

Who Leads Matters?

*A study of presidential leadership and its impact on
environmental policy*

Abstract

As climate change is a global threat it is of essence to understand how we can work against it. Research within the sphere of Peace and Conflict Studies lacks the perspective of the psychology behind world leaders as an explanation for how environmental policy is conducted. This thesis investigates what type of leader Obama and Trump are, what implications that has on environmental policy and how environmental policy can be understood by looking at leadership types. This is analysed through a comparative case study using the lens of leadership theory and psychological models to determine Obama's leadership style – most likely accommodative, and Trump's leadership style – clearly expansionistic, and analysing the impact that has on the Paris Agreement. It is found that leadership styles do in fact have an impact on environmental policy, but it cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the perceptions and agendas of the leader in question. Further, more research needs to be done to make this theoretical framework reproduceable on a larger scale, since categorising leaders not scoring extreme values on the variables, such as Obama, are difficult to pinpoint.

Keywords: Foreign Policy Analysis, leadership, Obama, Trump, environmental policy, Paris Agreement

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1 Introduction

“Climate change is the single greatest threat to a sustainable future. But, at the same time, addressing the climate challenge presents a golden opportunity to promote prosperity, security and a brighter future for all” (Ki-moon 2014).

Six years after Al Gore ran for president and lost against George W. Bush, he released the documentary “An inconvenient truth” on the effects of climate change. No doubt Gore fought, and is still fighting, for a sustainable planet, but we must ask ourselves if we are still fighting. Many feel a sense of hopelessness in contributing to a sustainable planet because of the small impact they feel that they have. Instead they look up to our leaders to take charge (Law 2019). Post 9/11 the focus of the American government has been on fighting the “war on terror”, as declared by President Bush in 2001 (Bush 2001), and today it may seem as if environmental issues have been lost in the periphery after Barack Obama left office and Donald Trump became president.

Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is considered a huge setback to global climate governance and a major reversal of the Obama administration’s environmental policy (Hongyuan 2019). Even though the Trump administration has not finalised its first mandate period, significant changes on environmental policy have taken place since the time of the Obama administration. For the environmentalists, these changes may be seen as a doom for the planet’s future, but from the market-oriented view of Trump, federal energy and environmental policy is in urgent need of reformation based on financial realities (Lesser 2017; Da Vinha 2019: 8). This change in environmental policy is a clear indication that who leads really does matter.

It is interesting how two presidents, who face the same environmental threat of climate change within the same time span, can act on the issue in so different ways. There are many possible explanations to this state of affairs, such as personality, political differences, economic considerations, cultural backgrounds, etc. We know for a fact that the two presidents at issue are very different from one another and have quite different ways of conducting politics. They come from completely different backgrounds and work(ed) within different political parties. But irrespective of political backgrounds and views, states need to cooperate in a globalised world to challenge global security threats. Therefore, it is important to analyse a single individual’s impact on environmental policy.

This study will contribute to the sphere of Peace and Conflict by adding psychological explanations as a new way to analyse impact on environmental

policy. As will be explained later on, environmental decay and threat to global health, prosperity and peace are intertwined. I will examine the leadership types of former president Obama and current president Trump with help from the psychological sphere and that of leadership theory and based thereon analyse their impact on environmental policy of the United States with focus on the Paris Agreement.

1.1 Aim and research question

The aim of this thesis is to study presidential leadership to see how leadership style can affect environmental policy within the sphere of Foreign Policy Analysis and if we can explain environmental policy changes with help from leadership theory. I have chosen to limit this study to the United States of America (hereafter U.S.) with focus on former president Barack Obama and current president Donald Trump. Keep in mind that I do not seek to examine the administration's role, but rather the impact of the personality and style of the individual leader. A comparison of these two presidents will hopefully result in a deeper understanding of the effect leadership has on foreign policy and, more specifically, environmental policy. The effect of personality traits on foreign policy is not given, even if we might believe it to be so by nature. Many factors are included in a president's actions, such as politics, prevailing circumstances, mood, family, background, timing, etc. However, this study will build upon previous research on why personality is of value when studying presidential leadership and decision making in foreign policy. The final aim is to see how we can understand environmental policy through leadership theory, as an alternative to more common explanations within Peace and Conflict Studies and Foreign Policy Analysis (such as securitisation theory, among others). The main research questions will be;

- *What type of leaders are Obama and Trump, what effects does this have on environmental policy and how can we understand environmental policy with help from leadership theory?*

2 Previous research & theory

In this section I will account for previous research on environmental policy and why it is relevant to the Peace and Conflict sphere of study. I will also describe what theories I will use to analyse leadership personality and impact and the science behind these theories.

2.1 Environmental policy

The field of environmental policy started to be explored more in depth in the 1960's due to the widespread discourse about protecting the environment. The growing concern of air and water pollution had begun to spread, and the consequences of oil spills surfaced. In addition, space development and astronauts being able to photograph the earth has contributed to the awareness of limited resources. Environmental policy derived from a rich but rather narrow tradition of earlier analyses of conservation and natural resource policy. The field broadened with an increasing interest in contemporary environmental challenges, stretching from pollution surveillance and maintenance to forest management. Scholars have since then greatly expanded the field, especially after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (Kamieniecki & Kraft 2012: 5; Floyd & Matthew 2013: 3-4)

Since the 1960's, states and local governments in the U.S. have adopted dozens of laws and hundreds of regulations to control pollution, protect natural resources and promote sustainable approaches to economic development. In the context of new environmental policy, former president Richard Nixon implemented the institution "US Environmental Protection Agency" (hereafter EPA), that still is in function today. EPA's main goal is to protect human health and the environment (Kamieniecki & Kraft 2012: 5; EPA; Floyd & Matthew 2013: 3).

Although some scientists believe that social scientists should not interfere in the study of the environment and instead leave it to the ecologists or biologists, others argue that social scientists should indeed analyse environmental issues because it poses a serious threat to the global society and that solutions will require understanding among politicians and governments (Kamieniecki & Kraft 2012: 10).

The research of climate change is now well known and global warming is expected to continue for decades, if not centuries (Matthew 2013: 265). Even though environmental policy has been implemented in the U.S. since decades back it is not enough according to scientists. For example, a U.S. poll brought out by Stanford University, ABC News and Resources For the Future in 2018 reveals that 44 percent believe global warming to be a long-term problem rather than an urgent

problem (Stanford University, ABC News & RFF 2018: 4), and in a poll by Washington Post from 2019, only 38 percent among U.S. adults viewed it as a crisis (Dennis et al. 2019). This is an indicator that a developed country, even though addressing the issue in media, does not take this matter seriously enough. A minority of scientists, the climate change ‘sceptics’, argue that climate change is not real. They claim that what we call “climate change” is a result of changes in solar activity and some of them argue that it simply was invented by liberals and radicals to advance a hidden agenda aimed at wealth distribution. This side has been supported by others – not experts – and has received a lot of attention in the media. However, the majority of scientists are in agreement that since the nineteenth century and the large industrial revolution the planet’s temperature has increased (and will continue to do so) as a result of human activity (Matthew 2013: 264-265; Giddens 2011: 17).

One way of looking at climate change and its impact on human societies is within the framework of security issues. The 2007 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (hereafter IPCC) brought this up and it has since become a wide-ranging debate (Matthew 2013: 266; IPCC 2008). In the most recent IPCC report evidence has been presented that the impact of climate change is expected to influence national security (IPCC 2014: 20, 758). Further, in the U.S. report “Fourth National Climate Assessment” the national security issue is brought up multiple times in connection with climate change (USGCRP 2018: 26, 30, 58-59, 175, 336, 605), implicating that environmental policy indeed is (or should be) security policy. The report states that “[c]limate change, variability, and extreme events, in conjunction with other factors, can exacerbate conflict, which has implications for U.S. national security. Climate impacts already affect U.S. military infrastructure, and the U.S. military is incorporating climate risks in its planning” (USGCRP 2018: 605). This is why it is relevant for the academic sphere of Peace and Conflict Studies. It is a global threat to all mankind and nature, and international cooperation is of essence to solve this problem. The Paris Agreement is a step in this direction. It is a document that aims to summon countries – wealthy and poor to adopt standards and set climate goals to protect the planet (United Nations / Framework Convention on Climate Change 2015).

