

Following the leader

The role of the host nation President of Conferences of the
Parties to the UNFCCC

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Abstract

In this thesis I investigate the role of formal leaders in international negotiations. I present theories on the role and influence formal leaders might have in international negotiations, and what variation in this role and influence might depend on. I then use this theoretical framework to analyse the role of the Presidents of the UN Climate Change Conferences in Copenhagen in 2009 and in Cancún in 2010, how these differed, how they were perceived by observers such as the media and NGO representatives, and if their roles were perceived differently, what was their perception of the underlying factors causing this. I further analyse these images with the aid of my theoretical framework.

Key words: leadership, multilateral negotiations, COP President, influence, COP15, COP16

Words: 10704

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List of abbreviations

AWG	Ad-Hoc Working Group
BINGO	Business-oriented International Non Governmental Organisation
CAN	Climate Action Network
CMP	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
COP	Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ROP	Rules of Procedure
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1 Introduction

During the final day of the Cancún conference, the President of the COP Patricia Espinosa announced the release of new draft decision texts prepared under her responsibility, and received a standing ovation (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 9). One year earlier, Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen was in the same position, announcing the release of two final draft texts. Instead of applause, he and other state leaders included in the process of creating the texts were accused of performing a “coup d’état against the Charter of the United Nations” (Dimitrov, 2010, p. 811).

The Copenhagen conference, which included the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is often considered a failure. Two weeks of negotiations led to “what many consider to be a disappointing Copenhagen Accord that does little to ensure that significant actions will be taken to address climate change” (Hoffman, 2011, p. 4). The Cancún conference, which took place a year later, was met with a more ambiguous response. Some, such as Dean Bialek, advisor to the Marshall Islands delegation, described the negotiations as “gracious and fruitful” (Bialek, 2010). Others, like the Swedish journalist Martin Ådahl stated that the result was even worse than expected (Ådahl, 2010).

Attempting to explain why the results differed to the extent that they did, I choose to study a factor that quite obviously differed between the two conferences, namely the hosts. I examine how the Danish and Mexican Presidencies might have influenced the results of the two conferences, and led to their different outcomes. I aim to do this by studying how the media and other onlookers perceived their effort. Using theories on formal leadership and bureaucratic influence I construct an image of what the role of the formal chairmanship can be, how the President and the Presidency of a multilateral conference can influence events, and why this influence might differ between Presidencies. I use the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, emitted daily during international environmental negotiations by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, to build an image of what happened during the two conferences. I then use this information to analyse how the media, NGOs, and other significant commentators perceived the effort of the Presidencies. Was the role of the host nation Presidency perceived as influential? In that case, how and why?

1.1 Research questions and hypothesis

What is the role and mandate of the Presidency of UN Climate Change Conferences, and in what measure did the Presidency fulfil this role during the conferences in Cancún in 2010 and Copenhagen in 2009?

How did the leadership provided by the Presidency of the UN Climate Change Conferences in Copenhagen and Cancún affect the outcome of the negotiations?

What was the perceived role of the Presidency during these two conferences, and how does this correspond to theories on formal leadership?

To study this I use theories by Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al. on the role of international environmental bureaucracies in shaping global environmental policy together with Jonas Tallberg's work on the role of formal chairmanship during international negotiations and Joanna Depledge's descriptive work on the role of the Presidency during multilateral negotiations. I apply these theories on empirical material consisting of UN documents, such as formal rules of procedure for conferences of the parties to the UNFCCC, publications from think tanks and other institutes reporting from the conferences, media coverage and scientific articles describing what happened during the conferences and why.

To guide my work, I have formulated the following hypothesis:

Leadership matters in multilateral negotiations. Leadership can yield a great deal of influence on the proceedings and outcome of negotiations. It is a necessary condition for the success of negotiations, but not a sufficient one. Leadership can have a positive influence on negotiations, but can also lead to a poor result. Variations in influence can depend both on factors that are internal and external to the Presidency.

This hypothesis reflects my expectations when diving into my material. It is also founded in the literature on leadership that I use when building my theoretical framework.

1.2 Disposition

I begin my thesis by explaining my theoretical background, giving account of the theories on leadership and bureaucratic influence that I use. Firstly, I present the functionalist theory on formal leadership during multilateral negotiations presented by Swedish political scientist Jonas Tallberg in the book *Leadership and Negotiation in the European Union*. I then introduce Frank Biermann & Bernd Siebenhüner et. al.'s theories on bureaucratic influence in international

environmental politics, and make the connection between these two theories. I use Joanna Depledge's work on diplomatic procedure to link the theoretical framework presented by Biermann & Siebenhüner to my cases, which consist of temporary negotiation Presidencies, contrary to the more permanent bureaucracies they describe. I proceed by describing my methodological approach, which is a variation of a comparative case study with an explanatory intention. The methodological chapter includes operationalisations of relevant elements of my theory. I further present my material, which consists of both primary and secondary sources. Then follows an analysis of said material. I direct attention towards the common mandate of the President of the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC and further describe how the different Presidencies fulfilled their mandate, and analyse the differences between them.

1.3 Limitations

When writing this thesis, I have a certain explanatory ambition. However, I am aware of the limits I am faced with. I have no ambition to provide a complete and objective explanation of the subject I am investigating.

I am faced with practical limits in terms of time and resources. A possible and interesting method would be to conduct interviews with officials present both in Copenhagen and Cancún, such as people working within the two Presidencies. This might have been possible in the case of Copenhagen, but finding equal sources in Cancún turned out to be complicated. I therefore deemed it a risk too great to take, and decided upon not using interviews as my primary method. Recordings exist of all plenary meetings during both conferences, but analysing these would also turn out to be a too time consuming task.

I am using resources for the two conferences that I deem comparable, and accessible within the time limit I am confronted with. The sources that I choose to use also bring limitations. One cannot say more than what is actually expressed in one's material. The expression might be explicit or not, there is much to be read between the lines of a text, but one has to be aware of where to limit one's generalisations.

1.4 Clarifications

Much like in the opening segment of most UN treaties and documents, I here clarify what is meant when I use particular words and expressions. The "President of the COP" or the "COP President" is the one defined in the draft rules of procedure for the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC. When the expression President is used, it is the President of the COP that is intended, except when other is specified. When using the expression "chair", I am referring to the

theoretical definition of a formal conference chairman, such as the one found in Tallberg's theory on formal chairmanship. "The Secretariat" signifies the secretariat of the UNFCCC, unless other is specified. A "Bureaucracy" is the theoretical entity described by Biermann & Siebenhüner. The secretariat of the UNFCCC is an example of a bureaucracy, but this is not necessarily what is meant when I use this expression. When the word "Presidency" is used, I mean the part of the leadership of the conference that is handled by the host country in question, when other is not specified. This is not to be confused with the COP Presidency, which includes all elected presiding officers, such as the chairmen of the different working groups.

