

Abstract

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) should have been a ‘game-changer’ and a boost for the EU economy by creating more jobs and growth in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. By eliminating the remaining trade barriers, it would have established a transatlantic trade area connecting the two most powerful economies in the world. This Master’s thesis utilizes four concepts of the neo-Marxist theory: key premises of the Amsterdam School, State theory of Bob Jessop and Nicos Poulantzas, combines Ulrich Beck’s notion of risk society with Antonio Gramsci’s role of intellectuals, and outlines the premise of commodification as a part of political ecology. The theoretical neo-Marxist prism facilitates the mapping of the crucial social agents functioning as the proponents of the TTIP agenda as a hegemonic project and those forces opposing the deal as a counter-hegemonic movement. This thesis reveals how the TTIP agreement was legitimized by the proponents but issues of transparency and other contradictions revolving around the deal attracted the attention of various civil society organizations (CSOs) that were concerned about TTIP’s impact on public health and environment. Three empirical cases focusing on the precautionary principle (PP), endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), and glyphosate saga highlight why these debates, full of controversies, spilled over to the overall context of the TTIP debate and influenced decision-makers of the EU Member States (MSs) and the EU institutions. These cases explain why the concerned opponents of the neo-liberal TTIP agenda were perceived as irrational by the proponents once the legitimization process of the deal failed.