

The Ecology of Technocracy and the Survival of the Resourceful

Exploring patterns and strategies of intra-elite communication within Brussels' disembedded political hamlet (and assessing the influence of Brazilian interests in manufacturing a consensus around European biofuels policy)

Kim Bizzarri
Ph.D Candidate
University of Strathclyde
Glasgow, UK

EU System of Governance

Energy Policy

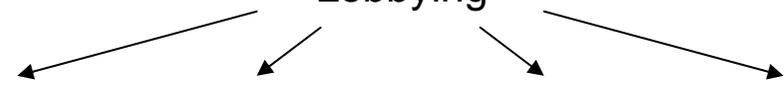
Agricultural Policy

Transport Policy

Rural Policy

BIOFUELS POLICY

Lobbying



Intra-EU conflicts

DE/IT/FR



EU



NL/SV

Sustainability Debate

...Directive
2003

Review
2005/6

Commission
(Proposal 2007)

Parliament

2008

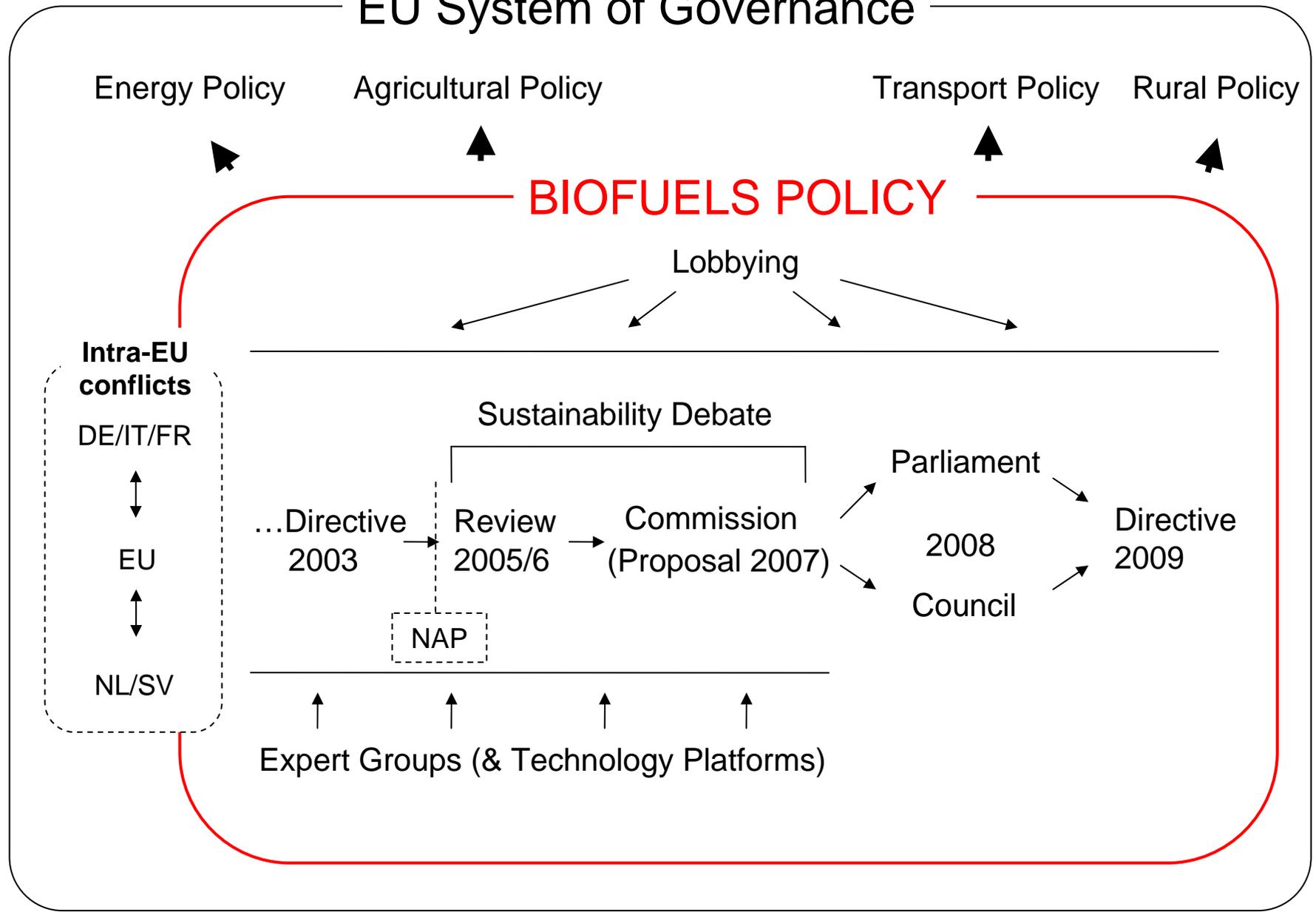
Council

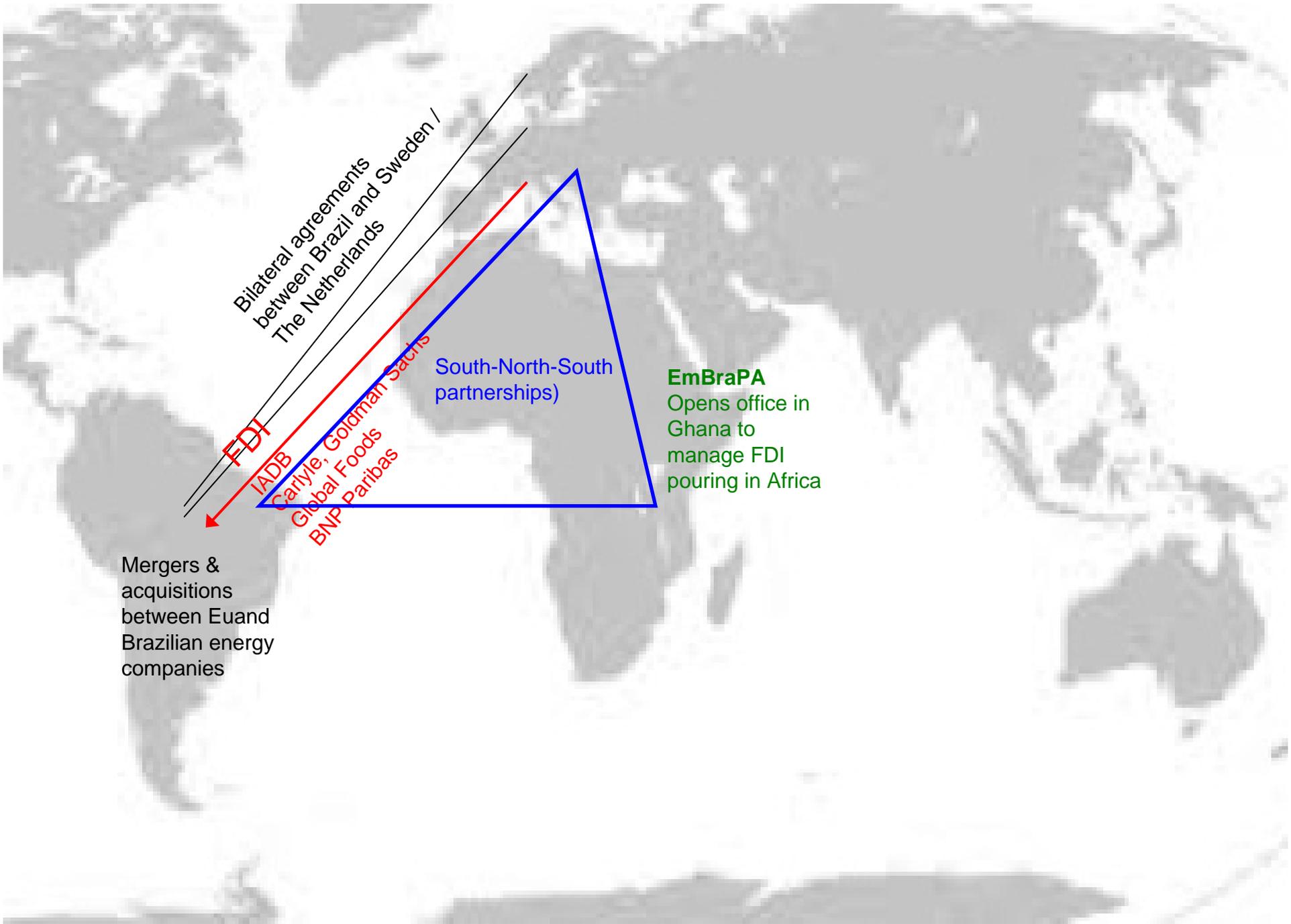
Directive
2009

NAP