The two expressions "The Copenhagen conference" and "the Copenhagen summit" both signify the 2009 UN Conference on Climate Change held in Copenhagen. This conference included the COP15 (the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC), but also the CMP5, the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. When others use the expression COP15 to signify this conference, I also do so, but in my analysis I do not distinguish between the COP and the CMP concerning leadership, meaning that this distinction is of no particular significance. The same goes for the Cancún conference.

2 Theory

I have chosen to focus on leadership in my analysis of the organisation of the two conferences. In this section I present Swedish political scientist Jonas Tallberg's theory on formal leadership of multilateral negotiations. I then complement his theories with theories on bureaucratic leadership presented by Frank Biermann & Bernd Siebenhüner et. al., and Joanna Depledge.

2.1 What is leadership?

To aid the understanding of what I mean by leadership, I choose to divide it into three aspects: leadership as a *mandate*, leadership as a *capacity* and leadership as a *process*.

I see leadership as a *mandate* as the formal right to lead, which is defined by the organisation that is to be led. A person that has been elected President of a conference is per definition the leader of the negotiations. This leader has certain rights that differ from those of other members of the organism that is to be led, rights that might be expressed through formally defined rules of procedure. A leader's mandate is what one could call leadership *a priori*, it is what defines a leader outside the actual action of leading someone or something, and even without someone or something to fill the position as leader.

Leadership as a *capacity* is defined by the knowledge, expertise, resources or experience that a certain leader possesses. The capacity to lead depends on the actual person filling the position as leader. A part of the capacity to lead can also be traditions and informal procedure that has emerged within the organisation that is to be led, and the ability to use this in the process of leading. One can claim that the border between what is a part of a leader's mandate, and what is his or her capacity at times can become blurry; as certain common practices might be so frequently used that they eventually are considered part of the mandate.

Leadership as a *process* is the action of leading. This can be a combination of mandate and capacity, when a leader that is formally given the right to lead, also has the capacity to do so, and then pursues to lead whatever is to be led. Leadership as a process can also exist without the mandate to lead. This is the more informal entrepreneurial leadership that occurs when a certain actor attempts to or is successful at leading actions or opinions in a certain direction.

The kind of leadership that is to be studied here is formal leadership, which stems from the mandate to lead. It differs from other kinds of leadership (such as informal entrepreneurial leadership) in just that, its *formality*.

I aim to separate leadership as a *mandate* from leadership as a *capacity* and leadership as a *process*. Leadership as a *mandate* will then represent what the two host nations have in common. I then attempt to analyse leadership as a *capacity* and leadership as a *process* in these two cases, using the theoretical framework described below.

2.2 On formal leadership

In his book *Leadership and Negotiation in the European Union*, Jonas Tallberg presents a functionalist view on the origin of the formal chairmanship of multilateral negotiations. Tallberg claims that “[...] the chairmanship as an institution in political decision-making should be understood as a functional response to collective-action problems in decentralized bargaining” (2006, p. 20). Thus, the designation of a chair is an active and rational decision based on experience from multilateral negotiations.

Tallberg directs attention towards the *formal* leaders of multilateral negotiations. He chooses to operationalise leadership as formal chairmanship, contrary to other definitions that focus on leading states or other actors that have an important influence on the negotiations and thus has or takes a role of a leader. He describes the functions that a formal leader serves by directing attention towards three central collective-action problems that states experience in multilateral negotiations (Tallberg, 2006, p. 2-4).

The first of these issues is insuperably complex and crowded agendas. There are often a vast number of issues to be negotiated during UN conferences such as those organised within the UNFCCC. According to negotiation theorists, Tallberg states, a cluttered agenda is a major obstacle on the path to an agreement. Therefore, agenda management becomes important. The complexity of an agenda might be the result of not only a large number of issues to discuss, but also the complexity of each issue (Tallberg, 2006, p. 22). As Harvard professor Stavins states in a blog post addressing the Climate summit in Copenhagen, the fact that nearly 200 states are involved in UNFCCC negotiations does not make it easier to navigate an already complex agenda (Stavins, 2010).

The task of agenda management thus consists of choosing what is to be negotiated, and what is not, and also the structure and order of negotiations. This includes the procedural control of the negotiating process, such as giving delegates the right to speak, and calling for votes (Tallberg, 2006, p. 24). This involves an opportunity to prioritise between different issues. It allows leaders to put weight on issues where a negotiable outcome is judged to be within reach, and avoid those that can cause irresolvable deadlocks. Good agenda management might be the key to successful negotiations. This is achieved by “management of people through the creation of system and structure” (Tallberg, 2006, p. 22-23, citing Winham, 1977). Tallberg also describes the action of writing and ordering the writing of draft negotiating texts as an example of agenda management, as this

gathers the negotiations around specific issues deemed negotiable by the chairmanship (Tallberg, 2006, p. 195).

The second and equally important function that a chairman should serve according to Tallberg is that of negotiation brokering, to bargain between important actors. This is a response to the problem that arises when parties hide information about their positions. Of strategic reasons, a negotiating party might choose to hide their preferences or not give up information on how far they are willing to go to reach an agreement. This permits them to use this information as leverage, and obtain a preferable result. But, withholding information also makes it more difficult to identify potential zones of agreement. When all actors strategically conceal their own position, the result might be that no agreement is reached at all (Tallberg, 2006, p. 24-25).

To solve these problems, a chair is given access to an important source of power: information. Through bilateral talks and informal consultations, the chair gains information about how far the different parties are willing to go to reach an agreement. The chair can then identify an underlying zone of agreement, concealed to other negotiating parties. Information about state preferences and limitations becomes an important bargaining tool (Tallberg, 2006, p. 29-30). An example of brokerage is the formation of smaller negotiating groups on the initiative of the chair, such as the “Friends of the Chairman”-group formed under the initiative of chair Mustafa Tolba during the ozone negotiations. Tolba gathered key negotiating parties in an informal group and was successful in creating a draft text that became central in the remainder of the negotiations (Tallberg, 2006, p. 198-200).

