

'The London School of Economics and Political Science

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Learning in International Negotiations

The strategic use of lessons in post-agreement climate finance politics

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis examines the strategic use of lessons drawn from past experiences during post-agreement climate finance negotiations. Existing theories and empirical studies of learning and lesson-drawing tend to disregard aspects of political contestation and power. Their research agenda aims to find alternative explanations for policy change, which creates a blind spot for learning in politically charged contexts. Approaches that do take power seriously emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons. This thesis proposes a different mechanism. In its theoretical framework, it demonstrates how lesson-drawing and power can be reconciled within arguing-and-bargaining theory, which requires rethinking how lessons fit into the framework conceptually.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF), an institution under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, serves as a case study. Formally established in 2010, the GCF allocates funding for climate adaptation and mitigation measures in developing countries. While envisioned to induce a paradigm shift in global economic development pathways, it is not the first of its kind. Other development and climate finance institutions are frequently referenced during the negotiations at the Fund.

Based on an in-depth qualitative analysis of video recordings of four negotiation rounds, the thesis finds that post-agreement climate negotiations, while equally politically charged, take place under different circumstances than the annual global climate summits. The fact that an initial agreement has already been signed preempts effective bargaining using conventional tactics, such as threat of withdrawal, as those would lack the necessary credibility. In this light, delegates adjust the mode of negotiating, but without changing the underlying logic of interaction. On the contrary, lesson-drawing not only reflects that adjustment, but becomes itself a vehicle for strategic action. These findings have further implications for larger debates in International Relations, particularly regarding the role of structural assets in negotiations.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
BM	Board member
BMF	Business Model Framework
CAF	Corporación Andina de Fomento
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CDKN	Climate & Development Knowledge Network
CO₂	Carbon dioxide
COP	Conference of the Parties
cp.	compare
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
e.g.	exempli gratia
et al.	et alii
etc.	et cetera
EU	European Union
Fig.	Figure
FP	Funding proposal
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GB	Gigabyte
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HBS	Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung
HSBC	Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
ibid.	ibidem
IDA	International Development Association
i.e.	id est
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ID	Identification number
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
ITAP	Independent Technical Advisory Panel
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LDC	Least developed countries

LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MDB	Multilateral development bank
n.d.	no date
NDA	National Designated Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	[United Nations] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official development assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PDF	Portable Document Format
PhD	Philosophiae Doctor
PSAG	Private Sector Advisory Group
PSF	Private Sector Facility
PSO	Private sector organizations
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SIDS	Small island developing state
SRI	Socially responsible investment
Tab.	Table
TC	Transitional Committee
UK	United Kingdom [of Great Britain and Northern Ireland]
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States [of America]
USA	United States of America
USD	United States dollar
VLC	Video Local-area-network Client
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZIB	Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen

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1 Introduction

The Green Climate Fund was founded to achieve nothing less than a paradigm shift in global economic development. A financial mechanism under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹, it supports developing countries in their efforts to mitigate global warming and adapt to its effects, shifting development pathways to more sustainable and resilient trajectories. However, while envisioned to be transformational, the Green Climate Fund² is not the first of its kind. The Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol, or the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds, for example, are existing climate finance institutions with comparable instruments, procedures, and objectives. Experiences from these institutions provide opportunities to draw lessons for the GCF's own institutional design and operational mechanisms. Observers have emphasised the importance of learning if the GCF is to achieve its aims. In the negotiations setting up the Fund, delegates frequently drew lessons from other institutions. And in political science, there is a wide literature on how learning can improve policy outcomes. It would seem, at first glance, that the Green Climate Fund has much to learn from past experiences.

