

# A Genuine Green Giant?

The European Union's role as a leader in international  
climate politics

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# Abstract

This thesis examines the notion of the European Union (EU) being a leader in international climate change (CC) politics. It aims at finding out whether the Union is indeed a leader in the area and how this leader role is constructed. As a leader is only a leader when it is perceived as such, the study takes into account a distinct role-theoretical approach that analyzes the self-image of the EU and perceptions of non-EU actors on the EU's leadership. Interviews and qualitative data of CC negotiators and diplomats both from the EU and third states serve as the main empirical material for this endeavour. While the EU is seen by both the EU and non-EU outsiders as a leader on CC that is pursuing a 'soft' leadership strategy – a distinctive combination of structural and instrumental with directional leadership modes – there is some incongruence between the EU and others' perceptions regarding to specific elements of the leader role. The EU may therefore, I argue, be characterized as a strong and genuine but somewhat restricted leader in the climate regime.

*Key words:* climate change, European Union, leadership, perceptions, roles

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# Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AOSIS  | Alliance of Small Island States                         |
| CC     | Climate Change  |
| CDM    | Clean Development Mechanism                             |
| COM    | Interviewee from the European Commission                |
| COP    | Conference of Parties                                   |
| COUN   | Interviewee from the Council Secretariat                |
| DC     | Developing Country                                      |
| EU     | European Union  |
| EEA    | European Environmental Agency                           |
| GHG    | Greenhouse Gases  |
| ICN    | International climate negotiations                      |
| JI     | Joint Implementation                                    |
| LDC    | Least Developed Country                                 |
| MS     | Member States (of the European Union)                   |
| SIDS   | Small Island Developing Countries                       |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change   |
| UNEP   | (Interviewee from) United Nations Environmental Program |
| WTO    | World Trade Organization                                |

Note! The interview and survey sources are indicated by the name of the state that the interviewee is representing. For example, (Switzerland) after a sentence or quote indicates that the sentence refers to a remark by an interviewee or respondent from Switzerland.

*Für meine Eltern und Geschwister.*

# 1 Introduction\*

Since the early 1990ies, the European Union (EU) presents itself as a leader on climate change (CC). In the current post-Kyoto climate negotiations, it is “leading global action to 2020 and beyond” (Commission 2009a) and “has been at the forefront of efforts to combat climate change” (Commission 2008d). This description has been echoed by scholars that see Europe<sup>1</sup> as a key actor with leadership capabilities despite some shortcomings and implementation difficulties (Oberthür 2007, Vogler 2005, Bretherton & Vogler 2006, Vanden Brande 2008a). The most obvious example of the emergence of European leadership in environmental diplomacy was witnessed when the EU circumvented the United States’ (US) power to help shaping an international climate regime in form of the Kyoto Protocol (Vogler 2005, Falkner 2006, Bretherton & Vogler 2006). Moreover, the EU’s climate policy actions at the domestic and international level, such as the ratification of the ‘climate and energy package’ and the Kyoto protocol, accompanied by official EU-rhetoric consolidates the impression of a leader with major capacity in foreign environmental policy. Arguably, the EU has made considerable effort to show that it is a ‘green giant’ - a heavy weight in global climate change and environmental policy (Vogler 2005).

Against this background, this paper intends to shed light on the Union’s international role as a leader in the area of international climate politics. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations on a post-Kyoto agreement represent a sound opportunity to assess the construction of the Union’s environmental leadership role in the interplay with other international actors.

The approach of this study deviates from the rich literature on the EU’s leadership in environmental politics (Vogler 2005, Oberthür 2007, Vogler & Stephan 2007, Lacaste et. al. 2007), as it presents a unique analytical framework. Most studies do not take into account the *perception of others*<sup>2</sup> in assessing the international role of the EU. This is surprising as the assessment of leadership needs to take into account that “[a] leader is not only a party that fulfils theoretical criteria; a leader is one that is *perceived* as a leader” (Gupta & van der Grijp

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper Europe refers to the EU. In case the continent Europe or European non-EU countries are meant, it will be indicated.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this study I refer to ‘others’, ‘outsiders’ or third party actors as non-EU actors in the international climate talks.

2000:67, emphasis added). Hence, by extending the analysis of the Union's role from how the EU sees itself to how outsiders perceive the EU in climate politics, a thorough and fruitful theoretical assessment of the construction of the EU's leadership role can be conducted.

## 1.1 Purpose and Contribution

The general purpose of this thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding on the construction of the EU's international role as a leader on climate change (CC). This is a challenging area of research, which has gained considerable academic attention (e.g. Bretherton & Vogler 2006, Vanden Brande 2008a, Oberthür 2007). However, except for one article published almost a decade ago (Gupta & van der Grijp 2000), scholars have not yet systematically analyzed the European Union's role in climate change negotiations in relation to the perceptions of 'others'<sup>3</sup>. This is astonishing as this approach could enhance our understanding of the Union's role in climate politics and its external presence considerably, especially because third party actors' perceptions are necessary to fully assess the leader-role of the EU (Gupta & van der Grijp 2000:67). They also influence the EU's role construction and behaviour, which at the same time feeds back on the others' perceptions in a circular relation. For this reason, they enable an evaluation of the reception and performance of the EU's leadership in climate politics (compare Elgström 2006: 1, 12-13).

How others see the EU in international politics is still an under researched area despite a growing body of literature on that issue (e.g. Elgström 2006, Elgström 2007a, Elgström 2008, Chaban et. al. 2006, Lucarelli 2008, Cerutti & Lucarelli 2008, Lightfoot & Hussey 2006). The present study contributes to this rather scarce set of academic writing by shedding some light on how Europe is perceived in the area of climate change politics. As the EU's climate change policy has not yet been addressed sufficiently in this literature this thesis can add new knowledge to the academic debate.

Moreover, the study may also give some general indications about the current status and position of the various actors involved in the UNFCCC climate talks in general and about the prospective developments of EU policy-making in the area of climate change. The focus on leadership perceptions may also indicate to what extent an effective EU leadership may contribute to a progressive post-Kyoto agreement in the future.

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<sup>3</sup> Gupta and Van der Grijp (2000) analyze the EU and others' perceptions in the area of climate change. However, their account does not apply a role theoretical approach and focuses on the pre-Kyoto negotiations. This thesis deals with the prospects of leadership for the EU-27 in the current post-Kyoto negotiations, which are arguably a much more complex setting.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This paper intends to shed light on two basic and tightly inter-connected questions.

- 1) How is the European Union's leading role constructed in the area of climate change,
- 2) and does the European Union *indeed* play a leader-role in climate change politics?

These questions will be tackled by a role theoretical account (see section 2.2) that is based on a qualitative analysis of interview-data and official documents. In order to fully assess the second question, we need to find out how the leader-role of the EU is constructed.

For the first question, thus, I intend to find out about the leader-role that the EU holds of itself (*ego* part of the role) and how the Union constructs this role by scrutinizing its constituting elements. The self-perspective is then contrasted with the perceptions of 'others' (*alter* part of the role) on the self-representation of the EU. This proceeding is a first step in order to answer the second question as a thorough assessment of the EU's leadership is only possible if we know about how the leader-role is constructed.

The second question will be answered through an assessment of the leader performance of the EU together with a careful comparison between the *ego* and the *alter* part of the proposed role and its elements.

Role performance is analyzed by applying leadership theory that provides for a distinction between three modes of leadership: structural, instrumental, and directional.

Subsequently, the *ego* and *alter* parts are compared. As a "leader is not only a party that fulfils theoretical criteria; a leader is one that is perceived as a leader" (Gupta & van der Grijp 2000:67), the EU needs to be recognized as a leader by others to qualify for the label as playing a leading role in CC. It can be hypothesized that if it turns out to be a predominantly conflicting relationship between the *ego* and *alter* role-part, the EU's ability to pursue its leadership role on climate change policies would be hampered. Thus, this could eventually mean that a leadership role for the EU may be very hard to perform. On the other hand, if the role ascribed to the EU by others predominately matches the conception of the EU's own role-conception, we could state that the Union has made considerable achievements as being a leader beyond mere rhetoric. Consequently, the EU's may then very well be described as being a leader in CC politics.

## 1.3 Outline of the Study

In the following chapter the theoretical basis of the approach applied in this study will be presented. In chapter 3 the methods for analyzing the leader-role construction are outlined, followed by a short overview of the climate negotiations in chapter 4. Chapter 5 examines the EU's self-perception of its role which is then contrasted with the perceptions of non-EU actors in chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 concludes this thesis with a short summary of the most interesting findings.

## 2 Theory

*“There is nothing so practical as a good theory.”*

Kurt Lewin (1964:169)

In the following I am going to present a role-theoretical framework that allows to structure the EU's leadership role in climate politics by taking into account the perceptions of the Union's self and views from third party actors. Firstly, I briefly expound the assumption of the EU being an actor in international relations. This is a necessary condition for further analysis. Secondly, I present a role-theoretical approach that facilitates the practical application to the case of the UNFCCC negotiations and climate policy in general. Thirdly, I elaborate on why and how to include perspectives from non-EU actors. Fourthly, I discuss the conception of leadership in international relations and introduce a useful leadership terminology that encompasses three distinct types of leadership.

### 2.1 The Object of Study – The EU as an Actor

The broad focus of this study is the EU in international politics. Thus, a precondition to discuss the EU in foreign relations is to come to terms with the question whether the Union is an actor in the international community.

An actor in the international system according to conventional international relation terms is a sovereign state that pursues negotiations and signs treaties with other sovereign states. The EU is either depicted as an ‘almost-state’ on the one extreme, or as a mere international organization on the other. This uncertainty about the international personality of the Union resulted in the conception of the EU as a *sui generis* geopolitical entity (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:15). Thus, the EU is not a state but it often pursues the mentioned state-like actions.

Nevertheless, the Union is widely described as a pivotal player in international negotiations and seems to have a prominent position to influence global policymaking- especially in the area of trade and environment (Bretherton & Vogler 2006, Vogler 2005, Zito 2005, Rosencrance 1998). This lends evidence to the assumption that the Union can be considered an international actor (Bretherton & Vogler 2006). Hence, in this study the EU is considered an actor along with others in the UNFCCC talks where the Community also has legal personality as it has the ability to pursue negotiations and to interact with other players (Reischl 2009:34).

### 2.1.1 Mixed agreements and shared competence

After it has been briefly established that the EU can indeed be conceptualized as an actor, the case of international climate negotiations (ICN) adds a complex layer to the picture. This is because the UNFCCC is a so-called ‘mixed agreement’ under shared competence, where both the European Community (EC) and the member states are a party at the negotiation table<sup>4</sup>. The reason for this ‘mixture’ is the fact that the UNFCCC negotiations touch upon competences of both the EC and the MS. According to article 300 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, issues that are covered by Community competences are to be negotiated by the Commission, whereas the member states formally negotiate those issues which fall under their competence. This procedure may undermine the ability to speak with a common voice and thus decrease the bargaining power of the Union (Frieden 2004).

This is why in practice member states usually pool their voices in order to delegate negotiation authority to a common negotiator, which is most often the member state holding the Presidency (Delreux 2008). In the climate talks it is predominantly the Presidency that leads the Union as a whole and that pursues the climate agenda. This agenda is a commonly agreed mandate or guideline from the Council. This guideline is likely to be seen by third parties as representing the common position of the Union (Damro 2006:185). Furthermore, coordination meetings with national delegations and EC representatives as well as working and plenary group meetings are held to form an EU stance in the negotiations. This means that the EC and the member states (MS) rarely negotiate independent from each other (ibid.:178).

The Commission’s participation is crucial even if issues are not strictly within its competence as it is the only player that can assure an organized response to the complexities that emerge from the EU’s obligations on climate change (Harris 2007a).

Because of the mentioned complexities of shared competence, the EU’s climate negotiation system has been characterized as ponderous and requires immense efforts to achieve coordination. Thus, this constrains flexibility in the process of negotiation and it implies that the EU tends to be a predominantly reactive negotiator (Vogler & Bretherton 2006b:13). In general, problems for the performance of the EU’s claimed leadership role, for example in form of misunderstandings or irritation from ‘outsiders’, can be expected to arise from this set-up (Damro 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> The basis for Community action in international (environmental) matters was laid by the European Court of Justice’s ERTA decision in 1971. The essence of the verdict reads that when the EC has the right to legislate internally, it also obtains the legal right to act externally in matters that could affect that internal legislation (Damro 2006:177). Most international environmental agreements are today mixed agreements. Member states are reluctant to allocate full negotiation power to the EC and there is still a political quarrel going on about the limits of EC competence (Vanden Brande 2008a:164, Vogler & Bretherton 2006:4).

## 2.2 Role Theory

Role theory is on the one hand related to constructivism in its presumption that decision-makers' perceptions about their environment might differ from its objective condition<sup>5</sup>. The presence and recognition of role concepts in the minds of policy-makers may affect and constrain their interests, as well as shape their policy choices (Orbie 2008). On the other hand, role theory deviates from constructivism due to its positivist underpinnings like the reliance on empirical observation, falsification, and hypothesis testing (Breuning 2008). Thus, this approach can be described as being based on 'soft rationalism' or 'thin constructivism'. Material interests and objective reality do exist and play an important role, but intersubjective understandings matter as well (Vanden Brande 2008b:2).

Roles "refer to patterns of expected or appropriate behavior" (Elgström & Smith 2006:5). March and Olsen's logic of appropriateness is of relevance here along with the idea of socialization. According to the logic of appropriateness, actors behave in the way they believe is expected from them in a specific context. Identities and roles, *inter alia*, shape behaviour (March and Olsen 1998:951-952). Hence, the behaviour or performance of the EU in CC negotiations can be fruitfully analyzed with the help of this approach. Socialization or social learning occurs in the interaction process with others (cf. 2.2.1). Exchanging information and communicating with others shape expectations of oneself and the other's behaviour. In other words, the roles an actor engages in are partly a consequence of "learning and socialization in interactive negotiation processes where self conceptions are confronted with expectations" (Elgström & Smith 2006:5). Actors are however not entirely constrained by this process but have some freedom of what role to choose or how to play it in a certain context. There is, as Elgström and Smith (*ibid.*) put it, "room for agency in role theory".

Role-concepts are contextually determined and fluid across issue areas. For example, the EU may not have the same role(s) in the trade area as it has in climate policy (Elgström 2007b, Elgström 2006). Role-conceptions thus change to a certain extent along policy fields as they are "connected to the behavior of an actor in a specified issue area or a certain organizational forum" (Elgström and Smith 2006:5).

A role can be viewed as being constituted by certain elements, that is, recurrent perceptions or images, within a specific policy setting. The performance and construction of these role-elements then again shape and influence the overarching role conception of the Union and simultaneously other role-elements within the role matrix. This means that roles and role-elements are co-constitutive (see table 1). For example, a leader role is either constrained or supported by a recurrent image on the credibility of this role.

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<sup>5</sup> Constructivists' point is usually that no objective truth exists and that all reality is (socially) constructed (Risse 2004:160-61).

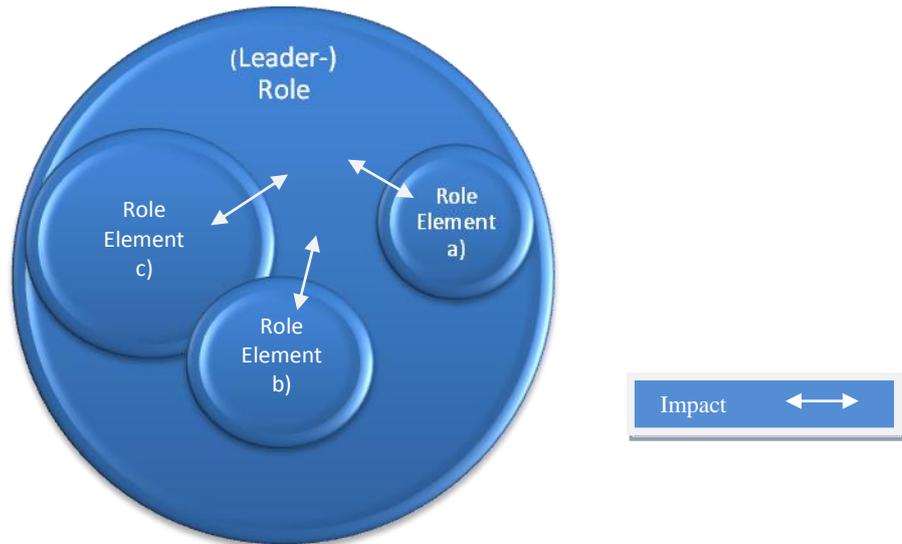


Table 1: Simple Matrix on Roles in International Relations

In the present study, the leader role of the EU is the overarching role that is shaped as well as constrained or facilitated by role elements (or: sub-roles). These role elements are recurrent patterns of perceptions or images that can be derived from interview and textual data. In other words, the sub-roles are the constituents of the leader role. In the area of climate change, recurrent images of the EU have been inductively<sup>6</sup> read out from the empirical material (cf. 3.6, 5.3). These elements encompass a view on the EU's leadership as (1) important, (2) multilateral, (3) coherent, (4) credible, and (5) responsible. They are occasionally overlapping and do not exclude each other.