Expert Groups (& Technology Platforms)

Exogenous Factors





Bilateral agreements
between Brazil and Sweden /
The Netherlands

FDI

IADB
Carlyle, Goldman Sachs
Global Foods
BNP Paribas

South-North-South
partnerships)

EmBraPA
Opens office in
Ghana to
manage FDI
pouring in Africa

Mergers &
acquisitions
between Euand
Brazilian energy
companies

HEGEMONY

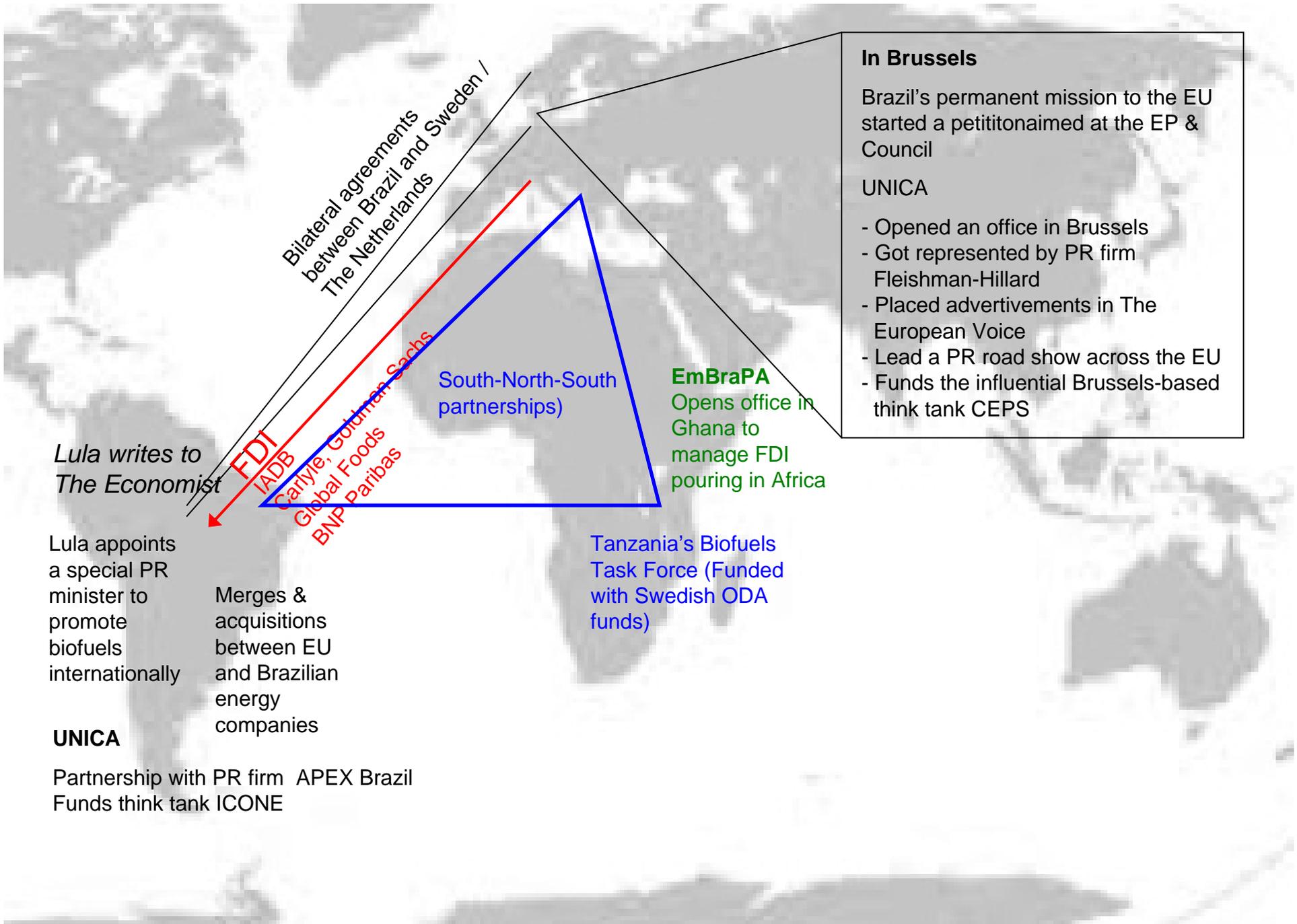
Hegemony refers to the institutionalisation of a set of ideas and practices constituting a structure of domination to be understood as a form of leadership or rule based on consent, rather than on coercion, and whose attainment requires the building of a concrete configuration of social forces whose rule is underpinned by an organic fit between material conditions, ideas and institutional practices.