A general assumption in Tallberg’s theory is that the chair *matters*, their work can definitely have an influence on the outcome of negotiations. However, he explains variations in *why*, *how* and *how much* a chair can influence the output of multilateral negotiations simply by variations in the institutional setting and the mandate given by the principals, i.e. the negotiating parties. How can one then explain that different leaders sometimes perform differently at negotiations when they have the same mandate, the same institutional setting and answer to the same parties? This is not answered in Tallberg’s theory, and this is where Biermann et. al. enters the equation.

2.3 On bureaucratic influence

In their book *Managers of Global Change: The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies*, Frank Biermann and Bernd Siebenhüner aim to explain how an international bureaucracy can influence the political path of the organisation it works within, and particularly how come this influence can vary between bureaucracies that otherwise work with a similar mandate and similar resources (Biermann & Siebenhüner, 2009, p. 3-4). This goes beyond Tallberg’s theory on formal leadership, as he claims that differences in influence comes from structure and mandate.

Biermann et. al. define international bureaucracies as “a hierarchically organized groups of international civil servants with a given mandate, resources, identifiable boundaries, and a set of formal rules of procedures within the context of a policy area” (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 37). For example, an international bureaucracy can thus be the secretariat of a treaty, a UN body, agency or program.

What distinguished the secretariats described by Biermann et. al. from the host country Presidency of an international climate conference is its degree of permanence. They explicitly state that bodies like “temporary conference secretariats” (2009, p. 37) are not a part of what they intend to study. However, I consider that the variables they present as explanatory factors to the varying influence of different bureaucracies are applicable also in the case of temporary conference Presidencies.

Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al. define the influence of international bureaucracies as “the sum of all effects observable for, and attributable to, an international bureaucracy”. In terms of leadership as I have chosen to express it, this would correspond to what is attributable not to the way the mandate of leadership is constructed, but how the leader in question uses its capacity within this mandate in the process of leadership, which then leads to certain effects. The effects can again be divided into an *output*, an *outcome* and an *impact* (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 41). The *output* is the result of the bureaucracy’s activities in terms of “regulations, policy instruments, compliance mechanisms, and so forth” (Young, 2001, p. 114). The *outcome* is the behavioural effect this has on other actors (whether intentional or not), and the *impact* is the “changes in biogeophysical conditions” (Young, 2001, p. 114), or “changes in economic, social or ecological parameters that result from the change in actors’ behaviour” (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 41).

Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al. divide the influence of international bureaucracies into three different areas, *cognitive*, *normative* and *executive* influence. The last of these, *executive* influence, is not relevant in the case of temporary conference Presidencies, as this translates into the practical assistance that international bureaucracies offer in the implementation of treaties and agreements, (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 48), something that temporary Presidencies are not engaged in. *Cognitive* influence, however, is the “influence [on] the behavior of political actors by changing their knowledge and belief systems”, for example by acting as knowledge brokers. *Normative* influence is the effect international bureaucracies might have “through the creation, support and shaping of norm-building processes for issue-specific international cooperation”, thus shaping the norms of global environmental governance (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 47-48).

Biermann et. al. state that the influence that international bureaucracies yield within these different areas may vary, and attempt to describe what this variation depends on. Again they divide the possible influential factors into three clusters; “the external *problem structure*; the *polity* set by the bureaucracies’ principals within which the bureaucrats need to function; and the *activities and procedures* that the staff of the bureaucracies develops and implements within the constraints of problem structure and polity framework” (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 49-50).

The *external problem structure* and the *polity* are both factors that are determined outside the bureaucracies.

The *problem structure* can greatly affect the influence that bureaucracies are able to yield in a specific field. Different problems demand different resources to resolve. Some are complex and multifaceted, with strongly diverging interests between the different negotiating parties. Others are less controversial and contain less asymmetry concerning interests. The willingness of the parties to resolve a problem and put effort and resources into the negotiation of a solution might also affect the influence of bureaucracies (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 51).

The *polity* of an international bureaucracy is defined as the “legal, institutional, and financial framework” that the bureaucracy works within (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 51). Using the language of the different aspects of leadership presented above, *polity* encompasses what I define as leadership as a *mandate*. Biermann et. al. concludes that the more autonomy a bureaucracy is granted, the more influential it is likely to be (2009, p. 53).

Finally, Biermann et. al. mention the *activities and procedures* of a bureaucracy as the factors that can explain variations in influence depending primarily on variables within the bureaucracy. Activities and procedures correspond to what I refer to as leadership as a *capacity* and leadership as a *process*. The capacity being all resources in the form of knowledge, experience, routines, etc, and the process being what occurs when these are put in action. The difference between these two aspects lies primarily in the spatiotemporal dimensions.

Biermann et. al. divide *activities and procedures* into four variables: *organisational expertise*, *organisational structure*, *organisational culture* and *organisational leadership*. The first of these categories, *organisational expertise*, relates to the processing of knowledge within the bureaucracy. Differences in the “ability to generate and process knowledge” (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 55) can have an important impact on the influence the bureaucracy can yield. This relates directly to the cognitive influence of a bureaucracy (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 55).

The *organisational structure* of a bureaucracy encompasses its internal hierarchy, how division of tasks and responsibilities is managed, and so forth. This may vary in level of formalisation, openness, freedom and flexibility, which can have an important impact on the efficiency of the bureaucracy (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 55-56).

Thirdly, the *organisational culture* within the bureaucracy is also of importance. This is defined as “the set of commonly shared basic assumptions in the organization that result from previous organizational learning processes and include the professional cultures and backgrounds of the staff members”. This is a more informal variable than the organisational structure, and can prove difficult to measure (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 56-57).

Lastly, Biermann et. al. point to *organisational leadership* as a final influential factor. The way executive officers of an organisation conduct their work can be of particular importance to the influence of a bureaucracy. When analysing the role of temporary host Presidencies, organisational leadership seems to be of particular importance. A “strong leader” is one that manages to be flexible and attentive, and

maintains a good and dynamic relationship with both the rest of the bureaucracy and the organisation it works within. He or she is “charismatic, visionary, and popular” (Biermann et. al., 2009, p. 58). This kind of leadership has a positive effect on the influence that a bureaucracy can yield on the turn of events.

2.3.1 Explaining variation in the case of COP Presidencies

To be able to apply the theory on bureaucratic influence to the cases of temporary conference secretariats, I here introduce variables that can affect the influence a presiding officer such as the President of the COP has on negotiations.