With the help of this specific role theoretical approach, I try to find out about the construction and external interpretation of the leadership role that the EU assumes.

For example, if the role-elements mostly match or are to a large extent congruent with the leader conception, one can assume that the EU indeed plays a leader role in CC negotiations. If there are huge deviations to be found between the elements and roles, the leadership-role has to be 'adjusted' or, inversely, the role constituents.

**Images and perceptions**

Any description of “objectives, choice among courses of action, or response to a situation in the environment may be explained partly in terms of policy makers’ perceptions of reality. People act and react according to their images of the environment. In policy making, the state of the environment does not matter so much as what government officials believe that state to be. By image, we mean individuals’ perceptions of an object, fact or condition; their evaluation of that object, fact, or condition (...) and the meaning ascribed to, or deduced from, that object, or condition” (Holsti 1992:291).

<sup>6</sup> Using an inductive approach means that data is collected and examined to derive hypotheses or a theory in order to explain the data found (Babbie et. al 2007:9). The resulting potential hypotheses are however likely to be a mere “inference to the best possible explanation” (Hacking 2001: 16).

### 2.2.1 The ‘others’ issue

As already mentioned, most studies on the EU’s international appearance do not focus on non-EU actors’ views, but merely take into account what the EU’s self displays. What makes role-theory fruitful is the emphasis on the dynamic interplay between the actor’s self-conception and, on the one hand, actor independence and, on the other hand, structurally guided role expectations (Elgström & Smith 2006).

Analyzing a role(-conception) takes into account a) the construction of the actor’s self or self-image (ego part of a role concept) and b) the expectations and perceptions of others that interact with the actor in question (alter part). Consequently, a complex analysis of an actor, in our case the EU in climate policies, can be conducted.

So what is the added value analyzing perceptions and expectations of the EU by third party actors? A mere look at what the EU internally displays or how it is ‘domestically’ constructed may not be sufficient to gain a complex image of what kind of an actor the European Union displays in the international (climate policy) arena. With the help of role-theory, the above mentioned two-sided approach (ego and alter part) can be conducted that takes into account the self-perception of the EU in climate policy matters, but broadens it with the view of how outsiders or ‘others’ perceive and assess the Union’s role conception(s). This approach incorporates the assumption that “others’ views on the EU help to shape identity and roles” (Chaban et. al. 2006: 247). Thus, foreign policy roles are shaped through constant interactions between one party’s role(s) and expectations from another party. This implies that with the means of analyzing third actors’ perceptions of the EU, conclusions can be drawn about the very character of the EU, at least in a specific policy field. As a consequence it is possible to gain insights on whether the Union succeeds in externalizing its internal construction by comparing it to others perceptions and expectations<sup>7</sup>. Outsiders’ perceptions thus facilitate an analysis of what the EU *is* or seems to be in international relations in several ways. Firstly, in the most basic sense “recognition by others allows for presence in global politics, which, not surprisingly is the sine qua non of global actorhood” (Jupille & Caporaso 1998:215). As this precondition - the EU being a recognized actor - is legally fulfilled by the EC being a full party to the UNFCCC (Art. 22, 23 UNFCCC), the second dimension of studying others perceptions is promising for the analysis:

“(…) as the EU comes to interact with third states bilaterally, regionally, or globally, and as the number and frequency of these contacts increase, a process of socialization occurs according to which EU activity comes to be accepted and expected, and indeed according to which its very identity is formed and the identities of its interlocutors transformed” (Jupille & Caporaso 1998:216).

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, a completely congruent role-conception between EU and outsiders is impossible to obtain. Perfect communication and perfect understanding of others’ and oneself would be a prerequisite for that.

Finally, other's assessments are a pre-condition for legitimacy in the international arena as legitimacy is a subjective quality (Elgström 2007a:952).

## 2.3 Leadership – A Condensed Framework of Analysis

This sub-section provides for the here proposed understandings of leadership and defines three different types of leadership that will be subsequently used in the analytical part. I will start to explain the significance of leadership in international relations by then proceeding with an attempt to define leadership in ICNs based on existing definitions. Deriving from this definition, structural, instrumental and directional leadership will be presented as the three applied leadership types.

### 2.3.1 Leadership and its relevance

There is relatively consistent agreement among academics that leadership in multilateral negotiations is of pivotal importance (Gupta & Ringius 2001, Jönsson 2002, Sannerstedt 2005). Empirical studies of international negotiations evidently report of the significance of leadership in order to reach agreement (e.g. Zartman 1994, Hampson & Hart 1999:339-40). Sannerstedt (2005:108) emphasizes that leaders are needed in order to avoid or circumvent deadlocks and to push the negotiation process to a solution. Moreover, the delegation of powers to leaders may be viewed as a functional answer by states to collective action problems in multilateral negotiations. Members of an international institution may for example delegate brokerage tasks, management of agendas, or mediation to more powerful countries (Nabers 2008).

Generally, it has been theorized that the larger the negotiations and the more complex the negotiation set-up, that is, the more actors and negotiation issues which could be regarded as 'national' interests by each country, the more it is likely that some actors will emerge as leaders and others as followers. As a result, with increasing complexity leadership becomes more crucial as a factor for successful negotiation (Underdal 1994:180-181).

The UNFCCC climate talks are a potentially fertile field for the emanation of leadership due to the fact that almost every nation state participates in the negotiations and because of the vast number of issues that are linked to climate change (Kanie 2006). Therefore, leadership is a necessary feature in the climate change regime (Gupta & van der Grijp 2000:67).

### 2.3.2 Cooking a definition of leadership

The consensus on the significance of leadership in international relations has not entirely been transferred to the debate about what leadership actually is. There are several classical definitions of leadership in international relations theory which emphasize certain traits of leadership (Young 1991, Underdal 1994, Malnes 1995, Sjöstedt 1999 cf. Grubb & Gupta 2000, Andersen & Agrawala 2002, Skovdin & Andresen 2006). This results in a wide range of different leadership types. However, these concepts are rather a matter of labelling than of severe deviations in content. Drawing on existing leadership classifications, I will develop a definition of leadership that suits the analysis of the EU's leadership role in ICN. Consistent with the proposed framework of this study, this definition will depart "from a conception of leadership as a *role* that a particular country or organization can – or cannot – perform in a given negotiation" (Sjöstedt 1999:226-227, emphasis in original).

I am going to take the risk of too many cooks spoiling the broth by focussing on a "demanding definition of leadership" (Skovdin & Andersen 2006:14) developed by Arlid Underdal (1994), flavouring it with some critical insights from Nabers (2008) and spiced with the initially mentioned scholarly work of leadership. This is an attempt to develop a leadership typology that suits the analysis of the climate change regime, highlighting "the fact that any typology of leadership needs to be adapted to the characteristics of the issue being negotiated" (Grubb & Gupta 2000:18).

Underdal (1994:178, emphasis added) classifies leadership as "*an asymmetrical relationship of influence, where one actor guides or directs the behavior of others towards a certain goal over a certain period of time*". He dissects this definition further into three qualifying constituents.

Firstly, leadership in core is a "relationship between [a] leader and followers" (ibid.:181). This relation is shaped by the responsiveness and the demand of the followers as well as by the supply of leadership services provided by the leader(s). Accordingly, "leadership will clearly be most effective when supply matches demand" (ibid.).

Drawing on the work of Burns (1979), Nabers (2008) stresses two important points which are not explicit in the proposed definition. Firstly, leadership is competitive. There is a constant struggle between actors that intend to lead: "Leadership is always contested by challenges from those who are left out of what we will call a 'hegemonic project', and sometimes from those who find themselves in a subordinate position to the leader" (ibid.:9). Secondly, leadership is associated with influence and power (see also Underdal 1994, Skovdin & Andresen 2006). However, contrary to mere power holders, leaders are effective as they provoke change. Moreover, in contrast to pure power, leadership is indivisible from the wants and needs of the followers. These wants and needs, in turn, may be changed by means of social interaction (Nabers 2008:5-6). Also, it is worth mentioning that influence does not necessarily equal leadership (Sjöstedt 1999:228). Influence exerted by a leader needs to have a major impact on the negotiation's main developments. That means that exerting influence over a minor technical detail cannot be called leadership (Kanie 2003).

Leadership and its relation to power and influence directs us to the second element of the above proposed definition. In order to qualify for a leadership role, it is necessary to be “associated with the collective pursuit of some common good or joint purpose,” which implies that leaders are “supposed to exercise what might be called positive influence” (Underdal 1994:178-179). Hence, the exercise of brute force is not a basis of leadership as a “platform of shared values, interests and beliefs” is required for a leader role. It is however questionable what Underdal means with positive influence as he does not elaborate any further on this notion. In this study, it is therefore assumed that a purely self-interested actor is hardly compatible with a leader role. However, self-interest is still inherent in the leadership role. Or as Malnes (1995:94) coins it: “[L]eaders normally take an interest in what they get out of various arrangements, but their activity qualifies as leadership only if self-interest takes second place to collective goals”.<sup>8</sup> Others, nevertheless, will not perceive a purely self-interested actor that intends to lead as a credible or legitimate leader, which ultimately undermines its leading role (Karlsson & Parker 2008:24).

Finally, leadership has to be exerted over a certain period of time. A leader has to have more than just one commonly accepted, brilliant idea at a specific point of time (Underdal 1994:178). Kanie (2003:3) suggests that this time-span in the area of climate change politics “may be translated into a series of regime building negotiation that would produce a main development such as UNFCCC or the Kyoto Protocol, lasting more than one [Conference of Parties] COP, at least”.

### 2.3.3 Modes of leadership

In order to examine and evaluate the performance of a leadership role by the EU, we need to break down the aforementioned definition into modes of leading. Existing theory of multilateral leadership provides a fruitful account for this enterprise. There are different terms in describing ways of leadership (Young 1991, Underdal 1994, Malnes 1995). Although these ways of leadership are not so different from each other (2.3.3), they lack a specific approach to climate talks. In this study, I will follow a typology provided by Grubb and Gupta (2000:18-23) who summarize the work of Young (1991), Underdal (1994), and Malnes (1995) and form a typology that is prolific for climate change negotiations. Accordingly, leadership is operationalized in three modes as structural, instrumental and directional leadership. As these modes are ideal-types, overlapping may well occur in reality (Kanie 2007:91-92). Moreover, these performances of leadership are not mutually exclusive.

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<sup>8</sup> Arguably, this is not a clear-cut classification of self-interest and common interest. In actual negotiations a clear demarcation between self-interest and common interest is often infeasible to apply, as ‘purely’ selfish or altruistic motivations often go hand-in-hand. For a critical account of collective versus self-interest within the leadership concept see Skovdin & Andresen (2006).

### 2.3.4 Structural leadership

Structural leadership builds upon the structural capacity of an actor. It is “associated with the exercise of power derived from political strength in the global order and the weight of an actor with respect to the problem at hand” (Grubb & Gupta 2000:19). This type of a leadership role corresponds to coercive (Underdal 1994) or ‘sticks and carrots’ (Malnes 1995) approaches to negotiations.

Structural power stems from a state’s material or political resources and is gainfully used to affect “the incentives of others to accept one’s own terms or at least make a concession” (Underdal 1994: 186). Hegemony is the ultimate extreme of structural leadership. However, absolute hegemony is irrelevant in the area of climate change because the issue’s character is global and long-term in nature. No single state – or alliances or coalitions of states – would therefore be able to impose a long-lasting solution or bear the full expenses of climate change (Grubb & Gupta 2000:19). In other words, the sticks would not be long enough nor would the carrots be sufficient for a pure ‘sticks and carrots’ approach.

Structural leadership nevertheless remains significant as the “structural element is indispensable in order to make others listen to one’s voice” (Kanie 2003:6) and hence correlates to the status of a party actor. In this context, a leadership role is likely to depend on how well and how sensitively structural power is applied to enhance the impact of other leadership modes. In the policy area of climate change, structural leadership relates to the size of present and potential future greenhouse gas emissions and the economic resources that a country is willing to bring to bear upon the global regime (Grubb & Gupta 2000:19, Sjöstedt 1999:247).

### 2.3.5 Instrumental leadership

This mode of leadership is related to the exercise of political skill in negotiations and the creativeness of a leader to accommodate the needs of different parties regarding to the instrumental design of the climate regime. Moreover, it involves fostering beneficial coalitions in order to achieve common ends through the conveyance of instrumental negotiation tactics (e.g. issue-linkage and coalition formation) (Grubb & Gupta 2000:19, Underdal 1994). This leadership type is closely related to an ‘entrepreneurial’ style of leadership which incorporates the skills of negotiators to detect and propose solutions to common problems (Young 1991).

The analysis of the EU to perform this way of leadership is constrained by the fact that instrumental leadership has its focus mostly on the individual level. An individual’s personal leadership capabilities seem to determine success. While all leadership modes require individual skills for the transformation of leadership potential into concrete influence, structural (2.3.6) and directional leadership (see next section) are principally linked to states or other organizational entities (Skovdin & Andresen 2006:14-15).

The difficulty therefore is to ascribe instrumental leadership to the EU as a whole, and not just to single EU negotiators. However, it can be argued that such skilled negotiators leave a huge footprint on the perceptions of followers. As these negotiators are part of the EU entourage, others' perceptions may 'spill over' to the assessment of the EU as an instrumental leader in general.

### 2.3.6 Directional leadership

This type of leadership emphasizes 'leading by good example'. The core of this leadership style consists of the combination of internal and external initiatives that aim at influencing the perceptions of others. Essentially, it means promoting a collective goal through influencing the behavior of other parties "by moulding their interests, values and beliefs, rather than coercing or alluring them to do things they would rather not have done" (Malnes 1995:93). Grubb and Gupta (2000:21f) dissect this leadership manner in two inter-connected components.

The first element stresses the development of perceptions and solutions, emphasizing leading by example primarily through the effect of domestic actions. The second component concerns the diffusion of these perceptions through active promotion of the leader's vision. Domestically developed solutions, accordingly, shall serve as a model that can be disseminated internationally. This type of leadership thus highlights the social interaction process by which perceptions about the self and others can be transformed (see 2.2; Nabers 2008).

Generally, it has been hypothesized that the usage of directional leadership is most effective in international climate policy if it is conceived as a combination of structural and directional leadership (Oberthür 2007:78).

### 3 Methods – “good research is research that works”<sup>9</sup>

The research methods I intend to apply originate largely in qualitative thinking. The here proposed framework is open to different sets of information as a supplement. The possibility to combine different methods, also referred to as triangulation or hybridization, is seen as a strength to put the study on an even more solid ground (Flick 2007, Yin 2003). The paradigm of this logic is that any kind of data about the same research problem reflects the ‘real’ world, and can therefore be piled up in an additive way in order to add to the internal validity of a study’s findings.

This study takes a pragmatic stance and concurs with the words of Kvale & Brinkmann (2008:56): “Today, the legitimacy question of whether a study is scientific, or whether it leads to true knowledge, tends to be replaced by the pragmatic question of whether it provides useful knowledge”.

The proceeding of this chapter is the following: First, I present the empirical data and the sampling strategy. Second, some limitations and possible criticisms are briefly discussed.

#### 3.1 Empirical Data – Expert Interviews and Qualitative Surveys

Expert-interview data is the paramount set of empirical material for my study. The interviews conducted are mainly semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews with experts from both the EU and non-EU states and observers to the UNFCCC. Also, a qualitative questionnaire was used in eight cases<sup>10</sup>. Nine face-to-face interviews were conducted in Brussels and one in Copenhagen between November 2008 and February 2009 at the interviewees’ workplaces. Together, both surveys and interviews form the empirical backbone of the study. The interviewees consisted of EU officials and non-EU diplomats (‘others’). All interviewees work with climate, environmental or energy policy. For the most part, they participated in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Convention on Parties (COP 14) in Poznan, Poland or had

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<sup>9</sup> Kvale and Brinkmann (2008:56).