WAR OF POSITION

He employs a military metaphor to suggest how social groups might avoid a frontal assault against entrenched adversaries by constituting a longer-term strategy, coordinated across multiple bases of power, to gain influence in the cultural institutions of civil society and develop organisation capacity that will win them new allies. As in a game of chess, power lies not just in the playing pieces but in the configuration of forces relative to each other and to their adversaries.

ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS

Each social group creates within itself one or more strata of intellectuals that gives it meaning, that helps to bind it together and helps it function. Essentially, they have developed organically alongside the ruling class and function for the benefit of the ruling class - to help it maintain its hegemony.



Bilateral agreements
between Brazil and Sweden /
The Netherlands

In Brussels
Brazil's permanent mission to the EU
started a petition aimed at the EP &
Council
UNICA
- Opened an office in Brussels
- Got represented by PR firm
Fleishman-Hillard
- Placed advertisements in The
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- Lead a PR road show across the EU
- Funds the influential Brussels-based
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Lula writes to
The Economist

Lula appoints
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minister to
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Merges &
acquisitions
between EU
and Brazilian
energy
companies

UNICA

Partnership with PR firm APEX Brazil
Funds think tank ICONE

Tanzania's Biofuels
Task Force (Funded
with Swedish ODA
funds)

Brazil's PR 'road show'

Aim: to "demystify" the unsustainable image of Brazilian biofuels

Brazilian delegation

Minister Correa do Lago
M.F.A.

André Nassar - ICONE

Prof. Weber Amaral
ESALQ (University of São Paulo)

Dr. Peter Zuurbier *Wageningen
University (NL)*

Affiliations

..... Funded by UNICA

..... CEO - Brazilian Centre
for Biofuels (Think Tank)

..... UNICA / Shell (Dutcham)

}

Book on sustainability of
Ethanol. 2008



Preface by
Prof. José Goldemberg
University of São Paulo

Dr. P. Zuurbier

Management Studies Group

- Education
- Research
- Publications
- News & Calendar
- Organisation
- Staff
- Contact details
- Links



Dr. Peter Zuurbier

Associate Professor of International Business Management

Room: 5063
Phone: (0031) (0) 317 - 484160 / (0031) (0) 6222 103 19
E-mail: Peter.Zuurbier@wur.nl

Peter Zuurbier studied in Utrecht, Rotterdam and Pretoria –Rep. of South Africa- before he was awarded his PhD degree in Wageningen in 1984. In his academic work he focused on strategic management between 1982 and 1999 with a heavy emphasis on designing and functioning of vertical alliances and networks in agri and food industry. He participated and coordinated research projects domestically and abroad, conducted workshops and contributed to many conferences and published extensively on this subject. In 2000 he became corporate director marketing of Wageningen UR, then corporate director communication and marketing, followed by the position as advisor international affairs to the Board of Wageningen UR. In 2005 he continued his work at the department of Management Studies and continued his institutional work for Wageningen UR focusing on Latin America.

Specializations

Peter is an expert on food chain management. His focus on strategic management has a strong international component. The current new point of attention is on strategic change management, connecting the body of knowledge on strategic and food chain management to the process of change in and between organizations, where implementation of changes is key for success. Obviously,

FCCC/CP/2008/INF.1 (Part 2)
Page 81

**Transparency International
(continued)**

Mr. Pascal Fabie
Director
Asia Pacific Department

Manoj Nadkarni
Programme Manager on Forestry
Governance

Mr. Dieter Zinnbauer
Chief Editor, Global Corruption Report

Ms. Farzana Nawaz
Assistant Project Coordinator
Policy and Research

Ms. Andrea Figari
Programme Manager
Conventions Programme

Mr. Manoj Nadkarni
Coordinator
Centre for Science and Environment

Mr. Charles Hall
Member

Mr. Philip Powell

**Turku School of Economics and
Business Administration**

Ms. Sylvia I. Karlsson
Academy Research Fellow
Finland Futures Research Centre

Mr. Antto Juhani Vihma
Researcher
Finland Futures Research Centre
Turku School of Economics and Business
Administration

Mr. Mika Flöjt
Researcher
University of Lapland

U.S. Climate Action Network

Mr. Peter Bahouth
Executive Director

UNEP - Insurance Initiative

Mr. Albert Knuth
Climate Change Working Group
CarbonRe

Ms. Eva M. Willmann de Donlea
Investment Area
Conscious Investors
Financial Standard

**UNICA - Brazilian Sugarcane
Industry Association**

Mr. Emmanuel Desplechin

Mr. Peter Zuurbier

Union of Concerned Scientists

Mr. Kevin Knobloch
President

Mr. Alden Meyer
Director, Strategy and Policy

NEWS



photo: Jos van de Vooren

Peter Zuurbier presenting the Wageningen UR activities in Brazil to prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende, with chairman Aalt Dijkhuizen of the Executive Board (middle) watching.

COOPERATION UNIVERSITY

Wageningen University Amsterdam agreement with Nagoya, Japan of students and Moors and Pa Earth System Change Group UR were presented the exchange on 27 January the Wageningen experts have been with Nagoya University research station East Siberia. This is primarily aimed at carbon and w

In Brussels

Brazil's permanent mission to the EU started a petition aimed at the EP & Council

UNICA

- Opened an office in Brussels
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- Lead a PR road show across the EU
- Funds the influential Brussels-based think tank CEPS

CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies)

- "We set out to establish that we are here to talk at the highest level"
- Board of directors (Etienne Davignon, ERT; Pedro Swartz, MPS)
- UNICA & Shell corporate members
- "[t]he past year has been intensive with a strong involvement of CEPS corporate members in our activities." (Activities Report 2008)
- Corporate Breakfast meetings
- Promoting market-based solutions via reports, policy briefings, academic articles and research programme / meetings, conferences and other events;
- 2008 Journal of Cleaner Production (biofuels special edition)
- 2008 Agrinergy conference (EU funded)

Bilateral agreements between Brazil and Sweden / The Netherlands

South-North-South partnerships)

EmBraPA
Opens office in Ghana to manage FDI pouring in Africa

FDI
IADB
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Tanzania's Biofuels Task Force (Funded with Swedish ODA funds)