In the next section I will explain why it is important to look at the individual leader in this context rather than institutions and whole states.

2.2 Foreign Policy Analysis

Anthony Giddens once wrote that structure and agent are comparable to fire and water within social sciences, but that they shouldn’t be (Giddens 1979). Society consists of both structures and agents. However, there are scholars who believe that agent and structure should be separated since they don’t have anything in common. Rothstein argues that either one cannot be explained without the other (Rothstein 1988: 27). This is explained further by Karl Marx, who wrote in chapter one of

“The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” that “*Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past*” (Marx 1852). This suggests, as Rothstein argues, that even though a single actor has the power to make executive decisions, that decision is influenced by many outside and societal factors together with historical legacy. The eternal question of how to approach this dilemma is stated by Etzioni as follows: “*To what degree can societal actors decide their course of action, and to what degree are they compelled to follow a course not chosen by them?*” (Etzioni 1968: 251).

Scholars are still struggling with this question of structure and agent and many are divided into either camp. Hence, much of the discourse in International Relations (hereafter IR) has evolved around agent versus structure. So why focus on an agent-based view in this research? Hudson and Vore state that a theoretical perspective has evolved within IR to address human behaviour and political choice. They argue further that this framework has evolved as a consequence of the Cold War and the new way to look at the world order after the Cold War era (Hudson & Vore 1995: 209). During the Cold War, IR lacked this perspective. Foreign Policy Analysis (hereafter FPA) provided a perspective shedding light on how political decisions are made, individually or in collectives. The previous focus on the state as an actor will include only noncomplex global trends and problems that affect the system as a whole (Hudson & Vore 1995: 210). Zakaria explains it as a “[...] *parsimony of systemic theory is useful for some purposes... [however, d]omestic politics explanations can be more useful in explaining events, trends, and politics that are too specific to be addressed by a grand theory of international politics*” (Zakaria 1992: 198). Furthermore, Michaels argues that the president is the only actor in the U.S. with somewhat control, even though he (to this day there has not yet been a woman president in the U.S.) himself is controlled by the senate and the house of representatives (Michaels 2017: 54). This indicates that the president has the last say on many issues and that the words of Harry S. Truman that “the buck stops here” still is true. The phrase means that it is the president that is mainly responsible for top decisions and must deal with whatever consequences may occur in the aftermath. In short, even though the president may be influenced by outside factors, either subconsciously or consciously, he bears the sole responsibility and has to justify his course of action. Therefore, the agent-specific view is of the essence when studying presidential leadership and its impact on environmental policy, because it is the factors leading up to the decision-making that are of importance when analysing leadership styles (Hermann et al. 2001: 85). Hence, I shall focus on the agent-specific sphere of social science.

The reason for using a theory (leadership theory) not particularly common within Peace and Conflict Studies is to look at other explanations for foreign policy. The same applies within FPA, where Gallagher and Allen argue that the main explanations for foreign policy issues in the U.S. have an emphasis on economic conditions, domestic institutions and relative strength of the U.S. When researching foreign policy, scholars have mainly focused on the nature of the decision-making process or the outcome of it. Further Gallagher and Allen argue that presidential

personality is much too often left out of the picture when researching foreign policy (Gallagher and Allen 2014: 1, 17). In earlier foreign policy studies that dealt with the complexities of the Cold War, researchers focused on international constraint such as that of international balance of power, international threats and military commitments. Whereas more recent studies have a larger focus of attention on domestic factors, mainly of economic and political nature. Again, the focus on individual leaders has been underrepresented in this field of research (Gallagher and Allen 2014: 2-3).

FPA derives from the broad sphere of IR and is not considered a single theory, but rather as a broad perspective (Kaarbo 2019: 29). Hudson argues that FPA in fact contributes to all areas within social science and policy fields and therefore is the foundation of all IR. Furthermore, she explains FPA as, “[...] *characterized by an actor-specific focus, based upon the argument that all that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision makers acting singly or in groups*” (Hudson 2005: 1). FPA includes both the process of decision-making and the outcome of decision-making and is usually limited to actors with authority to commit resources, such as presidents, which will be the focus in this study. This study will not include decision-making within groups. FPA is characterized by six basic features: 1) multifactorial – there are many factors influencing foreign policy decision-makers; 2) multilevel – explanatory variables from all levels of analysis is of interest, from the most micro to the most macro; 3) multi-/interdisciplinary – insight from many different disciplines such as psychology and economics among others; 4) integrative theoretical enterprise – includes information across levels of analysis and spanning numerous disciplines of human knowledge; 5) agent-oriented theory – states are abstractions and not agents and thus have no agency, only humans have, and it is their agency that is the source of all international politics and all change therein; 6) actor-specific – individuals might not be a representative of their whole state (or group), and therefore it is important to take into consideration the actor specifically (Hudson 2005: 2-3). With this stated we can conclude that there are many different factors affecting foreign policy, not least the governing actor him-/herself. What FPA gives us in this study is a perspective within IR that focuses on agent rather than structure.

I will take all characteristics described above into consideration in my research. As earlier stated, there are many factors affecting presidential decision-making and to analyse this I will look into the psychology of president Obama and Trump, using other scholarly disciplines to come to a conclusion by applying an actor-specific view and focusing on the individual rather than on the state.

2.2.1 Leadership Theory

According to Hermann et al. (2001) an examination of how ruling parties and governments make decisions of foreign policy suggests that authority is exercised by three types of decision units, namely leaders, groups and coalitions. Kenneth

Waltz presents these three decision units that influence FPA in his famous work, “Man, the State, and War”. In the first unit as Waltz explains it, the reason for war often lies in powerful individuals and human psychology (Waltz 1959: 16-41). Hermann et al. are looking into the leader’s decision unit to see what happens when the decision is up to one predominant leader. The discussion of Hermann et al. has evolved around leadership styles that are derived from extreme scores on three variables; responsiveness to constraints, openness to information and type of motivation. According to the leadership theory of Hermann et al. the leader in the study must be a “predominant leader”, such as a president or other individual with sufficient power. The main focus for Herman et al. is on leadership per se, understanding what leaders will do while forming policy, the nature of the impact on policy and the characteristics of the leader in question (Herman et al. 2001: 83-84). Hermann et al. focused in their article on extreme cases of leadership style, such as the leadership of former president Hafez al-Assad of Syria. However, they argue that the article has merely provided a foundation for future research within leadership theory and they further argue that the scope needs broadening (Hermann et al. 2001: 100, 120).

Nai et al. have conducted research within the psychological sphere on how to analyse personality traits. The “Big Five” model measures a person’s extraversion – a high score is usually associated with being social, assertive and active; agreeableness – people high in this trait are often described as sympathetic and warm; conscientiousness – a person that scores high is often perceived as responsible and achievement oriented; emotional stability – a person who scores high in this trait does not often have feelings such as anxiety and tension; and openness to experience – a high score is associated with eagerness towards challenges and new situations. The “Dark Triad” is a second model, that measures narcissism – people with a high score are prone to overconfidence and a reckless behaviour; psychopathy – a high score is associated with impulsiveness and insensitive social behaviour; and Machiavellianism – where a person who scores high tends to be manipulative and prone to fraud. These features can distinguish a person’s personality traits and can be of help when studying leadership (Nai et al. 2019: 612-613).

3 Theoretical framework

First of all, to be able to conduct this study I will need to pick leaders who are predominant. The president of the United States has a lot of influence as the head of state and must, therefore, be considered predominant (Herman et al. 2001: 83-84). According to Hermann et al. the predominant leader falls into one of four categories due to their responsiveness to constraints and openness to information. In addition, these four categories are divided into two subcategories each in relation to what motivates them – relationship focus or problem focus. This results in eight categories of leadership, which are the following: 1) expansionistic; 2) evangelistic; 3) incremental; 4) charismatic; 5) directive; 6) consultative; 7) reactive; and 8) accommodative, which you can see in table 1 (Herman et al. 2001: 95-96).