According to Joanna Depledge, the presiding officers of a UN Climate Change Conference are expected to play an extensive informal role in the reaching of agreement. However, the President of the COP is not necessarily the most important officer. COP Presidents often play a more ceremonial role, but can also choose to take an active role in promoting agreement (2005, p. 36-37). Depledge even states that COP Presidents taking a more ceremonial role has often been for the best (2005, p. 47-48).

Depledge points to the same main tasks as Tallberg when specifying how a presiding officer (be it the COP President or the Chair of a subsidiary body) is expected to work. Examples are building consensus through consulting informally with parties, organising meetings between key players, and presenting proposals in the form of texts or suggestions for compromises (Depledge, 2005, p. 44-45).

How well presiding officers perform can be dependent of a number of different factors, summarised by Depledge. Firstly, the perceived impartiality of the President is essential. This is to be distinguished from neutrality. The President is expected to promote a successful outcome the negotiations, not to be indifferent to what happens. However, if parties perceive the COP President to have a bias towards certain outcome, certain parties or suggestions, this can be fatal to the confidence towards the President, and thus also to the influence that said President can yield (Depledge, 2005, p. 48-49).

Secondly, the personality of presiding officers has an impact on their performance. A strong personality and an ability to withstand the pressure from parties are important factors that make up an influential President (Depledge, 2005, p. 49-50).

The experience of big multilateral negotiations is another factor that greatly influences the performance of a President. An insight in the dynamics of the negotiations is essential to be able to effectively preside. However, the President of the COP often lacks the necessary experience. The President is usually elected as a result of being environmental minister of the host country, not because he or she is considered particularly qualified for the task. Because the President of the COP only stays in office for one conference, he or she has no possibility to learn from experience. This is partly why the President of the COP can choose to take a more ceremonial role, and leave active chairing of the conference to others, such as the chair of one of the subsidiary bodies (Depledge, 2005, p. 50-51). A certain technical knowledge of the matter that is negotiated is also a necessary quality for

a presiding officer. However, this becomes less important at the level of the COP President, because most technical details are negotiated at lower levels, such as in the subsidiary bodies (Depledge, 2005, p. 51). There is also a great need for diplomacy when presiding an international negotiation. The knowledge of what is diplomatic procedure as well as the patience to not let frustration take over and lead to mistakes and insults to parties is essential (Depledge, 2005, p. 52-53).

Other factors, such as English skills and nationality can also affect the perception and influence of a leader. A developing country President has a different position towards the parties compared to a developed country President. An ability to communicate fluently in English is important, but as most parties are not native English speakers, this is not at all necessary (Depledge, 2005, p. 51-52).

3 Methods

In this section I present the methodological aspects of this thesis. First, I explain how my case selection was conducted. Then, I describe the comparative logic behind my analysis. I further present my material, how it was collected and how I have conducted the analysis of it.

3.1 Case selection

Initially, I chose to study the implications of the organisational aspects of international negotiations. This idea was sparked after observing the criticism that the Danish government received after hosting COP15 in 2009. Certain commentators went as far as claiming that the lack of a binding treaty was the fault of Denmark, and not the different negotiating parties. Thus, the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference seemed to be the natural case to study. In addition to this, the Copenhagen summit can be considered as a *significant case* within the category of international negotiations. A significant case is, according to Jan Teorell and Torsten Svensson a case of particular importance. For example, this can be a particularly controversial case, a case that has received much attention, or a case that has an important impact on the lives of many people (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 151). The Copenhagen conference is all of this. It was a particularly important moment in the history of the climate change regime. It gathered nearly 115 Heads of States, one of the largest number of leaders ever to meet elsewhere than the United Nations headquarters (UNFCCC, 2013). Nearly 40,000 people applied for accreditation, either as a delegate or as an observer. According to the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, “[t]he meeting was subject to unprecedented public and media attention”, and the ambition was for the meeting to “result in a fair, ambitious and equitable agreement, setting the world towards a path to avoid dangerous climate change” (IISD, 2009:FINAL, p. 1). Thus, the Copenhagen conference was an event of particular importance within the governance of climate change.

Upon presenting my topic of interest, I was suggested a comparison with the next UN Climate Change Conference, which took place in Cancún in Mexico the following year. The Cancún Conference was perceived as differing from the one in Copenhagen concerning my chosen independent variable, that is the organisation. Upon further investigation, I discovered the two cases matched well with a comparative study following a most similar design. Below follows a description of the comparative logics I have followed.

3.2 Comparative logics

A comparative study aims to investigate a certain issue by comparing two or more cases to try to identify patterns. One attempts to copy a sort of experimental logic in a situation where one cannot do experiments. For social scientist it is often impossible to simulate a scenario. So, instead of doing repeated experiments where you add or remove a certain variable which impact you want to examine, you study real examples where your variable was or wasn't present, and compare these (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 222).

When choosing cases, one can follow several different logics, depending on what you want to examine. What they have in common is that you distinguish between cause and effect, where the cause is referred to as your independent variable or variables, that is the "x" that might have caused the situation you're studying. The effect is your dependent variable, the "y" that was caused. Two designs for the choice of cases, introduced by John Stuart Mills, have gained great support within the social sciences. In the "most similar design" your dependent variables differ, but otherwise your cases are quite similar. One attempts to identify the one independent variable that also differs between the cases, assuming that this then must be the cause of the different outcome (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 226). The "most different design" leads to a choice of cases that are different in all aspects except your dependent variable. To identify the cause one looks for an independent variable that the cases also have in common (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 227).

My cases reflect a most similar design. The dependent variable is the outcome of the negotiations, and my independent variable is what might have caused differences in the outcome. The two are both examples of multilateral climate change conferences organised within the same international organisation; the UN. They both include a conference of the parties to the same convention, the UNFCCC. This means that the secretariat and the Presidency of the two conferences act under the same mandate. The two conferences are situated relatively close in time, in 2009 and 2010, which could indicate minimal changes in actors involved, and also a similar international political climate. The focus of my study is the point where these two conferences differ; host country, and therefore also Presidency.

What distinguishes this study from a classic "most similar design" is that rather than examining several different possible explanatory causes, independent variables, I choose to focus on one that I believe have had an impact on the result of the conferences. I then examine *whether* and *how* this particular independent variable, leadership, might have influenced the outcome.