<sup>10</sup> For the sake of readability I refer to this whole set of data as interview-data in the following. The survey can be found at <http://www.thesistools.com/?qid=74929&ln=eng>.

expert knowledge about UNFCCC climate issues<sup>11</sup>. Complementary, two interviews were held with representatives of observers to the climate talks (United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and the European Environment Agency (EEA), Copenhagen). The interview data of the EEA was used as mere background information and is not directly applied in this study, while the perspective from the UNEP has explicit influence on the study<sup>12</sup>.

As indicated, all interviewed persons were considered experts. For the purpose of this paper, experts are people who have crucial knowledge of climate change issues within their respective governments and organizations. They have a prominent position – diplomatic personnel, high ranked civil servants, official government advisors – and represent a certain group, which in this case is a specific government or the EU (cf. Flick 2007). Apart from two interviewees, every person actively participated in the UNFCCC talks in Poznan and beyond that in earlier COPs.

The choice of role theory as a framework attaches great importance on perceptions and expectations. Thus, research methods are required which are sensitive to and able to measure actor-perceptions. Expert interviews fit perfectly with the here proposed theoretical approach. They are a sound choice for finding out about role-concepts as these are expected to be illuminated in policy makers' statements and behaviour (Chaban et. al. 2006:248, Kirste & Maull 1996, Holsti 1970:245, Harnisch 2000:3). Interviews under promise of confidentiality are a "reasonably reliable way to reveal how state representatives (...) experience other actors, although the risk of receiving 'adapted' descriptions of state characteristics is still there" (Elgström 2007b:447).

In order to facilitate a comparison of perspectives, interviews were semi-structured. The advantage of this proceeding is that an interview-guideline allows for posing the same questions to each interviewee while at the same time provides for freedom to go into more depth or detail. Also, the option to ask follow-up questions and to 'dig deeper' while not losing focus of the guideline are enormously helpful (Flick 2007:194-196).

The type of survey that was used for my analysis is predominantly qualitative. Most of the questions were openly formulated<sup>13</sup>. To answer this type of question,

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<sup>11</sup> For more details on the interviewees see the section on sampling (3.2.1 and 3.2.2).

<sup>12</sup> The UNEP interview is considered as a perspective in between EU and non-EU actor, since the UNEP has observer status and enjoys, in a simple sense, a sort of referee position in the UNFCCC (see section 3.2.2). The perspective from the EEA is to evaluate the environmental performance of the EU and even European non-members. In this sense, the EEA provides scientific information that can be used by European negotiators. Put simply, its role is 'biased' and can be assigned to the perspective of the EU. For this reason this interview data is not applied in the study at hand.

<sup>13</sup> O'Brian (1997) gives a concise description of the qualitative nature of those types of questions: "Open format questions are those that ask for unprompted opinions. In other words, there are no predetermined set of responses, and the participant is free to answer however he chooses. Open format questions are good for soliciting subjective data or when the range of responses is not tightly defined. An obvious advantage is that the variety of responses should be wider and more truly reflect the opinions of the respondents. This increases the likelihood of you receiving unexpected and insightful suggestions, for it is impossible to predict the full range of opinion"

as much space as the interviewee wished to fill was provided. The nature of the survey made that the questions were treated qualitatively. That means that the items were not operationalized in a quantitative manner but could be compared to the interview data. The respondents had several days to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was provided electronically in form of e-mail and on a web-server. Any attempt to gain a response to the survey involved an initial personal contact in order to assure that the right person answered the questions.

I am aware that this approach could be dismissed as a chimera of qualitative logic in quantitative form. According to Beckett and Clegg (2007, see also Esaiasson et. al. 2007:259, Kitto & Barnett 2007) it is however possible to gather in ‘thick’ data in this form of mostly open-ended question surveys as the respondent describes with his or her own words how a phenomenon is perceived. In general, capturing perceptions of negotiators by means of a survey is a feasible and fruitful way as recent studies have demonstrated (Elgström & Jönsson 2000, Sannerstedt 2005, Zutter & Toro 2008).

## 3.2 Empirical Data – Official documents

In order to get a more valid and reliable grip on the EU’s construction in CC politics, expert-interviews are triangulated with official textual data. EU documents, strategy papers, communications and the like are dissected as they are likely to display the European Union’s own ‘image’ in environmental and climate policy. This follows the assumption that “roles leave their mark in decision maker [sic!] speeches and statements” (Breuning 2008). Documents issued by EU institutions thus give us a consolidated picture of the EU’s own role-perception. This two-fold approach, on the one hand analyzing interview data from EU officials, and on the other hand analyzing official documents, has several advantages. Firstly, it enables to investigate if a certain role or image that is anchored in documents has been ‘incorporated’ by EU officials or vice versa. This would thus lead to a higher validity of the findings as both documents and interview data either affirm or negate a role-conception<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, it allows for mapping a process or development of the leader role and its sub-roles. Accordingly, it is the document that lays down a role, but the ‘living object’ writes that document and is living and ‘beholding’ this role. Both document and interviewee shape the role. As roles are process-related, changes in roles or developments are likely to be found in ‘living’ role beholders (cf. Aggestam 2006:13). Hence, there is a process-related interaction between role-related documents and persons.

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<sup>14</sup> Documents from any EU organ are assumed to mirror a commonly agreed ‘official’ EU stance peppered with compromises. Generally, they incorporate the EU’s policy on CC. Thus, put simply, all the obstacles of the EU’s logic of consensus and compromise might restrain the roles that are actually held by EU representatives at UNFCCC negotiations.

The basis of others' perceptions is principally interview-data, as 'official' information about the EU's climate policy role from an 'outsider' perspective is rather scarce and hard to get hold on. Moreover, limitations in time and language capabilities restricted the consultation of third countries official text-data. In an attempt to outweigh this slight imbalance, information from newspapers or websites has been occasionally incorporated in the study.

### 3.3 Sampling

Generally, the sampling mode of this study is strategic, as significant representatives of third party-actors, the EU and observers to the UNFCCC concerned with global climate policy have been selected (cf. Flick 2007:165-170).

#### 3.3.1 Third state representatives

The choice of interviewees was based on a set of principles. Firstly, the aim was to obtain a relatively broad picture of the perceptions of outsiders. Thus, more than just one single outsider's view should be taken into account. In other words, the principle of 'the more the greater knowledge' has been applied in order to reach this goal. Secondly, this goal of 'broadness' is certainly hampered as the COP14 negotiations under the UNFCCC hosted 191 official parties, including two observer states, and 464 observer organizations such as NGOs, IGOs and business organizations. It would be simply infeasible to conduct interviews with each third-country representative involved. Thus, the number of interviews needed to be limited. The study therefore implies certain limitations of the empirical material that has been used.

The choice of interviews and texts was based on the assumption that a broad and nuanced picture could be drawn by taking into account respondents from both (1) developing and developed countries as they are the main 'opponents' in the current post-Kyoto negotiations (cf. Section 4); Countries that are (2) geographically close to the EU as they are assumed to be more receptive to EU's leadership due to the Union's magnetic force (Rosencrance 1998); and (3) major countries<sup>15</sup> have been picked as they can make a 'difference' in the climate talks and have the potential to pursue a leading role on their own. This conceptualization emphasizes the competitive relationship inherent in the concept of leadership (cf. 2.3.2). Finally (4) specific countries have been selected depending on their membership of party groupings within the UNFCCC. The reasoning behind this was based on an assumption that certain groupings have a

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<sup>15</sup> Major country refers to political, economic and ecological (in terms of high GHG emissions) weight. The assumption is that states like the US, Japan or China have a potentially big impact on the international arena and have the capabilities to (co-)shape the international climate regime (Harris 2007c).

common stance on the Union’s leadership. Table 2 lists the countries selected and their group-membership.

| Interviewee/ Respondent          | Coalition/ Grouping           |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Republic of Iceland              | Umbrella                      |
| Republic of Namibia              | G-77 and China                |
| Republic of Indonesia            | G-77 and China                |
| United States of America         | Umbrella                      |
| People’s Republic of China       | G-77 and China                |
| Japan                            | Umbrella                      |
| Argentine Republic               | G-77 and China                |
| Dominican Republic               | AOSIS, G-77                   |
| Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela | OPEC, G-77                    |
| Swiss Confederation              | Environmental Integrity Group |
| Republic of Belarus              | n.a.                          |

**Table 2:** *Non-EU ‘others’ and membership in groupings*

The study thus builds on 11 interviews and survey results from third countries. This is not a representative sample in the strict sense, but due to the proposed sampling strategies, and an inductive logic, it could be argued that a limited extent of generalisation is possible at least by analogy or theoretical proposition (Yin 2003:10-12).

### 3.3.2 EU representatives

The choice of interviewees from the EU followed a logic of variety. In order to obtain a thorough self-estimation of the Union’s role, relevant stakeholders from the EU were asked for an interview. As the climate negotiations are under shared competence, a representative from the Council Secretariat had been interviewed along with civil servants from the Commission (DG Environment, DG Relex) all dealing with climate change matters and participating in the UNFCCC negotiations.

### 3.3.3 The observer(s)

IGOs enjoy observer status at the COPs. The UNEP is regarded as an impartial promoter of a post-Kyoto agreement having an unbiased view on the parties<sup>16</sup>. Valuable information about the EU’s role from a comprehensive non-state

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<sup>16</sup> To assume a totally impartial role for the UNEP would be naïve. For example, there might be sympathies depending on the financial contributions of certain states. Nevertheless, an IGO observer comes closest to impartiality.

perspective probably contrasts non-EU states' perspectives and EU's self-image with a new and balanced picture.

Although the role of observers in the negotiations is limited, their position in framing a role and communicating to the public and thus co-shaping a form of discourse should not be underestimated. It is therefore of relevance to take a closer look at those actors.

### 3.4 Qualitative Text Analysis

The method of analyzing the empirical data obtained is a qualitative or interpretative text analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008, Esaiasson et. al. 2007). The interviews are analyzed by focusing on their meaning through language with the aim to *verstehen* (~critically understand) the underlying textual images. The leading question behind this is to find out about the potentially different understandings of the European leadership role.

Moreover, this approach facilitates the detection and elaboration on the elements of the Union's leader-role. The interview and document data were dissected in order to elucidate the role constituents by means of theoretically informed reading of the material (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008:202).

In order to do that, the study uses a set of analytical tools along what Kvale and Brinkmann (2008:233-234) call *bricolage*. It uses a "multiplicity of ad-hoc methods and conceptual approaches" originated in interpretative textual analysis (ibid.). The variety of techniques enables a thorough understanding of the text analyzed. This approach is accompanied by codes and categories. Coding the interview-data and text-data is an essential tool to capture the entirety of the experiences and actions studied. The pre-determined theoretical categories are based on the proposed role-elements within the EU's leader-construction which are revealed by theoretical reading. They encompass importance, multilateralism, coherence, credibility and responsibility (cf. 5.3). Along these general codes the data has been categorized. This proceeding is considered fruitful since it leaves a certain leeway for surprising findings and structures the complex and extensive interview and text-data while at the same time allows for an investigation of differences or similarities in role-perceptions of the different interviewees. The main aim of the analysis is thus, by means of the interviewees' descriptions and the relevant text documents, to develop a critical and contextual interpretation of the EU's 'climate role'.

To some degree the qualitative text analysis here is inspired by a dialectically inspired discourse analysis, where contradictions in texts are put forth (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008:226-228). This can be fruitful in order to see beyond the discourses of texts and to detect discursive images about the EU's leadership role (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). However, this is not a fully fledged discourse analysis focussing on language and its impact on reality but more a way to find out about discussions and discourses within certain role-elements.

### 3.5 Critics and Limitations – A Fly in the Ointment?

*“Against criticism a man can neither protest nor defend himself; he must act in spite of it, and then it will gradually yield to him”*

(Johan Wolfgang von Goethe)

There are other ways of coming to terms with the EU’s climate policy and international roles. This study, however, cannot take into account all approaches, ideas, and criticisms even though they might be sound for analyzing the topic concerned. There are limitations to this thesis that will be presented briefly.

Firstly, the study’s focus is on the European level, not explicitly including the member states’ level. Taking into account all MS’ domestic policies would be an infeasible enterprise. It is assumed that the MS commonly agree in different EU bodies, notably in the Council, on a policy and negotiation stance concerning global CC. By this means, the complicated and vast mosaic of European domestic policies can be circumvented. Nevertheless, it is favourable to have an eye at least on the larger MS policies as their positions can considerably influence the Council conclusions. Furthermore, foreign climate policy of the EU does not merely appear out of nowhere, but is a complex interaction of at least two levels (Putnam 1988). This two-level game view informs this thesis to some extent. However, it is not explicitly applied due to time, resource, and space limitations.

Secondly, the time focus lies on the recent developments in climate politics and the negotiations towards a post-Kyoto agreement as the interviews are concentrated on this period. Although crucial developments of the whole climate negotiation process are taken into consideration (cf. section 4), a thorough examination of almost 15 years of UN climate talks would be hard to conduct here. It is assumed that the period concerned is especially fruitful for analysis, as the EU’s construction as a leader has matured over this time span - meaning that ‘others’ are able to evaluate the role over time -, and needs reinforcement for a post-2012 agreement.

Thirdly, all concepts applied are certainly contestable. Leadership, for example, is difficult to disentangle from other negotiation behaviour (Andresen & Agrawala 2002:41) and role-theory is a ‘blind spot’ in international relations theory that has been barely used in recent years. Nevertheless, the here provided framework is seen as stable enough to withstand disruptions from these criticisms.

## 4 The UN Climate Talks – A Brief Background

The textbox below provides for a very brief background on international climate politics under the UNFCCC, focusing on some ‘climate talk essentials’. This will facilitate the understanding of the analysis in the remainder of this study.

International efforts to politically tackle man-made global warming with its harmful effects of greenhouse gases (see Appendix) began at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. As a result of this ‘Earth Summit’ the UNFCCC was launched and came into force in 1994. The convention’s objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent hazardous, man-made interference with the climate system (cf. Art.2, UNFCCC). Explicit responsibility is laid on the developed countries (the so-called ‘Annex-1’ countries) to provide resources to developing states in order to help them with their efforts to limit GHG emissions. The UNFCCC generated a series of UN climate negotiations - the COPs, which became the UNFCCC’s overriding authority (Harris 2007a:10-11). Throughout, differences between developing and developed countries were a significant burden to the negotiations. Milestones of the following negotiations include the Berlin Mandate, the Kyoto Protocol, the Marrakesh Accords and the Bali Roadmap.

At the first COP in Berlin in 1995, the Berlin Mandate established that Annex-1 states would negotiate factual cuts in their GHG emissions, to be concluded in 1997 at the third COP in Kyoto (Damro 2006:185). It was specified that Annex-1 countries shall reduce their GHG emissions while at the same time assist developing countries, which were excluded from making cuts in their emissions.

The negotiations resulting in the Kyoto Protocol have been “especially contentious” (Harris 2007a:12) due to deviations between an EU proposal suggesting a target to reduce emissions by 15 percent below 1990 levels (Commission 1997) and a US plan aiming to reduce emissions to 1990 levels in 2010 and further 5 percent by 2015. Generally, throughout the negotiations on the Protocol, the US position has been characterized as “ranging from constructive abstention under Clinton to denunciation of the Kyoto Protocol and active obstruction under the Bush Jr. administration” (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:106).

The resulting compromise required from Annex-1 countries to decrease emissions by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. The EU agreed to collectively reduce emissions, which is also called the EU ‘bubble’, by 8 percent. The US agreed to a 7 percent cut. Developing countries were excluded from GHG reductions on the basis that they had not been responsible, as yet, for noteworthy GHG emissions (Damro 2006:187). Demands from the US to endorse

an emissions-trading program that allows developed states to purchase and sell emissions among themselves were incorporated in the Protocol, despite the then scepticism on the part of the EU. Further, so-called flexible mechanisms comprised in the Kyoto Protocol were Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). JI implies that developed countries can earn emission credits when investing in one another's emissions reduction ventures. CDM focuses on the possibilities for developed countries to invest in emission reduction projects in developing countries in order to gain emission credits.