Responsive to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges Constraints	Closed to Information	<i>Expansionistic</i>	<i>Evangelistic</i>
(Becomes a crusader)		(Focus is on expanding one's power and influence)	(Focus is on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause)
Challenges Constraints	Open to Information	<i>Incremental</i>	<i>Charismatic</i>
(Is generally strategic)		(Focus is on maintaining one's maneuverability and flexibility while avoiding the obstacles that continually try to limit both)	(Focus is on achieving one's agenda by engaging others in the process and persuading them to act)
Respects Constraints	Closed to Information	<i>Directive</i>	<i>Consultative</i>
(Inclined towards pragmatism)		(Focus is on personally guiding policy along paths consistent with one's own views while still working within the norms and rules of one's current position)	(Focus is on monitoring that important others will support, or not actively oppose, what one wants to do in a particular situation)
Respects Constraints	Open to Information	<i>Reactive</i>	<i>Accommodative</i>
(Is usually opportunistic)		(Focus is on assessing what is possible in the current situation given the nature of the problem and considering what important constituencies will allow)	(Focus is on reconciling differences and building consensus, empowering others and sharing accountability in the process)

Table 1: leadership categories (Herman et al. 2001).

This thesis will derive from the eight leadership styles presented above and aims to apply these leadership styles to leaders not necessarily scoring extreme values. The theoretical framework will build upon three criteria that Hermann et al. characterises as; *“questions [that] represent different ways of being sensitive to the political context and are featured prominently in research on how leaders make decisions. The answers to these queries suggest the strategies and leadership styles predominant leaders are likely to use in addressing a foreign policy problem”* (Hermann et al. 2001: 90). The three criteria or questions are:

- 1) How leaders are likely to react to the political constraints they perceive in their environments
- 2) How open as opposed to selective they usually are in viewing incoming information
- 3) Whether they are more motivated to accomplish something or to build and maintain relationships (Hermann et al. 2001).

Hermann et al. have looked at past behaviour to explain current behaviour and predict future behaviour (Hermann et al. 2001), which might be a little bit problematic since we can be misled by considering only previous behaviour to understand current behaviour. We cannot assume that our leaders will be consistent and predictable in their behaviour. Therefore, I have decided to complete my theoretical framework with use of psychological models to determine what category of leadership each president belongs to and from there analyse their behaviour. Also, by using a specific tool that measures both presidents' personality traits under the same premises, we can hopefully get a more accurate result.

While researching this field I came across the Big Five model, which is not mentioned by Hermann et al. (2001) but that I find of use as a complement or help to their existing leadership theory. The Big Five is one of the most widely used inventories of personality traits and measures extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. Another commonly used model with populist leaders is the Dark Triad which measures narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism. The reading for these two models varies from 0 (very low) to 4 (very high) (Nai et al. 2019: 612, 621-622).

Therefore, to examine where each president stands in relation to criteria 1, 2 and, 3, I will seek guidance from the psychological sphere of study and mainly the Big Five model. By looking at how the two presidents score in this model we can determine their personality traits and get an indication of how they will respond to criteria 1, 2 and, 3.

With regard to these criteria we can gain the ability to ascertain leadership style and determine how sensitive or goal-driven the leader in question is likely to be to the political context. Leaders can be motivated by either internal factors, where they feel obliged to act by ideas and images they believe and advocate, or by outside factors, where they can seek a specific relationship with important others and be influenced to act based thereon. Thus, leaders are divided in motivation by focus on problem or focus on relationship building.

By looking at criteria 1, 2 and, 3 we can find out what kind of leader each president is and hopefully link the leadership type to its actions within environmental policy.

3.1 Operationalisation

The three criteria previously described in section 3 according to Hermann et al. (2001) and their theory of leadership style serve as the main three operationalisation factors;

- 1) Does the predominant leader in question challenge or respect constraints?
- 2) Is the predominant leader in question open to or closed to information?
- 3) Does the predominant leader in question have a problem- or relationship focus?

By answering these questions, we can determine what type of leaders Obama and Trump are. Once we know that we can analyse what impact it is likely to have on environmental policy and, in this case, the Paris Agreement. It is important to keep in mind that a specific type of leader does not automatically lead to a specific behaviour, but that it can be associated with a specific behaviour, explain behaviour in the past and in some cases help predict future behaviour (Hermann et al. 2001: 90).

These factors will be measured with help from the Big Five model, the Dark Triad model, and researchers' findings about their personality and behaviour. These factors are simple measures of leadership type that are easy to apply to all predominant leaders, which contributes to the internal validity of this study. If applied correctly conclusions can be drawn about what type of leader the person in question is. Hence, the factors contribute to making this research reproduceable for other researchers, contributing to its external validity and broaden the span for this type of research (Höglund & Öberg 2011: 97; Halperin & Heath 2017: 149, 174).

4 Research design & methodology

This study will be designed according to a comparative research design using a qualitative explanatory case study as method to explain how leaders, in this case former president Obama and current president Trump, characteristics (style and personality) affect environmental policy. To complete this study, I will first distinguish what kind of leader type Obama is and what leader type Trump is according to Margaret Hermann et al. (2001) and their leadership theory. Secondly, I will examine the actions taken and statements made by Obama and Trump in relation to the Paris Agreement and analyse how each leader type has impacted environmental policy and how it is performed.

4.1 Case Study

As stated above this study will build on two cases; the presidency of Obama and the presidency of Trump and their impact on the Paris Agreement. George and Bennett describe the art of defining a case as “an instance of a class of events”, where the word “class” stands for a phenomenon of scientific interest (George & Bennett 2004: 17-18). The phenomena of scientific interest in this study is how the personality of leaders affects environmental policy and, in this case, mainly the Paris Agreement. The use of case studies is a powerful tool in examining whether theories and concepts, applied to a specific case or context, works in a different context (Halperin & Heath 2017: 216). In this instance, the theory of Hermann et al. has initially been used on leaders that score extreme levels on each variable and their behaviour in a specific situation. In other words, it has not been used to describe in broad terms a person’s full personality or leadership type, but only the leadership type in a specific event (Hermann et al. 2001). I will seek to use the theory in a wider scope to allow for use of it in a policy analysis.

Environmental policy is relevant today because politicians have now woken up to the reality and urgency of climate change. A threshold has been crossed and many political leaders are now aware of the dooming consequences we stand in front of and realise the importance of action. The next step is to embed the issue in our institutions and involve the citizens to change everyday life. Some work has been done, for example the UN has taken on the role to organise meetings and agreements among nations to achieve climate goals. But there is a lot of work left to do as recognised by Giddens who states that “[they] have produced little in the way of concrete results so far. There has been far more talk than there has been

tangible action” (Giddens 2011: 18). This was written before the Paris Agreement was adopted, and therefore I find it interesting to analyse what type of impact leaders have had on that agreement.

The reason for choosing to analyse the leadership style of Obama and Trump as a case, is because despite “ruling” within a short time-period of one another, having the same climate threats and information at hand, they have taken two very different paths of action. Of course, this can partly be explained by looking at the differences in politics – democrat versus republican. However, climate change is not a left – right issue. It is a global issue that cuts across the left-right spectrum, and hence, a framework that works across political borders is the best alternative (Giddens 2011: 22).

4.2 Selection of material & demarcation

The materials used in this study are largely secondary data, picked out from academic journals. However, supplemented with primary data in the form of actual statements by each president from both social media and live speeches (Halperin & Heath 2017: 176, 180-181).

To build the foundation and theory on as close to objective facts and research as possible is critical for the legitimacy of this study. It is important to achieve coherence and transparency in order to minimise bias (Halperin & Heath 2017: 317). Therefore, I have decided to use academic research from several disciplines of study to build my theoretical framework. In the first part of my analysis – when categorising each president into a specific leadership type – I have used mainly previous research from the foreign policy sphere and psychological sphere, where scholars have or have attempted to classify Obama respectively Trump in the spectrum of the Big Five model. By using psychological analysis of each president and excluding biographies, personal statements and every-day journalism, we can create a more objective view of each president. However, I failed to find extensive research on the Big Five model applied to Obama’s personality traits. This resulted in a less detailed model than that of Trump and cannot give us any exact numbers. Hence, the model is not as accurate as the one of Trump, but it does fulfil its purpose in this study, where it in broad terms helps to indicate what leadership type Obama is.

