

## Standardforside til projekter og specialer

Til obligatorisk brug på alle projekter, fagmodulsprojekter og specialer på:

- Internationale Studier
- Internationale udviklingsstudier
- Global Studies
- Erasmus Mundus, Global Studies – A European Perspective
- Politik og Administration
- Socialvidenskab
- EU-studies
- Forvaltning (scient.adm)

Udfyldningsvejledning på næste side.

<b>Projekt- eller specialetitel:</b>		
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<b>Projektseminar/værkstedseminar:</b>		
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Michael Würtz 51893	Fagmodulsprojekt	IS-K1
Frederik Werlauff 44957	Fagmodulsprojekt	IS-K1
Michael Kjær Jørgensen 52639	Fagmodulsprojekt	IS-K1
<b>Vejleders navn:</b>		
Anne Ingemann Johansen		
<b>Afleveringsdato:</b>		
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## **List of Abbreviations**

- ACP: African, Caribbean and Pacific region
- CFTA: Continental Free Trade Area
- CCP: Common Commercial Policy
- DFQF: Duty Free Quota Free
- EC: European Community
- ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
- EPA: Economic Partnership Agreement
- EPADP: Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme
- EIB: European Investment Bank
- EU: European Union
- GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- GSP: General Scheme of Preferences
- OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- LDC: Least Developed Countries
- LIC: Low Income Countries
- IDPE: International Development Policy Establishment
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- TNC: Trans National Company
- TTIP: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
- UN: United Nations
- WTO: World Trade Organization
- WWII: World War II

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## 1.0 Introduction

In modern international economics it is often emphasized how free trade is preferable over the retention of tariffs and trade restrictions upheld by individual state (Smith 1970 [1776], Ricardo 1927 [1817], Ohlin 1935, Bhagwati 1997). However, liberal trade theory has also been criticized by scholars since Smith first explained his concept of *the invisible hand*. Friedrich List (List 1966 [1885]) was one of the first scholars who argued that Smith's focus on individuals as primary drivers for state-wellbeing weren't sufficient when dealing with state security and economic stability. This debate about which exact approach to capitalist economics a state should pursue continues to this day, and has not become less relevant since the onset of the financial crisis in 2008 (Web source 1).

Critiques of the global liberalization process have been carried out by heterodox economists like Ha-Joon Chang (Chang 2002). He emphasizes how developed countries used protectionist measures, like tariffs, when developing and are therefore actually *kicking away the ladder* from the developing countries by forcing them to liberalize even if their economies can't keep up with the import/export pace or the foreign competition that would ensue when a state would open its market.

The phenomenon of trade is ancient. Wealth is related to trade, which would be the simple explanation as to why states seek to practice it (Web source 2). People, countries, and regions engage in trade. How has the trade relations between regions evolved? And why have they evolved? How is the extensive regional trade structured? Who decides how it is conducted? And does this structuring subscribe to any economic doctrines and/or discourses?

After WWII the GATT was introduced in 1947 and was to include the members in *custom unions* with free trade. Several revisions of these rules conclusively ended in 1994 with "GATT 1994" and were the starting point to the creation of the World Trade Organization.

The European Union is a prime example of what the GATT advocated because of its free internal market, the EU has also engaged in trade agreements with regions besides the internal European market – and more importantly in this review – trade agreements with regions that weren't as developed as European states. The cooperation between African, Caribbean and Pacific region countries and the

European Community can be traced all the way back to the European Treaty of Rome in 1957 where the newly established European Economic Community expressed solidarity with the colonies and overseas countries and a commitment to contribute to their prosperity.

## **1.1 Area of research**

By briefly introducing the theoretical and historical-institutional framework leading up to present time it is now possible to narrow down and concretize our area of research. The starting point will be the Economic Partnership Agreement which is a part of the Cotonou Agreement and is the current framework for the EU-ACP relationship. After signing the Cotonou Agreement in 2000, the EU has tried to revise the EPA by differentiating the content of the agreement in order for it to fit the different regions in the ACP. Our focus will be on the historical events leading up to the EPA between the European Union and the states of West Africa as well as the actual EPA negotiation.

In 2014 The European Commission reported that a deal was finally concluded in February after years of negotiation with the ECOWAS. These EPA's are extensive trade and developmental arrangements between the EU and ACP countries an economic association consisting of a large portion of former European, mainly French and British, colonies (Web source 3, Web source 4).

On the 3-31-14, Ghanaian television Joy news reported on the lack of consensus in trying to agree on the new EPA. African leaders had supposedly failed to sign the deal. In the coverage, a Ghanaian academic and a Ghanaian bureaucrat exchange strong contra dictionary views on whether or not the EPA was advantageous for the ECOWAS, or if the deal was "*downright malicious*" (Web source 5). Even after years of negotiating, the EU and the ECOWAS had not yet reached an adequate deal on how to structure the EPA.

There has been very little debate in Europe about this extensive economic deal with the West African region. For the EU trade with the ECOWAS region is worth 30 billion € in exports annually, and for the ECOWAS region, the EU market is worth 42 billion € in exports. The lack of debate on the subject in Europe, and the fact that the issue is a source of debate in West Africa insinuates different levels of economic power between the EU and the ECOWAS. Maybe even different fundamental

opinions on the subject of which economic policies should be pursued, and how best to execute economic policies by the respective administrations. The West Africans are more concerned about the prospects of such a deal than Europeans. The high level of journalistic attention the TTIP deal has in Europe supports this presumption of an existing economic schism (Web source 6, Web source 7).

The basic picture or assumption by the group is; Europeans feel a need to debate the TTIP. But the general media regarding the EPA with West Africa in Europe raises no serious debate or questions about the EPA taking place, even though millions of jobs for citizens and the economic future of states are at stake. Only NGO's attend to the prospects of the deal (Web source 8). The TTIP deal only serves as an example for underlining the groups wondering and understanding of what is really at stake in the EPA case.

## **1.2 Research question**

*To what extent, if any, has the normative preferences underpinning the EU's trade relations with the ECOWAS undergone a change from a non-reciprocity development agenda to a reciprocal agenda and how has this affected the recent EPA negotiations?*

## **1.3 Working questions**

Working questions are here formulated as a way of structuring the project and to further define the focus of our study.

1. What is the historical institutional background foreshadowing the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS?
2. Which indicators have contributed to a discursive shift in the EU's trade preferences with the ECOWAS countries?
3. Why has the shift in the EU's normative preferences caused difficulties in the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS?

## **1.4 Delimitation**

In this chapter we will outline our general conceptual delimitation. Furthermore we have chosen to structure this into two categories; subject delimitation and theoretical delimitation.

We won't draw final conclusions regarding the economic outcome of the EPA. This means that we are not analyzing comprehensive amounts of economic data and calculations. In order to identify a discursive shift regarding reciprocity we won't use any amount of economic data, which could be relevant to calculate which approach is most economically beneficial. Our objective is to understand the motives behind the potential shift in discourse and how this has complicated the recent EPA negotiation.

We have decided to focus on the organizational structure of the EU and not the ECOWAS because the EU has designed the trade agreements. Our focus is on the development after the first Lomé agreement. We won't investigate earlier cooperation, including the Yaoundé convention and we will not consider the previous trade colonial relations between European nations and West African states in the project.

We won't use one particular theory but instead a set of different theories in this project, because we want to identify indicators towards a general discourse. In order to establish the theoretical overview, which is required to identify a discourse we have decided to work with theoretical concepts instead of a particular theoretical framework. This leads to a major delimitation; we are not going to search for an evident truth, which can be tested through our theory. On the contrary we are using our theoretical concepts to understand the empirical data in which we can find discourses.

## **1.5 Current scholarly position on the EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreement**

In addition to the more well-known theoretical perspectives from prominent scholars such as Bhagwati and Chang we find reason to investigate how other scholars have investigated the Economic Partnership Agreement. The main area of discussion has been to explain who and what have been the key actors and drivers in these

negotiations and why the EPA has experienced difficulties being signed by the ACP countries.