In October 2001 at COP-7, the Marrakesh Accords established the 'rulebook' for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and set up new funds to provide more aid for poor countries. Previously in March, the US announced that they would not ratify the Protocol and pulled out of the Kyoto process. It thus seemed as if "the scene now appeared set for the EU to assume a leading role in the Kyoto process" (Damro 2006:187). Three years later, after considerable diplomatic efforts from the EU, Russia ratified the Protocol and it finally entered into force in February 2005.

As the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, the Bali Roadmap was established at COP-13 in 2007 as an outline on how to reach agreement on a successor of the Protocol. The Bali Road Map includes the Bali Action Plan, which outlines the course for a new negotiating process, with the aim of completing this at COP-15 in Copenhagen 2009 (Secretariat UNFCCC 2007). It includes agreement on four areas: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and provision of financing and investment. Crucial for the Bali summit was that developing countries opened up for discussion about own emission reductions. They accepted to contribute to measurable, verifiable and reportable reductions in GHG emissions supported with resources from developed countries.

The recent COP (COP-14) in Poznan, Poland, has widely been characterized as having not delivered significant results. This was due to a late ratification of the EU's legal package on climate and energy and the restraint of the US delegation that was only willing and able to negotiate reduction targets under a new mandate from the newly elected Obama administration. At least, the negotiations resulted in establishing the formal conditions to agree on a post-2012 climate deal in Copenhagen (Secretariat UNFCCC 2008, Germanwatch 2009).

In Copenhagen, negotiations about developing countries' commitments are likely to be a crucial issue as emissions from large developing countries like China (currently the largest total GHG emitter in the world being responsible for 24% of the global share of GHG emissions (NEEA 2008)), India and Indonesia will further increase. Industrialized countries along with the EU are therefore eager to get target commitments from the developing world. Developing countries on the other hand expect a greater share from the Annex-1 countries and are reluctant to decide on binding emission targets. They insist on their right to raise their living standards, and point to their evidently lower GHG emissions per capita. Moreover, they emphasize the responsibility of the developed world for climate change since the industrialization and the growth of the West due to exploitation of resources from developing countries.

## 5 The EU as a Climate Leader

This chapter tries to empirically shed light on the construction of the EU as a leader on CC negotiations. The self-image (ego) of the EU will be examined in order to find out if and how the Union conceptualizes a leading role for itself. This is the first step to evaluate whether the EU indeed can be theoretically and empirically described as a leader in CC matters. By taking a close look on the EU's self-representation, I intend to find out how the Union performs a potential leader role and how the leading role and its elements are constituted. In the next chapter, a second step is taken that takes into account the perceptions of others in order to generate a valid picture of whether the Union plays a leader role. The self-construction is then compared to the perceptions of 'others' (alter) derived from the established qualitative data.

### 5.1 The Leadership Representation and Performance of the EU

“Since the early 1990s, the EU has increasingly established itself as an international leader (...) most prominent[ly] in the paradigmatic area of climate change” (Oberthür & Roche 2008:35). This and similar assessments (e.g. Vogler 2005, Grubb & Gupta 2000, Harris 2007a, 2007c) reflect a consensus on EU leadership on CC among academics<sup>17</sup>. The occupation of the leader role by the EU has mainly been attributed to the abdication of US leadership in the beginning of the 1990s making it “relatively easy to declare the EU the leader” (Harris 2007c:365) on CC. Since then, the EU has worn the mantle of leadership enthusiastically (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:93).

Indeed, since the 1990 Dublin Declaration the EU officially expressed its ambition to become a leading actor in international environmental politics already then seeing enormous “capacity to provide leadership” (Council 1990, see 5.3). The ‘contemporary’ Union is even convinced to have “both the opportunity and the means to lead the global response that is needed to win [the] battle [against CC]” (Dimas 2007). It perceives itself “in the international arena (...) at the very forefront of the fight against climate change and takes an active part in negotiations on the subject” (Commission 2008b). The EU “leads the way”

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<sup>17</sup> Of course, this does not imply that the academic community in unison hails EU leadership. Rather, the leadership is broadly acknowledged but also critically analyzed - especially the Union's domestic performance (e.g. Vanden Brande 2008a, Harris 2007, Karlsson & Parker 2008).

(Commission 2008a) to combat climate change and constantly reaffirms this leader role in its rhetoric. Furthermore, interviewed EU officials share and affirm this construction and unanimously view the Union as the clear ‘champion on CC’. The position as a leader facilitates the Union to promote its role as it is economically, politically and even morally predestined to exercise global leadership on environmental matters (Council 1990).

Hence, the style of EU leadership has been characterized as “a ‘soft’ leadership strategy” (Oberthür & Roche Kelly 2008:37) combining mainly structural and directional, but also instrumental, ways of leadership. While relying on its structural weight, the EU has applied soft power means, implying ‘setting an example for others’, diplomacy, argumentation and the intention to change perceptions. This may be a matter of necessity and preference. On the one hand, the EU does not possess enough political and economic power to compel others to combat CC. On the other hand, “this leadership approach correlates well with the notion of the EU as a civilian power in pursuit of a rule-based global governance in keeping with its normative preference for soft measures” (ibid.). In the following, I will take a closer look at the ways the Union pursues this strategy by applying three modes of leadership.

### 5.1.1 Structural leadership – The EU punching its weight

The European Union has been characterized to have a large ecological footprint by the scale of its industry, transport, agriculture and energy consumption being the world’s largest economy. This makes it unavoidably one of the largest polluters and exploiters of resources on earth (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:89). Indeed, the enlarged EU causes about 14% of today’s global GHG emissions (Commission 2005b). Also, today it represents 27 states, which makes it hard to be looked over given the sheer size of the population and the internal market. The interviewees<sup>18</sup> are well aware of this structural influence and underline that the Union is a strong actor whose voice is “definitely heard” in the negotiations.

The EU is generally known for using its structural economic power within an environmental - respectively trade - context as examples from the WTO show, where the Union tries to implement ‘green policies’ within the framework of the regime (Elgström 2006:23, 26; Bretherton & Vogler 2006:104-105). Despite resistance, the Union pushed for the incorporation of environmental standards and the recognition of sustainable development. This made commentators notice that even trade administrators try to “consolidate the position of the EU as a green leader” (Vanden Brande 2008a:163).

In the climate regime the economic clout of the Union facilitates the impact on others and may result in the changing of their preferences. The fact that the Union alongside its MS accounts for the most of the world’s development assistance

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<sup>18</sup> In this chapter interviewee refers to the interviewed EU officials. If a third state interviewee is meant, it will be indicated.

gives it a significant structural means to get other states to follow. Moreover, the EU is the gatekeeper to one of the world's biggest markets which is a strong power resource. By granting access to the internal market, the Union may impose environmental standards on trading partners. Eventually, this can lead to a 'race to the top' when corresponding or even higher environmental measures are adopted in third country markets (ibid:162).

The most impressive application of this mode of leadership was the active support for Russian membership to the WTO. This was a decisive 'carrot' in order to persuade Russia to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which eventually led to the coming into force of the Protocol. The use of the EU's "benevolent" economic sway can thus serve as a crucial example for structural leadership (Damro 2006:187-90). The clearest indication of this is a citation of former Russian president Putin saying that "the European Union has done some rework during the WTO negotiations. Of course, this influences our positive stance toward the Kyoto process. We will advance the work to ratify the Kyoto Protocol" (in Karlsson & Parker 2008:27; my translation).

What could diminish the future application of structural leadership are the decreasing GHG emissions within the 27 European states (EEA 2009). This seems somewhat paradoxical as a reduction of GHG is a crucial element for directional leadership (cf. 5.2.3) and indispensable to sustain international credibility. Moreover, the relative decline of EU's economic weight due to the increasing economic power of emerging countries is likely to hinder the utilization of structural leadership.

### 5.1.2 Instrumental leadership – Skillfully forging majorities

The EU's instrumental leadership by using political skill and crafting structures is a recurrent pattern in the ICN. The Union arguably puts hard effort into shaping important aspects of the climate regime by using instrumental tactics (Karlsson & Parker 2008:29-30, Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007:22).

A source of its instrumental capability is the armada of skilled negotiators stemming from MS, the Commission and the Council secretariat. The EU can pick the most appropriate negotiators in different bargaining situations and is backed up with technical expertise, for example from the EEA (Interview Commission (COM), Zito 2005:368). This facilitates the avoidance of deadlocks at the negotiation table by providing innovative solutions. An example for this is the North-South debate coupled to the inclusion of developing countries (DC). As a post-Kyoto agreement needs to encompass less developed countries in an equitable and fair manner, the EU has made propositions to integrate the South. The design of adaption funds and agreements on bi- or multilateral partnership within and outside the regime framework is an illustration of the EU's instrumental leadership. Potential to form a 'winning coalition' with DCs may be enhanced through the former colonial ties between many EU countries and the less developed world (Edwards 2002:12). As also earlier examples show, in 1995 the Union succeeded in persuading the G-77 to agree to its proposal establishing a

negotiation process on legally binding emission targets for developed countries (Yamin 2000:50). Moreover, it eventually dropped a dogmatic position in the course of the Kyoto negotiations and has been striving for flexible solutions to problems rather than pushing a strict environmental agenda (Edwards 2002).

As already mentioned, the Union's ability to have made important actors ratifying the Kyoto agreement is an example of the often necessary combination of leadership modes. The Union succeeded to foster a coalition with countries that were willing to agree to a binding commitment on GHG cuts, facilitated by issue-linkage in the case of Russia (WTO-Kyoto). However, it is rather unlikely that the EU succeeded with this issue-linkage by solely relying on its political skills (cf. 5.2.1). Thus, both the structural economic 'carrot' behind the issue-linkage and the instrumental problem-solving approach of the Union made a 'winning coalition' possible that served the interests of all parties.

Constraints to the Union's performance as an instrumental leader comprise its difficulties to manoeuvre quickly internally due to institutional complexity and interest diversity (Zito 2005, Müller 2003:ii).

### 5.1.3 Directional leadership – The Union paving the way

Leading by the good example is probably the most frequent and important way of leadership displayed in the post-Kyoto climate policy of the EU (cf. Oberthür 2007). Rhetoric by EU leaders constantly emphasizes the importance of setting an example for others to follow. For example, EU Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas (cited in Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007:22) made clear that Europe's CC leadership

“is not just leadership for the sake of leadership, or because we think we can fight climate change on our own—we clearly can't. The EU's commitment and success has been an inspiration to our global partners. Without it, it is certain that the Kyoto Protocol would not have entered into force.”

The European Union's directional leadership thus explicitly intends to change others perceptions in order to get them to acknowledge the EU's leading role. As the citation shows there is a strong confidence about the Union's achievements within its role. Indeed, 'inspiring' examples based on the decision to unilaterally go in front are numerous. The paramount case is the rescue of the Kyoto Protocol (Bretherton and Vogler 2006:105-09). The decision to move forward with ratification of the Protocol after President Bush Jr. on March 28, 2001 declared that the US is going to withdraw from the agreement still builds an important basis for the directional leadership of the Union. It set an example, which other actors, notably Japan and Russia, eventually followed.

Already in 1996, the European Council declared in its conclusion that the global average temperature rise should not exceed 2° Celcius above pre-industrial levels on basis of recommendations from the IPCC. This measure is (still) the Union's benchmark to set its emission objectives in order to meet the mandate of the UNFCCC (Harris 2007c:366). Apart from the Alliance of the Small Islands

States (AOSIS) that champions a 1.5°C limit due to their special vulnerability, the Union's goal is the most ambitious among the industrialized countries (Oberthür 2007:78). Only recently the Union succeeded in diffusing its 2°C goal to all major economies whereof many states were formerly opposed to. At the Major Economies Forum 2009 in Italy, the most powerful heads of states recognized that global average temperatures “ought not to exceed 2 degrees C” (MEF 2009). This example shows that the Union sets an example, which it then promotes internationally.

With the coming into effect of the world's first carbon emission trading scheme in January 2005, which copied the successful US sulphur dioxide (SO<sup>2</sup>) emissions trading system established in 1990, the EU again set an example. It has even been suggested that the Union could become an international standard setter due to the ETS and might find “itself in control of the most important international regulatory effort to limit GHGs” (Legge & Egenhofer in Vogler & Bretherton 2006:7). Indeed, the Union makes efforts to promote its scheme to other states (EP 2008).

The most recent illustration of the Union's endeavour for directional leadership is the 2007 announcement to unilaterally reduce its GHG emission by 20 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2020 (Council 2007a). This emphasizes the EU's seriousness to lead the post-Kyoto process and the commitment to push the global climate agenda forward while “other countries have not even talked about what they are going to do” (Dimas cited in European Voice 2009b). The Union is furthermore willing to reduce its GHG by 30 percent given that other developed countries take action within the framework of an international agreement (Council 2007a). This implies that the Union seeks a directional strategy, which gives other industrialized nations an incentive to follow the Union's lead. It thereby prepares ground for others to join a post-2012 agreement. Although the Union goals have been criticized by environmentalists as not ambitious enough (Oxfam 2009, European Voice 2009b) the European approach has been hailed by Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, as “the most ambitious offer on the table so far to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2020” (Secretariat UNFCCC 2009). With the ratification of the Climate and Energy Package in December 2008, which included the 20/20/20 goals<sup>19</sup>, the Union has a ‘domestic backbone’. It now has to be proven whether the Union is able to implement and reach its aspiring goals.

In general, a combination of the aforementioned leadership modes (5.2.1, 5.2.2) is fruitful to get a more effective directional leadership: In order to function as a successful policy entrepreneur that is promoting ideas, the EU needs to be a credible example that is in the forefront of CC policy-making while giving its example a larger impact through its structural clout.

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<sup>19</sup> The goal meant the domestic reduction of GHG emissions, the increase of energy efficiency and the enhancement of renewable energies by 20 percent. The goal for energy efficiency is however not binding.

## 5.2 The EU's role construction – Five Recurrent Role Elements

Europe's intention to become an active and leading entity in environmental politics can be traced back to the early 1990ies<sup>20</sup> with the 1990 Dublin Declaration of the then European Communities as its probably clearest expression. By and large, this declaration formed the essence of the self-image of the EU in international environmental matters until today:

“There is (...) an increasing acceptance of a wider responsibility, as one of the foremost regional groupings in the world [1], to play a leading role in promoting concerted and effective action at global level [3], working with other industrialized countries, and assisting developing countries to overcome their special difficulties [2]. The Community's credibility and effectiveness at this wider level depends in large measure on the ability to adopt progressive environmental measures for implementation and enforcement by its Member States [4, 5]. The internal and external dimensions of Community environment policy are therefore inextricably linked” (...)

“[EU's] capacity to provide leadership in [the] sphere [of global environmental politics] is enormous. The Community must use more effectively its position of moral, economic and political authority to advance international efforts to solve global problems and to promote sustainable development and respect for the global commons [5]” (Council 1990)

Based on five elements found in this declaration and – (1) global importance, commitment to (2) multilateralism, (3) coherence, (4) credibility and (5) responsibility – the ego-part of the Union's leader role is scrutinized. These elements are constituents of the leader role and shape the conceptualization of the Union's leadership. Importantly, these elements are not limited to the citation above but can be found as recurrent patterns throughout official EU documentation (e.g. Commission 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008c) and in the interview data from EU officials.

### 5.2.1 The element of importance – the big and rich counterweight

The EU sees itself as an important player in global environmental affairs. It is a “foremost grouping” that has the capacity to be a significant factor in multilateral environmental agreements. This implies an underlying notion to challenge and lead other players with EU's weight and capacity (cf. structural leadership). Also, the close association with the concept of leadership which bears a meaning of

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<sup>20</sup> The European Union's (or European Communities') attempts to influence global environmental politics can arguably be dated back to the 1970ies. The ambition to play a significant part in international environmental politics however started in the early 1990ies (Wurzel 2008, Vanden Brande 2008a, Vogler & Bretherton 2006).

“rule and dominance (...) and negotiation strength in multilateral environmental regimes” (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:103) is incorporated in this part of EU’s ego.

Hence, the Union’s view on influence in CC politics comes into play. The interviewees view the Union as a rather powerful actor with obvious impact on the negotiations. The power sources lie in the credibility of its leading commitments to reduce GHG emissions (cf. 5.3.4) and its economic respectively financial strength. As the negotiations are “basically about money, who’s paying for climate change” (Interview Commission (COM)), the EU’s ‘power of the purse’ has an enormous leverage<sup>21</sup>. The EU is portrayed as the principal paymaster of the CC regime which gives it some sway over the setup of the regime. Also, developing countries (DC) are more likely to follow the Union’s lead, when they are provided with financial incentives.