Once they have been categorised, I will use statements from press conferences, tweets and speeches to analyse their behaviour in relation to the Paris Agreement and climate change overall. This because here we want to analyse their exact words and behaviour in the context of environmental policy.

Since there is no clear indication of what material to use when categorising leaders into leadership types by Hermann et al. (2001) it is up to each researcher to decide. This might complicate things, because if I were to use books and biographies of each president the result could easily become biased and misleading. There most likely is an agenda behind such books since they may be part of a political campaign or written as critique with no reliable sources behind the claims.

Finally, I have decided against a specific timeframe while carrying out my research on the categorisation of each president. However, the timeframe I have investigated within while collecting my data on their behaviour was initially intended to span from July 29th, 2016 – September 29th, 2016, one month before and after the signing of the Paris Agreement (Obamas statements); and May 1st, 2017 – July 1st, 2017, one month before and after the statement of withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (Trump’s statements). However, I found this timeframe too narrow and therefore decided to broaden it to a year before Obama and Trump, respectively, took office up until today.

5 Analysis

With regard to the three criteria presented under section 3 “Theoretical framework” above, I will analyse Obama’s and Trump’s leadership styles and their impact on environmental policy by looking at the international climate document the Paris Agreement.

5.1 Leadership style of President Obama

In 2009 during the economic crisis Obama painted a hopeful, optimistic picture of the future by ending one of his speeches saying “*If we confront without fear the challenges of our time and summon that enduring spirit of an America that does not quit, then someday years from now our children can tell their children that this was the time when we performed*” (Erisen & Villalobos 2014: 470). Obama’s rhetoric, after the Bush era, made a large effort to mute negative commentary through messages of conciliation, empathy, enthusiasm and hope for the future. This to gain support for his foreign policy agenda, which marked a significant change from that of former president Bush. Obama’s agenda included diplomatic problem solving, collaboration and outreach instead of the hard power his predecessor frequently utilized (Conley 2018: 3). Obama had a positive foreign policy discourse with willingness to make concessions to achieve his foreign policy goals (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 19, 32).

Obama received extensive media coverage during his presidential campaign in 2008 and early presidency. Some political analysts, opponents and even supporters perceived Obama’s personality to be elusive or even contradictory in some cases. However, the responses to his personality has in itself been contradictory. His personality has been described as *open* but also as *not listening* and *trustworthy* as well as *dishonest*. The list goes on and what we can understand from this is that the perceptions of his personality are clearly divided (Winter 2011: 1059-1060).

Obama’s personality traits have as of 2011 not been analysed through a systemic study like the Big Five model by Rubenzer and Faschingbauer (2004) and from my research I have yet to find this kind of study. However, Winter has attempted to interpret Obama’s personality traits based on previous research and has somewhat come up with a beginning to a Big Five model on Obama (Winter 2011: 1063). Hence, with the help from previous research I sought to place former president Obama in the right category in relation to the leadership theory of Hermann et al. (2001).

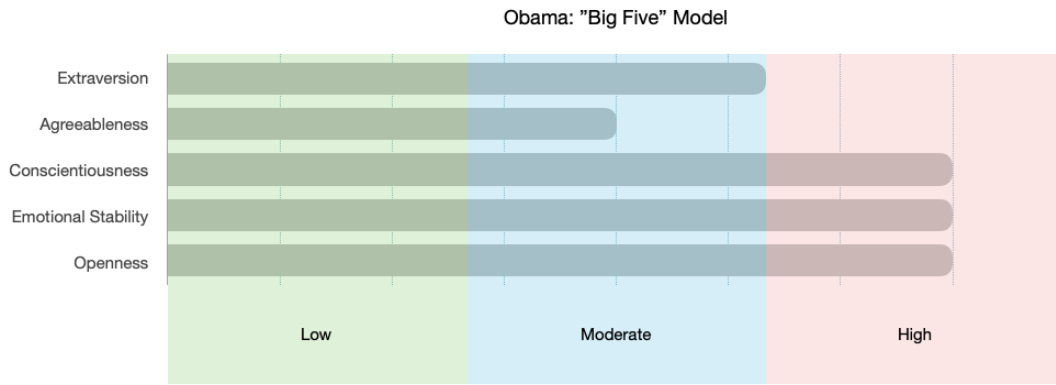


Table 2: classification of Obamas personality traits in the "Big Five" model (Winter 2011).

5.1.1 Constraints

Obama conveyed a passionate, positive, diplomacy-based rhetoric with the goal to bring back the public to the domain of gains. Although his hands were at times tied by Congress, global threats and constraints such as the humanitarian crisis in Syria, ISIS and the situation in Libya. These events caused him to sway towards using force rather than utilizing non-military actions. In these instances, he chose more risk-averse military methods, such as drone-strikes, to avoid a riskier move in regard to the army's security, such as ground-troops (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 28-29). According to the main scholars in prospect theory, people tend to be more risk-averse in the domain of gain, and more risk-taking in the domain of losses (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). This can explain some of the presidential decision-making process and the discourse to justify such actions (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 27). Further, Professor Robert Kuttner argues that *"the adjectives widely used to describe Obama are words like diffident, detached, aloof, professorial. Obama practices restraint to a fault. [...] Obama, despite his eloquence and capacity to motivate, seems to believe that power should be conserved, and presidential leadership reserved for emergencies"* (Kuttner 2011).

On the one hand, some might argue that not all of Obama's decisions were entirely his own, or that in some cases, like the closing of the Guantanamo facility, actions were not doable because of the democrats being outnumbered in Congress (Fisher 2018: 119). On the other hand, there are plenty of evidence supporting the fact that it was Obamas' leadership style that stood in the way in the case of the Guantanamo prison, and he compromised rather than challenged this constraint. Fisher argues that firstly, Obama acknowledged the obstacles in shaping policy but trusted that the contested actions he took as president would come to be more favourably viewed, since he actually moved forward. He did not manage to close the facility completely, but he reduced its population by 90 percent, which he himself considered as progress. Secondly, Fisher argues that Obama was timid and cautious, meaning that he was unwilling to go bold (Fisher 2018: 116). The nickname "No Drama Obama" was often used during his presidential campaign in 2008 and represents *calmness* as his most characteristic trait. This is further supported by Greenstein (2009) in his book "The presidential difference:

Leadership style from FDR to Barack Obama”. Winter recites Greenstein’s work while also stating that Obama has a “considerable emotional intelligence and a “first-rate temperament”” (Winter 2011: 1063-1064). The fact that Obama, according to the table above, scores high in emotional stability indicates that he makes rational and thought through decisions (Nai et al. 2019: 673).

From these observations made by scholars and reporters we can conclude that Obama was a leader who mostly respected constraints. However, there is a specific instance that might contradict this. Obama’s decision to adopt the Paris Agreement has been seen from two very different angles. Some argue that he breached the constitution by signing without the support from the U.S. Congress, while others argue that since the agreement was not legally binding no consent by Congress was required (Durney 2017: 234). I will come back to this particular issue later on, but since the majority of scholars and research carried out points to Obama leaning towards respecting constraints, I will for now conclude that he does so. After all, there is no rule without an exception, and this might be Obama’s exception if, indeed, consent by Congress was required.

5.1.2 Information

According to Winter, other scholars have brought up Obama’s openness towards others and desire for gathering counsel and information from both allies and opponents and debating over the alternatives and its expected consequences before making a decision. This indicates that he scores high on the level of openness in experience in the personality trait table the Big Five, see table 2.

Obama plans ahead with care and studies whatever field he has to tackle, indicating that he is open towards information and gladly receives guidance and advice. This leads into the next section where I will explain Obamas motivation, which is largely correlated with his openness to information, since he gathers information by building and maintaining relationships (Winter 2011: 1064).