3.3 Material

I have done a strategic selection of newspaper articles and blog commentaries containing references to the role or effort of the host nation during these two conferences. My material consists of several different types of sources, both primary and secondary, with a varying degree of reliability. The reliability of a source is defined by how accurately it describes or measures what you intend to describe or measure, in this case the performance of the host nation Presidencies during these two conferences. If the information presented in your material has inaccuracies that aren't prone to any particular bias, there is a problem with your sources' reliability. If, however, your sources deliver information that is inaccurate with a clear bias in any direction, your problem is one of validity. In short, an unreliable source gives relevant but inaccurate information, whereas an invalid source gives you accurate information about something slightly different than what you intend to describe or measure (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 55-59).

I am confronted with a problem of validity. Newspaper sources cannot be guaranteed to provide complete and valid information on what happened during the conferences. One can expect newspapers to be biased towards the spectacular. A journalist is not subject to the same demands of accuracy and impartiality as a scientific researcher. This led to my decision to use newspaper articles not as sources on what actually happened, but as sources on how events were perceived, thus also adding another dimension to my analysis, the *perceived* role of host country Presidencies. This also solves my potential problem of reliability. A newspaper article on the events of one of the conferences might not be a reliable source of information on what actually happened. However, it is an accurate description of how the journalist in question perceived the events of the conference.

Firstly, I use the *Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties and its Subsidiary Bodies* as well as the UNFCCC Handbook to describe the formal role of the President of the COP.

To explain *how* the Presidencies led the negotiations, I use the Earth Negotiations Bulletin published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) every day during both conferences. In addition to this I also use information from scientific articles describing the conferences, as I judge these to be reliable sources. I further use newspaper articles, blog posts and reports from think tanks and NGOs to build an image of how these actions were perceived.

Through these articles, I build an image of how the effort of the two host nations was perceived by onlookers such as journalists and NGO representatives. Then, I pursued to analyse the perceived image using the theoretical framework on leadership presented in the previous chapter.

3.4 Operationalisations

I measure the success of the conferences with reference to the official objectives presented in the Bali roadmap, as well as whether the IISD characterised the conference as a success in their Earth Negotiations Bulletins, and how the result of the conferences was described in scientific articles. I will not myself do a normative analysis of whether the results were good or bad. When referring to good or bad leadership, this will be based on the perception of the quality of leadership reflected in reports, the media, and negotiating parties' statements. "Good" or "bad" leadership refers to whether it sparked positive or negative reactions, and whether the actions of the leader correspond to what is defined as good or bad leadership in my theoretical framework.

Tallberg further refers to brokerage, as a function demanded of a chairman. This might include the act of writing text-proposals and organising talks in smaller negotiating groups to facilitate negotiations. I operationalise the first as the actual formulation of texts separate from, but possibly related to or based on formal text-proposals already on the negotiating board. Only text drafted by the host country Presidency or under its responsibility or initiative are to be taken into account, as it is the influence of the host nation that is the object of study.

The second aspect of negotiation brokerage is the organisation of informal meetings with key parties. Negotiating in plenary sessions with nearly 200 parties present is a highly complex and difficult task. Discussing matters in smaller groups is a possible solution to this problem, and something that has been done at several multilateral negotiations. I operationalise this act of brokerage as the organisation of separate negotiating groups with a limited number of representatives from a limited number of parties (requested or suggested by the COP Presidency). These are not to be confused with the already existing working groups that also hold negotiating sessions during COPs. The groups that I here intend to study are the ones organised on the initiative of the COP President or other host country actors that are separate from regular or other semi-permanent negotiating groups.

How a problem is structured is not something that the Presidency can affect, but something external. It depends on the problem itself and the relation that the parties have to it. However, differences in problem structure might affect the degree of influence a Presidency may enjoy. Therefore, I will not at first hand analyse the problem structure but rather give a short account of how the structure of what faced the different Presidencies might have changed.

I operationalise *problem structure* as a combination of the different positions the parties have and how the disagreements surrounding the issue are structured, and what was expected of the two meetings according to the Bali roadmap that describes the goals for environmental negotiations in the immediate future, a definition that is influenced by the description provided by Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al.

4 Analysis

This segment combines the theoretical background on leadership with the material described above. I follow the structure of my theoretical chapter, meaning that I start by describing the *a priori* of these leadership positions, their mandate, which is what they have in common. I then continue to explain how they differ. I give a brief description of what happened during each conference and the actions of the Presidency, thus describing the leadership *process*. Then I direct focus towards the explanation of *why* they acted differently, drawing on articles and opinions on the different qualities the two Presidencies possess, seen through the theoretical lens provided by Tallberg, Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al, and Depledge. I distinguish certain main topics that are reflected in the reporting from each conference, and compare the description of these aspects to what is expressed in the bulletins from IISD. I continue to analyse these using my theoretical base, aiming to identify elements explaining *how* the Presidencies might have influenced the outcome of negotiations found both in the Earth Negotiations Bulletins and in articles and opinions. I thus analyse the *process* of leadership was perceived, aiming to distinguish the *capacity* to lead within the two different Presidencies.

4.1 The mandate of the COP President

Being chosen to organise a UN Climate Conference comes with a certain mandate and certain resources. These are the same for most Presidencies, but when they vary it is often not something the host country has any control over. These factors/variables are what I refer to as the *a priori* of leadership in the case of the Presidency of the UN Climate Change conferences.

According to the *Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties and its Subsidiary Bodies*, the President of the Conference of the Parties is elected during the first meeting of the session (UNFCCC, 1996, Rule 22). The office of the President normally rotates between the five UN regional groups. Usually, the President of the COP is the environmental minister of the government of his or her country. During a Conference of the Parties, the President will not at the same time act as representative for his or her Party, he or she is to act impartially (UNFCCC, 2006, p. 31). The President performs several procedural duties, such as opening and closing sessions, give permission to speak, call for votes, announce decisions and, in short, “have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat”. But, the President “remains under the authority of the Conference of the Parties” (UNFCCC, 1996, Rule 23).

4.2 Process: What happened during the two conferences?

Through the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, one can get a certain impression of the role of the Presidency during the negotiations.

4.2.1 Summary of the Copenhagen conference

Monday the 7th of December 2009, thousands of diplomats, press representatives, UN officials and members of NGOs gathered in Copenhagen for the beginning of the largest UN-summit ever held. According to the Bali Action Plan, which contained the Bali roadmap, negotiations for a climate treaty replacing the Kyoto protocol were to be concluded in Copenhagen (IISD, 2009:1, p. 1).