Another indicator that the European Union constructs itself as globally important and influential are references to the character CC policy being interconnected with security, trade and energy policy, giving it the label of ‘high politics’. The interviews state that the EU is now more present in the area of ‘high politics’ due to its climate leadership. As climate policy started as a soft ending up as a hard issue, the EU is able to show its citizen and third states that it is able to ‘deliver’ (COM). Or as one interviewee put it: “the fact that the EU can handle such a hard subject reinforces the EU” (ibid.).

Seen from a broader perspective, if an actor portrays itself as globally important, it justifies a position from which it may impose its views on others (Chasek 2007:364-65, cf. Holsti 1992:340-344). In the context of the (post-)Kyoto negotiations, this may also imply counterbalancing the US, the Union’s foremost other (cf. Fioramonti & Lucarelli 2008, Diez 2005, Bretherton & Vogler 2006:43, 56-57, Yamin 2000:62).

The long-lasting conflict on CC between the US-government and the EU has been a major sticking point in EU–US relations during the ‘Bush years’. There has been a constant negotiation battle between the US and the EU on several issues since the run-up to Kyoto, leading a commentator to state that “seldom in history has the EU criticized the US as forcefully as it has over this issue” (Schreurs in Harris 2007c:365).

This conflict is still mirrored in the current transatlantic relationship. Since its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, “the US basically was coming to negotiations just to stall and to block” (Interview Council (COUN)) and was the perceived ‘bully’ of CC matters. US domestic records on tackling CC have been described as poor apart from state-level actions (Paterson 2009), but only recently, newly elected President Obama changed track and now constitutes the US as a global leader on CC (Obama 2008a, 2008b, 2009). The basis for that leadership is the pledge to return to 1990 GHG emission levels by 2020 through the ‘Waxman-Markey bill’ and the commitment to foster a post-Kyoto agreement

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<sup>21</sup> “[S]aying that we have an impact on the solution in terms of financial commitment, exemplary attitude, even technology transfers is obvious. It’s very clear. Does that make us more powerful? I say so. I truly believe so” (COM).

despite domestic resistance in the Senate and Congress (Paterson 2009). The US claim for leadership could thus be perceived as challenging the ego of the EU. The Union still sees itself as the ambitious leader that shows the US – and others – way. Yet, its efforts are not acknowledged as, in ironical reference to the US, “it’s actually the ‘mean’ guy on the other side who’s getting all the benefits” (COM). Indeed, media and even environmental campaigners have warmly welcomed the new approach of the Obama administration.

Interviewees from the Commission and the Council confirm a potential transatlantic rivalry for CC leadership. There seems to be a competitive relationship between the US and the EU on climate politics leadership, with the EU presenting a more striving position (Reuters 2009a, Dimas 2009). The EU welcomes the new approach of the US but at the same urges the United States to be more ambitious and therewith reinforces who the ‘real’ leader on CC actually is (Reuters 2009b). The German minister for environment Sigmar Gabriel coined this ‘superiority’ on CC leadership felicitously: “measured by what Europeans believe needs to be done to fight climate change, we’re [the EU and the US] still are very far apart from each other” (Reuters 2009c). Also, what might still play a part is the infamous ‘inferiority complex’ of the EU towards the US. A desire of Europe’s politicians is to show “that the EU could ‘stand up to the US’, act without American support and demonstrate that it [is] a force to be reckoned with on the international stage” (Edwards 2002:32). Indeed, there are signals from the interviewees that back up this assumption (COM).

In turn, there are signals from the US that European leadership on CC is soon to be seriously challenged. Former US vice president and Nobel-prized climate ambassador Al Gore strongly doubts the European ability to exercise climate leadership and is quoted to state “I think the United States is the only nation that can lead the world” (Euobserver 2009a) particularly concerning CC. He urges the US to take on bold action on CC “in order to repower our economy, restore American economic and moral leadership in the world and regain control of our destiny” (AFP 2009). Thus, it seems as if there is a discourse on competition for leadership emerging. Indeed, this is mirrored in observations of Paterson (2009) who predicts a ‘hegemonic struggle’ for leadership on CC. Accordingly, the post-Bush era is likely to be characterized by continuing EU-US conflict over CC. This may appear to be surprising as the US made major moves towards developing a more active CC policy under Obama. But as the citation of Gore indicates this competition has serious political-economic implications with two competing capitalist approaches on the two sides of the Atlantic<sup>22</sup>. On the level of leadership

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<sup>22</sup> Paterson (2009) sees a conflict between the European ‘ecological modernization’ versus the US-embraced ‘carboniferous capitalism’ with CC as a key terrain of competition. The former model promotes “a set of aggressive constraints on carbon emissions while promoting alternative energy resources and significant increases in energy conservation and efficiency” (ibid.: 148). The latter endorses subsidizing new forms of energy to supplement old energy sources, while the element of binding constraints on carbon use is almost absent. This model of growth is based on “the availability of cheap inputs for all industries as a means to out-compete other economies” (ibid.:149). Generally, Paterson identifies climate policy as a potential source of competitive gains with examples ranging from the estimated 64 billion US \$ carbon market industry to border

in the climate regime, the US meets with the EU an established leader on the climate negotiation process. There is thus already an ample impetus behind a regime and its structure “which the US no longer feels it owns” (ibid.:145). The EU is already familiar with its leadership role and is far less likely to comply with US demands compared to the negotiations that led to the Kyoto Protocol. Signs of an interest in bashing Kyoto in the US consequently emerged in the American discourse on CC (ibid.). Hence, some commentators have started to talk of the regime as ‘Eurocentric’. This is despite the fact that the basic institutional features exist at the persistence of the US (Vogler & Bretherton 2006). According to this logic, the US will keep on trying to apply pressure on the climate regime to change its overall architecture, “precisely because it is one which is now associated with European leadership, and one which EU countries have built an economic strategy around” (Paterson 2009:145)<sup>23</sup>. Indeed, economic arguments circle around the EU leadership discourse to be found in official documentation (e.g. Commission 2009a, 2009c) and interview data. Accordingly, leading by example would give the EU a “first mover advantage” mirrored in the set-up of the European emission trading scheme (Commission 2009b).

Additionally, there is still the American perception that it can act unilaterally - on CC as well as on other issues. It does not need to consider multilateral developments that have occurred in its absence and its preferred approach, which has been decided domestically, can be imposed externally (Chasek 2007). However, while the US may be able to enforce its interests in relation to other regimes, in relation to climate change, the US ability “is far from clear” (Paterson 2009:145).

In stark contrast to these arguments, there is also a strong sense of partnership between the EU and the US. As indicated above, this is coupled to the inauguration of the Obama administration that “amounted nothing less than a sea-change in the US position” (Commission 2009c) and a general commitment to multiparty partnerships. On the other side of the Atlantic, US President Obama facilitates US-EU partnerships with his rhetorical shift towards a general commitment to more multilateral approaches (Obama 2008b). The EU in turn emphasizes an increasing convergence of EU and US positions on CC issues (Commission 2009c). Moreover, the EU acknowledges that in the CC negotiations, it is “not the only show in town” (COM) and it therewith tries not to overstate its position. Indeed, the structural power of the US, its large amount of GHG and its diplomatic sway are all reasons why a regime with the United States is more likely to be successful than without it. The EU sees itself as being able to seize a role as a bridge builder between DCs and the US while at the same time it

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tax adjustment aimed at preventing carbon leakage. This makes “Kyoto-like actions precisely designed as competitiveness strategies” from the EU point of view (ibid.).

<sup>23</sup> The US debate on the ‘architecture’ of climate governance illustrates the abovementioned claim. US commentators make the presumption that “Kyoto has ‘failed’ (in part because the US has not joined) and thus a new architecture (implicitly, more conducive to US interests) is required” (Paterson 2009:152)

tries to push the US to an ambitious agreement within a coalition<sup>24</sup>. Apart from being large emitters and sharing the label of developed countries, a range of common interests such as energy security from oil and economical prospects of 'green technology' facilitate cooperation (Paterson 2009:153).

Thus, this part of the ego displays an ambiguous self-confidence of the EU. On the one hand, it mirrors the Union's power, coined by one interviewee: "We are a strong actor and now that the US is onboard, I think we would be an important bridge builder" (COM). On the other hand, as the citation explicitly states, a role as a bridge builder is also a possibility for the EU in the post-Kyoto process, indicating a sharing of leadership together with the US (COUN). Joining forces to fight CC would thus not mean abandoning the leadership role, but it would secure influence on the transatlantic partner within a strong coalition (ibid.). A scenario of shared leadership is also a signal of the re-gained importance of the US in climate matters and the EU's sense for multilateralism. At the same time it reinforces the image of EU's global importance: being a leader together with the world's current superpower.

### 5.2.2 The multilateral element – joining the Union to fight CC

The EU does not intend to lead without other states' support as it tries to convince other actors multilaterally. It is "at the forefront of driving forward a multilateral process within the UN system" (Paterson 2009:141). Indeed, the Union does not strive for pure dominance as it incorporates the conviction that "multilateralism doesn't work if you have one single leader crushing the other" (COM). The EU is "smart enough not to pretend we're the only one, because if we wanted to be the only one it would be stupid, we would lose it all" (ibid.). This is fairly in line with the proposed definition of leadership as it shows mutuality, which is a condition for being a leader. In general, commitments to multilateralism can be read from the Union's rhetoric, as it intends work together with other countries to promote its stance on CC and environmental policy (cf. e.g. Council 2007a, Commission 2009b). On the practical level, the EU incorporates many of the suggestions from the IPCC. It works on CC issues through bi- and multilateral forums like regional EU-Asian partnerships (Vanden Brande 2008a:169) and through other UN fora (Damro 2006). The nature of the CC problem contributes to the EU's stance to "believe deeply in multilateralism (..) and if [CC] is not a common problem then I don't know what a common problem is" (COM).

On the other hand, there is a perception that "until now, there has been no other leader in the past five years. There has been no other leader on climate [policy]" (COUN) implying that the EU is *the* leader in CC politics. This tends

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<sup>24</sup> "I hope that there's a kind of coalition between the both [the EU and US] to make sure that [the US] are as ambitious as possible. And by that, engaging also others like China and India. That's the basic thing. If the EU and US are ambitious enough, there's no reason for China, India and others to stay on the sidelines" (COUN; cf. Niblett 2008).

towards the aforementioned global importance factor and seems to be at unease with multilateralism. However, unilateral action is perceived as a mosaic in an overall multilateral approach to CC. It is seen as showing the way for others to follow (cf. directional leadership; COUN, COM). Scholars have generally coined this commitment to multilateralism in the area of CC as ‘logical’ given EU’s integrative nature and the cross-border character of the challenges arising from climate change (Damro 2006:176). Another commentator (Niblett 2008:126) confirms this by adding that

“[i]f one overarching theme dominates European thinking about international order in the twenty-first century, it is the extent of the interdependence between the lives and destinies of nations and people around the world. The policy area that manifests this interdependence most clearly is the need to confront climate change”

Thus, the commitment to multilateralism is deeply anchored in European values, which facilitates a leader role as a ‘good’ and instrumental leader that listens to other parties needs and builds winning coalitions.

### 5.2.3 The element of coherence – a single voice?

The ego-side of the leader role incorporates the assessment that “externally we always manage to keep a kind of a strong and rather unified perception” (COUN), through speaking, negotiating and acting as a unified actor (Karlsson & Parker 2008:26). There is nevertheless an awareness of potential rifts in this presentation. A pertinacious struggle for more effectiveness and concerted action is displayed in the Union’s presentation. The call for more coherence in foreign policy is namely a recurrent element in the Union’s representation: EU foreign policy action “that matches [its] potential” has to be “more coherent” (European Security Strategy 2003:11). In CC affairs, the EU calls upon itself to “organise itself so as to present a single EU position and policy and a convincing and consistent approach over the years that this effort will require, so that the EU pulls its full weight” (Commission 2007). Coherence is thus a precondition for effective leadership (cf. Gupta & Grubb 2000, Cramér et. al. 2008:10-11). The nature of CC negotiations being subject to mixed agreements results in the many EU actors being involved in the process. There is a constant struggle for competences between the MS and the Commission as well as discussions within the Council and the Commission about appropriate actions in the area of CC. It has been held that the “constant quarrelling over competence (...) is giving the EU a bad reputation” (Vanden Brande 2008a:165) reflecting a view of the Union as being more concerned with internal discussions than with substantial negotiations on CC. Interviewees acknowledge “on the negative side, the fact that the EU can’t move so easily” and that it has “very rigid positions” (COUN). This is due to the complex decision-making process in the context of shared competences along with the intra-sectoral character of CC where final international positions have been negotiated internally as a rather fragile product of consensus (cf. Bretherton

& Vogler 2006:90-99). Despite the general EU negotiating position agreed by the Council, the Union often needs to alter its position during negotiations. However, there is no overarching authority that may take binding decisions on behalf of the European Union. The Commission or the Presidency thus cannot take binding decisions without consulting the MS to agree on a consensus (Vanden Brande 2008a:166). Lacaste et. al. (2007:214) point out that the process of finding a consensus among MS and the Community can be cumbersome and even delay action. This can hence result in a serious hurdle for the EU's capacity to demonstrate leadership in the negotiations (cf. Elgström 2007a, 2007b).

Shaping an internal consensus on climate policy has become even more difficult since the accessions of the new MS (COM; COUN). This is due to the dependence on coal in many of the new MS and their lower GDP per capita which makes actions against CC a more difficult enterprise for the EU<sup>25</sup>. The interviewed EU officials indicate that, in general, the new rules of the Reform Treaty would improve this problem and facilitate a better co-ordination.

In line with the 'bad reputation' argument, interviewed EU officials unanimously perceive certain reluctant MS to 'dilute' the image of the EU as a progressive climate leader (ibid.). Evidence for this impression can be found, for example, in the reluctant position of Poland and Ireland in the question of the Climate and Energy Package (Euractiv 2009, PBS 2008) or there are even conflicts within different DGs of the Commission on sustainable development (European Voice 2009a). The interviews elucidate certain inter-bureaucratic wrangling (cf. Bretherton & Vogler 2006:91). For example, the Commission's DG Environment, which "has been opposed by all [other] departments historically" and "culturally used to handle [CC] on their own" (COM) is thus cautious to share its information with other DGs involved in climate issues, which contributes to a certain amount of internal inconsistency. As the EU's CC policy is subject to complex decision-making procedures and touches practically upon the whole scope of the Community's policy competences, it can be of significance for the Union's construction and performance as a leader against climate change and "not least [(...) be] a source of bewilderment for third parties" (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:91).

Despite the diverse agendas of the different EU bodies, a homogenous discourse of the EU as being a consistent climate leader has emerged since the early 1990ies. All EU bodies involved in CC shape an image of cohesive EU leadership (Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007). As the main bodies, the Council (2007a), the Commission (2005, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) and the European parliament uphold and promote the image of "the leading role of the European Union in international fora" (European Parliament (EP) 2009). Furthermore, the consultative bodies, the European Social and Economic Committee (2008) and the

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<sup>25</sup> One interviewee coined it nicely: "I have to admit that with the accession of the new MS, it has complicated the matter. Because there are some specificities of the new MS. There are some MS that are heavily dependent on coal. For example Poland. Poland is depended on almost 100% on coal for its electricity needs. So that doesn't make things easy. The other thing is that they have a low GDP per capita. That means they cannot be expected to do as much as the old MS. Except, of course, if they get the money to do it" (COUN)

Committee of the Regions (2007), which represent European civil society and regions, share this image. As to the international negotiations and the need for the EU to present itself as a unitary or coherent actor, the Union has made considerable steps forward (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:99). It became a leading actor “despite the special difficulties associated with mixed competence” (ibid.:89) in the area of CC. An interview-source (COUN) expressed that “things have changed substantially, six- seven years ago the Union was more busy with trying to reach a position [internally] than with speaking to others, now the internal meetings are quite focussed and quite brief and we reach [a] common position quite fast”. The internal co-ordination meetings during the COPs have developed to be “very informal and very effective”<sup>26</sup> (COM). Despite the mentioned set-backs, the EU “works wonderfully well” compared to other negotiating blocks, like “the G-77, which are constantly split” and “have even bigger differences within their group than the EU” (COUN). The image of the EU admits that its position in international negotiations is rather immobile due to the complicated internal decision-making process of the EU. Its position nonetheless becomes increasingly flexible<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, the wide range of subjects and policy areas that have to be covered by an EU CC approach is not necessarily seen as an obstacle. The overarching CC problematic in the development area is for example viewed as “mutually self-supporting” (Commission 2009c). The EU sources (COM, COUN) point to the possibilities of extending the scope of its leadership role to other policy domains, especially to development policy where the Union with its MS already has a strong standing as being the world’s largest development aid donator (see below). Accordingly, Europe is “not transferring, [but] joining two areas of leadership” (COM), coupling CC and development policy. In conclusion, despite some difficulties with the coordination of internal and external positions, the ego of the Union can be described as fairly consistent due to a European consensus on EU leadership on international CC matters. This unity “will be of central importance for the EU to be able to exert directional leadership” (Oberthür & Roche Kelly 2008:37).