Lula writes to The Economist

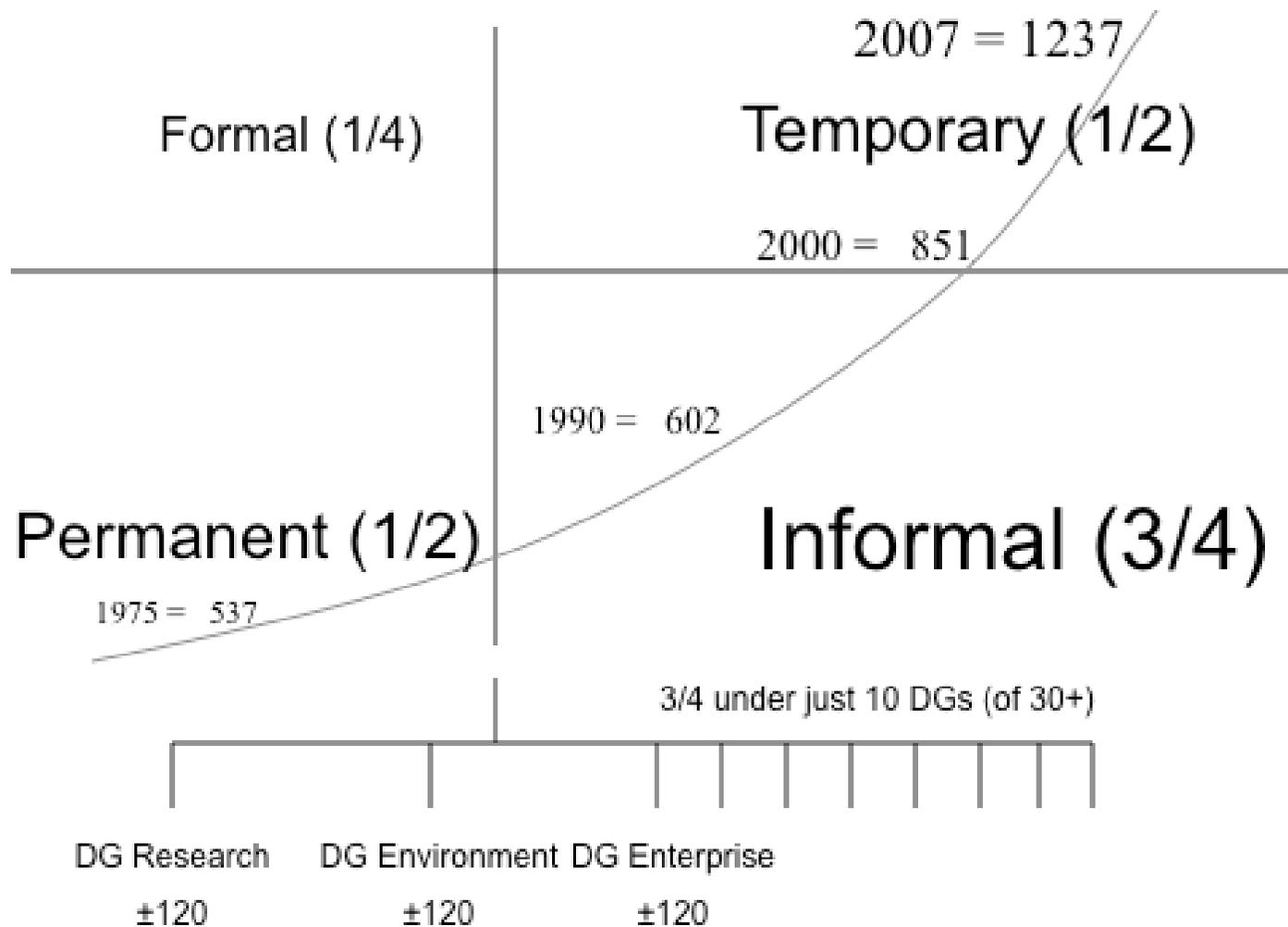
Lula appoints a special PR minister to promote biofuels internationally

Merges & acquisitions between EU and Brazilian energy companies

UNICA

Partnership with PR firm APEX Brazil
Funds think tank ICONE

Expert Groups



Biofrac (2005)

Aggregate mean composition of the Expert Groups:

21 National officials
 06 Industry reps
 03 Academics/ NGOs / TUs

Biofrac composition:

No National Officials
 No NGOs
 No Trade Unions
 08 Academics
 15 Industry reps

Table 1 – BIOFRAC membership

BIOFRAC steering committee

Anders Roj (Chair)	Volvo Technology Corporation
Olivier Appert (Vice-Chair)	Institut Francais du Petrole
Javier Salgado (Vice-Chair)	Abengoa Bioenergy

BIOFRAC members

Olivier Alexandre	Total
Michel Baumgartner,	British Sugar
Gerard Belot,	PSA Peugeot Citroen
Dirk Carrez	EuropaBio
Matthias Rudloff	CHOREN
Ann-Britt Edfast	SVEASKOG
Hartmut Heinrich	Volkswagen AG
Raffaello Garofalo	European Biodiesel Board
Dietrich Klein	COPA-COGECA
Darran Messenm	SHELL
Calliope Panoutsou	CRES
Kimmo Rahkamo	Neste Oil
Meinrad Signer	Iveco Powertrain
Rene Van Ree	ECN
Guy Riba	INRA
Liisa Viikari	VTT Biotechnology
Eckhard Weidner	Fraunhofer UMSICHT
Arthur Wellinger	Nova Energie
Grzegorz Wis'niewski	EC-BREC
Guido Zacchi	Lund University

“The ultimate show of power on the part of the ruling ideology is to allow what appears to be powerful criticism [...] there is no lack of anti-capitalism today. We are overloaded with critiques of the horrors of capitalism: books, in-depth investigative journalism, documentaries [However] there is a catch: what isn’t questioned in these critiques is *the democratic-liberal framing of the fight against these excesses* [of capitalism], [...] the institutional set-up of the (bourgeois) democratic state is never questioned.”

Slavoj Žižek

The Ecology of Technocracy and the Survival of the Resourceful

Exploring patterns and strategies of intra-elite communication within Brussels' disembedded political hamlet and assessing the influence of Brazilian interests in manufacturing a consensus around European biofuels policy

Kim Bizzarri

Notes for the presentation – do not quote

Abstract

The presentation will bring into focus aspects of *realpolitik* within European governance practices around biofuels policy. Building on the more structural elements underlying the discourse around the promotion of biofuels (covered by preceding contributions) the presentation will offer an empirical analysis of the agency at work concerned with shaping the direction of biofuels policy at the European level of governance.