We have found three positions on why the negotiations have encountered difficulties and been prolonged. The first stand is a critique of the lack of coherence between the EU's development strategy and its reciprocal import/export interests. The inconsistency in the EU's normative outlines creates a disparity which is both difficult for the EU to practice and for the ACP countries to understand (Holden 2014). The second position deals with how the institutional change from following a clear non-reciprocal approach into a combination of WTO's legal rules and guidelines and development has made it difficult for the EU to make comprehensive trade and development agreements with the ACP. The new nexus, between reciprocity and development, has at the same time given the ACP countries an opportunity to challenge the opacity of the EU approach and thereby prolonging the negotiations (Heron 2014, Siles-Brügge 2014). The third view is on the problematic aspects of how the GSP has had a massive influence on how the EU has differentiated countries depending on their level of development. The main focus in the GSP is trade and it has thereby downgraded the importance of development and aid. The placement of different countries under different strategies/schemes has also been influential on the prolonging of the negotiations since many ACP countries want to be placed in the scheme which targets the absolute least developed countries (Woolcock 2014).

These different views on the problems with this recent EPA gives us a wide perspective on the negotiations but it also gives us an opportunity to differ our focus in order to make a new contribution as to why these EPA negotiations has encountered such difficulties in the making.

## **2.0 Conceptual framework**

This section will be an explicit elaboration on our theoretical apparatus from which we throughout the analysis will use in order to make adequate arguments and thereby answering our research question.

There isn't going to be an ongoing individual operationalization of the theories throughout the exposition because of our aim to explain our theoretical perspectives as accurate as possible. We are instead going to make a conclusively operationalization where an elaboration on how we can use the theory to

conceptualize the different aspects of how these theories are going to contribute in our analysis.

## **2.1 Economic Nationalism and Mercantilism**

Economic Nationalism, or Mercantilism, is the oldest theoretical perspective on the phenomenon of the market or practice of trade in human society. It's within the academic field of global political economy. Global political economy theorizes on power and the use of power within the field of trade and economics.

When engaging in analyzing and foretelling events economic nationalists tend to be descriptive in nature. They believe in power as being a zero-sum game between rivaling states in an anarchical system. The state is the main variable of interest to economic nationalists. In more recent times they do however recognize large firms and companies as actors, but tend to downplay their level of influence on state of affairs, basically because firms will turn to states for help when faced with trouble in relations to trade and are therefore, in most cases, subordinates to states as actors. In other words economic nationalists see market activity, or the global economy, as being completely dependent on favorable arrangements structured by the international political system (Robert O'Brian & Marc Williams 2013: 9-10).

The individuals within a society should count on and turn to the state when questions of trade and regulation arise. The level of political power wielded by a state is seen as the broad tool to secure that its citizens reap a certain level of the world's production and exchange of goods. The economic nationalists believe that the state should act to protect its own interests.

Internal markets can be effectively protected from foreign competition with various measures. Through legislative actions and procedures the state can be arranged and structured to benefit the internal markets, in so securing the possibilities and economic wealth of the inhabitants of a state or nation. Tariffs, governmental subsidies, and limited privatization can be productive tools for different state actors in the global economy to secure prosperity for the citizens (Robert O'Brian & Marc Williams 2013: 10-11).

### **2.1.1 Friedrich List**

One of the first of the modern economists to advocate an economic nationalist approach within trade practices was Friedrich List. List criticized one of the founders of economic liberalism Adam Smith, by stating that Smith ignored the principals of nationality and the states national interest. According to List, Smith simply ignored the evident circumstances of the community or state structure, which would limit the individual's economic freedom for the sake of attending to the states wellbeing, a reality that according to List was a basic premise. List questioned Smith's belief in the private individuals economy as a driving force for the greater good of society. List did not believe that the individual could take into account the wellbeing of the state when trying to promote his private economic goals. Goals like state security, and therefore the security of the state's internal market, can only be attained through means of cooperation and state control. In the states quest for stability the individual would be limited in certain aspects of its desire for economic prosperity (List 1966 [1885] Second Book: 163, 164, Chang 2002: 3)

List used a case of a newly founded American town to show how working together as individuals united as a community can create real lasting progress for a society stretching onto future generations. The individual left on its own would mainly attend to its own narrow self-interest because the individual simply can't fathom the interests of the national economy, and therefore not provide or add progress or wealth for the community (List 1966 [1885]: 77, Robert O'Brian & Marc Williams 2013: 9, 72, 280, Web source 9).

### **2.1.2 Ha-Joon Chang**

Professor Ha-Joon Chang belongs to the heterodox school of economics; this phrase sums up all the economic schools that are considered outside the "mainstream" economic branches (Web source 10, Web source 11).

Chang has conducted a thorough yet comprehensible historical and statistical analysis, of the different economic policies applied and pursued by various countries throughout history. His findings and conclusions are controversial. Chang argues that developed countries, which have created and are in control of the IDPE's (WTO, IMF and The World Bank), are "recommending" or rather dictating which policies and

institutions should be followed and implemented by developing countries (Chang 2002: 128, 127, 135).

These international institutions were created by developed countries, not when developing themselves, but after the developing countries governments had successfully developed core institutions and created a certain level of economic productive capabilities. This ensures a relative level of competitiveness as well as sufficient levels of education for the populations of the countries ensuring or making efficient governance and control possible. This dictation of the means with which a developing country should seek to catch up with the developed countries amount to what Chang phrases as *kicking away the ladder*. An expression borrowed from classical economist Friedrich List (Chang 2002: 2, 5, 135, 15).

The *ladder* (policies and institutions) developed countries have used historically to *crawl* (develop/secure growth) upwards to a point of abundance of wealth, they attained by what is now a days being labeled by the WTO as *bad policies* or frowned upon. These ladder-climbing policies are protectionist measures, e.g. tariffs and state subsidiaries. Nowadays if a developing country for example tries to negotiate an EPA with a developed country or another developing country for that matter, the country has to abide to certain standards, rules, and treaties. The WTO lays out these rules giving countries little freedom of choice when conducting trade. Chang points out that this is a clear double standard shown by the developed countries at present. It is forbidden for a developing country to enact or pursue the same protectionist policies used by developed countries in earlier times. Developed countries are banning the use of policies they themselves were using when comparably on the same level of the developing countries of today. However, Chang does point out that this double standard, being shown by developed countries, could be interpreted as good intentions being misunderstood (Chang 2002: 135).

## **2.2 Liberalism**

One of the first advocates for liberal trade theory was Adam Smith. He emphasizes how a free market, which encourages productivity and creates a surplus within the production, increases the annual produce to the utmost and thereby increases the real revenue and wealth of the society. The focus for any legislator should be on giving the best possible conditions for trade and growth in the domestic market and not

primarily on exporting goods in exchange for gold and silver. If the manufactures in a domestic market creates a higher value to their products it will automatically put them in a better position in foreign trade (Smith 1970 [1776], vol. I: 392).

The main object for every merchant in a society is to create as great a profit as possible by employing his capital the most profitable way he can. By pursuing his own interests he automatically promotes the value of the industry and society without it even being his intentions. This phenomenon is what Smith refers to as *the invisible hand* (Smith 1970 [1776], vol. I: 400).

David Ricardo further develops how we can understand trade between one or more countries in what he calls *a perfectly free commerce*. He agrees with Adam Smith in his argument concerning how a free movement of capital and labour are most beneficial to each part, and how the pursuit of individual advantage is closely connected with the universal good of the whole (Ricardo 1927 [1817]: 114).

More specifically Ricardo advocates for states and industries pursuing a comparative advantage by specializing in particular areas where they have a natural advantage, like (in his time) wine in France and Portugal, corn in America and Poland, and hardware and other goods in England (Ricardo 1927 [1817]: 115).

Eli Heckscher and his student Bertil Ohlin continues the work on comparative advantage from where Ricardo left off, but distances themselves by emphasizing that the nature of trade has a close coherence between the supply of productive factors and the demand for commodities, which also reacts upon each other (Ricardo's model focuses primarily on supply). They further state how pricing and level of trade is an outcome of the actual demand and supply conditions (Ohlin 1935: 130f).

Liberal trade theory has met a lot of criticism for only explaining trade between developed countries (e.g. the Linder Hypothesis; which emphasize that countries will only trade with other countries if they have a similar per capita income and consumption of quality products (Bhagwati 1964: 27)). Ohlin developed a theorem called *Heckscher-Ohlin* theorem with inspiration from the famous 1919 article by Eli Heckscher. The theory advocates the advantages of international trade between countries where there is a difference in the level of labour and capital (e.g. developing countries are labour intensive while developed countries are capital intensive). The

theory says that countries with a large workforce export commodities which are produced in industries which are ‘labor-intensive’, while they import commodities from countries which are capital-intensive, and vice versa (Bhagwati 1967: 80ff).