This suggests that he can be *opportunistic*, because consensus-building and compromise are both relevant tools in achieving one’s goal (Hermann et al. 2001: 99-100). Opportunists are known as testers. They can act as naïve scientists whilst testing their hypothesis. The opportunistic leaders are the most sensitive to their political context, and knowledge about it is therefore crucial. They seek to define the problem and listen to important others before taking any positions. Inaction is preferred to action, if action has the potential of building opposition, as long as there is hope of building some sort of consensus between the parties. They make great brokers or diplomats as bargaining is one of their favourite tools of foreign policy (Herman et al. 2001: 96).

5.1.3 Motivation

The Norwegian Nobel Committee announced in 2009 that President Obama was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. One of the main arguments for this was “his efforts to strengthen international, multilateral diplomacy based on respect for international institutions [...]” (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 28-29). This suggests that Obama was motivated by building relationships through consensual multilateral agreements.

Obama pursued a positive-valence discourse, which complemented his foreign policy strategy of diplomatic problem solving. One of Obama’s goals was to soften Americans’ fear of Islam and bridge the gap between the United States and the Middle East. He sought to forge new collaborations with Arab countries based on common interests and mutual respect (Feste 2018: 54). Obama stated, with a compassionate rhetoric that Islam is not the enemy and should not be dismissed by saying that “[a]s extremists try to inspire acts of violence within our borders, we are responding with the strength of our communities, with respect for the rule of law, and with the conviction that American Muslims are a part of our American family” (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 34). Although, some might argue that his use of drone strikes that caused many deaths of innocent Muslims, indicates the contrary... (Feste 2018: 56).

As mentioned under section 5.1, Conley (2018) argued that Obama’s foreign policy goals consisted of diplomatic problem solving, collaboration and outreach. A study made by Washington Post and journalist Kim Soffen concludes that Obama reached a compromise on 30% of his 40 campaign pledges (27,2% promises were kept). This tells us that rather than focusing on his specific goal at the risk of his office he was willing to compromise for the country’s best (Soffen 2017; Hermann et al. 2001: 98) (see table 3). From these findings we can conclude that he has a relationship focus and, accordingly, that his leadership type is *accommodative*. What characterises Obama as an accommodative leadership type is his willingness to compromise and reach a consensus, accepted by most parties, and find common interests with parties to create a win-win situation (Hermann et al. 2001: 99-100).

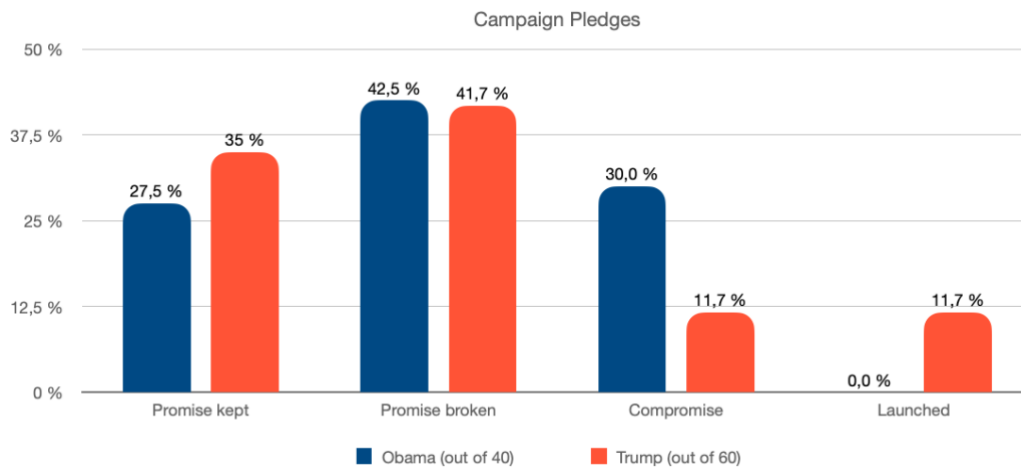


Table 3: campaign pledges given by Obama respectively Trump (Washington Post: Soffen 2017 & Kessler et al. 2020).

5.2 Leadership style of President Trump

By the end of Obama’s presidency, a new era emerged, with growing anxiety over the threat of terrorism and the complex situation in the Middle East. With manners, ways of expression and appearance that can easily alienate people, Trump became the next president of the United States, with a new and entirely different approach from that of Obama (Conley 2018: 3). Trump asserted that the U.S. was losing the war on terror and that he as president would “quickly and decisively bomb the hell out of ISIS” (Johnson 2015). The view Obama had of Islam as being a friend of America changed quickly once Trump came to office. Not only is he pursuing an anti-Muslimism discourse, but he has gone as far as announcing his plan of implementing a Muslim-ban (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 34). In his inaugural speech President Trump argued that for too many citizens reality is a struggle. He referred to children and mothers being trapped in poverty; abandoned factories scattered like tombstones over the nation; the educational system being flushed with cash without providing good knowledge for its students; and the drug-problem stealing lives. He portrayed America as a nation in despair and referred to it as “American carnage” (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 31).

Trump has been viewed by the public through a common narrative, describing him as vulgar, thin skinned, insecure, bad tempered, uninterested in details and holding a “grandiose sense of self and an exaggerated vision of himself and his accomplishments”, in other words narcissistic (Nai et al. 2019: 610). This narrative has been widely supported by periodicals and late-night shows on television, but it lacks scientific evidence and can therefore not be relied upon (Nai et al. 2019: 610). Nai et al. have compiled a Big Five and Dark Triad model of Trump’s personality traits based on research with the help from experts in the area, see table 4 (Nai et al. 2019). In the following sections I will seek to, with the help from previous research, place president Trump in the right category in relation to the leadership theory of Hermann et al. (2001).

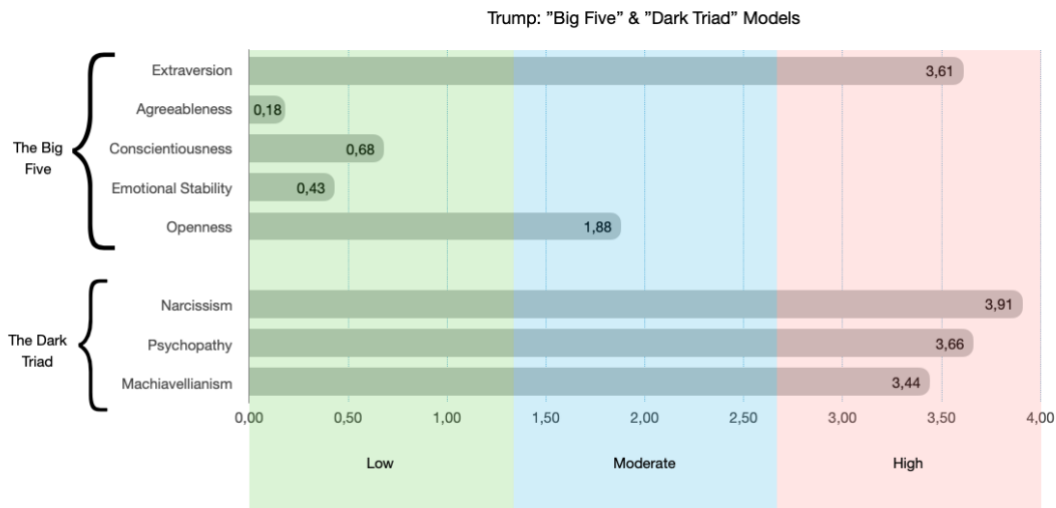


Table 4: classification of Trump's personality traits in the "Big Five" & "Dark Triad" model (Nai et al. 2019).