#### 5.2.4 The credibility element – the EU practicing what it preaches

Fourthly and unsurprisingly, the EU perceives itself as being a credible and rightful leader. As expressed by Commissioner for the Environment Stavros

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<sup>26</sup> On the implications of informality in environmental decision-making see Vanden Brande (2008a:166-167).

<sup>27</sup> The interviewee from the Council gave an illustrative example of the ‘new’ flexibility of the EU in CC negotiations: “During the Poznan conference there was the question about the operationalization of the adaptation fund. And there, developing countries were asking for not only access to that fund via implementing entities or executing entities, but also directly by governments. There was a fear by developed countries, also from the EU, that there would be some problems with countries, having not such a good governance system in managing those funds. They [i.e. the governments] have direct access without the control from others. But in the end the EU accepted this. This would never be possible five years ago.” This flexibility increases the closer “the date to achieve an agreement in Copenhagen” comes (COM).

Dimas, in the eyes of the EU, “everyone accepts that Europe is leading the fight against climate change” (European Voice 2009b). The basis for this self-image is that the EU’s credibility as an international environmental actor is coupled to the performance of a leader role. There is awareness that “the Community’s credibility and effectiveness at this wider level depends in large measure on the ability to adopt progressive environmental measures” (Council 1990). In order to be a credible leader, the inter-linkage between external and internal CC policy is significant (ibid.) as effective domestic action diffuses leadership to third countries (cf. directional leadership). It is therefore important to make a ‘good impression’ to shape others’ views as “expectations are important, and behaviour judged to be incongruent or cynical can result in a loss of credibility” (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:40). In other words, successful domestic action may increase the Union’s international credibility. An example for consciousness of this is the Parliament’s call for “urgent need for the EU and its Member States to meet the targets of the Kyoto Protocol in order to play [a] leading role in a credible way” (EP 2009). Hence, credibility has a key foundation in the accomplishment of domestic EU actions in order to make others believe in the leadership of the EU. The interviews show that there is confidence in the domestic accomplishments which facilitate international trust in the Union’s leader role: “it will be no problem [for others] to accept the EU leadership and the EU example on environmental policy because we have a quite good track record” (COUN). The EU is portrayed as being “the people who can deliver” (COM). When it says or announces something, it keeps its promise.

Closely associated with this finding is the construction of a self-conception as an honest player that plays with open cards<sup>28</sup>. The European Union practices what it preaches and does this in a transparent manner. The strategies and actions that the EU decides on fulfil one of the tasks of directional leadership, namely raising the Union’s credibility. A foundation of this honesty lies in the stiff institutional set-up of the EU. If the Council releases its conclusions, which form the basis of the Union’s negotiation mandate, EU negotiators have to stick to what the Council decided. Since Council conclusions, documents and communications from the Commission are available on-line, third parties know immediately and detailed about the European negotiation position (COUN, Interview Japan (Japan)<sup>29</sup>). From this point of view, the complicated decision-making process within the EU furnishes it with useful by-products for climate negotiations: honesty and transparency. So, somewhat paradoxically, the stiffness of the negotiating position can be framed as giving the Union a higher credibility<sup>30</sup>. According to the EU interviewees, EU negotiators occasionally use this as a negotiation strategy.

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<sup>28</sup> “Other parties know about the position of the EU. Clearly. That cannot be said from others, who try to hide behind some issue. So, honesty. That’s the (...) thing” (COUN)

<sup>29</sup> In the following, the names of the countries in brackets indicate an interview-source. For example, (Switzerland) means that the reference or source for a sentence is the interviewee from Switzerland.

<sup>30</sup> What may complicate matters is the apparently growing flexibility of the EU’s negotiating position (cf. footnote 27). This may increase the possibilities for coherence. But thought strictly further within the above mentioned argument, this flexibility may undermine the Union’s credibility as well.

Still, as practical climate actions are predominantly under the competence of the MS, interviewees notice that there is a potential for a loss of credibility due to MS that lag behind in their climate efforts. What weakens this possibility is that the GHG cuts of the EU are negotiated under a ‘bubble’, which takes into account the totality of EU’s cuts. Nevertheless, the increasing emissions of some MS, notably Spain, Greece and Portugal, together with the considerable variation of efforts against CC depending on MS could undermine the leading position of the EU (cf. Karlsson & Parker 2008).

The emphasis on credibility originates also in a response to the European publics’ interest in CC (Vanden Brande 2008a, 2008b). This is clearly reflected in the statements from the EU interviewees. The Union can play a credible role as a leader, as it can be sure of the support for its CC leadership among its citizen. Indeed, there are consistent numbers of Europeans that want the EU to lead on climate change (Eurobarometer 67) and the EU responds to this expectation by appointing CC as a EU priority in the 2010 Annual Policy Strategy (Commission 2009d). On the international level, the Union in turn sends signals to the European people through the fulfilment of a leading role. This is perceived as “a way to prove to our citizens: look, we can deliver!” (COM).

### 5.2.5 The responsibility element – the good guy

Fifthly, the EU sees itself as a moral actor in environmental affairs. It perceives itself as “the good guy” and “the responsible guy” (COM) at the negotiations. Generally, the Union’s ethos is one of a “special responsibility for the environment, both to [its] own citizens and to the wider world” (Council 1990). This contains an underlying notion of the Union being a ‘force for the good’ (Diez & Pace 2008). The Union thus has the moral obligation respectively a “wider responsibility” to act as a leader in international environmental politics on behalf of the world and its citizens. The relationship to DCs which is characterized by overcoming “their special difficulties” is an important mosaic in this picture. The Union sees itself as the principal developed partner for developing economies in the CC issue (Council 2007b). It is portrayed as “Africa’s best friend in the negotiations” (COM) as it acknowledges that “[c]limate change is hitting poor developing countries hardest as they are most vulnerable and have the least economic means to respond to the negative impacts” (Commission 2005a:14). Also, the EU does not demand binding targets from least developed countries (LDCs) (Commission 2006, Dimas 2007). The reward that the EU gets back from its responsible role is that less developed countries are more likely to agree on the Union’s CC policy. In turn, this means that the overarching leader role of Europe is accepted frictionless. Consequently, there is a prevailing perception that the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the LDCs are strong supporters of the EU’s leading role due to the ambitions of the EU and its financial means (COM). The climate negotiations are tightly coupled to development politics and are fundamentally about global inequality (Roberts & Parks 2006, cf. section 4). The UNFCCC (Article 3(1)) enshrines the principle of ‘common but differentiated

responsibility', which gives developed countries the liability/responsibility? for historical emissions. At the same time, they are less vulnerable to CC impacts and are able to pay for actions to cut GHG. DCs emerge stronger economically, which leads to them being big emitters. China, for example, is today the world's largest emitter of GHG. However, the main priority for less developed countries is economic growth and poverty reduction, which made them state that any future agreement on international climate protection that is not based on fairness and equity is not going to be signed (Roberts & Parks 2006). As the developed part of the world demands GHG cuts from DCs in a post-Kyoto agreement, normative-ethical considerations like responsibility and fairness "– notions not commonly perceived as essential to serious international discourse (or of most foreign policy practices and analyses)- are absolutely central to efforts to address global climate change." (Harris 2007c:353). Since the EU takes into account the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (Commission 1999:19) and "arguably acts much more ethically than do its developed-country counterparts" (Harris 2007c:370), it has the "moral upper hand" (Elliot 2004:88) towards reluctant developed countries, notably the US. Since other actors are more reluctant to apply this 'mentality' of fairness to their CC policies, this makes it a seemingly special feature of the EU (Harris 2007c:350, Mayer 2008). International environmental equity, justice and fairness thus leave a considerable imprint on the construction of the EU's ego. Following this argument, international environmental equity has been deeply incorporated in the European self-image and shapes its foreign policies on global CC.

The analysis of EU documents and action largely affirms this assessment. The Union's fight against CC "forms an integral part" of its foreign policy agenda which emphasizes assistance of DCs to fight poverty, the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of sustainable development (Commission 2006). Thus, the EU's approach "to promote adaptation to and mitigation of climate change is to 'mainstream' these objectives into strategies for poverty reduction and/or sustainable development" (ibid.). On the action level, the Commission (2003) developed a strategy to support developing countries with mitigation efforts and works through several bilateral and multilateral fora on CDM initiatives and climate change mitigation<sup>31</sup>. In its climate protection program it explicitly acknowledges that equity is "fundamental to the climate challenge" (cited in Harris 2007c:353). The Union seems to be committed to its moral obligations and has recently made suggestions on the financing of adaption funds. It sees itself as an instrumental leader in the development of the CDM mechanisms and financial aspects of a post-2012 agreement, urging other developed countries to follow its track (Reuters 2009b, Commission 2009a). Developed countries have the financial and technological resources and stay for the clear majority of GHG emissions. Therefore, the EU tries to push other

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<sup>31</sup> These co-operations include, *inter alia*, the EU-India Clean Development and Climate Change Initiative, the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change, the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument and a Global Climate Change Alliance which includes LDCs and the SIDS.

Annex-1 and OECD member countries through its leader role to pay their 'fair' share. What comes into play here is a confession to play a role as the "rich guy who wants to be liked by the people" (COM). According to this logic, helping DCs with financial means thus facilitates leadership as they are more likely to follow.

There is also an element of guilt and expiation which is reflected in the statements of the EU interviewees. The historical and present emissions make the EU "one of the origins of the problem" (ibid.) and the colonialist past of many of the EU MS makes CC cooperation occasionally difficult:

"Look, we've been the baddies for so many centuries. We've been the colonial power; we've been the one exploiting the South. Remember the 1950's? The horrible Franco, German or English colonial powers, we brought pain to the world, we've done the all the bad things, you can imagine. We are the good guys now. (...) We can do a lot there, and now we are the good guys and obviously we are the ones who originated all this climate change." (COM)

There is also a consciousness about the flaws of EU's stance on developing states and its moral role. One interviewee (COM) pointed out that the Union is not doing enough to secure the DCs support. Furthermore, a perception that DCs are getting annoyed by the European 'wiseacre' attitude that patronizes these states can be derived from the empirical data.

Though dulled through the 'moral EU' image, there is an increasing perception that takes into account a concern about the potential costs and competitiveness implications of climate policy for the European economy. The EU's directional leadership implies that the EU has "abandoned its previous stipulation that all industrialized countries must be engaged in making emission reductions and ensured that, in the first phase at least, the costs of the climate regime will be mainly borne by its Member States" (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:106). This fades back to what has been stated on the political-economic features of climate change (5.3.1) and may contradict the responsible directional leadership to a certain degree. Notwithstanding this obstacle, the EU has been characterized as to have raised the moral standard against which other have been judged (Gupta & Ringius 2001:289).

## 6 The Other Side of the Coin – EU Leadership Perceived by Outsiders

It has been established so far that the EU sees itself as fulfilling a role as a leader on CC. In the eyes of the EU, the performance of this role rests upon a ‘soft’ leadership strategy that mostly combines structural and directional modes of leadership. The self-perception is based on five elements or images of the leader role. However, the self-construction as a leader is merely a necessary but not sufficient condition to qualify for a leader-role in CC politics. In order to be a ‘genuine’ leader, others need to perceive the Union as such one (Gupta & van der Grijp 2000:67). In order to assess whether the EU indeed can be seen as a leader and how the Union’s role is mutually constructed, I will compare the ego with the Union’s alter part of the role conception.

### 6.1 The EU – A Leader in the Eyes of Others?

Unanimous agreement among third state representatives clearly shows that the Union leads on CC, no matter whether the interviewees represent a developing country, developed country or might have ideological constraints towards the Union<sup>32</sup>. Noteworthy in this context is that even the ‘heavyweights’ on the international scene the US, Japan, and China affirm the Union’s leader role. This allows for conclusions to be drawn on the definite international weight of the EU in CC politics (cf. 6.2.1). In general, the alter-construction matches with the general self-construction of the European Union as performing a role as green leader. Observers underline that “[the EU] has been on the forefront for many years. It’s been the strongest advocate of action” (Interview UNEP (UNEP)) and has been showing “a number one leadership compared to other countries” (Japan). What adds to this evaluation is that EU leadership has been assessed as consistent and continuous<sup>33</sup> (all interviewees; cf. Gupta & Van der Grijp 2000).

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<sup>32</sup> Among the third countries that comprise my empirical material are states that have different (ideological) perceptions from the EU about e.g. democracy, human rights or free markets.

<sup>33</sup> This is a major achievement as leaders usually “come and go. It’s not a static situation. It used to be that the AOSIS group was very, very well prepared. In the sense that they were well supported by a number of NGOs and were extremely punching above their weight. That’s diminished in the recent years” (UNEP). The Union seems to defy this mechanism as it “has shown leadership for many years” (US).

There is a confirmation of the ‘soft’ leadership strategy that incorporates all three types of leadership (5.2). The Union is seen as using its structural weight in form of its economic clout to back its instrumental and directional leadership. However, the two pictures (alter and ego) do not match so perfectly, when we analyze the role-constituents in more detail.

### 6.1.1 Structural leadership

There is unobstructed agreement among the third country officials that the EU can lead via its structural weight. The European economic weight and financial power can persuade other, mostly DCs, to follow the Union. Yet, mere financial means are not sufficient to make DCs to followers (Indonesia) as “there is not enough money to buy Chinese or Indian agreement” (UNEP). The financial power of the EU “can help but it cannot dominate” (ibid.). This may also be part of the explanation of why the Union needs to exercise a combination of the three modes of leadership. Apart from economic influence, scientific power is mentioned as a structural means of the EU. However, the economic clout is the by far most dominate instrument of the EU’s structural leadership. Except for one developed country (Iceland), the Union is said to have used its economic power occasionally. Others, in general, are well aware of the Union’s gatekeeper function to its internal market (China). Hence, the “Union matters because of its large economy” (US). The structural capabilities are thus always in the back of outsiders’ minds when they negotiate with the Union (cf. Oberthür 2007:78).

### 6.1.2 Instrumental leadership

The perception of instrumental leadership is based on the evaluation of the negotiation style of the EU as being always prepared and having a thorough knowledge of technical details. It is voiced that the EU often negotiates with a wide focus on the future backed up by scientific evidence and support of civil society. Opinions of the EU on proposals by third states are important as they can make “proposals or viewpoint[s] more feasible” (China). The Union is characterized as a “very strong diplomatic power because they already have problem strategies and they prepare well for the negotiations” (Japan). Also the sheer number of EU negotiators including the MS diplomats is seen as an advantage for exercising leadership. Negotiators from the EU are praised as having “a lot of skill and also technical expertise. They can provide us with all the information about the environment” (Indonesia). Moreover, some interviewees reckon that the experience of EU negotiators within the EU gives them generally an advantage in multilateral negotiations. The formulation and planning of policies by the EU is described as “very well” (China). However, some DCs note that the EU largely abandoned its instrumental leadership in the recent COP in Poznan. They expect more progress on the issue of funding and technology transfers as outlined in the Bali Action Plan (ibid., UNEP).