Yet, the linkages between learning and achieving the Fund's objectives are not as straightforward as it may seem. There is an ambiguity and contentiousness surrounding the creation of the GCF that extends into the way it learns as an institution. The Green Climate Fund was born out of the failure that was the 15th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) in Copenhagen in 2009. In an effort to produce at least some tangible outcome, developed countries promised to mobilise USD 100 billion per year by 2020 in climate finance. The Green Climate Fund, formally established one year later, was to serve as a major funding channel in this endeavour. To avoid deadlock over details, the GCF was given a mission that was as ambitious as it was vague: Its task is to “promote the paradigm shift towards low emission and climate-resilient development pathways” (UNFCCC 2011a: I.2). But what would that shift actually look like? What would define the new pathways? And by what means exactly should the shift be promoted? From these fundamental questions, further, more concrete and technical questions arise: To what extent should funding stem from public or private sources? How should the Fund prioritise certain financial instruments or types of climate action over others? The highly consequential

¹ The UNFCCC is a major international environmental treaty adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. See Bodansky (1993) for an early or Yamin & Depledge (2004), Gupta (2010), and Vogler (2016: 35–59) for more recent discussions.

² Hereinafter also referred to as the GCF or simply the Fund

decisions about these kinds of questions were discussed during the post-agreement negotiations at the Green Climate Fund's Board. The real political struggle is about those technical details because they determine how the GCF's goals are to be operationalised. Tasked with bringing the Fund into operation, the Board was caught up in political contentions. When objectives are vague and contestation is high, learning cannot be seen as an apolitical process of technical optimisation because technical optimisation would require concrete agreed-upon objectives that can be worked towards. In addition, creating an international climate fund means, by definition, negotiating redistributive mechanisms, rather than regulatory ones. This further decreases the chances of learning for purely technical purposes because the material interests of parties would get in the way. Learning does not transcend politics.

Why, then, do actors draw lessons in international post-agreement negotiations? This is the question this thesis seeks to answer. Note that the aim is not to explain a contradiction between expectation and observation. Here, the two are not contradictory: The circumstances and characteristics of the GCF Board meetings as well as the way these meetings actually played out both point to strong political dissensions embedded within processes of technical deliberation. Instead, the motivation for this research project stems from a contradiction between observations and the theoretical toolkit to explain them – a frustration with the functionalist and constructivist notions dominating the learning literature. The aim of the thesis is to provide a better understanding of the characteristics of lesson-drawing as a social phenomenon. How can learning in international post-agreement negotiations be conceptualised? By extension, the thesis tackles important questions at the intersection between learning and power in international negotiations. How do negotiators creating a new international institution use the experiences from existing institutions? What is the explanatory mechanism through which the lessons turn into policy? Whose lessons win out over those of others when there is no single agreed lesson to be drawn? How does learning from past experience relate to the ambition of creating a transformative institution?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to reconceptualise learning in theoretical terms. As will be elaborated in detail in the theory chapter, theories of learning in the social sciences can be divided into two main strands. The first strand finds learning to be an explanatory factor for policy change beyond power. This view, however, creates a blind spot for learning in politically charged contexts like the GCF negotiations. This thesis argues against these functionalist notions often found in scholarship on learning and global

environmental politics. The second strand of learning theories does take power seriously. It emphasises the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons, usually taking a constructivist perspective in terms of International Relations³ theory. However, this thesis proposes a different explanatory mechanism for two reasons. First, constructivist approaches make certain assumptions about the malleability of political positions that do not hold in post-agreement climate negotiations. Second, adopting a constructivist perspective changes the entire ontological paradigm. This thesis aims to demonstrate that learning and power can be reconciled without abandoning a rationalist view. To achieve this, the thesis develops a theoretical framework based on arguing-and-bargaining theory, which will require rethinking how lessons fit into this theory conceptually.

This introductory chapter consists of four parts. Section 1.1 elaborates on the research question and explains the considerations behind it in greater detail – in particular with regard to the case of the Green Climate Fund and the extent to which conventional learning theories apply to it. Section 1.2 reviews existing empirical work on learning in international negotiations. Section 1.3 highlights the contributions to the academic literature this dissertation seeks to make. Finally, Section 1.4 gives an overview of the dissertation's structure.

1.1 The research question

This section elaborates on the research question. It identifies more thoroughly the gap in the academic literature that this thesis seeks to close. To this end, the section first examines the context for learning in the GCF. It then explains why existing approaches fail to fully capture learning in such contexts.