The presentation will highlight a few examples that illustrate the tightly knit net of social relations through which a variety of policy actors come together to form hybrid (discourse) coalitions within Brussels' disembedded political and economic elite.

Special attention will be paid to the Brazilian agency and its European allays operating in Brussels through *formal* and *informal* channels of policy influence.

Concerning the former, examples will include the European Commission's advisory bodies (such as Expert Groups and Technology Platforms) that have provided biofuels proponents with a privileged access to EU decision-makers and much leverage over the direction of public funds aimed at biofuels R&D.

Latter-wise, examples will focus on the 'fuel vs food' debate as a key moment in the evolution of the European debate on biofuels to gain insight into the strategies of 'crisis management' deployed by biofuels proponents (such as the Brazilian lobby) and to describe the 'division of labour' between discourse coalition members in their pursuit of winning 'the battle of ideas' and manufacture an intra-elite consensus over the future of biofuels policy.

In so doing the presentation hopes that, by showcasing some key aspects of the ecology of lobbying across Brussels' complex bureaucratic landscape, it can contribute to the conceptualisation of 'Power' within political-ecological frameworks through offering some reflections on the more microscopic dimension of 'Power'.

Biographical Note

Kim Bizzarri is a Ph.D. candidate in *Multi-level Governance of European Environmental Policy* at the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow, UK). In 2006 he published a book on the challenges of globalisation (*Il Mondo é di Tutti*, EMI, 2006) and since 2003 he has collaborated with many Brussels-based environmental and developmental organisations on various aspects of European environmental policy. Kim used to run the International Trade and Environment Campaign at Friends of the Earth Europe and he coordinated the European-wide Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU). Kim is also a member of the International Think Tank Network Initiative which studies the role of think tanks at the nexus between knowledge and power.

Contact: Kim Bizzarri, School of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK. kim.bizzarri@strath.ac.uk

Introduction (slide 2)

When discussing European biofuels policy (and policy in the making) it is important to bare in mind the analytical complexity of the biofuels' phenomenon, such as:

- the relevance of biofuels policy to other EU policy areas (rural, agricultural, trade, energy...), and hence the range of competing policy objectives and interests;
- the wide range of transnational interests at play (by transnational I mean interests operating between and across sub-national, national and supra-national levels of governance);
- the interests of the North vs the South;
- the post-colonial nature of Brazil's agency as an emergent economy in a changing world order;
- the friction between biofuels exporting and importing countries/regions (ie: Brazil/ EU as well as internally within the EU between Sweden and The Netherlands on the one hand and Germany, France and Italy on the other);
- the conflicts between business and social/environmental organisation;
- the conflicts within the business community (ever changing depending on the question of first vs second generation biofuels – hence the creation and dissolutions of hybrid coalitions between the energy, agricultural, automobile and biotech sectors).

These are all important analytical elements to bare in mind if we want to fully appreciate how Brazilian interests influenced the direction of biofuels policy in Europe (the main focus of this presentation).

When considering the EU/Brazil relationship we notice that it has been one highly dynamic and mutually constitutive.

Already back in 1995, when developing a European-wide Energy Strategy the Commission had framed energy policy in line with the eco-efficiency focus on growth (drawing on the notion of 'Sustainable Development' as it had been crystallised in neoliberal terms in Rio).

In 1997, just months ahead of the Kyoto Summit (for which the EU had not prepared itself) the Commission identified in biofuels a potential techno-fix for making a contribution to CO₂ emission-reduction whilst fostering growth.

In 1998 the EP called for an increase in share (1 to 2%) in biofuels use in transport, a call reiterated by the Council the following year. As a result, in 2000 the Commission started its bureaucratic process of putting together a Climate and Energy Strategy that in 2003 turned into the infamous Renewable Energy Directive (RED) that set voluntary targets of 2% market share for biofuels by 2005, set to grow to 5.75% in 2010 and finally 10% of transport fuel by 2020.

The impossibility of the EU to meet internally its biofuels demand (EU biofuels production – mainly biodiesel was estimate to reach, at best, 3% of the market share) sent off a strong economic signal internationally to biofuels exporters, which Brazil wasted no time to respond to...

EU targets trigger global biofuels investment (slide 3)

Despite the need for ethanol imports, European ethanol-producing countries were keen to protect and promote their domestic producers by means of high import tariffs - Robert Vierhout, Secretary General of the European Bioethanol Fuel Association explained that "Brazilian imports would wipe away the entire European production."

However, importing countries were eager to access Brazil's ethanol and have been supportive of Brazil's call for a reduction of Europe's import tariffs (Sweden and The Netherlands which had big commercial ties with Brazil).

Yet, with no agreement on an EU-wide reduction on ethanol import tariffs, Brazil began pursuing a different strategy to access the EU market. By signing "cooperation agreements" with individual EU member states on a bilateral basis, Brazil has been able to accommodate the individual needs of importing countries and ensure, one way or another, access for its ethanol exports to the European market.

European energy companies seized the opportunity offered by such a favourable political climate to invest in Brazil's expanding agrofuel industry. A number of European businesses signed exclusive commercial agreements with Brazilian companies to secure access to Brazil's cheap raw materials while guaranteeing Brazilian agrofuel producers access to the European market.

After Brazil signed an agreement with Sweden, Swedish top ethanol importer Sekab set up a partnership with several Brazilian ethanol producers aimed at supplying the Swedish energy market. As Sweden proceeded to temporarily eliminate its import tax on ethanol, as part of its agreement with Brazil, the commercial partnership between Sekab and its Brazilian counterparts guaranteed Sweden access to cheaper ethanol imports, whilst securing Brazil reliable access to the Swedish market.

A similar partnership was also forged between the Dutch firm BioFuel Projects International B.V. and the Brazilian company Plant.a.Bio, following the Brazilian-Dutch cooperation agreement. In this case, cooperation centred on the development and management of commercial-scale jatropha plantations in Brazil, where Plant.a.Bio became responsible for providing BioFuel Projects International with feedstock to be distributed across Europe...

European foreign direct investment (FDI) flowing into Brazil represented a key element of the bilateral cooperation agreements between Brazil and European governments. While on the one hand Brazil obtained access to the EU market, European companies benefited from access to cheap raw materials and energy supplies.

FDI also played a major role in promoting the expansion of agrofuels in Brazil.

In July 2008, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a loan of \$269 million and promised to help raise an additional \$379 million for the construction of three new ethanol plants in southern central Brazil – the additional investment came from private Western commercial entities, such as US private equity firms Carlyle and Goldman Sachs, the Dutch agro-business giant Global Foods, French financial group BNP Paribas...