During the conference, negotiations progressed slowly. The trust for host country Denmark was undermined early on, when the newspaper *The Guardian* leaked a draft “Danish text”, which was particularly opposed by developing countries. When heads of state arrived for the high level segment, there was still a lot of work to be done. After nearly two weeks of intense negotiations, a draft text was written by a “friends of the chair”-group working behind closed doors. Several countries opposed this document. According to political scientist Radoslav Dimitrov, “[c]ountries opposing the Copenhagen Accord gave two primary reasons for doing so: the weak policy content, and the allegedly “undemocratic” and “illegitimate” procedure through which it was created” (Dimitrov, 2010, p. 810).

The conference resulted in the extension of the mandate of both the text drafting ad-hoc working groups, transferring their work to the next conference, in accordance with the draft rules of procedure (IISD, 2010:1, p. 2 & UNFCCC, 1996, Rule 16).

4.2.2 The Danish Presidency

During the first day of the Copenhagen conference, Danish Climate minister Connie Hedegaard was elected COP President. In addition to her formal procedural duties, I have distinguished three different categories of action.

The first is the act of engaging in consultations with parties. An example is when Hedegaard proposed the establishment of a contact group on the subject of proposals for new protocols under the UNFCCC that had been received from several different countries. As there was no agreement on this subject, Hedegaard stated that she would consult informally on the issue (IISD, 2009:4, p. 1). This also serves as an example of the second category of action, namely the suggestion of particular activities. The third is the announcement of particular activities

conducted by the Danish Presidency, such as the introduction of separately written draft texts.

As heads of states from the different negotiating Parties arrived in Copenhagen, President Hedegaard resigned as COP President to give place to Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. Some saw this as a dramatic event, believing that it might be the result of some conflict, but in reality it was more of a question of procedure (IISD, 2009:10, p. 3).

4.2.3 Summary of the Cancún conference

When diplomats from all over the world gathered in Cancún in December 2010, they did so with modest expectations (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 1). After what was seen as failure in Copenhagen, an important task during the Cancún conference became to restore faith in the UN system's ability to solve the problems of climate change (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 28). This also made parties eager to prove that they had not lost the ability to reach an agreement (C2ES, 2010). Issues of transparency had been a major topic during COP15 and the Mexican Presidency worked hard to ensure that the negotiating process was perceived as democratic and open. COP President Espinosa repeated on several occasions that maintaining transparency was highly prioritised, and that no Mexican text was to be introduced (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 28). One step taken to reach this was introducing informal stocktaking plenary sessions to inform all parties of the progress made in the different formal and informal working groups (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 2).

Some faith was restored in the UNFCCC after the conclusion of the Cancún conference. It was characterised by small but important progress. Decisions were made on several points, “and contain provisions on adaptation, REDD+, technology, mitigation and finance” (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 1). However, some decisions were also postponed to future conferences (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 29).

4.2.4 The Mexican Presidency

The role of Espinosa during the Cancun conference was in certain aspects quite similar to that of Hedegaard and Rasmussen in Copenhagen. In other ways, it differed substantially. COP President Espinosa also performed the duties of a President, such as chairing the plenary discussions. She consulted informally with the parties and took the initiative to the formation of negotiating groups and other negotiating strategies. An example of the first is when Espinosa suggested that ministers were to be paired, one from a developed and one from a developing country, to work together on specific issues (IISD, 2010:8, p. 4).

Unlike the Danish COP Presidents, Espinosa did not introduce a Mexican text. On the contrary, UNFCCC executive secretary announced that there would be no Mexican text (IISD, 2010:6, p. 4), and Espinosa repeated this on several occasions (IISD, 2010:11, p. 3). At the very end of the Cancún conference, Espinosa

announced the release of new texts drafted under her responsibility. This led to her receiving a standing ovation, a clear sign that parties appreciated her effort as the President of the COP (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 15).

4.3 Process and capacity

I present a number of central elements in the work of the COP Presidencies and how these were perceived.

4.3.1 Informal consultations

The act of engaging in informal consultations is something that is referred to often in relation to both conferences. The two Presidents of the Copenhagen conference talk about engaging in informal consultations on a wide range of issues such as the election of officers (IISD, 2009:2, p. 2), forming contact groups on particular issues (IISD, 2009:4, p. 1), and are even reported to be “consulting on how to conduct consultations” (IISD, 2009:FINAL, p. 4). Concerning the Cancún conference, however, there are less reports of the COP President herself conducting informal consultations (IISD, 2010). Not only the President consults informally. Chairs of different working groups and delegates from different nations are also cited to be consulting informally throughout the entire conferences.

According to Tallberg, holding informal consultations is one of the tools available to formal chairs that permit them to gain access to knowledge about the positions of parties that is otherwise unavailable. This knowledge permits the chair to act as a broker.

The creation of separate negotiating groups, such as a “friends of the chair”-group is a form of informal consultation conducted in more organised forms. The possible creation of a “friends of the chair”-group was suggested by Danish COP President Connie Hedegaard, as a forum for the negotiation of a final treaty document (IISD, 2009:11, p. 4). The creation of such a group was met with a positive response by some parties, but was also criticised by a group of developing countries that saw this as a threat to transparency (IISD, 2009:FINAL, p. 28). Eventually, a “friends of the chair”-group was created, consisting of several heads of state. It was in this group that the final text that was to become the Copenhagen Accord was negotiated (IISD, 2009:FINAL, p. 28 & Dimitrov, 2010, p. 809-810).

The creation of the “friends of the chair”-group became an important theme during the Copenhagen conference (Dimitrov, 2010, p. 809). Journalist Martin Khor was one of those that directed harsh criticism towards the group. He refers to it as a “hijacking” of the negotiations, and states that one should “[b]lame Denmark [...] for Copenhagen failure” (Khor, 2009). After the “friends of the chair”-negotiations were over, the resulting document also received harsh

criticism, going as far as one delegate comparing it to the Holocaust (Dimitrov, 2010, p. 811).

Espinosa also received criticism for engaging in informal consultations during the Cancún conference. UN Youth delegate Anjali Appadurai comments on the existence of informal consultations with scepticism. She claims that they're "not considered legally appropriate". However, she does not refer to who considers this and why. She mentions the informal dinner held at the arrival of certain ministers to Cancún, and implies that the dinner was held in secrecy (Appadurai, 2010). The same dinner was however mentioned by the IISD, which simply stated that an informal dinner was held, without further comments (IISD, 2010:7, p. 4).