### **2.2.1 Jagdish Bhagwati**

In the field of international trade Jagdish Bhagwati’s contribution is primarily critiques on existing theories and further development of these theories.

Bhagwati agrees with Ricardo in how the price is a factor when wanting to export but disagrees in how the price is generated. Bhagwati adds an extra layer to the Ricardian model by arguing, like Ohlin, that comparative advantage in international trade cannot solely be considered from a supply-side. He proved that, in international trade, the price on commodities other countries have to pay depends on the demand of the goods on the domestic market – much like the demand of a single consumer depends on the price (Bhagwati 1967: 78ff).

Bhagwati has also made a contribution in how to understand and solve the problem of a divergence between the domestic commodity price ratios and the marginal rates of transformation, which basically is when there is a domestic distortion of some sort (e.g. structural changes, new investments, new technologies, etc.). His argument deals with whether countries should use free trade, tariffs, or subsidies when trying to protect an infant industry, and if there is an optimum subsidy (*tariff-cum-subsidy*) with the purpose of establishing a relative price (Bhagwati & Ramaswami 1963: 44). He states that there is no empirical basis for arguing that a tariff is superior to free trade but at the same time acknowledge that his calculations can’t assure that free trade won’t impede the development of infant industries. His main argument on this particular area is therefore: *“a tax-cum-subsidy on the domestic production of the commodities, which eliminates the divergence between the price ratio and the domestic rate of transformation in production, would necessarily yield a better solution than protection”* (Bhagwati & Ramaswami 1963: 49). Which in other words mean, that Bhagwati emphasizes how subsidies can be relevant when dealing with infant industries and that these are preferable over tariffs.

By extending his own early work, Bhagwati has used several economic models with the purpose of analyzing how different tariffs and quotas can end up being *directly unproductive activities* and hereby be immiserizing to growth and reduce welfare.

While he acknowledge that certain revenue-seeking trade tariffs may, paradoxically, improve welfare, he finds that trade quotas on exports or imports, when defined solely in quantity (rather than value) terms, will altogether have a negative effect on the welfare of the particular country. In his model it is shown, that the constrained-trade equilibrium will result in a reduction in consumption which will immiserize growth (Bhagwati & Srinivasan 1982: 34).

## **2.3 Neo-Functionalism**

First of all it is worth noting that this theory was originally intended for the use of analyzing different types of transnational integration and cooperation, and not only European state relationships. Therefore we argue that the theory is applicable when trying to identify supranational institutional conditions whether they are identified in Europe or outside of Europe (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 60)

The theory's primary concern is to explore which factors causes European integration to increase or expand. It is claimed by neo-functionalists that, self-interests of institutions and interest groups are the main factor for continuant and increasing European integration. Supranational institutions can overrule national states in the EU, and will therefore have to be examined alongside non-state actors such as international investors or TNC's (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 59, 61, 65).

This self-interest or self-preserving drive can be directly identified in further economic integration between states in the EU, since the interest groups mainly consists of international investors whom are looking for new investment opportunities, new markets for investments present such an opportunity. But the member states can also play a role. E.g. states or political parties often try to secure jobs within their own national market. By expanding the economic integration within the EU, this goal can be more easily achieved (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 59, 61).

The founder of neo-functionalism is Ernst B. Haas. He started the seminal theorizing in European integration with his book *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic forces 1950-57* (Haas, 1958). Three hypotheses are put forward by neo-functionalists such as Haas; 1. The spillover hypothesis, 2. The elite

socialization hypothesis and 3. The supranational interest group hypothesis (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 60).

Haas puts forth the view, that policy making in one area could have a spillover effect in another policy area. This refers to a situation where cooperation between different EU policy areas, would create a kind of pressure on the neighboring policy area for further European integration. In so creating a *natural* flow of continual integration of the policy areas that can happen by coincidence, however this is not always the case. This *automatic* process of spillover can be also be manipulated politically into happening by different actors and institutions (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 63-64).

Elite socialization could be seen as the foundation for creating and maintaining a supranational institution. Bureaucrats and politicians within the supranational institutions of the EU will often socialize with each other in the international environment. This environment of course contains different nationalities. In this environment the civil servants will socialize, thus creating a new European loyalty, replacing the national loyalty to a certain extend.

This national neutrality is of course already the ideal for civil servants working within EU institutions. But Haas argues that this *loyalty transfer* will occur naturally through years of socialization. Neo-functionalists have succeeded in predicting the phenomenon of these elite groups with a pan-European idea and norm set coming into existence (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 60, 64). These European elites will then seek to convince the national elites of the benefits of supranational cooperation. In this international environment the negotiations between member states will become less fused with different political standpoints and a more technocratic approach will be accepted (Haas 1958: 291).

The civil servants of the EU are not the only actors who will develop a supranational orientation according to neo-functionalists. Also the corporate interest groups will become organized towards influencing the supranational community's agenda. E.g. the Confederation of European Business' formed in 1958. Investor groups will become more focused on having an influence or voice within supranational institutions rather than within the national ones. The lobbying in Brussels is directly pin pointed at the supranational agency of The European Commission. As a consequence national ties and relationships between the now

international firms and national level institutions will deteriorate and suffer. Neo-functionalists were able to predict the nature of how the lobbying would evolve; today we are talking more about Europeanized corporations rather than state based one – TNC's or interest groups. E.g. transnational interest groups like Greenpeace push for a common European climate policy (Cini & Borragán, 2013: 65, Web source 12).

## **2.4 Conclusive conceptualization**

We have included mercantilism and liberalism to provide theoretical concepts to understand international trade. An important fact and an intentionally choice have been not to use economic models and calculations for analyzing the specific numbers in the EPA but we have instead used the theory as a way of conceptualizing the essential theoretical foundation of the agreement. We are using the two different economic perspectives as a continuum and thereby trying to analyze how the EU's approach towards trade with the ECOWAS has shifted.

A key area of the forthcoming analysis is the contrast between non-reciprocity versus reciprocity. It is therefore essential that we explain how we understand these two concepts and how we are going to apply them into the analysis.

### **2.4.1 Non-reciprocity**

The mercantile theory offers an explanation as to why using protectionist measures when aiming to develop the industry, and in particular infant industries, in a developing country can be beneficial. Considering this argument in the perspective of how to put together a trade agreement between a developed country (or group) and a developing country (or group) it can be argued, on a theoretical basis, that a strategy not containing free-trade is the most profound way of helping developing countries develop their industries. Non-reciprocity shall therefore be understood as an approach in the conduct of making trade agreements where the focus isn't on breaking down tariffs barriers for export to the European market, by incorporating a liberal trade strategy, but to allow and assist developing countries to obtain protectionist measures in a period of time until their industries are capable of competing at the global market.

Specifically we will use the mercantile theory to identify when indicators for a non-reciprocal approach is the case in historical trade agreements and in the recent EPA between the EU and the ECOWAS.

### **2.4.2 Reciprocity**

The liberal theory offers explanation and mathematical calculations showing how the concept of free trade is to prefer over protectionism since increased trade will add value to domestic merchants which ultimately will generate higher revenue for the country. The liberal theory confronts the idea that developing countries need a protectionist trade strategy and explains why a developing country (or group) can benefit from having a free trade agreement with a developed country (or group). It is on this theoretical basis that we understand that the concept of reciprocity, as the main driver in a trade agreement, obviously will benefit the developed country but ultimately also will benefit the developing country on a long-term basis.

Specifically we will use the liberal theory to identify when indicators for a reciprocal approach is the case in historical trade agreements and in the recent EPA between the EU and the ECOWAS.

### **2.4.3 Institutionalism**

In addition to the economic theory we have found it useful to include the perspective of supranationalism. Neo-functionalism gives us a tool for understanding the level of influence that supranational institutions hold over both the EU and the ECOWAS and how the level differs from the two parties. We find it relevant to include the neo-functional perspective as a tool for understanding the implications and restraints of institutions when having different levels of power to exercise its strategies.

Specifically we will consider the implications that trade agreements put on the institutional apparatus in the ECOWAS countries.

## **3.0 Methodology**

This section will be a statement of our scientific position, the theoretical implications and methodological approach in this project.