FDI was followed by mergers and acquisitions led by foreign investors – such as Spanish renewable energy and construction firm Abengoa purchasing the Brazilian Grupo Dedini for €216 million.

Hence, when we talk about Brazil's interest in accessing the European energy market we need to bare in mind the huge FDI attached to this venture – the interests are not exclusively Brazilian, they carry European commercial interests too...

Given that access to land in third countries became indispensable to Brazil's exports - Lula began calling on developing countries to "join the agrofuels revolution".

The expansion of agrofuel production in developing countries had been promoted both by Brazil and its European counterparts as a tool for development - despite the growing evidence that agrofuels competed with food crops and impact on people's right to food (the rationale being that the neoliberal understanding of what constituted development in an internationally integrated market: countries with export potential should concentrate on exploiting this comparative advantage to develop an export-oriented industry that can supply countries unable to rely on domestic production).

In its crudest form, this South-North-South cooperation entailed the European partner bringing financial and technical resources to the table, the Brazilian counterpart contributing with scientific,

agronomic and technological expertise, and the developing partner offering the investment opportunity. The legal framework on which this partnership was built was provided by the historical cooperation agreements tying the partnering countries. In most cases, they involved former European colonies with whom the European partner has a long-standing history of cooperation and with whom Brazil recently stipulated a partnership.

The Swedish-Brazilian agreement foresaw Swedish energy supplier Sekab and the Brazilian construction company Constran build an ethanol factory in Ghana that refined feedstock grown on 400,000 hectares of newly acquired land by Sekab in Tanzania and Mozambique – both of which are primary recipients of Swedish government aid (!) It is in fact through aid funds that the Swedish government has co-financed the Tanzanian government's National Agrofuels Task Force, responsible for attracting foreign investment to expand ethanol production in Tanzania - despite warnings from the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) about Tanzania's "particular vulnerability" to the current global food crisis.

A dedicated African unit of Brazil's Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agrícola (EmBraPA) was also set up in Ghana in 2007 to guide and coordinate international investment flowing into the African continent.

For many ACP countries, the 2006 sugar reforms imposed by the EU – which were ironically the result of pressure exerted by Brazil in the WTO to liberalise the sugar trade and remove the quota system that privileged ACP countries' sugar exports to Europe – meant that the sugar industry in ACP countries began turning towards energy production as a way to survive and prevent closure.

In early 2007, under the auspices of the UN and with support from China, India, South Africa, the United States, and the European Commission (EC), Brazil launched the International Agrofuels Forum (IBF). Acting as a political platform, the IBF enabled agrofuel producing countries to cooperate towards a) the creation of a world market for agrofuels and, b) to channel international investment towards countries with a potential to develop an export oriented production of agrofuels.

However, despite the hype around biofuels, by 2007/8 an overwhelming evidence of the negative social and environmental impacts of biofuels could be found.

As a result, France, a biofuels producing country, took the opportunity to immediately review (and scrap) its national biofuels targets. The UK did the same.

Within the European Parliament, the Environment Committee (with a strong leadership from the Greens) proposed reviewing the targets, whilst the European Environment Agency proposed dropping it altogether.

This sudden change in attitude toward biofuels took place during the European Commission's review of the RED and its proposal to introduce mandatory targets for biofuels use in transport, putting at risk not only the European Commission's energy strategy at risk, but also the gargantuan profit potential it held for the energy industry both in Europe and abroad.

It is at this point in time that it is possible to best appreciate the Brazilian agency.

Framing the Brazilian agency (slide 4)

In view of the discussion that will follow the presentation and the workshop's request to consider the question of how to address the issue of 'Power' in Political Ecology, let me introduce a couple of useful theoretical notions to frame the Brazilian agency within the wider power dynamics at play:

Hegemony - Gramsci (ref) argues that hegemony refers to the institutionalisation of a set of ideas and practices constituting a structure of domination to be understood as a form of leadership or rule based on consent, rather than on coercion, and whose attainment requires the building of a concrete configuration of social forces whose rule is underpinned by an organic fit between material conditions, ideas and institutional practices. For Gramsci, the construction of hegemony is thus a political process in which:

Previously germinated ideologies become "party", come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of the them, or at least a single combination of them tends to prevail, or gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society – bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a "universal" plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a social group over a series of subordinate groups.

War of Position - Gramsci employs the military metaphor of a "war of position" to suggest how social groups might avoid a frontal assault against entrenched adversaries by constituting a longer-term strategy, coordinated across multiple bases of power, to gain influence in the cultural institutions of civil society and develop organisation capacity that will win them new allies (Gramsci, ref). As in a game of chess, power lies not just in the playing pieces but in the configuration of forces relative to each other and to their adversaries.

From an environmental perspective we might expect to observe specific strategies as actors engage in a 'war of position' across each of the three pillars of hegemony: on the material level, corporations might develop product and technology strategies to secure existing and future market positions; on the discursive level, they might attempt to challenge the scientific and economic basis for regulation and use public relations to portray themselves and their products as 'green', adopting the language of sustainability, stewardship, and corporate citizenship; on the organizational level, they might build issue-specific coalitions that traverse sectoral and geographic boundaries and reach into civil society (Newell and Davy ref).

Political opportunities and options are historically circumscribed by the configuration of the relevant transnational historical bloc, and the power arrangements of the hegemonic constellations in particular polities.

Organic Intellectuals - Each social group that comes into existence creates within itself one or more strata of intellectuals that gives it meaning, that helps to bind it together and helps it function. They can take the form of managers, civil servants, the clergy, professors and teachers, technicians and scientists, lawyers, doctors etc. Essentially, they have developed organically alongside the ruling class and function for the benefit of the ruling class.

They were produced by the educational system to perform a function for the dominant social group in society. It is through this group that the ruling class maintains its hegemony over the rest of society.

Crisis management: the role of Brazil's 'organic intellectuals' in Europe's war of position over biofuels policy (slides 5-9)

Baring these guiding theoretical notions in mind, we can now turn to explore how the Brazilian contingency responded to this sudden crisis within the EU biofuels policy-making?

First of all, President Lula himself made the sustainability of Brazilian ethanol the core message of his interventions at both the 2007 G8 summit and at the 2008 UN General Assembly. He set up a dedicated Department of Energy within the Ministry of External Relations and appointed a "minister" with the sole task of promoting the image of Brazilian biofuels internationally (essentially a Minister of Public Relations).