According to Dean Bialek, a negotiator for the Marshall Islands, Espinosa also convened a group of key actors to discuss the last details of the final text proposals during the final stages of the Cancún conference. Bialek states that "every international negotiator knows that at some point during a complex and politically charged multilateral process, a small, humid room is necessary to crunch the final deal" (Bialek, 2010). However, this meeting was not explicitly mentioned in by the IISD.

Bialek represents a view that differs radically to that of Appadurai, one that resembles the understanding of informal consultations reflected in my theoretical framework. Whether informal consultations should be considered good or bad, legal or illegal, the surprise expressed by Appadurai points to an inequality in the access to information about common negotiating procedure. Similarly, when Khor criticises the creation of a "friends of the chair"-group, he does not mention that this is a common negotiating tool. This lack of transparency, not only by holding closed meetings, but particularly the lack of knowledge of such meetings, is one that might lead to distrust towards the climate regime.

As already mentioned, Espinosa held stocktaking plenary sessions during the Cancún summit to increase transparency. This points to awareness and openness concerning the problems that are associated with extensive informal consultations.

4.3.2 Writing draft texts

The writing of a "Danish text" caused much debate and received strong criticism during the Copenhagen conference. During the first week, the British newspaper *The Guardian* leaked a draft document presented as "the 'Danish text'" (*The Guardian*, 2009). According to the newspaper, this caused developing nations to react strongly. John Vidal quotes negotiators and NGO representatives that heavily criticises both the content of the text and how it was written, and states that "developing countries reacted furiously to [the] leaked documents". A senior diplomat was cited claiming that the document "is to be superimposed without discussion on the talks" (Vidal, 2009a). The Climate Action Network also commented the leakage, stating that "[s]omething really WAS rotten in Denmark", and describe the text as unambitious, and the process behind its development as "fatally flawed". (ECO, 2009, p. 1).

The leakage was also commented by the IISD. They report of strong reactions from certain actors, but states that “most veterans and observers close to the process were more interested in knowing “which version” of the text was leaked”, indicating that the existence of a Danish text was not at all a secret to many delegates (IISD, 2009:3, p. 4). Danish journalist Per Meilstrup even claims that UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon gave Denmark an informal mandate to bring forth such a text (Meilstrup, 2010, p. 124-125).

Albeit the heavy criticism, at her resignation, COP President Hedegaard announced that a complete Danish draft would be presented in the coming days (IISD, 2009:10, p. 1). This was met with critical questions from several parties, including China who questioned the transparency concerning the drafting of these texts, and stated that “the Presidency could not “put forward text from the sky”” (IISD, 2009:10, s. 1).

Contrary to the Danish, President Espinosa of the Cancún conference continuously repeated that there was no Mexican text. However, on the last day of the conference, she presented several texts “under her responsibility”. She stated that these texts reflected the negotiating tracks, and were not to be seen as a “Mexican text” (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 15). This claim is similar to the one presented by Hedegaard, that the texts that were to be presented were “based substantially on the two texts forwarded by the AWGs” (IISD, 2009:10, p. 1). Nonetheless, Espinosa received standing ovations for her statement, as opposed to the critical questions and accusations directed towards the Danish COP Presidency.

The writing of separate text proposals is presented both by Jonas Tallberg and Joanna Depledge as a common practice within the climate regime. It is an important tool in negotiation facilitation, used by many successful conference chairs, such as Mustafa Tolba in the Ozone negotiations (Tallberg, 2006, p. 198-200). However, the repeated reference to the text as the “Danish text” indicates that it is not seen as an impartial contribution to the negotiations. According to Depledge, impartiality is a very important quality of a presiding officer.

4.3.3 Expressions of trust – and distrust

When the efforts of the Danish hosts of the Copenhagen conference are mentioned, they are often set in a bad light. In an article compiled by Suzanne Goldenberg, John Vidal comments on the Danish Presidency, describing it as an embarrassment. He points to Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen’s poor effort as COP President during the high level segment of the negotiations, and connects this to his inexperience of such high level politics. Hedegaard, however gets a better review. He also claims that a conflict between Rasmussen and Hedegaard lay in the background when Hedegaard stepped down as COP President, the official reason being that a change of leadership was needed when such a high number of heads of state arrived in Copenhagen (Vidal, 2009b). Vidal even brought up the Danish text proposal that was leaked in the beginning of negotiations, pointing out that it lead to furious reactions from developing

countries. Danish journalist Per Meilstrup also heavily criticises the Presidency, and also points to inexperience and a weak understanding for UN procedure as a reason for the Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen's failure to lead the negotiations (Meilstrup, 2010, p. 130). This corresponds to Depledge's description of the skills needed to effectively chair a UNFCCC negotiation. Experience is essential, and is something that the President of the COP often lacks (Depledge, 2005, p. 50-51). Despite this lack of experience, Rasmussen chose to take an active role, which is voluntary according to Depledge (2005, p. 36-37).

Something that is reoccurring in articles and reports from the Cancún summit is the expression of a positive view of the Mexican hosts, and a praising of their efforts. Bruno Berthon lists important players in the debate on climate change, and starts with Espinosa. He describes her as "the central figure" at the negotiations. The article is written at the very beginning of the conference; the author states that she has already given a good impression of Mexico as a host nation. It is not given that the President of the negotiations is presented as the main figure. At previous conferences, the chair of a working group or a subsidiary body has had a more central role, and is the name one refers to when talking about the "chair" or when discussing formal leadership during that particular conference. An example is Raul Estrada who led the Kyoto conference as the chair of an ad-hoc working group (Tallberg, 2010, p. 257). Estrada is often used as an example of effective leadership. Contrarily, one does not often hear the name of the Japanese President Ohki of the very same conference. As Depledge states, it is a choice whether the President of the COP takes a visible role during negotiations, and in Kyoto, the Japanese chose to let Estrada take the role of the chair (2005, p. 48).

This shows that being the President of the negotiations does not automatically make you the leader. The President officially leads negotiations according to the UNFCCC rules of procedure, but taking a leading role in negotiations is not given, it is a choice for each country or leader to make.