5.2.1 Constraints

Research shows that narcissism is strongly linked with presidential personality traits such as willingness to take risks, boldness and a wide imagination. Allies of president Trump have in fact complained about the president's impulsive behaviour and have compared the chaos in the White House to an "adult day care centre" during his first year in office (Da Vinha 2019: 2). By looking at table 4 we see that Trump scores high in narcissism (3,91). Narcissism is also linked to the likelihood of permitting immoral behaviour. This in turn poses a higher risk of resulting in impeachment (Nai et al. 2019: 624, 637), which Trump recently faced (House of Representatives / Report of the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives 2019). He thinks highly of himself as he has an "overarching confidence that he could successfully run the country stems from his conviction that there are no significant differences between running a private corporation and the executive branch of government" (Da Vinha 2019: 8). He further calls previous presidents incompetent people and that he is a better manager himself (Da Vinha 2019: 8). This suggests, according to the theory of Hermann et al. (2001), that Trump is more likely to challenge constraints than to respect them. This because his narcissistic traits might influence him to take greater risks instead of respecting the challenges and making a more thought through decision. Furthermore, he also scores low in emotional stability which drives him to make impulsive decisions and prefer unilateralism over multilateralism and tends to be anti-globalism (Nai et al. 2019: 673).

5.2.2 Information

Trump is known for relying on informal and unconventional sources of information (Da Vinha 2019: 17), and Henry Kissinger reminds us that "[p]residents listen to advisers whose views they think they need, not to those who insist on a hearing

because of the organization chart” (Kissinger 1979: 31). This means that the president can choose whose advice he wants to listen to. For instance, in the case of the “Iran Agreement”, members of his national security team tried to convince him to maintain the deal, however, Trump had already received information that supported his view and therefore did not budge (Da Vinha 2019: 17). Based on this and the fact that he does challenge constraints we can conclude that according to the theory of Hermann et al Trump has a tendency to become a *crusader*. Crusaders are also referred to as ‘cognitive misers’ and are the least sensitive of the four to the political context in which they find themselves. They are characterized by being proactive, advocating for a position and of course, crusading. They can be very convincing of what they want and are effective in mobilizing others to action. However, they don’t seem to have the patience to wait for “the right timing” (Hermann et al. 2001: 96).

5.2.3 Motivation

President Trump sought to withdraw the U.S. from multilateral accords on trade and replace them with bilateral agreements (Conley 2018: 13). Furthermore, he initiated “the Muslim ban” which would keep ‘unwanted’ Muslims out of the country by stating, “[u]ntil we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in jihad and have no sense of reason or respect for human life”. Even though the order was blocked, many have expressed their concern. The Republican Senator John McCain, who himself ran for president against Obama in 2008, described this ban as a confused process that will only fuel ISIS propaganda. In other words, he among others have expressed concern and doubt regarding Trump’s view of Muslims (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 34-35). According to the theory of Hermann et al. (2001), *crusaders* are known to have a lack of sensitivity. Trump scored high on psychopathy which is described as a “tendency to show a lack of remorse and to display callousness and insensitivity” (Nai et al. 2019: 623).

According to table 4 Trump scores low on agreeableness. This data is clearly supported by examples of personal attacks on opponents, both privately and in a work-environment. In addition, he is considered quarrelsome, which would make him more prone to focus on his goal rather than building and maintaining relationships (Nai et al. 2019: 618, 621). Furthermore, a lack of courtesy, patience and will to compromise are presidential traits that have shown to be correlated with being more likely to use veto rights and being overruled by vetoes and having political and judicial nominees rejected. Despite a Republican majority in Congress, many nominations of Trump’s Cabinet members have been heavily debated and criticized (Nai et al. 2019: 637).

In table 3 we can see that Trump does not tend to compromise on his campaign pledges (at least not in comparison to Obama). He either goes through with it or fails (Kessler et al. 2020). However, Trump has not yet finished his mandate-period

and the results can therefore not be interpreted as completely accurate, since he still has time to change the outcome on these pledges. Although, it does show evidence of Trump being more goal oriented than relationship oriented, and in turn proves that Trump's main motivation is on problem solving to reach his goal and therefore his leadership type is *expansionistic*. His leadership type explains why he ignores people who do not support his cause. An expansionistic leader identifies with their goal completely and believes that his/her beliefs are the right ones and those who disagree are seen as traitors. They are also fairly consistent and predictable in their behaviour (Hermann et al. 2001: 98).

In the next section I will analyse the impact of each president's leadership style on environmental policy by looking at how they have acted in regard to the Paris Agreement.

5.3 Impact on environmental policy: The Paris Agreement

Now that we have concluded that Obama most likely is an accommodate leader type and Trump is an expansionistic leader type, we can analyse how these two types affect environmental policy. Or, if you like, how different actions within environmental policy can be described and/or explained with the help from these two categories.

The Paris Agreement was adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015 during COP-21 in Paris. The participating parties agreed to keep the global average temperature increase well below 2.0 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Developed countries would take a greater role by helping developing countries with the transition to renewable energy and to meet the goals of the treaty (Blau 2017: ix).

Judith Blau defines the Paris Agreement as "*the international treaty that binds states to make the transition from fossil fuels [...] to renewable energy and establishes guidelines for rich countries [...] to aid poor countries acquire technologies for renewable energy, notably solar, wind, and tidal technologies*" (Blau 2017: vii). Whether the Paris Agreement is binding or not has been debated (United States District Court for the District of Columbia / Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief 2019; Kienast 2015). Nowhere does the document clearly state whether it is legally binding or not. However, it does include the word "shall" 117 times which indicates that the things mentioned in connection to that word are in fact binding (United Nations / Framework Convention on Climate Change 2015). I will get back to this dilemma later on in this study.

The only means for a party to exit the Paris Agreement is by serving a withdrawal notice after three years from the effective date of the agreement. In case of such notice, the withdrawal will not take effect until at least one year after the withdrawal notice was submitted (United Nations / Framework Convention on Climate Change 2015: 25; Blau 2017: viii). Accordingly, if the U.S. maintains its

decision to withdraw, this will happen on November 4th, 2020 at the earliest (the day after the next presidential election).

5.3.1 Signing of the Paris Agreement

President Obama signed the Paris Agreement on August 29th, 2016 and it entered into force on November 4th, 2016 (Blau 2017: 2; Durney 2017: 234). When signing the agreement Obama did not seek approval from the U.S. Congress. Instead he invoked his executive powers to make a foreign policy decision and signed the Paris Agreement. Whether the signing was legitimate or not has been debated (United States District Court for the District of Columbia / Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief 2019; Kienast 2015) and is of some importance to this study. Not because we are interested in looking at the laws and regulations behind the document but interested in looking into Obamas actions and whether he challenged this constraint or respected it. In paragraph 5.1.1 we came to the conclusion, based on other scholars' research, that Obama mainly respects constraints. However, this particular event brings me to question this. Hence, it is important to know if he breached the constitution or if he acted within its boundaries.

In contrast to Blau, Jessica Durney argues that the agreement presents itself as “a non-binding international agreement akin to political commitment” (Durney 2017: 238), and that “the agreement creates no new obligations that the UNFCCC [the mother treaty of the Paris Agreement,] does not already require” (Durney 2017: 240). According to Durney's findings, the Paris Agreement is a non-binding political commitment, which means that former president Obama had the right to sign it without approval from Congress and Trump has the right to exit on the same premises (Durney 2017).

However, even though Obama might not have needed consent from the U.S. Congress, the fact that the issue was diffuse and the knowledge of whether the document was binding or not was not clear enough, states that not seeking approval can be quite controversial (Kienast 2015: 314) and therefore can be seen as a challenge towards that particular constraint. This makes us question Obama's accommodative leadership type and suspect that he in this particular instant acted out of the boundaries for an accommodative leader.

On the 30th of November, 2015, during the COP-21 meeting in Paris Obama said; “*I've come here personally as the leader of the world's largest economy and the second largest emitter, to say that the United States of America not only recognizes our role in creating this problem, we embrace our responsibility to do something about it*” (Obama 2015). He acknowledges the problem that the U.S. is part of fuelling global warming and takes (as the leader of the U.S.) responsibility for doing something about it. Although, this is not only a matter of taking care of the environment for the sake of its beauty or function. It is in fact a national security issue as well.