In 2008 President Lula wrote a piece for *The Economist* regarding Brazil's global agenda

In Brussels, the Brazilian permanent representation office to the EU begun to actively lobby EU decision makers and, in May and November 2008, it orchestrated letters signed by other biofuels-producing developing countries addressing Members of the European Parliament (EP) and the Council in a plea to keep the 10 percent target and to vote against the introduction of sustainability criteria for biofuels.

On the corporate front, UNICA, the main lobby association of the Brazilian sugarcane industry (representing 60% of Brazil's ethanol production), joined forces with the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency, APEX-Brazil, with the aim to promote the image of Brazil's sugar-cane ethanol abroad as a clean and renewable fuel. The partnership comprised "sensitization, enabling the supply of Brazilian ethanol, business intelligence studies, and especially business and image promotion actions." As a first step, UNICA began funding the Brazilian Institute for International Trade Negotiations, ICONE, a think tank that "has become a reference in studies and projects on agriculture and agribusiness in Brazil". Soon after, UNICA opened an office in Brussels, employed the Brussels-based PR firm Fleishman-Hillard to represent it within the capital's political circles, and became a corporate sponsor of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), one of the most influential think tanks in Brussels. Just ahead of the European Parliament's (EP) vote on the reviewed EU strategy in December 2008, UNICA begun placing on a regular basis full-page advertisements in *The European Voice*, Brussels' most influential newspaper, under the banner that "You can help fight climate change by supporting a mandatory 10% target for renewables in transport by 2020."

At the same time, with support from the Brazilian government, UNICA orchestrated a diplomatic "Road Show" across European capitals, including Brussels. The delegation, which was headed by Minister Correa do Lago, the government official within the Brazilian ministry of foreign affairs responsible for the promotion of Brazil's biofuels (the PR Minister), comprised a number of scientists and experts whose role was to build a scientific case that would finally "demystify" the environmental un-sustainable image of Brazil's biofuels (that was the stated objective of the mission).

Yet, all of the scientists and experts members of this discourse community had strong connections with the biofuels industry, both in Brazil and Europe. For instance, André Nassar, who spoke about is the Director-General of the think tank ICONE, which, as said previously, is funded by UNICA. Similarly, Prof. Weber Amaral, who spoke about presented himself as a senior academic from the School of Agriculture (ESALQ) of the University of São Paulo, but he is also the founder and former CEO of the Brazilian Centre for Biofuels, another Brazilian think tank actively involved in the promotion of biofuels. Both Mr Nassar and Prof. Amaral contributed, earlier in 2008, on the timely publication of a book on "Sugarcane ethanol: contributions to climate change mitigation and the environment", which built a scientific case that supported the international trade of Brazilian sugarcane bioethanol as an environmentally sustainable energy option. Prof. José Goldemberg, who features amongst TIME

magazine's list of "Heroes of the Environment" for having helped the biofuels industry boom in Brazil in the late 1970s, wrote the preface to the book. Again, Prof. Goldemberg, who also teaches at the University of São Paulo, chairs many energy industry initiatives both in Brazil and internationally and was, until recently, a member of the board of Trustees of the Shell Foundation.

The book was edited by Dr Peter Zuurbier, from the Dutch University of Wageningen, who also featured amongst the members of the Brazilian delegation. Dr Zuurbier participated in the delegation as an expert on sustainability-related issues, yet, on his online CV there is no trace of such an expertise. What his CV reveals is that his academic work has focused on strategic management "with a heavy emphasis on designing and functioning of vertical alliances and networks in the agriculture and food industry". His CV also reveals that, in 2000, Dr Zuurbier became corporate director of marketing at the Latin America Office of the University of Wageningen, which, coincidentally, is located in the School of Agriculture (ESALQ) within the University of São Paulo. His connections with the biofuels industry however go beyond the academic connections with the Brazilian university. In December 2008, Dr Zuurbier attended the IFCCC meeting in Poznan (COP-14) as a representative of UNICA, and promoted Brazilian biofuels as a solution to climate change during the conference's side events. His role as "director of marketing" also suggests that the Latin America Office of the Dutch university might serve purposes that are not exclusively academic. In early 2009, for instance, Dr Zuurbier was responsible for liaising between the visit of a large delegation of Dutch businesses, headed by the Dutch prime minister, and the Brazilian government. The visit aimed at strengthening the trade relationships between The Netherlands and Brazil, particularly in relation to Brazil's biofuels exports to The Netherlands. As the largest foreign investor in the Brazilian economy, the Dutch business community has set up a Dutch-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (Dutcham) with a view to facilitate the business relationship between the two countries. It was in the occasion of the "4th Brazilian Strategic Conferences" organised in The Hague by Dutcham and the Brazilian Diplomatic service in the Netherlands, that the Brazilian expert delegation made its first stop on its European tour. Hosted in the impressive headquarters of Shell, also a member of Dutcham (and at the time the energy company to have invested the most in biofuels), over a hundred participants attended the event, including several high profile Dutch government officials and ministers directly responsible for overseeing biofuels policy.

Subsequent stops included London, Paris and Brussels. London and Paris were chosen because as I said France intended reviewing its national targets, whereas in the UK the influential Ghallager Report (on Climate Change) had raised a number of concerns about biofuels and the UK appeared also to be reconsidering its national biofuels targets.

In Brussels, the delegation was hosted by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS - see Slide 10)

As the oldest think tank in Brussels, CEPS is also one of the most authoritative. CEPS organises elite gatherings of companies' CEOs, top EU decision-makers and academics. As CEPS former director Peter Ludlow explains, "CEPS is seen as an insider. [...] We set out to establish that we are here to talk at the highest level" (cited in Watson 1998). CEPS owns much of its influence to its impressive all-male board of directors, which includes princes, viscounts and barons. Amongst its most notable members, feature the economist Pedro Swartz, a prominent member of the Mont Pelerin Society³⁶ and the influential Viscount Etienne Davignon, former Vice President of the European Commission, former member of the European Roundtable of Industrialist (ERT), Chair of the Bilderberg annual conference and director of several transnational corporations (TNCs). In their analysis of the "global corporate elite", Carroll and Carson (2006) found that Davignon can be described as one of the six most well connected individuals within the "inner circle of cosmopolitan thinkers", knitting together the global

corporate-policy network by participating in transnational interlocking and/or multiple global policy groups.