### 6.1.3 Directional leadership and some constraints

The Union is generally seen as to be able to play a role as directional leader by setting (domestic) examples, and by that, inspiring others. The EU “does do its homework well” domestically and “in the past five to ten years, it has come forward with ideas and with a clear position” (UNEP). Its role is “dominant” in the discussions and by and large the Union “know[s] the direction” (ibid.) This indicates that the EU may well be able to mould others’ perceptions through its discursive impact on the discussions and by that might get ‘power over opinion’ (Manners 2002:238-9). Some DCs point out that Europe “can play an active role and can show the good example. Especially concerning the issue of (...) cooperation between the developing and [the] developed world” (Indonesia, cf. 6.2.5). The domestic measures of the EU are evaluated as pivotal for its leading role in CC. Thus, it is “the great work done in national policies [that] strengthened the EU’s role” (Argentina). Especially “to the other developed countries, the EU shows ambitious targets and demonstrated with concrete measures how to achieve a target” (Japan). Not only domestic decisions, but also the EU and its commitment to CC as a whole serve as “an example for other developed countries to deal with climate change” (China). This emphasizes the ‘soft’ approach of the EU, and might correspond to Manners (2002:252) well-known statement “that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is”. The Union’s rhetoric is echoed by some interviewees, both from developing and developed countries, stating that “the EU plays a key role in the making and implementation of climate change policy” (Iceland, cf. Indonesia, China). Again, this affirms the Union’s domestic capabilities. As “the EU, and its MS have among them a good experience in taking measures” (UNEP) all third countries perceive that they can learn from this experience either “to a large” or “to some extent”. Thus, third party actors “may learn from EU’s practice” (US). As a concrete example for this, the European ETS was named frequently. This means that EU domestic policies clearly have an ‘emanation’ on others. Indeed, all experts asked state that the policies at EU-level have an outreach or impact on the world.

There is also a perception that the EU pursues a ‘green mission’ within its leadership realm. Except for one third country (Venezuela) all experts confirm this impression. Its mission is to preach about the benefits of ‘green growth’ (Switzerland) backed by a consistent rhetoric about sustainable development (Baker 2006, Vanden Brande 2008) and by a Swedish EU Presidency that made CC a priority during its presidential period (Namibia). Closely associated to this perception is a reading of the Union as teaching others about CC by the good example. Accordingly, others gain knowledge of Europe: “we learn from their policy and action and programs on how they make their people more understandable” (Indonesia). This perception is not only limited to DCs but prevails also in developed countries officials’ minds. Thus, the EU may, at least to some extent, be a ‘teacher’, model or ‘missionary’ for others to follow in CC matters. This seems to be consistent with the Union’s self-image.

However, despite this rather good evaluation, the potential to inspire and set standards for others to follow is ambiguous and somewhat limited. Whereas the smaller countries with the exception of an African and a Latin American country (Namibia, Venezuela) state that Europe's CC policy inspires their own approach to fight global warming, the global powers US, Japan and China are reluctant to ascribe the Union such a merit<sup>34</sup>. The reasons for this might lie in their own structural capacities along with a tendency to strive for hegemony, or 'doing it alone' that is assigned to global powers (Chasek 2007:364-65). Nevertheless, examples that major powers are "very interested in the result of the [Climate and Energy] Package" (Japan) may signal that domestic action by the EU is of importance for their approach. Especially European "non-EU members do look to the EU in regard to different issues and view their position with interest" (Respondent Iceland) which may reflect the regional importance of the Union or its 'magnetic force' (cf. Power). The case why Venezuela and Namibia do not gain inspiration from EU policies may lie in their experience of how the Union treats them.

Another adjustment to the leader perception is that others do not clearly perceive the Union to be the only leader in CC politics. Apart from a clear minority (Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Switzerland and Belarus) it is not entirely seen as an 'undisputed' or single leader. International and regional powers (USA, China, Argentina, Japan), DCs (Namibia, Indonesia) and observers (UNEP) perceive other states as either potentially or equally being able to lead. For the most part the US, followed by China, India and Brazil were named as other leading countries. This could indicate potential problems for the leadership role of the EU, as it may result in a competition for leadership. Nevertheless, it is consistent with the self-construction of the EU, which incorporates the need to mutually come to a post-Kyoto agreement by emphasizing multilateralism and a (although ambiguous) will to share leadership (cf. 5.3.2, 5.3.1).

When asked about the performance of the leadership role of the EU, the picture of this role further gains some slight cracks. Apart from the already mentioned disappearance during COP14, there are voices that want more commitments from the EU to "help developing countries with adaptation strategies" (Respondent Dominican Republic), for example "regarding financial options or new mechanisms" and "by putting numbers on the table" (Respondent Argentina, cf. Venezuela). Nevertheless, there is an overwhelming majority of respondents and interviewees that perceive the performance of the leadership role as rather or very good. Except for the African and the Venezuelan respondent which see the EU performance as neither good nor bad, there seems to prevail consensus that Europe acts well in its leader role.

## 6.2 The Elements of the Alter Part

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<sup>34</sup> The US diplomat made clear that the EU "certainly" can set standards, but "not everybody follows".

In the following, we will take a closer look at the constituent elements of the Union's ego and try to contrast them with the perceptions of outsiders. This proceeding makes it possible to outline the complex relation between the ego and the alter part of the role.

### 6.2.1 The element of importance – A strong competitor?

The European self-conception to be a significant player in the CC regime is broadly shared by the alter-construction. The EU is “critical” and a “particularly relevant player” (UNEP) in the negotiations. The EU “matters” in many ways and has the ability to exercise power in form of economical and scientific incentives. On the question how others perceive the ‘general impact’ of the EU in international climate policy, only two respondents state the Union's influence to be “modest” (Venezuela, Argentina), while all other respondents find the EU to have a “huge impact”. This is often associated with the character of the Union as a ‘negotiation block’ that consists of 27 MS, which ultimately gives stronger influence as its positions have been well negotiated internally (Japan). Other countries, although they usually are member of a negotiating group, lack this influence. The Icelandic respondent notices that negotiating on ‘its own’ “does indeed put a tag on the role of Iceland in the negotiations as compared to the EU which speaks for 27 countries and therefore has a stronger voice and presence in the negotiating room”<sup>35</sup>.

While Japan generally ascribes the EU “strong power” the US specifies the Union's power as ‘soft’ and “appreciates the important role it plays” in CC matters. This, again, indicates the specific approach of the Union in combining leadership modes in its ‘soft’ manner (Oberthür & Roche Kelly 2008:37). Intersecting with the findings about the EU's structural and directional capacity, the “EU can exercise power by science [and] economics” (China) and gets its voice heard in the international arena through its directional leadership capacities: it “make[s] the main stream in the climate change negotiation[s]” (ibid.) and thus seems to be able to change others' perceptions.

There is also a perception mirrored in the answers of third party actors that corresponds to the notion of the EU as a ‘counterweight’ to the US. For example, an interviewee remarked that the European Union “used to be an alternative to the US for Latin America” (Argentina). Before the changed US administration there was an almost hostile atmosphere between the two transatlantic partners which the US official ironically compares to as being in Iraq during the war. To date, this relationship has seemingly changed considerably towards a more positive attitude to each other. However, several third states indicate that there could be an emerging competition for leadership due to the new policy on CC of the Obama

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<sup>35</sup> Iceland is member of the Umbrella group and does not *per se* negotiate on its own. The respondent remarks however that “[b]y this I do not mean that the views of countries that are only speaking for themselves are not as important as the bigger groups; but the situation is different for them”.

administration: “when Mr Obama became president, the competition began” (China).

On the side of the Americans this has been recognized as the US interviewee asked “why is Europe so anxious of the US to play a leading role?”. The relationship tending towards competition is thus the result of role competition. However, this competition is blurry and ambiguous. On the one side the US tries to regain a leadership role, with a president that is “truly committed to climate change” (US), and a perception by other parties that “if [the] USA change its climate change policy, EU leadership will encounter competition” (China). The rise of the US in CC is just a question of time and soon “we will see the US come back in a very dominant way” (UNEP). The US is frequently portrayed as a very important player in the global climate regime with immense structural capacity. This perception seems to have remained throughout a decade (cf. Gupta & Van der Grijp 2000:69). An indicator for this perception is that a part of the third state diplomats state that the COP14 meeting in Poznan was stalled due to the waiting of the new administration under Obama (Japan, Indonesia). Without the US, no post-Kyoto deal seems feasible. Also, the hype about a ‘new green deal’ both in the US and Europe couples leadership in CC to economic success as Obama’s remark that “the nation that leads in the creation of a clean energy economy will be the nation that leads the 21st century global economy” shows (White House 2009).

On the other side, there is, similar to the ego part, an emphasis on strengthening the transatlantic partnership and the sharing of leadership. The US sees similar interests of both the Union and the United States. Both are industrialized entities with the goal to strike an agreement that is equitable and effective. Moreover, the negative attitude towards the US is vanishing and the EU does not ‘shame’ America anymore due to the change of office. The survey results show that only a – although narrow – minority of ‘outsiders’ perceive a competition for leadership between the present US government and the EU, illustrating that transatlantic role competition is ‘not as bad as all that’. Moreover, several diplomats point to the opportunities about mutual “future leadership by the US and the EU” (Japan) and see the climate regime benefiting from the EU-US cooperation (Indonesia).

## 6.2.2 The multilateralist element – congruence

Others undisputedly share the self-image of the EU as a committed multilateralist. The Union’s effective and farsighted cooperation with different countries is underlined (Japan). Bilateral cooperation and regional partnerships with the EU are seen as beneficial and the Union is perceived as a stimulator for cooperation (Indonesia). Often, the EU’s character as a 27-MS entity where multilateral cooperation is ‘business-as-usual’ is seen as the reason for the ‘natural’ inclination towards multilateral approaches. This has also been noticed as a bargaining advantage in international negotiations (Japan). What might be part of an explanation of why the Union is viewed as an advocate of multilateralism is the

fact that the negotiations on CC are multilateral *per se* and that environmental problems are often transnational (Kremenjuk & Lang 1993).

### 6.2.3 The coherence element – struggling despite increased consistency?

The Union's self-consciousness to represent a coherent outside in CC negotiations is largely shared by outsiders. There is agreement that the EU succeeds to negotiate as a block and that its positions are well-developed and coordinated reflecting that its negotiation behaviour can "be very effective" (UNEP; Venezuela). At first glance, a clear majority of interviewees thus regards the EU to speak with a 'single voice' in climate negotiations. Also, this perception applies for "other political fora related to climate change" (China). Third state representatives recognize that in CC matters "a few decades ago each member states had a lot of power but recently [the] EU integrates to the one single EU" (Japan). However, this matching picture is somewhat spoiled by experts from Belarus and the Dominican Republic who do not see the EU to act coherently on the international stage. When taking a closer look at the empirical material, this critical perception on EU coherence is, although ambivalently, shared by many third countries.

On the one hand, the diplomat representing the US, for example, generally views the Union as a coherent actor with no grave inconsistencies in its behaviour. On the other hand, there is the perception of EU internal wrangling as the different MS all have different national interests in CC (US, Japan, Indonesia, UNEP). Also, the institutional setup of the EU is named as an obstacle to a consistent approach since it implies limits for EU competences on CC (cf. 2.1.1). The interplay between the institutional arrangements and differing national interests add to the complexities for coherent and effective bargaining. For example, the linkage between the institution of the Presidency and national politics has an impact on the outside-coherence of the EU: "Depending on the Presidency, [the EU] can be very effective. If the Presidency is held by a country whose national interest differs from the majority or the EU leaders in CC, it can be problematic" (UNEP). In this sense, the underlying struggle within the EU for more consistency is clearly recognized by the interviewees. The Union is seen as an entity, but sometimes the perception of the EU as a mere combination of its MS is revealed in the data. The EU "has a single voice" but occasionally member states add some cacophony to that voice. "It's difficult for other countries to understand the differences of opinions of every member state. And we think there's a difference in the thinking of every member state" (Japan).

In general, this ambivalence may point to a misunderstanding of the EU's complex political structure. As the interviewees from Japan and Indonesia admit, the decision-making processes within the EU are all but easy to see through. The lack of transparency in the decision-making processes is widely seen as complicating things unnecessarily. With it comes the classic Kissinger-question of who to call when to talk to Europe, as third states "sometimes see difficulties in

which person we should propose our idea to in the EU decision making process” (Japan).

However, the EU decision-making process is not necessarily seen as a difficulty: “If there is any delay [due to the complex decision making] we don’t see this as an obstacle” (Indonesia). The reason for this may lie in the possibility to exploit this ‘weakness’ of the Union’s negotiating stance. Some interviewees admit that it is beneficial to find out about the differences within the EU and then try to impinge on certain MS to get closer to one’s own position.

In the context of the negotiation behaviour of the EU, the Union has constraints due to its negotiation setup which is “disadvantage in [that] it prevents agility. The EU cannot move quickly” (UNEP). Especially in the final negotiating phase this immobility is attributed to the EU (Japan, US). The increased number of MS has contributed to this. If the agenda changes and decision have to be made fast, the EU is seen as to be taken by surprise despite rigorous preparation (cf. Gupta & Van der Grijp 2000:78).

Despite the asseverations of increased flexibility on part of EU interviewees, the EU decision-making process and the EU’s complex institutional design contributes to a certain extent of incoherence. Yet, there is a majority of third state actors that see improvements in the Union’s coherence and acknowledge that it increasingly speaks with a single voice.

#### 6.2.4 The element of credibility – hypocritical or honest?

Generally, the EU is seen as a legitimate actor in the negotiations. Its leadership is therefore due in the eyes of others and matches with the Union’s self-image. Yet, the picture is more complex as there are deviations in perception about the credibility of the EU in CC matters.

On the one hand, developed countries generally commend that the Union “preaches with the good example” and is “doing what it says and proposes” (Switzerland). This holds especially true for those states close to the EU (Iceland, Switzerland). Europe is regarded as using legitimate measures to pursue its climate goals and observers assign it to negotiate “credibly, faithfully and professionally” while “following [the] rules of the game” (UNEP). This reasoning thus corresponds well to the leadership perception that the Union has of itself. It highlights an effective directional leadership that repays in the form of credibility.

On the other hand, there is a concern on side of some DCs that the EU does not act in a credible way. The “EU should be as good as its words” (China) in its CC approach, indicating that the Union’s rhetoric is not followed by serious action. This signifies the often-discussed domestic implementation difficulties of the EU (Lacoste et. al. 2007). There are “too little commitments” (Namibia) from the Union. And although the EU is “politically (...) committed” to “reasonable targets” it is “not when negotiating” (ibid.). In the same direction, Venezuela assesses the EU as acting not reliable. This is a severe blow to the self-image of the Union: This impression implies that the EU has not more to offer than warm words and may in the long-run point towards a severe damage of the Union’s

leadership capabilities. To put it somewhat bluntly, this might be coined as the contradistinction of the essence of the Union's leadership: an unreliable hypocrite that bases its leadership on mere rhetoric using "the luxury of being greener than it is" (Gupta & Van der Grijp 2000:77).

Although this result ought not to be underestimated, there are some indications not to overvalue this finding. Firstly, the 'accusation' of hypocrisy has been voiced already a decade ago by some less developed states without having serious influence on the leadership role of the EU (Gupta & Van der Grijp 2000:74). In fact, the EU apparently gained leadership during the Kyoto negotiations and is still perceived as a leader on CC. Secondly, the empirical data shows that apart from China no other state or observer regards the Union to have lost status or standing in global CC politics. Indeed, it is only a minority of developing countries that positions the EU close to hypocrisy. Thirdly, there is a consensual perception that the EU has gained or not lost in leadership since the Kyoto deal. Its leadership has been "strong and consistent - growing over time" (UNEP) despite its rather weak performance in the last COP. The leadership of the Union is portrayed as very consistent as "it doesn't go up and down year by year" (Indonesia). Hence, all this absorbs the impression of an "empty" leader.

### 6.2.5 The element of responsibility – too 'good' to be true?

Outsiders have a rather nuanced picture of the Union's self-image as a 'good' or 'responsible guy'. It is not necessarily seen as being more moral than other parties, but there are signals from third party actors that assign the EU as amicable or good-natured. This assessment is found in both developed as well as DCs perceptions.

Japan, for example, notices that the EU has been a partner for developing and LDCs in Africa and tries to help African countries to achieve better energy efficiency. However, this engagement is not based on pure altruism or commitment to responsibility. Behind it is "not only green political reason. Of course, EU businesses have an interest in business opportunities" (Japan). This implies that the EU is not primarily acting on moral grounds. Indeed, all experts see the Union to pursue "its very own interests" in the CC negotiations. These interests range from hard national-interest-inclined competitive advantages (Japan, US) to more milieu goal<sup>36</sup> oriented interests that "will help the EU to get high status in the world" (China). In comparison to other actors there is not seen any bigger disparity as "all countries pursue their own interests while trying to achieve some common goal. So [the EU] is no different than most countries or blocks" (UNEP).