Contrary to the conceptual framework, we will operationalize in the individual subheads throughout this section and conclusively have a final operationalization where we explain how we are going to combine the theoretical perspectives, methodology, and empirical material in the analysis.

### **3.1 Philosophy of science**

We understand that basic epistemological and ontological perceptions are essential in how we can understand the results from our analysis as evident, or if we even can see them as evident (Juil & Pedersen 2012: 10).

Our scientific position will be *scientific realism*. We have chosen this in the light of our ambition to uncover knowledge of deep structures and mechanisms that are difficult to observe.

A thorough dissemination of our scientific position is needed in order for us to create coherence all the way from the research questions and to the conclusion (ibid.: 418).

Scientific realism puts a great emphasis on the philosophical question of *being*. Scientific realists argue that the ontology can't be grasped through the epistemology which means that *truth* can't be determined from its methodology. The *transitive* knowledge derives from a historical context which is in a state of constant change and is fallible. Scientific acknowledgement shall therefore not try to systemize impressions and observations of the world but instead try to uncover so-called *mechanisms* which makes it possible to observe with our senses. E.g. Gravity is a mechanism and when it is observed by a sensory apparatus it is merely observed in its function and not necessarily understood. Scientific realists accept how the world consists of an open system wherein mechanisms and structures interact in highly complex ways which makes predictions of the future impossible (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen: 277ff).

The scientific realist outlook tries to challenge the positivistic point of view. More specifically, a challenge of the positivistic assertion of how realization of the world can only be brought forth through observable phenomenon's which is directly coherent with the ontology. This is what Roy Bhaskar defines as an epistemological fallacy. According to scientific realist the world exists independently from our

awareness of it which ultimately makes a scientific realist an ontological realist. This truth about ontology is called the intransitive dimension and this is where the transitive dimension (or the epistemology) gets its current historical form. This makes scientific realists epistemological relativists since the epistemology has changed and will continue to change historically (ibid.: 285)

The intransitive dimension can be divided into three domains; the empirical domains which consist of our observations and experiences. The actual domain which consist of all phenomenon's and events that occur independently of our recognition of it. And the deep domains where mechanisms and structures, which can be very difficult to observe, potentially can cause phenomenon's and events in the actual domain.

Scientific realists establish how social systems in the intransitive dimension are open. The systems are open because causal laws rarely occur in the social reality. Scientific realists aren't dealing with laws per se but tendencies instead. Positivist would explain observations of phenomenon's or events through empirical laws arguing that when incident A then follow incident B. The scientific realists emphasize how the deep domain contains a number of highly complex structures and mechanisms which lead to causalities determining how events play out. These contingent causalities in objects means that the intransitive dimension is a very differentiated reality where humans causal potential can be triggered and be expressed in different ways depending on which structures and mechanisms that are being activated (ibid.: 280ff)

Alexander Georg and Andrew Bennett have further developed the conceptualization of Roy Bhaskar's work regarding *causal mechanisms*. They define it as follows: “*we define causal mechanisms as ultimately unobservable physical, social or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information or matter to other entities.*” (Georg & Benntt 2005: 137). This quote gives us two important implications to how we can understand scientific realism; first we learn that agents, who operate in the sphere of causal mechanisms (or structures), are constrained by these mechanisms since they are the independent variable. Secondly we learn that agents have capacities but only in a specific context. This means that all knowledge

generated from the scientific position can only be understood within its context. This is because the causal mechanisms and structures in the deep domain are complex and, more importantly, differs from context to context, which makes it very difficult to generalize and develop certainties that are applicable to various cases in the social sciences.

These implications from our scientific stance are highly relevant when trying to understand and analyze why the EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS faced difficulties and were prolonged. The fact that the individual actors operates in a sphere, where complex structures have great influence in what kind of output is generated when actors activates specific causal mechanics.

### **3.1.1 Interdisciplinarity**

The basic assumptions in scientific realism and its related research method is much correlated with interdisciplinarity. The premise in the argument lies with the acknowledgement of how unknown phenomenon's can't be fully understood in a world of complex structures and mechanisms in the open systems (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen 2012: 300f). The interdisciplinarity in our project can be found in the theoretical apparatus since we have included theories of economics and neo-functionalism as theoretical perspectives to understand various aspects of why the EPA negotiations encountered several difficulties and were stalled.

### **3.2 Discourse theory**

Contributing to our methodical approach we have included the theory of discourse analysis as a tool for identifying and interpreting the shift the EU has undergone from being non-reciprocal into being reciprocal in their approach towards trade agreements with African regions. Because there are several different approaches within discourse analysis, we have chosen the Laclau and Mouffe version as a way of delimit and concretize our practical approach. The operationalization of this exact approach will be explained in the following.

The various aspects of discourse analysis have, since the 1980's, developed into a well-established approach in the social sciences. The diversity within the understanding of what the theory actually is makes it subject for a differentiated and interdisciplinary approach where more than one theory can be used in interaction with each other (Phillips 2012: 263f). The discourse analytical approach aligns with the premise in post-structuralism where there isn't one single general system of significance but instead a number of discourses where the significance change from discourse to discourse because they are unstable (Phillips 2012: 266).

The main fulcrum in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffé's discourse theory is *the battle of discourses*. They emphasize how different discourses, which have capabilities of giving different meanings to concepts, compete as to how specific words are to be understood – *hegemony* of meanings. It is through the practice of *articulation* where a relation between elements is established which then creates a discourse. *Antagonism* is the name for conflict in discourse theory. An antagonism occurs when two different discourses clash in an attempt to put a certain meaning to a certain word or concept. When a discourse is not yet created it is the different *floating signifiers* that are trying to fill the content of words and concepts, but when a discourse is created its significance is *crystallized* around certain *nodal points* (Phillips 2012: 279f).

The concepts in the above explained theory will be a guide to help us identify which discourses are articulated in the different trade agreements between the EU and the ECOWAS all the way from Lomé and up to the recent EPA. We will analyze how subject positions are created through a temporary consensus around a nodal point. More specifically, we will use the concept of trade agreements as a nodal point while we identify non-reciprocity and reciprocity as an antagonism of two different subject positions competing in the battle of discourses with the aims of achieving a hegemonic discourse.

### **3.3 Document analyses**

A large part of the methodological framework in our project rest upon the field of document analysis. In this chapter, we will explain how this method works and what characterizes this approach.

Document analysis finds use in several areas of investigation, and is a common method within an institutional analysis, such as ours. This approach is, among others, used to uncover the process and development of norms and structures within organizations as well as the change in political climate (Lynggaard 2010: 137).

This approach teaches the importance of knowing what kind of document you are dealing with. Documents are grouped as primary, secondary and tertiary. A primary document is a text, produced in relation to a specific event, by actors close to the event. This could be meeting records or personal notes from an actor close to the event. Typically, a primary document is produced within a closed forum and is often difficult to obtain. A secondary document is a text similar to the primary document, as it contains information about the event from the source, but made public. This could be government reports, newspaper articles or public reports from various organizations. A tertiary document is public, in the same way as a secondary but produced after the event that the document refers to. A tertiary text is commonly analytical in its approach to prior events and includes newspaper articles, academic books or scientific journals (Lynggaard 2010: 138). This grouping is not necessary distinctive but are of great importance to the scientist because it urges to know the timeframe, context and the intended receiver of the document. In our project we are trying to establish organizational patterns in a historic context and the secondary sources are therefor of great relevance to us. If our aim had been secret agendas and exercise of power, primary documents had held more relevance. Within the doctrine of document analysis, the selection of primary, secondary and tertiary sources depends upon the field of study (Lynggaard 2010: 140). In our project, we have decided to construct the framework upon two pillars, in order to answer our research question. First, we want to uncover the institutional development within the EU and secondly we want to explain the differences between the economic paradigm in the ECOWAS and the EU and how those have influenced the EPA negotiations.

Document analysis offers a method to combine our two pillars, given the focus on historic patterns and their effect on today's negotiations in our project. The strength of

document analysis lies in its contribution to the dataset of analysis with focus on historic changes within organizations (Lynggaard 2010: 141).