An example of how CEPS' contacts are put to use are the Corporate Breakfast meetings CEPS organises on a regular basis to give its members the opportunity "to meet and exchange views" with influential policy-makers in an informal setting. Due to the lack of transparency surrounding the activities of think tanks, and lobby groups in general, in Brussels, it is difficult to tell the extent of the influence of corporate members on think tanks' activities. However, with annual membership fees starting at €24.000 for ordinary corporate membership, and €60.000 for exclusive "Inner Circle" members one might assume that members do have a say in setting the think tank's priorities. Both UNICA and Shell are corporate members of CEPS and, although the following statement might be unrelated to the two companies' influence on CEPS' research priorities, it is nevertheless interesting to note that, in its Activities Report for 2008, CEPS acknowledges that "[t]he past year has been intensive with a strong involvement of CEPS corporate members in our activities."

Between 2007 and 2009 CEPS promoted the international expansion of biofuels primarily through the literature it produced, such as regular policy briefings, reports, academic articles and research programme, as well as through the organisation of meetings, conferences and other events in Brussels.

CEPS researchers for instance published in early 2008 an article in the Journal of Cleaner Production arguing in favour of the elimination of international trade barriers and the phasing out of trade distorting support measures with a view to contribute to the development of "a global sustainable bio-energy market". Another paper by the same CEPS' authors, which made the same case, was distributed as a background paper ahead of a high-level conference CEPS co-organised in Brussels in May 2008 on the sustainability of biofuels.

The conference was organised as part of CEPS' AGRINERGY project, funded by the Commission's 6th EU Framework Programme (FP6) and it aimed at promoting "the production of biomass from agriculture while ensuring sustainable development of rural areas (social, economic, environmental)". The conference was organised "to advance policy and research recommendations to European policy-makers to ensure a sustainable production of bioenergy in and outside of the EU."

The policy briefing that resulted from the conference recommended the Commission to pursue the international expansion of biofuels production and consumption through the progressive elimination of trade barriers and the creation of industry-led international certification bodies (such as the Roundtable for Sustainable Biofuels, which includes both Shell and UNICA) to guarantee the environmental sustainability of biofuels – all recommendation that are in line with the interests of Brazil's biofuels industry and of its European partners.

Concluding Remarks – the relevance of the Brazilian case to the study of 'Power' within Political Ecology (slides 11-13)

There is probably lots more that the Brazilian lobby has been busy with but that's not the focus of my PhD. What I spoke about here represents a small case study within the case study.

However, when we take into account the close connection (or mutual dependency even) between Brazilian interests and European interests, it is possible to appreciate that Brazil's influence on biofuels policy has been exerted also indirectly by allies (or commercial partners even) in other fora, some institutional and directly involved in drafting EU legislation on biofuels...

Let me pull up just a couple of slides and spend a few words on those institutional bodies responsible for drafting the EU legislation on biofuels...

In a recent paper I presented at the IPA conference on Tilburg I discussed the role of the European Commission's Expert Groups (charged with shaping policy direction pretty much in every policy area) as a novel 'lobbying tool' and I took biofuels policy as the paper's case study.

There is at least one expert group that is particularly relevant to our discussion and illustrative of the point I would like to make in these concluding reflections: the Biofuels Research Advisory Council (BIOFRAC).

BIOFRAC was created by the Commission's Research Directorate in 2005 as a "group of high level experts representing widely different sectors of the biofuel chain" was invited "to develop a foresight report – a vision for biofuels up to 2030 and beyond, to ensure a breakthrough of biofuels and increase their deployment in the EU." In addition to this 'foresight report', the Commission also invited BIOFRAC to prepare the ground for the so-called 'Strategic Research Agenda' (SRA), and to provide considerable input for the Seventh Framework Research Programme (FP7) – the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe (2007-13). When we look at the composition of this Expert Group's membership we notice that industry was the sector with the largest representation, with many industry representatives being major players in their sectors, including oil giant Shell and Total, car manufacturers Volvo, Peugeot and Volkswagen, raw material industries like British Sugar and the European association of biotech industries, EuropaBio.

In June 2006 BIOFRAC released its vision report, Biofuels in the European Union. A vision for 2030 and beyond, in which it set the ambitious target of ensuring that 25 percent of EU road transport fuel will be derived from biofuels by 2030.

Now, how does this inform us in relation to this workshop's question about how to address the study of 'Power' within Political Ecology?

In *The Mediation of Power* (2007), Aeron Davis argues that we need to shift our attention to precisely those elite communicative networks, social spaces and forms of horizontal inter-elite communication at both national and transnational levels, and zoom in on "specific sites of institutional power" (2007, p. 11), where the focus ought to be placed on exploring the "evolving 'elite micro cultures'" and how these inform and guide elite action in particular ways and directions..." (Davis 2007, p. 77)

As such it is possible to appreciate the rise of an emergent European communicative space structured much along the lines of Habermass' 19th century bourgeois model of the public sphere: one from which the vast majority of the public is effectively excluded, yet in which a select group of powerful social actors engage in intense communicative action with significant macro-level impacts on the rest of society (Baisnee 2007).

Hence, as power becomes at once dispersed throughout transnational networks of global economic and political governance and spatially concentrated in key hubs such as the 'Euro quarter' in Brussels, the locus of sovereignty in a Europeanised post-democracy is steadily shifting towards a combined political, economic, bureaucratic and cultural elite class. It becomes possible therefore to appreciate how members of this emergent 'cosmopolitan elite networks' have effectively become disembedded – politically, culturally, socio-economically and communicatively – from wider publics and the forces of public opinion. This is suggesting that power is being played out between competing elites, that knowledge, discourses and agency are being focused within a system of intra-elite communication, not of elite-mass communication.

This is a dimension of power that at the moment I feel has not been captured within Political Ecology. Power appears to be framed in terms of social/environmental injustice rather than in terms of the processes of decision-making and institutionalisation of power-practices from which the injustice stems.

I would like to finish therefore with a provocation...

Following the Wikileaks scandal of two years ago Zizek wrote a piece in the prestigious *London Review of Books* in defence of Julian Assange. I will not comment on his remark but I would like to end the presentation by asking you to reflect on its relevance to what discussed so far in this presentation and in light of the presentations that we heard so far:

(As argued by Zizek) “The ultimate show of power on the part of the ruling ideology is to allow what appears to be powerful criticism”. (As Zizek remarks) “there is no lack of anti-capitalism today. We are overloaded with critiques of the horrors of capitalism: books, in-depth investigative journalism, documentaries [...]” (However, Zizek warns us) “there is a catch: what isn’t questioned in these critiques is the democratic-liberal framing of the fight against these excesses [of capitalism] [...] the institutional set-up of the (bourgeois) democratic state is never questioned.