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<sup>36</sup> In Wolfers (1963) classical terminology, *possession goals* correlate to short-term national interests of an actor. It aims at gains or the preservation of things to the expense of other actors. Actors that pursue *milieu goals* "are out not to defend or increase possessions they hold to the exclusion of others, but aim instead at shaping conditions beyond their national boundaries" (ibid.:74).

On part of the less developed countries, Indonesia highlights that “the EU is very supportive. They assist us in getting a better understanding” of CC. Gestures to help the DCs and the exemplary cooperation form a perception of the EU as a responsible player that reaffirms the Union’s self-image. However, the perception is ambivalent among DCs. While the SIDS country (Dominican Republic) shares the image, and remarks that the Union has “dedicated much economic resources to help developing countries in Latin America; Africa and Asia”, some DCs do diverge severely from this image. In Namibia the EU’s stance on CC is “not very much appreciated”. Moreover, Argentina, Belarus, and Namibia feel some ignorance from the EU. This is grounded on the perceived “partly negative” attitude of the EU towards these countries’ proposals. What adds to that picture is that the EU has “a rather bad” status or standing in the eyes of the African representative. Thus, the picture of Africa as the ‘best buddy’ of the EU in ICN seems not to be shared by the Namibian counterpart.

One of the reasons behind this perception may be based on misunderstandings between the developing and the developed world. The EU “needs to understand and be more patient with the developing and LDCs to go their own path of sustainable development” (Indonesia). There is a view that the burden which the DCs have to bear is heavier than that of the developed countries. Although the EU affirms this in its rhetoric and its self-image in general, it is pointed out as a critical misunderstanding between the EU and the less developed states. It seems that there is a perceived mismatch on views of the environment and the CC problematic. Whereas the Union emphasizes environmental protection and sustainable development, DCs “cannot only think about the environment, not only GHG. We have to think of our people” (ibid.). Thus, there is a misperception in objectives and priorities. The goal to achieve the 2°C target is most important for the Union, whereas for DCs it is also the economic “development under adaption of climate change” (China). What seems to annoy third party actors is that “sometimes the Union makes regulations that, for us it seems, they don’t have much time, or they don’t have enough information about the consequences for developing countries” (Indonesia). These EU measures have an outreach on other states and are often coupled to a perception of ‘green’ protectionism. An example is European consideration to penalize imports from countries with softer climate policy regarding products such as steel and cement, whose manufacture generates a lot of GHG emissions. Hence, there are some DCs (Argentina, Venezuela, Indonesia, China) that perceive certain EU climate policy illegitimate especially if it has an impact on trade access.

However, what correlates fairly to the EU’s ‘good guy’ image is that the EU is acknowledged by developing countries as “an example for the developed countries to deal with climate change” (China). Its policies are perceived as being directed to “enhance capacity building for climate change in developing countries” (ibid.). Also, misunderstandings between the EU and the DCs apparently seem to decrease: “Now, the EU can understand about the position of developing countries, of the G-77 plus China. They give us even good explanations. The EU is more open about the positions of the developing countries in general” (Indonesia). All this indicates that the EU might eventually

gain a 'responsible' image in the eyes of others. However this image is painted with different nuances of impressions that indicate a 'restricted' good guy image.

## 7 Concluding Remarks – Making the Mosaics a Picture

The analysis confirms that the Union theoretically qualifies for the role as a leader as it complies with the definition laid out in Chapter 2. In a competitive setting, the EU has followers that it consistently leads via largely positive influence towards a common good: strengthened climate protection (cf. Oberthür 2007:78).

On the empirical level, the comparison of the ego and alter part of the role conceptions also indicates clearly that the EU indeed plays the role as a leader in global climate change politics. The construction of the Union's self and the perception of non-EU outsiders both largely confirm and mutually construct this role. This is first of all surprising given its problems concerning the complex institutional architecture, internal disparities with a cacophony of 27 different voices, and the difficulties associated with mixed competence. Thus, since the mere "aspiration to leadership might well be regarded as perverse" (Bretherton & Vogler 2006:101), the success for taking on a leader role may be described as an achievement against (almost) all odds. However, much of the leadership in the post-Kyoto process still stems from the abdication of CC leadership by the US after it refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol. In the eyes of others, the Union "has cleverly taken the momentum for leadership" (Indonesia), but even sustained and yet increased its leadership qualities.

However, by taking a closer look at the role and its elements, the leadership-role of the EU is not clear-cut but rather subject to certain constraints. The flaws in the leadership-ointment are based on some ambivalent assessments of the Union's leadership construction by 'others'. Apart from the perception of the EU as a multilateralist leader, there is no clear congruence of the ego and alter part when the constituting images are compared. Despite a fairly strong tendency towards convergence of ego and alter part, the EU is not entirely seen as important, coherent, credible, and moral as it conceptualizes itself.

Nevertheless, these obstacles in perceptions are not able to spoil the leadership of the EU aggravatingly. The EU in climate policy may therefore be described as a genuine but somewhat restricted green giant (cf. Elgström 2007b:456). Yet, in contrast to other negotiations or policy areas, the EU not only has the ambition to play a leader role in CC, but is also expected to play this role by others. It thus plays the leader role stronger and performs better than in other negotiation settings (ibid.). The potential for playing such a comparatively strong role in other policy areas are nevertheless rather limited due to the unique situation of 'hegemonic absence' from the US. Still, as indicated in the empirical material, the potential for the EU to learn from this experience as a green leader may in the long-run result in genuine leader roles in areas associated with CC.

To sustain its leader role on CC in the future, with the US being either a competitor or companion, the EU needs to ensure that its internal practices and processes work more smoothly. With the accession of the eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007, the Union's decision-making has become exceedingly complex and cumbersome. This may reduce the "EU's flexibility and opportunities to lead by example at future global CC negotiations" (Lacaste et. al. 2007:226). A recent example for this is the stalled EU position at COP14 due to the halted ratification of the Climate and Energy Package and the 'waiting for Obama'. An obvious solution would be the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which would facilitate flexibility. Still, the Union did succeed to lead consistently on CC despite these setbacks. It remains to be seen if the Union will succeed as a leader although it is hampered under the current decision-making procedures. It seems as if the Union incorporated an old wisdom, which works fine so far: "divide and rule, a sound motto. Unite and lead, a better one" (Goethe).

One last finding needs some special attention. The empirical analysis of the leader performance suggests that the EU relies on a 'soft' approach to perform its role as a green giant. Based on its general economic and political weight, the EU primarily exerts directional leadership added up with instrumental methods. This combination of leadership modes ultimately emphasizes leading by example. It is well associated with the non-coercive moulding of others' perceptions through diffusion of its leader-images and the intention to inspire third countries through its policies. Hence, this leadership strategy correlates with the conception of the EU as a normative power that pursues to shape conceptions of what is normal in international CC politics (Manners 2002). Or as Nicolaidis and Howse (2002: 774) coin it: to be a normative power, the EU must lead by example. Indeed, not only the quest for international status or economic interests, but also the aspiration to gain a unique identity can be detected in the motivations for leadership. The leader role of the EU in CC "is a fantastic subject for the EU to develop its own identity and its foreign policy. It's obvious. Why? We are the good guys, we are the good guys for once" (COM). This correlates well with the detected role of the Union as a 'responsible' leader. The European emphasis on equity and responsibility to act and aid developing countries in CC policy is infused throughout European foreign policy on global climate change and it seems that international environmental equity as a norm became a well-established part of the EU foreign policy objective (Harris 2007c:376). Through the incorporated norm of international environmental equity in the EU policy on CC the EU can influence other actors through its 'soft' leadership strategy by means of norm diffusion. Theoretically, the Union thus can be considered as pursuing normative power in CC. Further studies on CC that examine this issue in detail may be an interesting field of research on the European identity (cf. Lightfoot & Burchell 2005, Falkner 2006).

## 8 Executive Summary

This study examines the notion of the European Union (EU) being a leader on global climate change (CC), an area where the Union since the 1990ies has made considerable efforts to present itself as forerunner. With a focus on the current post-Kyoto climate negotiations at UN-level, the present paper analyzes (1) whether the EU can indeed be described playing a leader-role in CC politics and (2) how the leader-role is (mutually) constructed by the EU and non-EU players at the negotiations. In order to make a thorough assessment of the first question, the construction of the EU's leader-role is scrutinized by applying a distinct role-theoretical framework.

Role-theory is a sound approach to understand and examine the construction of the EU's leadership role as it takes into account the self-representation of the Union and the perceptions of this role by 'outsiders' (non-EU actors participating in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations). The underlying assumption here is that the leader role is shaped in a circular process between the self-perception (ego) and the expectations of others (alter). The basis for this proceeding is that according to leadership theory, a leader can only be a genuine leader if it is perceived as such by others. It is surprising that, to date, a role-theoretical approach has not been used in the current setting as it can add considerably to the academic debate.

In order to evaluate the construction of the EU's leader-role and its assessment, unique data obtained from interviews and a qualitative survey along with official documentation are used. This data is processed by means of a specific qualitative textual analysis in order to extract and examine the perceptions of both EU (ego) and non-EU diplomats (alter) and/or negotiators.

The analysis reveals that the EU pursues three specific leadership modes: structural, instrumental and directional leadership. A structural leader uses its political and economic clout to get others to follow. In the context of climate change, economic resources as well as current and potential future emissions build the power base for a structural EU. The EU as an instrumental leader exercises leadership by means of political skill and imagination, diplomatic insight, and an ability to foster 'winning coalitions'. Directional leadership of the EU means to set domestic examples and through that influencing the behavior of other actors by moulding their expectations. The EU combines these ways of leading, but its emphasis is on the third mode of leadership, making it a "soft leadership" performance that aims at changing 'outsiders' perceptions of EU leadership. This role-performance is acknowledged and confirmed by both the alter and ego part of the role.

Through analysis of the empirical material, the EU's leader-role can be dissected into five constituting and recurrent elements (sub-roles) of the

(overarching) leader-role. The role is shaped by its specific emphasis on (1) importance, (2) multilateralism, (3) coherence, (4) credibility and (5) responsibility. Along these elements the perceptions and expectations of ‘others’ are compared to those of the EU. The general finding is that the content of these role-constituents are mostly shared between the EU and ‘outsiders’. However, there are some deviations in the perceptions.

In more detail, the EU is perceived as an important actor by both EU and non-EU diplomats. A potential role-competition for leadership or sharing of leadership between the US and the EU is perceived by all interviewees and respondents. However, especially ‘major players’ like the US, China and Japan see the EU not as influential as it sees itself.

While the perception of the EU as being a multilateral leader is shared without differences between ego and alter, the role of the EU as a coherent leader is not completely congruent. The EU perceives itself as a cohesive player at the negotiations but also admitting some deficiencies due to a complex internal decision-making process encompassing the opinions of 27 member states. This is resulting in inflexibility at the negotiations. The alter part of this sub-role acknowledges the EU’s attempts for presenting a ‘single European voice’ but expects generally more coherence and more transparency.

The EU is largely seen as being a credible leader by both ‘others’ and the EU, however, the EU tends to see itself as exclusively credible whereas some ‘others’, primarily developing countries perceive the Union as occasionally hypocritical.

Finally, the EU regards itself as a ‘good guy’ and responsible player that unlike most other industrialized actors is committed to help developing countries and acknowledges its ‘guilt’ on causing CC. ‘Others’ face misunderstandings about this role as the Union is not necessarily seen as being ‘good’ or more moral than other developed countries. However, by and large, the EU is perceived as being committed to assist the less developed world in efforts to mitigate and adopt to CC.

In conclusion, despite some deviations between ego and alter part on the elements of the leader role, there is a strong tendency towards convergence indicating that the EU is indeed mutually constructed as a leader. Moreover, the role performance of the EU is perceived by others and by the EU itself as matching a leader-role with an emphasis on ‘soft’ measures. The EU may therefore, I argue, be characterized as a strong and genuine but somewhat restricted leader in the climate regime. This is a rather surprising result that contrasts the difficulties of the Union to play a leading role in other negotiation settings or international regimes.

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## Primary Sources

| Interviewee/ Respondent                       | Coalition/ Grouping           | Date       |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|
| Republic of Iceland                           | Umbrella                      | 23/07/2009 |
| Republic of Namibia                           | G-77 and China                | 10/07/2009 |
| Republic of Indonesia                         | G-77 and China, ASEAN         | 01/30/2009 |
| United States of America                      | Umbrella                      | 01/29/2009 |
| People’s Republic of China                    | G-77 and China                | 06/05/2009 |
| Japan   | Umbrella                      | 01/07/2009 |
| Argentine Republic                            | G-77                          | 09/04/2009 |
| Dominican Republic                            | AOSIS, G-77                   | 07/04/2009 |
| Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela              | OPEC, G-77                    | 16/05/2009 |
| Swiss Confederation                           | Environmental Integrity Group | 12/06/2009 |
| Republic of Belarus                           | –                             | 02/07/2009 |
| United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) | observer                      | 01/29/2009 |

|                                   |          |            |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|
| European Environment Agency (EEA) | observer | 02/11/2009 |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|

| Interviewee                         | Date       |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| European Commission DG Relex        | 01/28/2009 |
| European Commission DG Relex        | 01/23/2009 |
| Secretariat of the European Council | 01/27/2009 |
| European Commission DG Environment  | 01/28/2009 |

The questionnaire can be found at <http://www.thesistools.com/?qid=74929&ln=eng>, accessed 12.07.2009.

All interviews and survey results are in my possession.

# 10 Appendix

Below are some useful definitions that may facilitate the understanding of the reader.

## ***Climate Change (CC)***

This term here refers to climatic changes and their consequences as an effect from global warming which result in atmospheric changes connected directly or indirectly to human activities. CC has potentially severe impact on ecosystems, human societies, security and economies. These impacts range from sea level rise, to changing weather conditions characterized by increasingly severe storms, floods and droughts, and the side effects of these changes, such as the spread of diseases to newly warmed regions or potential conflicts due to water or energy resources. While some areas may experience positive effects of a changing climate (e.g. extended seasons, larger harvest etc.), others are likely to suffer. This makes climate change a global issue that needs to be solved by an international effort.

Science holds that a rise to a maximum of 2° Celsius (above pre-industrial) levels should not be exceeded in order to avoid risks of dangerous and irreversible changes in the global environment. This is also the position of the EU. In general, predictions point to adverse impacts, particularly in parts of the world where geographic vulnerability and poverty make adaption difficult or infeasible. The recent report of the IPCC indicates that CC is likely to be worse and occur more rapidly than predicted, leaving developing and the least developed countries most vulnerable to CC consequences. In Europe severe changes may be felt through varieties of in the frequency of extreme weather events and precipitation that cause droughts in some areas and river floods elsewhere (Harris 2007a:6-10, Maslin 2009, IPPC 2007, Commission 2009a).

## ***Global warming***

This term is often used interchangeably with climate change due to their close inter-linkage. According to mainstream science, global warming occurs as a consequence of GHG concentration in the atmosphere of the earth. Although not exclusively, many of these gases are products of human activity and industrialization as these are adding GHGs to the atmosphere. This contribution over the natural sources has a discernable impact by increasing global temperatures (Harris 2007a:6, Maslin 2009).

## ***Greenhouse Gases***

Greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>), Sulphur hexafluoride, methane, nitrous oxide, Perfluro methane PCF-14, CFC-12, HCFC-22, and ozone (Maslin 2009:4, 17). The Kyoto protocol to the UNFCCC tackles the six first named substances. CO<sup>2</sup> and methane are by far the most dangerous gas for the climate.

### ***European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)***

The ETS is the world's first carbon emissions trading system starting to operate in January 2005. In that year the system covered estimated 12,000 facilities, encompassing power generators above 20 MW and other large installations which represent just under half of European CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For the international level, a linking Directive (2004/101/EC) was passed coupling the JI and CDM mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol to the ETS. As a 'cap and trade' system, the scheme relies on national allocations of carbon allowances. Today, the Commission allocates certificates to the MS based on a national allocation plan. Implementation is still a challenge and initial problems originating from an affluence of national allowances were fiercely criticized by environmental NGOs. Yet, the ETS has not been exactly a success story (Karlsson & Parker 2008:28). But the system seems to perform better in the current phase (2008-2012) (Vogler & Bretherton 2006, Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007).