In the process of selecting our data, we have decided to use the snowball method. Within this method, focus is on the mother document. The scientist is to decide upon a main document and all other documents used, should have some kind of relation or relevance to this document. Often the main document is directly linked to the area of research and in some cases, is the focus of the research question (Lynggaard 2010; 143, 144). When deciding on data, it is important to pay attention to indicators of change in the theoretical foundation of the data, compared to previous documents (Lynggaard 2010: 145).

We have chosen the Cotonou agreement as the main document in our project. This is because we view the content as a main contributor to future EPAs, while at the same time is connected with the earlier Lomé agreements. In our empiric approach we have carefully selected data which relates to the Cotonou agreement, in order to stick to our methodic frame. It is also worth mentioning that we view the Cotonou agreement as secondary data, which complies with our range of research. In the following part we will explain our main document as well as other important data used in the project.

### **3.4 Empirical data**

This section will provide an overview of the empirical data we are going use for the analysis and answering of our research question. There isn't going to be a thorough explanation of the individual empirical data since it will be included in the analysis in a differentiated way when being relevant for different arguments.

In an overall perspective we use different sources in order to obtain an adequate empirical framework in which we have the abilities to use our methodical approach and theoretical concepts. This table is to show an overview of the empirical data we will use in the project.



<b>Main document</b>	The Cotonou agreement
<b>Previous trade agreements</b>	The Lomé agreements
<b>Legal outlines from WTO</b>	GATT 1994 article XXIV
<b>Scientific journals and reports from organizations</b>	Different scholars positions and analyzes on the trade relations between EU and ECOWAS
<b>Newspaper articles</b>	Articles which have the task of establishing certain facts in regards to specific dates and events.

The Cotonou agreement is the main document which is going to be referred to on several occasions throughout the analysis. We will, in addition, use other empirical data as a supplement in order to address the institutional changes and the related change of discourse in the EU's preferences towards trade agreements with the ECOWAS community.

### **3.4.1 Critique of empirical data**

The empirical data collected from scientific journals, reports from organizations, and newspaper articles is extensive. This compels us to have a general critical approach towards the objectiveness of the writers and publishers where we don't assess the arguments and conclusions as an ultimate truth but instead only as subjective perspective which can broaden our knowledge of aspects and implications regarding its relevance. A differentiated collection of sources of data can also contribute in seeing an event or a development through different angles.

### **3.5 Operationalization**

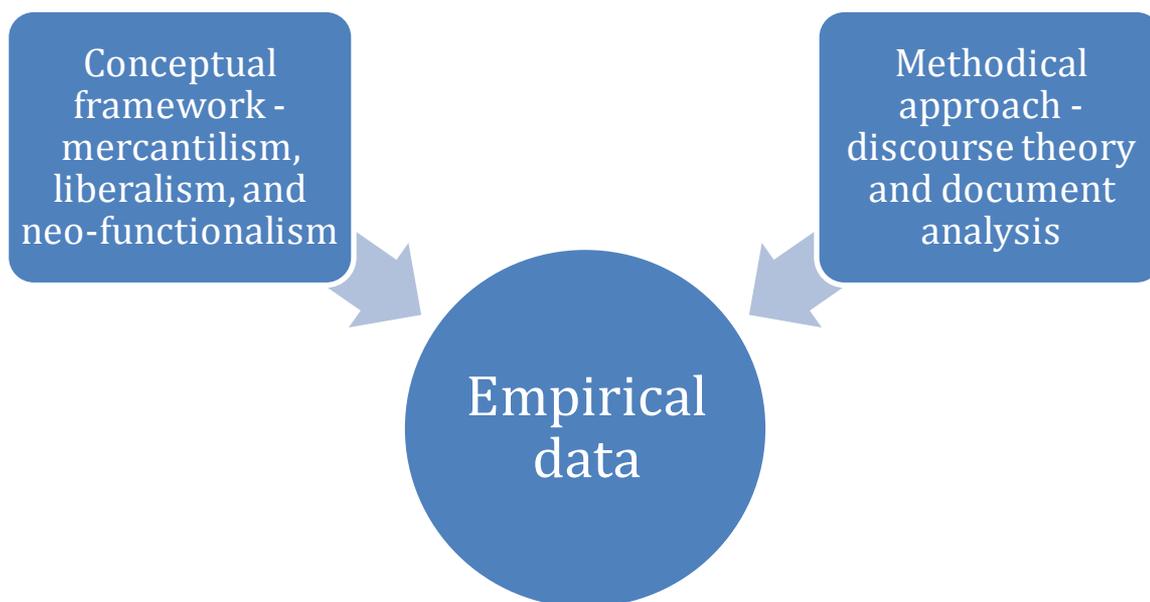
It is previously established how the three theoretical perspectives are going to contribute in the analysis and thereby help answering the research question. This section will explain how we are going to use our methodology consisting of scientific realism, discourse theory, and document analysis in a combination with our conceptual framework consisting of mercantilism, liberalism, and neo-functionalism as an adequate foundation in our objective to analyze the collected empirical data and to answer the research question as satisfactory as possible.

We have created three working questions which derive from our research question in an attempt to further explain our focus in the study and to structuralize the analysis. The first working question is going to give a comprehensive review and interpretation of the historical developments regarding trade agreements between the EU and the ECOWAS while the second question is focusing directly at the shift going from non-reciprocity to reciprocity. The third working question is deriving from the conclusions of the two previous working questions and is investigating how the aforementioned development has caused difficulties with the negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS.

The choice of combining discourse theory and document analysis should be viewed in the sphere of our attempt to discover how the discourse has changed from a non-reciprocal to a reciprocal and in order to do so we have acknowledged that differentiated empirical data is needed. Discourse theory gives us concepts for discovering changes in normative preferences while the document analysis gives us an opportunity to look at several different kinds of documents that we believe have had an influence on the development we are investigating. All the while keeping this combined practical approach under the ontological and epistemological assumptions that scientific realism holds.

Relating to our three working questions, we have decided to use the combination of discourse theory and document analysis only in question two. This choice has been made because the question is dealing with the discovery and analysis of discourses in a much more comprehensive way than research question one which is an analysis of the institutional change and question three which primarily analyze how the change in discourse had affected the current EPA negotiation.

The methodical approach is going to be influenced by the theoretical concepts and aspect that we have included. The concepts in mercantilism, liberalism, and neo-functionalism are going to be used thoroughly throughout the entire study because these theoretical perspectives gives a useful tool for understanding, analyzing and interpreting the implications which derives from our methodical processing of the empirical data.



The graph above shows the theoretical implications and methodical approach that we are going to use to process the empirical data. The table below shows an overview of the different working questions and how we are going to deal with them individually.

<b>Working questions</b>	<b>Methodical approach</b>	<b>Assignment of recognition</b>
What is the historical institutional background foreshadowing the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS?	A usage of document analysis with the theoretical perspectives for understanding findings in the empirical data.	This question establishes the framework from where we are going to analyze and interpret the change of discourse in the EU's approach towards the ECOWAS.
Which indicators have contributed to a discursive shift in the EU's trade preferences with the ECOWAS countries?	A usage of discourse theory within a document analysis with the theoretical perspectives for understanding findings in the empirical data.	This question establishes the indicators from where we can analyze and interpret if, how and why there has been a change in the discourse in the EU's preferences towards trade agreements with the ECOWAS.
Why has the shift in the EU's normative preferences caused difficulties in the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS?	A usage of document analysis with theoretical perspectives, but with a basis on the findings from previous working questions.	Establishing a change of preferences leads to the analysis of how the change has affected the practical negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS in signing the recent EPA.

## 4.0 Analysis

This section will contain a processing of the three working questions which are going to provide the analytic findings which will make us able to answer our research question.

### 4.1 The institutional historical background foreshadowing the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS

Trade between nations in the form of the institutional associations of the EU and the ECOWAS (which vary in institutional complexity and national autonomy), have a history of long standing trade relations and cooperation. Through the EU, Europe has evolved a certified supranational institutional voice on trade agendas (Web source 13, Web source 14). It can be argued that an efficient and effective institutional framework, where the conversion of economic potential to economic power takes place, have greatly contributed to the EU seizing the largest share of world trade in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Cini & Pérez 2013: 214).

The European Commission has carried out this unanimous voice concerning the EU trade policy since the Treaty of Rome in 1957. A Common Commercial Policy (CCP) was developed. The instruments in this policy consists of: the ability to seek out bilateral EPA's, and nowadays even multilateral agreements through the WTO, a set of counter measures to protect against "unfair" trade practices, such as dumping of goods on the EU market at unrealistically low prices as well as trade tools to sanction and punish if necessary (Cini & Pérez 2013: 215).