During a two-month period, spanning between July 29th, 2016 – September 29th, 2016, one month before and after the signing of the Paris Agreement Obama tweeted about the Paris Agreement only twice (@BarackObama 2016; @POTUS44

2016). The reason for this could be that he did not find it necessary to spend resources on this particular issue, due to the fact that climate change is well known. According to Obama's charismatic leadership type, he probably felt that he did not need to justify his actions towards his followers on twitter, since they most likely already agreed with his actions.

In the documentary "Before the Flood" (released the same year Obama signed the Paris Agreement), Obama comments regarding sea level rise that "*if they [the people living on the coast] start moving, then you start seeing scarce resources, the subject to competition between populations. This is the reason why the Pentagon has said [that] this is a national security issue; this isn't just an environmental issue. There's a national security issue [...] in addition to just the sadness that I would feel if my kids can never see a glacier the way I saw when I went up to Alaska. Yeah... that's the romantic side of me [...]. Even if you were unsentimental about that in very hard-headed terms you've got to worry about the national security implications of this and the capacity for the existing world order as we understand it to survive the kinds of strains that the scientists are predicting with that action. This is why we have to take action now*" (Obama 2016). In this statement Obama shows that he has embraced the information on climate change and is ready to act accordingly. He also brings up reasons for why we should care about the environment and why it is critical – from different points of view. He presents the national security interest and also becomes personal while talking about growing up and witnessing glaciers. This way people might find a common interest in something that he has said; either the melting glaciers or how sad it is that their children will not grow up in the same environment the parents did – or the fact that there is an occurring national security threat that must be dealt with.

Obama almost sounds nostalgic in the documentary. It is hard to say if it is genuine or designed to increase interest and boost selling figures. But either way, it probably works! This can be seen from the accommodative point of view with being open to all views and trying to find something that motivates each person to do and feel something on this matter, but we can also analyse this as a more strategic move from his side to involve others in his agenda and to persuade them to act (Obama 2016). He is passionate when he talks about this issue, and at the same time, reaching out his hands to different groups and opinions.

What we have learned from his initial leadership type is that an accommodative leader is easily influenced by the political winds and cues in the current situation, which means that he is *sensitive* to the surroundings. This can explain Obama's way of using his personal feelings in explaining what we are losing because of climate change. He uses his sensibility to affect other individuals. However, those who will be affected are most likely also sensitive people in the sense that they are open to information and can easily relate or feel something from listening to stories like the one Obama told about the glaciers (Hermann et al. 2001: 99-100). On the other hand, it might be a way of pursuing his agenda, and this is just a step to achieve his goal (Hermann et al. 2001: 98). Further, we know that the opinion of others matter to the accommodative leader and therefore Obama tries to include all types of points of view by bringing up different areas that are affected by climate change, so that

everyone can find something that they can either relate to or find to be an important issue to handle – like national security (Hermann et al. 2001: 99-100; Obama 2016).

Obamas behaviour in relation to the Paris Agreement is hard to analyse from a specific leadership style, since we see tendencies of sides other than the accommodative one.

If we had come to the conclusion that Obama in fact does not respect constraints, as can be argued in the case of signing the Paris Agreement, his leadership style would be different. He would be seen as a *charismatic* leader type with a tendency of being *strategic*. For that leadership type timing would be essential and resources would not be spent unless required to achieve a desired result to their gain. It does indeed have some similarities with what we stated under paragraph 5.1.1, that Obama chose less risky military alternatives when intervention was needed and used drones instead of ground troops, which can be seen as a strategic move (Sirin & Villalobos 2018: 28-29). Also, Professor Kuttner (2011) said about Obama, that he seems to believe that presidential power should be conserved and reserved for emergencies. As a strategic leader he knows what he wants and uses information to seek the means to reach that goal. The behaviour of strategic leaders may seem unpredictable, as they walk a fine line between actions that move them toward their goals while avoiding mistakes, failures and disasters (Hermann 2001: 96-97). So, even if the other two variables seem to be correct for Obama (information and motivation), the first one (constraints) determines that instead of being *accommodative* he might in fact be a *charismatic* leadership type who accepts that the general view on power and authority can vary from person to person and are mindful of rallying support from important institutions and groups for his/her actions including foreign policy activities. Charismatic leaders are looking for possibilities to build their public image, especially with important groups. They do not shy away from using divisionary manoeuvres to maintain and increase support and approval rating. They are in favour of strategic and deliberative actions and prevailing circumstances will have great influence on the activities and strategies to reach a certain goal. The charismatic leader has a clear and well-defined agenda. Whether or not to pursue it depends on if the current situation makes it possible and the likelihood of success (Hermann et al. 2001: 98).

Hence, the impact of Obama's leadership type on environmental policy is difficult to determine since he is hard to pinpoint in a single specific category. However, we can say that according to both the accommodative- and charismatic leadership type, he would most likely follow the scientists and tailor his actions according to the prevailing scientific view on climate change.

5.3.2 Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement

On June 1st in 2017 Trump announced that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris Agreement with the motivation that it has a negative impact on the U.S. economy and employment rate (Hongyuan 2018: 282; Durney 2017: 234). The one-year process of withdrawing from the agreement started on November 4th, 2019 in accordance to the terms of the agreement (Pompeo 2018).

Within a period of one month before and one month after Trump's statement of the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, he did not address the matter on twitter except by giving his followers prior notice of when he was going to announce the withdrawal. Instead, his twitter-feed reveals that a lot of focus during this time-period (May 1st, 2017 – July 1st, 2017) was on the failure of Obama Care and the problem with Fake News. In fact, he tweeted negatively about Obama Care 27 times and addressed the problem of Fake News 30 times (almost every other day), while mentioning the Paris Agreement only 6 times during this time-period (@realDonaldTrump 2017; @POTUS 2017). This does not tell us much about Trump's behaviour in relation to the Paris Agreement, except that other issues seem to have taken up a larger focus of the president at that time. However, his official statement of the withdrawal held in the Rose Garden at the White House on the 1st of June can tell us something about his behaviour in this context. He said "*In order to fulfil my solemn duty to protect America and its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, but begin negotiations to re-enter either the Paris Accord or in a really entirely new transaction when terms that are fair to the United States, its business, its workers, its people, its taxpayers. So, we're getting out, but we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair and if we can, that's great, and if we can't that's fine*" (Trump 2017a).

He continued by saying that the Paris Agreement is an example of an agreement that does nothing but benefit other countries while leaving the U.S. at a disadvantage. In his speech there is a strong emphasis on the harm the Paris Agreement has caused the workers and taxpayers of the U.S. and how unfair it is. He continued; "*Not only does this deal subject our citizens to harsh economic restrictions, it fails to live up to our environmental ideals. As someone who cares deeply about the environment, which I do, I cannot in good conscience support a deal that punishes the U.S., which is what it does*" (Trump 2017a). With this statement he also claimed that the Paris Agreement does not help to cure the climate crisis. In addition, he mentioned numerous times that it in fact "handicaps the U.S. economy" and makes the workers and taxpayers suffer unfairly since other countries are the main polluters. While stating this he presented no evidence to support his claims. He also said "*At what point do they start laughing at us? We don't want other leaders and other countries laughing at us anymore, and they won't be*" (Trump 2017a). This builds up a feeling or strengthens a feeling that is already there of 'America against the world' and further implies a threat that it is the U.S. against everyone else – or more like – everyone else against the U.S. Trump speaks as if he and the "mother country" are supposed to be the solution to every problem – and that other states mostly are in the way of that and the growth of the "Great America" ... (Trump 2017a). He states "*we'll be the cleanest, we're going to have the cleanest water, we will be environmentally friendly, but we're not going to put our businesses out of work, we're not going to lose our jobs, we're going to grow, we're going to grow rapidly*".

President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement (Trump 2017a; Pompeo 2019) can be seen as a lack of openness to information. President Trump fails to recognise the threats the whole world is facing – climate change (Zhang et al. 2017: 213-214). Or simply putting other interests before the climate,

like the economy. However, he fails to recognize that without a healthy planet there can be no economy. This speech confirms his leadership type and shows us what the consequences are, when having a leader with these traits and facing these problems. Not all expansionists are per se bad leaders, but in this particular context with these threats facing the U.S., not listening to an overwhelming majority of scientists can be fatal.