Heather Allen, of Natural Resources Defense Council, an NGO, writes about an early morning plenary session held at the very beginning of the high level segment of the Cancún conference. The different working groups presented new text proposals. Then, Espinosa did a move that Allen considers strategic. Instead of letting all countries speak and voice their opinion on the texts, she rapidly closed the meeting, expressing that further decisions were political ones and for the ministers to make. The author expresses confidence in Espinosa's authority, and sees this move as an effective way of managing the time-issue that arises when nearly 200 parties are to speak (Allen, 2010). Another possible angle would be to frame this as a democratic problem, stating that parties should have the opportunity to express themselves. But, in this case, the Mexican hosts managed to skip this step without being accused of leading an undemocratic process.

The decisiveness described by Allen was also reflected in the handling of Bolivia's protests against the conference outcome. Bolivia made several complaints concerning the procedure behind the drafting of the final texts, and put itself in the way of reaching consensus. Instead of accepting failure in negotiating a result that would be formally adapted, Espinosa stated that "[c]onsensus does

not mean that one country has the right of veto”, and declared consensus despite Bolivia’s protests (IISD, 2010:FINAL, p. 28).

Dean Bialek, an advisor to the Marshall Islands delegation at the Cancún conference, praises the Mexican Presidency, and gives it credit for what he defines as a success in Cancún. He describes Mexico’s style of negotiation as “gracious”. He credits “Patricia Espinosa, and her impressive team of diplomats” with what he describes as a success in Cancún. Even Martin Ådahl, who deeply criticises the Cancún summit in his article *Till och med värre än väntat*, (Even worse than expected), states that the failure in Cancún happened *despite* the efforts of the host country. He sees the Mexicans as calm hosts that were focused on small steps forward rather than big ambitious goals of saving the world, and states that Mexico is right when claiming that such small steps forward were taken (Ådahl, 2009).

Appadurai also expresses a general trust in the Mexican Presidency in her blog post titled *Always trust your Mexican*. However, her trust seem to be of a different nature, more of a *hope* that President Espinosa will succeed in maintaining transparency, combined with a determinist approach when stating that “[a]s observers in this process, all we may do at this point is “trust our Mexican.””.

All of these commentators point to what Biermann et. al. refer to as *organisational leadership*. Their description of the Mexican Presidency and Espinosa’s role corresponds to that of *strong leadership*, both according to Biermann et. al. and Depledge.

5 Conclusion

I conclude by referring again to my initial research questions:

What is the role and mandate of the Presidency of UN Climate Change Conferences, and in what measure did the Presidency fulfil this role during the conferences in Cancún in 2010 and Copenhagen in 2009?

How did the leadership provided by the Presidency of the UN Climate Change Conferences in Copenhagen and Cancún affect the outcome of the negotiations?

What was the perceived role of the Presidency during these two conferences, and how does this correspond to theories on formal leadership?

The President of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC has a clear mandate stipulated in the Draft Rules of Procedure of the COP to the UNFCCC. He or she is to preside over the negotiations, accord delegates the right to speak and call for voting. In addition to this formal and near ceremonial mandate, the President of the COP has an informal right to play a more active role in the promotion of an agreement. This includes bargaining between actors, engaging in informal consultations, drafting text proposals and organising meetings with key actors.

During the Copenhagen conference, Connie Hedegaard and Lars Løkke Rasmussen both acted as President of the COP. Hedegaard during the initial segment, and Rasmussen during the high level segment of the conference. Hedegaard performed well in her formal more ceremonial duties as President of the COP. Rasmussen, however, received criticism for not having a great enough understanding of UN procedure. Concerning the more informal role of the President of the COP, the Danish Presidency didn't perform as well. The Danish hosts received much criticism for the lack of transparency during negotiations, and the introduction of a so-called "Danish text".

The COP President of the Cancún conference, Patricia Espinosa, performed well in her formal duties. She was also praised for her effort performing the more informal duties of the President of the COP. She managed to maintain a good level of transparency, was a strong and consistent leader when needed, and received a standing ovation for her effort in drafting a text during the final hours of the conference.

One can assume that Espinosa's leadership had a positive effect on the outcome of the Cancún conference. It was under her lead that the final texts reflecting the two negotiating tracks were drafted. She also put her foot down

when Bolivia stood in the way of consensus. These are all actions that according to Depledge correspond the role of a strong and influential President of the COP.

On the contrary, the Danish Presidency was perceived to have affected the outcome of the negotiations negatively. The Danish hosts attempted to use the traditional tools of a COP President, such as the drafting of text proposals and the organisation of separate negotiating groups with key actors. However, their efforts were perceived as attempts to impose the view of a minority of the parties in an un-democratic way, rather than impartial attempts of negotiation brokering. It is difficult to determine whether the results of the conference would have been any better without the influence of the Danish Presidency, but according to the results of my studies, I judge it safe to assume that the Danish Presidency didn't bring a great positive influence on the results of the Copenhagen conference.

The President of the COP is perceived to play an important role in the United Nations Climate Change Conferences. In the case of the Copenhagen conference, those who mentioned the efforts of the host nation indicated that Denmark was partly (or fully) to be blamed for what was perceived as a failed conference. The role of the Mexican Presidency was equally presented as an influential one, although in the opposite direction. This reflects what is expressed in my theoretical framework. However, many authors express a view on the role of the President of the COP that does not match what is stated by Tallberg, Biermann & Siebenhüner et. al. and Depledge. The drafting of text proposals, informal consultations and the organising of separate negotiating groups with key actors is several times referred to as illegitimate and undemocratic actions that have no place in UN negotiations. It is legitimate for onlookers to criticise the course of actions during negotiations, but as times those who presented the criticism seemed to have no knowledge of the fact that these actions have become so common that they are presented as an essential part of the role of a leader of international negotiations. Tallberg presents the appointment of a leader to perform precisely these tasks as functionalist solution to a collective action problem that arises in international negotiations, such as the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, thus describing this kind of negotiation brokering as the central function of a negotiation chair. Depledge states that this informal role is “accepted – and often expected – of a presiding officer in promoting the reaching of agreement” (Depledge, 2005, p. 36).

I thus conclude by partly confirming my hypothesis. Leadership matters, and it mattered in particular during the Cancún conference, when COP President Patricia Espinosa exerted a strong form of leadership that led to visible effects in the outcome of the negotiations. However, in the case of the Copenhagen conference, it is difficult to visualise what would have been achieved with a different leadership using only the material I have chosen. I choose not to assume that not leading negotiations towards success is equal to leading them towards failure. Nonetheless, a perception that the Danish Presidency contributed to the failure of the Copenhagen conference is definitely observable.

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