This meant that almost from the very onset of the unions establishment, the EU have focused on how to handle its relations to partners and rivals in the world economy. Historically the power and mandate of the Commission has grown with the enactment of treaties securing a common market, through an increasing number of member states joining the union, and with it the "assets" (human resources and territory). The global and European economy has of course changed considerably in the last 50 years. The trade relational challenges posed to the EU and more specifically the CCP by globalizing trade routes, new technology, new "intellectual property rights" (e.g. computer software) and financial services all contributed to

institutional expansion within the EU. The battle for necessary reforms was finally concluded with The Lisbon Treaty, resolving the tension and disagreement of how to deal with the challenges of the present day.

It might be argued on this basis, that the EU Commission has created a sophisticated apparatus, which have displaced the national trade policies of the member states (Cini & Pérez 2013: 215, 216).

Since the Treaty of Rome, the CCP created has outlined the policy-making processes and how the common commercial goals should be implemented in the different member states. Resulting in the modern and complex, but efficient, institutional web of the EU. It is very important to note, that while thorough and almost uninterrupted policy implementation regarding the question of how best to consolidate itself towards the global economy was taking place in Europe, West African countries was still struggling under the yoke of European colonialism. This clearly gave Europeans a head start in constructing supranational institutions, and also a head start in institutional knowledge. Approximately 17 years of institutional experience when comparing the ECOWAS with the EU. And that is without even considering the pre WWII institutional differentiation of the two regions. Taking that into consideration, it might not be realistic for the ECOWAS countries to cope with the increased competition from European TNC's that will surely follow. (Cini & Pérez 2013: 214, 215, Web source 15)

The field of foreign trade relations is important and has a large job creation potential (Web source 16). Therefore the economic wellbeing of the EU as a whole is affected by how the responsibility is managed. The importance of the European trade commissioner is underlined by British politician, and former commissioner Leon Brittan who at one point was quoted saying: *“Frankly, it is more important than most [national] cabinet jobs”* (Web source 17).

When the latest EPA agreement between the EU and ECOWAS was nearing completion, Karel De Gucht was holding the office of European Commissioner for Trade. The instrumental and substantial power of the European Commissioner for trade responsible for conducting the CCP have historically faced a dilemma; is the aim to secure economic stability and growth for EU citizens at the expense of global stability and development? Or should the policy aims prioritize global prosperity and

development at a relative expense of the welfare of EU citizens? In working question two we return to the schism of the embedded goals of the CCP. Where we will look at whether or not the trade commissioner has maintained a balance between a non-reciprocal and a reciprocal approach when conducting trade with the ECOWAS (Web source 18, Cini & Pérez 2013: 215, 217).

In general the EU had substantially evolved institutionally since the first Lomé negotiations took place, and the question of how to develop the ACP regions from a European point of view along with it. This was likely based upon Europeans own experiences with institutional development through the EU, which again would empirically underlined the importance and necessity of West African institutional development as theoretically proposed by Chang (Chang 2002: 115, 116, 117).

## **4.2 Indicators having contributed to a discursive shift in the EU's trade preferences with the ECOWAS countries**

This section of analysis is going to provide three indicators which have contributed in a discursive change of the EU's preferences towards the ECOWAS transferring from non-reciprocity to reciprocity.

Specifically we are going to examine how the different floating signifiers have articulated and affected the two antagonist subject positions (non-reciprocity contra reciprocity) and therethrough created discourses which have been hegemonic at different times. Based on these findings, we will be able to explain how the EU's normative preferences towards the ECOWAS have changed from the Lomé IV and to the Cotonou Agreement.

### **4.2.1 Non-reciprocity through the Lomé agreements**

From the onset of first Lomé conventions (75, 79 and 84), the EU expressed a wish to maintain good relations and a desire and commitment to help the ACP countries (including the ECOWAS countries), with the development of the old colonies through the means of trade and of subsidiary arrangements (Web source 19, Web source 20). The Europeans showed willingness to economically support the technological and institutional backwards, and politically unstable countries emerging as independent states from the 1960's and onwards on the African continent. By the nineties, the

fourth and longest Lomé plan so far, spanning 10 years total, shifted its main focus from industrial development and aid to institutional development:

The main amendments introduced are:

- *The respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law become essential elements of the Convention. This means that ACP countries that do not fulfill these criteria risk the retrieval of allocated funds;*
- *For the first time EDF is not increased in real terms;*
- *Phased programming is introduced, with the aim of increasing flexibility and improving performances from ACP countries. more attention is given to decentralized cooperation in the form of participatory partnership including a great variety of actors from civil society.*

(Web source 19)

The wording of the layout concluding the negotiations towards the ECOWAS has a clear shift towards institutional development. It suggests that the EU is aware of the necessity of institutional functionality. The message and intention of the EU is clear; West African countries cannot expect growth and prosperity through trade and/or aid if the institutional foundation isn't growing, ascertainable or evolving. This is supported by the argument from Chang where he emphasized the vital importance of a well-functioning institutional framework as a mean to growth and prosperity (Chang 2002: 131).

The fourth Lomé agreement expired in 2000. Talks of a new EPA resulting in the Cotonou agreement resumed in 1998. The starting point for the preparations for the negotiations of the Cotonou agreement was a green paper published by the European Commission in 1996. The Green Papers underlined a need for EU-ACP cooperation to adapt to: "*a different geostrategic situation*" (Web source 19) referring to the disbandment of the eastern blocks. A new world with new priorities was in the making according to the European Commission where the bipolar structure had ended abruptly, creating a new world order.



It can be argued that the Commission was publicly noting, that African Nations was no longer in direct danger of submitting to the rule of a communist hegemon like The Soviet Union, which could threaten European capitalist interests in Africa. This indicates that the EU non-reciprocal aid approach towards Africa, was not only a humanitarian effort, but also partly politically motivated by a wish to protect future capital investments in Africa. Mainly materially unequal countries with poor economic integration into the world economy, have historically switched away from a governmental liberal ideology, in favor for a communist regime with plan economic structures. This knowledge would have influenced the European Commission's decision-making prior to the fourth Lomé agreement. The Soviet Union was officially disbanded in 1991 (Chang 2002; 15, Web source 21, Web source 22, Web source 23).

The fourth Lomé agreement did not remove the non-reciprocal approach practiced by the EU, but added and prioritized the political layers to the agreement even more, as well as using the trade platform to influence ACP countries towards a democratic and liberal approach (Web source 19, Web source 20).

In such a manner one could argue that the Lomé agreements was an important instrument for the EU to contain ACP countries and make sure they didn't developed in a more protectionist direction. We thereby suspect non-reciprocity as the dominating subject position in the nodal point (the nodal point being the perception of how trade agreements between the EU and the ECOWAS should be designed) at that particular time. The discourse which permeated the Lomé agreements has changed since, which we will elaborate in the following part.

#### **4.2.2 From non-reciprocity to reciprocity**

The Green Paper, published in 1996, aimed at causing debate towards the future EU-ACP relationship in general and trade was only part of this. The report noted WTO discontentment with non-reciprocal agreements, as they were in violation with the WTO ambition of achieving free markets (Green Paper 1996: 20). In this context, we view free markets as a floating signifier, which tries to fill the meaning and content in the liberal discourse. The Green Paper evaluated on earlier EU-ACP cooperation. They concluded that the non-reciprocal approach regarding exports, had strengthened the economy in implicated ACP countries, but not up to a satisfactory level. Growth

in exports to the EU from the ECOWAS area was not satisfactory, because of inefficiency in the West African institutional framework. Also a lack of political will from the ECOWAS leaders was identified (Green Paper 1996: 18). Even more crucial for the EU's normative change regarding the reciprocity was the Marrakech-treaties and the creation of the WTO as a judicial partner in regard to trade. The new, more effective procedures, regarding settlement of dispute in trade relations greatly strengthened the WTO and posed a serious threat to more non-reciprocal cooperation. The report further concluded that ongoing political instability, lack of necessary policies and structural requirements had to some degree participated in the failure of the earlier non-reciprocal approaches. Overall, the value connected to basic elements in the Lomé agreement, such as non-reciprocity, had a significant importance for the ACP countries but the economic benefits were at the same time meagre. The green paper mentions a possible future solution where the absence of non-reciprocity is the key change. The solution would impose a period upon which reciprocity would be gradually implemented (Green Paper 1996: 21).

