.

Taking into consideration that concepts and policies, especially in the case of GE and the 2011 party program, were produced in a similar social context there is a certain possibility that the social practice have had an influence of the formation of thought, something that to some extent could explain the similarities. Nevertheless, the strong shift in use of vocabulary between the party programs clearly indicates a shift of focus similar to that portrayed by Bauer et al. in their paper. Putting this into context with Fairclough's CDA critique on the tendency to embracing *competitiveness* in policy making (2013:182), another influence clearly visible in the analysis of the 2011 energy policy, we do see a clear shift in focus between the energy policies, parallel to the shift provoked by conceptual influence. As the idea of *competitiveness* as an excuse for policy reform is also compatible with some of the critique against GE as a neo-liberal concept, the frequent use of that conception to economic growth further entails a positive outcome for the thesis hypothesis.

5.1 PP energy policy shift in discourse

The analysis of discourse in accordance to Fairclough's CDA approach has provided this study with arguments for identifying a focus shift in the PP energy policy. In line with some scholars' views on the focus shift of the development concepts to one more linked to neo-liberal views of economic development, the PP energy policy can indeed be compared to the SD and GE concepts, both in a textual and discursive context. Additionally it is very plausible that the social

context of the time that the energy policies were produced has had an impact that has further promoted an adaption of the concepts to the authors of the policies.

In conclusion, the main research question of this thesis has been answered. In contrast to the UNEP “Towards a Green Economy Report” this does give some further arguments of critique against GE as a new concept of reference for environmental discussions, replacing SD, seeing how the authors of the report states that this should not be the case. (UNEP 2011:7)

5.2 Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis

Having applied Fairclough’s CDA as an analysis of policy discourse has proven a success, both from a theoretical perspective as well as a methodological one.

The theory regarding policy making in response to the financial crisis, by “illegitimately extending the microeconomic concept of the competitiveness...” (Fairclough 2013:181) has given further depth to the thesis analysis and the claim of conceptual extension has been substantiated.

On a methodological level limits only exist within the researcher himself, as Fairclough provides the user of CDA with a vast range of methods for application, including the statement that the user can adapt the methodology as he sees fit. For this thesis, the framework has positively been able to detect and describe the shift in discourse that, which was the objective of the analysis.

For environmental policy in general, CDA provides a huge selection of methodology, including a well-fitting theoretical approach to discourse analysis. Further research within the same field would benefit greatly by applying these methods.

5.3 Thesis limitations and future research

As for means of discourse analysis, this study might have benefited further by including an analysis of the discourse directly related to both of the concepts, this would have provided a closer look on the focus shift and might as well have brought further discoveries of similarities between policy and concept. However, such a study would amount for a greater mass of discourse to analyze and in light of what information earlier research from scholars around the phenomena (e.g. Bauer et al, Bernstein, Brand, Clapp et al, etc.) can provide this was deemed superfluous in context to the scope of the study. Nevertheless, by accepting the information made available from earlier research, some critique in regards to selectivity must also be mentioned. As many of the scholars whose papers and articles were cited in this thesis share a common ground of thought. Further depth might have been attained with a more contradictive selection.

The fact that the thesis analysis focus on the energy policy of a specific political party is due to the wish to see the impact discourse may have on different levels of policy making, going from an internationally accepted concept and narrowing it down to a national level and the interpretation of a single party. A broader dimension to the analysis could have been added by looking into different discourse coalitions and give an account for how concepts have been interpreted differently. However, in light of time and work load limitations of this BA thesis this is something that instead could be included in future research in the field.

The choice to incorporate the energy policy as in contrast to further review other aspects of the concepts, as they also incorporate additional fields of social and economic development, lies in the above mentioned wish to narrow down the research in order to look into specific policies. Accepting the fact that a broader base for the analysis might have provide the research with a deeper sense of intersubjectivity, the decision to narrow down the study can be defended by the qualitative nature of this type of approach.

In lack of a recent party program, and thus failing to incorporate the current discourse in the Spanish environmental discourse, an additional dimension of media and individual actor discourse might have provided the study with a further insight in the depth of influence that concepts like SD and GE have on domestic policies connected to the economic, social and environmental development.

For a research with a broader scope in terms of time, Bauer et al. 2012 paper provides an interesting suggestion for a future research matrix for individual country analysis, mainly for Southern countries. Taking more factors than just energy policy into consideration the matrix is to be used as a framework for analysis, not of discourse but instead of potential drivers that could be linked to the GE concept. Here, the influence on domestic policies is one of the variables of the analysis. (Bauer et al. 2012:18)

One can only hope that future research will help to establish ideas around concepts for development that could provoke a change in how these are viewed and interpreted. Only through concepts that are constructed to function, all the way from the production of discourse, through the process of discussion, and down to the interpretation and implementation of sustainable and eco-efficient policies, could we promote a change in how we view the environment that surrounds us. Tragically, as of today, the existing concepts fall short and as our unsustainable consumption of resources continues, the outlooks for such a reality are dim.

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