If we broaden our timespan and look at statements made before and after May 1st and July 1st, 2017, we can see that Trump's attitude towards climate change and the Paris Agreement were more extreme prior to his announcement of the U.S.' withdrawal. In 2015 he claimed global warming to be a "hoax" and that it's a "money-making industry" (Trump 2017b). To be fair, this was said before he was elected president. But he has as of today still not retracted what he said in 2015 on global warming being a hoax. However, in 2018 he said that "I'm not denying climate change, but it could very well go back" and on the question why he does not listen to the scientists he responds; "you'd have to show me the scientists because they have a very big political agenda" (Trump 2018).

Greta Thunberg for one said in an interview on the Ellen DeGeneres Show that "*I don't understand why I would [meet with the president]. I don't see what I could tell him that he hasn't already heard. I and just think it would be a waste of time really*" (Thunberg 2019). According to his leadership type we would not expect Trump to listen to what Thunberg has to say to him. For one, because he is not open to information and secondly, he believes only in his cause and does not care about the opinion of others (Hermann et al. 2001: 98). Hence, Thunberg is completely right. He has all the information at hand, but because of his personality traits and leadership type he is not able to take them in and act accordingly.

Persons with a combination of not respecting constraints, not being open to information and not being willing to build relationships as a tool of achieving ones' agenda cannot work well together with people who do not understand the importance of their concern. In their world view their point of view should prevail because they know what is best for all involved. Those who disagree are considered traitors. The main traitors to Trump are probably the CNN, ABC, etc... The news he considers fake news because they do not broadcast from his point of view and questions his intelligence (Hermann et al. 2001: 98).

The impact Trump's leadership type has on environmental policy will therefore most likely not change. He will continue to promote the economy and if he cannot find anything supporting his initial agenda in the Paris Agreement, he will withdraw (as according to his plans). This also means that a new form of agreement as he has mentioned, will not happen if it does not put *America First*.

6 Discussion

We have concluded that Trump is an expansionistic leadership type and Obama most likely an accommodative one, with the possible exception of his behaviour when signing the Paris Agreement, where we see tendencies of a charismatic leader. What does this tell us about environmental policy? Can one person really change policy?

What we have seen in the previous sections is that leaders do indeed have an impact on environmental policy and that their leadership style plays a role in *how* it will have an impact. The leadership style alone cannot tell us what kind of impact a president will have on policy, but it can indicate how they will carry out their already existing goals and desires. So, to determine impact, we need to know two things: existing perceptions and leadership type. We have learned that categorising a president in a leadership type can be tricky. In the case of Obama, I first came to the conclusion that he is an accommodative leader, but when analysing his behaviour in relation to the Paris Agreement, I found tendencies of a charismatic leader. I believe that the main issue here is that Obama is not in Hermann et al.'s (2001) definition of a leader that scores extreme values, and therefore might be more difficult to place. Further, I mentioned that I had not found an extensive study of his psychology and personality traits in a Big Five model. Even, though I found an attempt to this kind of study it could not give me any exact numbers and could present his personality only in broad terms. The reason for not having found any extensive research might lie in the fact that Obama in comparison to Trump is considered a quite neutral leader. This does not in any way have to mean that he in fact is a neutral leader, but since many might have that perception (even in the academic world) people tend to prefer studies of a more extreme and *interesting* leader (at least from a research and public interest point of view), such as Trump.

Therefore, my initial thought of using the theory of Hermann et al. (2001) to explain the general leadership type of a leader could appear simplistic, but it is at least a start. A theory shall help to generalise complicated matters, and if it does not, it is flawed. I am certainly not dismissing the theory as useless, but rather implicating that more research needs to be brought out to make it more useful in general terms and of whole leadership types (not just in a specific context). With access to more research on Obama's personality based on psychology methods this study would have been easier to bring out and become more accurate.

Regardless of what leadership type Obama really is – accommodative or charismatic – we can know that with him in charge environmental policy will most likely follow the way of science, and maybe at the expense of the economy. If he is an accommodative leader, he will achieve this by building consensus, and if he is a charismatic leader, he will do so by engaging others. They do not differ from one another that much, so on this particular field (environmental policy), whether he is

an accommodative one or a charismatic one does not have a great importance on the end result. Indeed, he might have been *influenced* to go through with the signing as an accommodative leader and he did in fact not challenge that constraint because people do in fact rely on leaders to take charge on this matter.

As noted, while it is more difficult to analyse Obama's leadership type in relation to the Paris Agreement since we see tendencies from two types, Trump is easier since he scores extreme values on all variables. It is easy to determine what category Trump belongs to.

An expansionist is not under any political winds' influence. If Trump were, then he would have an easier time adjusting to science about climate change and being able to adjust his and the country's actions accordingly. As an expansionist, not much will make him change his mind, so bombing him with evidence and statements from scientists saying that climate change is real will not have a large effect on him. Hermann et al. (2001) have not given any advice on how to influence an expansionist, but my suspicion tells me that it is almost impossible if it does not correlate with gaining on a different matter that lies close to heart. For example; say that Trump found a way to create lots of new jobs in the renewable energy sector, then he would be able to change his agenda towards a more environmentally friendly one, without having to admit that climate change is a huge threat. He can simply say that this is a way to create new jobs and support the economy. It is kind of interesting to see how we can learn to tackle different leaders and their agenda by knowing how to approach their specific leadership type. More research needs to be done on how to best influence each type but concluding that each type needs to be approached with new and tailor-made ways is a step in the right direction.

As long as an expansionistic leader like Trump is president of the U.S. the environment is not likely to be prioritised. However, if there was an expansionistic leader who firmly believed in climate change and was passionate about it, he or she would be pushing that agenda just like Trump pushes the importance of jobs and a wealthy America. The problem with that, however, might be that this person would not be as receptive to new and updating information on the environment and moving from step to step might become an obstacle since climate change is always changing and information needs to be updated on a regular basis so that we can act accordingly. An expansionistic leader would according to the leadership theory of Hermann et al. (2001) have difficulties with this constant flow of new information. However, if this information supports the leader's initial agenda there might not be a problem at all. Here is where more research is needed. So that we easier can understand our leaders and have the largest impact possible on our countries' policies. And yes, this might apply only to democracies, since general public's impact on dictatorships is a whole new science not included in this study.

6.1 Concluding remarks

From this study we can conclude that leadership style does have an impact on environmental policy, which has been illustrated with the case of Trump and Obama in relation to the Paris Agreement. Even though it was difficult to analyse Obama's impact according to a specific leadership type, we could see that both the accommodative leadership type and the charismatic one played a role in the Paris Agreement.

However, leadership style alone does not tell us what decisions will be made. We have to take into consideration the views and perceptions that the presidents already have. What are their main drivers? What do they want to accomplish? How do they prioritise?

The leadership type can tell us how they will act based on their view of the world. The leadership type can mainly be seen as a tool to tell us what direction a leader is likely to take. Will they do so by persuading others of their cause, or by befriending and building relationships – or do they simply not care and try to get their will through by the use of force, or are they strategic and have a plan behind every move? The questions are endless and here the leadership type can help us place a leader in a specific category by studying their psychology.

The combination of Trump's leadership style and his perceptions of the world indicates that environmental policy will not be prioritised if he cannot gain something supporting his agenda. Whereas the combination of Obama's world view and the accommodative leadership style tells us that he would pursue the battle against climate change through building relationships and forming consensus – or in the case of his charismatic side which we have witnessed in the example of the Paris Agreement – he would pursue this battle, but with a rhetoric persuading others to act and unify the people under his agenda. They both have the same outcome when it comes to what will become of environmental policy – it will be pursued but the way this will happen, we can only know for sure by being certain of Obama's leadership type.

So, to come back to what Ban Ki-moon said in 2014, climate change is a global threat and organisations such as the UN are trying to battle it with agreements such as that of Paris. But to really embrace these golden opportunities, we must understand what leaders we elect and by learning their leadership type find the right tools to have an impact on how environmental policy is formed and brought out.

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