The Cotonou agreement marked a turning point in EU-ACP relations. The Cotonou agreement specifically states that future trade relations must comply with WTO regulations: *"(...)the Parties agree to take all the necessary measures to ensure the conclusion of new WTO-compatible economic partnership agreements, removing progressively barriers to trade between them and enhancing cooperation in all areas relevant to trade"* (Cotonou 2000: Article 36, 1). The EU accepted the WTO normative. Trade should be conducted according to article XXIV of the GATT 1994. This stated that further trade should be towards implementing areas of free trade (GATT 1994: Article 24)

The change in the EU preferences relies on WTO's normative in regard to reciprocity. The preference towards free trade signifies an encouragement of liberal values, which we interpreted as a change into a higher level of support to the liberal discourse. It is clear that the switch from non-reciprocal preferences to reciprocal preferences can be characterized by the further commitment to liberalism. Free trade is one of many concepts, which participated in the battle of discourses in order to establish hegemony of meanings within the nodal point. It is hereby established that the WTO has a discourse, which we have identified through our conceptual framework as liberal.

The recent EPA negotiations are characterized by the reciprocal approach towards trade. The non-reciprocal approach, which was advocated in Lomé had changed. Through this change we have established how, non-reciprocity and reciprocity are identified as two subject positions, which is trying to dominate the discourse.

We can therefore conclude that reciprocity has gained momentum compared to non-reciprocity though the antagonist articulation where free trade has had a massive influence as a floating signifier affecting the nodal point.

#### **4.2.3 The free market and the private sector**

The interest of the private sector has been one of the main contributors to European integration in so creating the supranational institutional outlay in the present day EU. The private sector identified the economic possibilities and the benefits of a joint European trade platform. The drive towards EU economic integration and centralization of European institutional competences is tied to the interest of these investors for a stronger platform to form international trade.

The EU claimed that the non-reciprocal system failed because import from ACP countries to the EU has dropped from 7% to 3% of the EU's total import. Furthermore the aim is to integrate ACP countries into the world economy and share in the opportunities offered by globalization (Web source 3).

An institutionally more developed EU since the Lomé agreements has carried out the change of preferences in trade. According to Neo-functionalism, the institutional change is influenced partly by the interest of the private sector. Specifically TNC's based in Europe can put pressure on the EU commission through lobbying to try and force a more reciprocal EPA with the ECOWAS on the agenda. The reasoning for these TNC's to put pressure on the commission would simply be the huge opportunity for investments that could present itself for these companies. Therefore, a more reciprocal structured agreement is potentially good business for these companies. (Dicken 2015: 242). The drive for further European integration can be seen as being rational which ultimately will place the institution in a beneficial position in the system of international trade. Linking the wishes of the private sector to the policy carried out by the EU can explain where the discursive shift towards a more liberal approach derives from. Adam Smith explains how a merchant in a free market inevitably will strive to add as much value to his business as possible (Smith 1970



[1776], vol. I: 400). The motivation therefore lies in the ability to generate a surplus and expand which becomes compatible with policies shaped by the EU. However, Chang points out that removing tariff barrier would only benefit countries holding the advantage, and through historical scrutiny, reveals that the developed countries had high level of tariffs, when their own economy was at an infant state (Chang 2002: 20). Further on, Chang advocates that the intent from WTO and EU policymakers, imposing liberal values, may be misguide because he concludes that free trade and removal of tariff barriers may be destructive for infant industries in LDC's when trading with already developed countries (Chang 2002;139).

#### 4.2.4 Sub Conclusion

EUs normative regarding preferences when trading with ACP countries had its most significant change in the Cotonou agreement. This is because the Cotonou agreement agrees that future trade relations should comply with WTO rulings. The change towards reciprocity originates from a genuine idea that liberal values are superior. The change in discourse is tied to the free trade normative of WTO, as the Cotonou agreement states that future trade cooperation should be conducted in compliance to WTO guidelines.

This table summarizes our findings in this section

Trade agreements	Lomé IV	Cotonou
Floating signifiers	Aid and development	Free trade
Antagonist subject positions	Non-reciprocity	Reciprocity
Discourses	Institutional development	Liberal

We hereby conclude that free trade and reciprocity are the main indicators which have affected the discourse best described as liberal which has permeated the Cotonou agreement and the following EPA negotiation between the EU and the ECOWAS. We also establish how the process of articulation has been deeply affected by the green paper and the influence of TNC's.

### **4.3 The difficulties in the recent EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS**

As a preliminary exercise before embarking on the analysis, we sought to read as much of the current literature as to why the EU-ECOWAS EPA negotiations had encountered difficulties and thereby been prolonged. During this reading we quickly came across some of the main concerns expressed by different governments, NGO's or groupings in the private sector. These concerns were primarily dealing with the economic aspects of the draft the EU had presented which granted access to the European market according to the GSP while ACP countries gradually open their markets duty-free for 80 % of their imports from the EU over a 15-year transition period. ECOWAS made a counter offer which gradually opened the West African market for European import with 70 % over a 25-year period. The negotiations are finished and the final agreement landed on a 75 % opening over a 20-year period (UNECA 2015: 155, Web source 24) and is waiting to be official signed (Web source 25). During the course of the recent EPA negotiations the point regarding removal of ECOWAS trade barriers stalled the progress of the negotiations for almost two years. Mercantilistic ideas represented by the ECOWAS were resisting the liberal EU discourse. But eventually a compromise was found (Web source 5).

As previously mentioned this project will not evaluate on the final agreement but contrary investigate why these differences regarding the rate and speed of openness had a major influence in prolonging of the negotiations. We have identified two variables through our readings of literature on the EPA negotiations and our main object during this sub-analysis is to understand and interpret these variables through our theoretical framework.

#### **4.3.1 Fiscal implications on revenue**

One of the areas which have been subject to major debate has been how an opening of the West African market for European import would create an immediate fall in revenues for each country in the ECOWAS. Most of the sub-Saharan countries have been struggling with fiscal instability tracing all the way back to 1995. Facing those challenges many countries saw it as a solution to expand the tax base which, in most

cases, generated an increase in revenue. This development has made African countries heavily dependent on trade taxes as a source of revenue. Statistics from 2004 show that trade taxes generated 30.5 % of the total revenue in the sub-Saharan area, compared with the high-income OECD countries where trade taxes only accounted for 0.8 % of revenue, and while most of the world decreased its taxes on trade as a booster of revenue, African countries stayed flat or slightly increased in a period from 1995-2002 (UNECA 2004: 192f). Calculations done by the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa show that the full implementation of the EPA will decrease the tariff revenue for ECOWAS by 19.3 % (Mevel et al. 2015: 14)

The outlines in the Cotonou agreement are quite clear regarding the modalities of new trading arrangements: *“the Parties [EU and ACP countries] agree to conclude new World Trade Organisation (WTO) compatible trading arrangements, removing progressively barriers to trade between them and enhancing cooperation in all areas relevant to trade”* (Cotonou 2001 article 36: 1). This set the precedents for a restructuring of the fiscal implications from which many African countries uses taxes on trade to generate revenue. A comment to this is how the Cotonou agreement doesn't have the scope to determine how these barriers are to be diminished; it simply set the general outlines for the aim of the later coming EPA negotiations. The level of how much the West African markets should be opened wasn't the only disagreement regarding the future loss in revenue because of the liberalization. The West African ministers of finance and trade proposed a one-time subsidy in the amount of 16 billion euros from EU to the EPA Development Programme (EPADP) in order to keep its policies and current projects ongoing (e.g. infrastructure, agriculture, energy). The two parties ended on a compromise sending 6.5 billion euro from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to EPADP. (Web source 24).

The theoretical implications of how a country or region should open its trade to other parties and how it should be done has been an area of study ever since the concept of free trade came to be. Adam Smith wrote:

*“It may sometimes be a matter of deliberation, how far, or in what manner it is proper to restore the free importation of foreign good ... when particular manufacturers, by means of high duties or prohibitions upon all foreign goods which come into competition with them, have been so far extended as to employ a great multitude of*

*hands. Humanity may in this case require that freedom of trade should be restored only by slow graduations and with a good deal of reserve and circumspection”* (Bhagwati 2007: 254)

This theoretical perspective permeates the entire EPA negotiation regarding future loss in revenue since the main debate is about the rate and the tempo. Bhagwati has another interesting point in the gradual process of liberalization is in how freeing trade, which will lower prices, may lead to unemployment in the import-competing industries. Because of this fact he emphasizes that *“the more the politicians are able to provide adjustment programs to take special case of those who might be displaced in import-competing industries by trade liberalization, the less difficult it has been to secure political consent for trade liberalization”* (Bhagwati 2007: 255). The literature from Bhagwati then suggests that strong institutional foundation is crucial when wanting to liberalize a country or region.

Drawing up the facts saying that the EU is very interested in opening up trade as much and fast as possible meanwhile not being willing to provide the aid that the ECOWAS finds necessary for their political institutions to cope with the future changes is a critique on the European approach in the negotiations and one of the reasons as to why they were stalled. The colonial time is one of the main reasons as to why the African nations are far behind European standards in institutional strength and political options (Web source 15) and seen through a supranational perspective the ECOWAS doesn't have the same clout as e.g. the EU has. The EU were therefore putting the ECOWAS in a hopeless situation since they were facing a huge short-term loss in revenue while not getting compensated with a proper amount which ultimately would give their institutions even less room for manoeuvre in handling political issues on a domestic level that the structural changes will cause. The EU is therefore, to an extent, indirectly depriving the West African countries their sovereignty and forcing them under a WTO agenda not only on the area of international trade, but also on the domestic level because of their weak institutions and lack of political will.

#### **4.3.2 Intra-African trade**

The second finding of reason as to why the negotiations have been stalled can be found in the design of different EPA's with the different regions in the ACP. Even

though the recent EPA is WTO compatible it is asymmetric since the level of openness of Africa markets for European import varies from African region to region. The main concern that the ECOWAS, and other African regions, have held are the potential impact on Africa's regional trade and integration. A study published from the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa has shown that the fully implementation of the EPA will mean that non-LDCs from ECOWAS will divert some of their export from African partners to the EU. This will reduce intra-African trade with \$3 billion in 2040 (Mevel et al. 2015: 13f). The study conclusively emphasize how the ACP community should strive to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) before EPA with EU get fully implemented (as mentioned; the EPA has a duration period of 20 years before fully implemented) they could reverse its negative effects on the African economies (Mevel et al. 2015: 3). The CFTA negotiations between the fifty-four African countries were put on the agenda in January 2012 and are expected to take place in 2015-2016 and are planned to be launched by 2017 (Web source 26).

The above information shed some light on why so many LDCs have been reluctant to sign the EPA, before progress in the CFTA negotiations, out of fear of the future decrease in intra-African trade relations. Given that the non-LDCs will experience more relative export to Europe than the LDCs can have a negative effect on the development and industrializing of the LDCs and thereby create a higher level of disparity within the ECOWAS. Taken Chang's theoretical point of view into the picture the shift from intra-African trade on to more international trade will kick away the latter and press down the fragile infant industries in the LDCs because they will lose income previously generated from the products they use to sell to other African countries. Both the Ricardian and the Heckscher-Ohlin perspective would see a development where trade shifts from being primarily regional into international because a specialization process with two-country and two-commodity trade ultimately will generate an optimum situation where the labor-intensive industries in West African countries will be attractive to capital-intensive industries in Europe.

Going back to the practical process of the EPA negotiations, the EU approach can be seen as inconsistent with the outlines of the Cotonou agreement. Starting in the preamble the agreement emphasizes:

*“AFFIRMING their [EU and ACP] commitment to work together towards the achievement of the objectives of poverty eradication, sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy” (L 317/5) and also in the procedures of the EPA negotiation:*

*“Negotiations of the economic partnership agreements shall aim notably at establishing the timetable for the progressive removal of barriers to trade between the Parties, in accordance with the relevant WTO rules. (...) Negotiations will therefore be as flexible as possible in establishing the duration of a sufficient transitional period, the final product coverage, taking into account sensitive sectors, and the degree of asymmetry in terms of timetable for tariff dismantlement, while remains in conformity with WTO rules then prevailing”*

The above citation indicates a lot of good-will from the EU, however, by the time of 2007 only the Caribbean ACP member (CARIFORUM) had signed an interim EPA, and negotiations with other ACP member weren't being concluded. The European Commission got very frustrated with the lack of process and in 2011 they proposed that the EU should withdraw preferential access for some countries which had not taken the necessary steps towards reaching an agreement. The proposal from the European Commission was not meant to target LDCs who would still operate under the EBA scheme, but instead some of the non-LDCs (Young & Petersen 2013: 505). Focusing on ECOWAS, this proposal where targeting Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana which are low-income countries (LIC) and not LDCs.

On one hand, this strategic move by the European Commission obviously created a great deal of disunity in the ECOWAS community where the LICs being more interested in signing an agreement than the LDCs were. Taken the facts into account it can be argued that the combination of how LDCs would suffer more than LIC if an EPA was signed and the intra-African trade decreased, and how the European Commission created divisive in the ECOWAS community by letting the LICs pressure the LDCs, it is understandable that the LDCs were feeling exposed, vulnerable, and in a poor negotiation position. Even the European Parliament urged against the Commission's proposal and emphasized that the EPA negotiations shouldn't be rushed (Web source 27). On the other hand it can be argued that it is not the EU's job to secure that the African regions create a CFTA before implementing

the EPA. EU believes that the EPA will benefit Africa independently of them launching a CFTA beforehand and therefore leaves it to the African regions to work it out themselves.

#### **4.3.3 Sub conclusion**

Summing up the answering of our third working question two main conclusions can be made. First we have shown how the current EPA will re-structuralize the fiscal structures in the ECOWAS countries which inevitably will remove some sovereignty and political room for maneuver. We emphasize that this fact is a critical issue since the domestic challenges these countries face requires a level of institutional capability that the states won't be able to exercise.

Secondly we have shown that the deal may be more beneficial for LICs than LDCs because the institutional framework for intra-African trade is capable of competing with the DFQF agreement the ECOWAS has made with the EU through the EPA. This has complicated the negotiations since the ECOWAS community has seemed divided between the LICs and the LDCs which have experienced trouble coming to a common stance in the negotiations.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

A changing point in the EU's normative preferences in trade relations with the ECOWAS occurred between the signing of the fourth Lomé agreement in 1990 and the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000. This paper concludes that a shift from a non-reciprocity development agenda to a reciprocal approach is a fact. The analysis explains how the geostrategic situation changed after the fall of the Soviet Union which changed the dominant discourse from an institutional development approach, where non-reciprocity prevailed, to a reciprocal agenda where concepts of free trade were greatly emphasized. The investigation finds it evident that a combination of the outlines generated by the formation of WTO in 1995 and the European Commission's publication of the Green Paper in 1996 had a massive influence in a change of discourse of how the EU sought to conduct and design trade agreements with developing countries and regions like the ECOWAS. The study finds that the new focus on reciprocal trade agreements are embedded within a liberal discourse where

the objective that trade agreements should seek to improve is the breakdown of tariffs and trade barriers so free market forces inevitably will develop the industries of developing countries.

This conclusion further on states that the implications of the shift of discourse have complicated the current EPA negotiations between the EU and the ECOWAS. ECOWAS' reluctance to sign the EPA led to stalled negotiations that exceeded the original timeframe set for the process. This paper finds that the main reasons as to why ECOWAS wouldn't sign the agreement was a concern of how the new reciprocal focus in the EPA would affect the fiscal structures of the individual countries in the ECOWAS community. The removal of tariffs would, in the short term, decrease the income generated from taxes on trade which is a relatively large part of the total revenue. We found this fact critical since the loss in revenue would eliminate the institutions ability to handle domestic issues and decrease the political room for maneuver. Secondly, this study shows how the EU's new reciprocal trade agenda would decrease the intra-African trade relations by encouraging African import from Europe instead of regional trade, which divided the ECOWAS community since it would have a greater negative impact on the African LDC's than it would on the African LIC's.

This paper thereby established that the normative preferences of the EU has changed from a non-reciprocity development agenda to a reciprocal approach and explained how this change has affected the current EPA negotiations.

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