First and foremost, it is necessary to provide some background with regard to international climate finance and the Green Climate Fund.⁴ Responding to anthropogenic climate change is costly. Although, as the Stern Review famously concluded, these costs are likely to be considerably lower than the macroeconomic costs of inaction (Stern 2007: XV), mitigation and adaptation measures require significant up-front investments. At the same time, the economic capacities to make these investments, local needs for adaptation, and causal responsibilities for climate change are very unevenly distributed across the countries. Climate change is characterised by “a double inequality with an inverse distribution of risk

³ As is convention, International Relations will be spelled with capital letters whenever the academic discipline is concerned (in these cases, the acronym IR may also be used) and with lower-case letters whenever it refers to the subject matter of that discipline.

⁴ See Chapter 4 for a more detailed background information.

and responsibility” (Barrett 2013: 1819).⁵ Having contributed least to global warming, developing countries are most vulnerable to its effects. Developed countries, on the other hand, are better equipped with resources for adaptation and mitigation measures. Although all countries face the same problem, it affects them differently, they have different capacities to tackle it, and they bear common but differentiated responsibilities (UN 1992a: Principle 7).⁶ Although definitions vary, international climate finance can be seen as a way to address this double inequality. It refers to the transfer of financial resources from richer countries to poorer countries to fund climate action. First mentioned in the Copenhagen Accord of 2009 and established one year later at the 16th COP in Cancún, the Green Climate Fund is envisioned to become a major channel for sourcing, managing, and allocating climate finance under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Abbott & Gartner 2011: 4; Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 1; UNFCCC n.d.). With over USD 10 billion pledged, it has indeed become the largest climate fund as of August 2017 (GCF 2017f; HBF & ODI 2017).⁷ Its size and transformative ambition give the GCF a particular societal relevance.

The Board of the Green Climate Fund is the body tasked with negotiating how exactly the Fund would operate: what funding sources it would draw from, according to what procedures money would be allocated, what financial instruments would be used, how results would be monitored, and so on. The Fund aspires to be transformational and shift existing paradigms, according to its Governing Instrument (UNFCCC 2011a). Nonetheless, it is not the first of its kind, as mentioned above. Existing international climate and development finance institutions provide opportunities to draw lessons from past experience (Nakhooda et al. 2013b: 1; Schalatek 2014b; Afful-Koomson 2014). The Global Environment Facility, for instance, dealt with similar conflicts between developed and developing countries; and its procedures could serve as a model in various respects (Fairman 1996; Streck 2001). Civil society observers and policy analysts have made

⁵ As Gough (2013) points out, double inequalities exist not only on the international level, but also within countries.

⁶ Distinguishing between developed and developing countries is simplifying. Developing countries in particular are a very heterogeneous group in many relevant respects such as economy or vulnerability to climate change. However, this bipolarity is part of the empirical reality of the global climate regime, to the extent that it is institutionalised in the composition of the Green Climate Fund’s Board. In this dissertation, countries are grouped according to their official classification at the Fund. The distinction, however artificial, is analytically useful. See also Subsection 4.2.2 as well as Sections 5.5 and 7.2.

⁷ This number should be treated with some caution. Due to a change of government in the United States in January 2017, it is possible that the remaining USD 2 of the 3 billion US pledge will not actually be paid.

recommendations based on experiences with existing funds and environmental institutions (Ballesteros et al. 2010; Abbott & Gartner 2011; van Kerkhoff et al. 2011; Brown et al. 2013: 11–18; Polycarp et al. 2013a; Polycarp et al. 2013b; Huq 2017; Nakhooda et al. 2013b: 1; Afful-Koomson 2014), development aid (van Kerkhoff et al. 2011; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013), and the recent global financial crisis (Friends of the Earth 2011). In this light, the global climate finance architecture has been described as a living laboratory for finding and implementing best practices (Christianson & Patel 2014). Moreover, the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties – the entity the GCF formally reports to – has explicitly mandated the Board to take heed of lessons from existing funds, rendering learning a formal requirement (UNFCCC n.d.; 2011a; 2015: 18, 29). Yet, it did not prescribe in any way how this should be done. What sort of lessons should be considered, from what sources, about what issues, etc.? In negotiating the details of operationalising the Fund, the Board was caught up in an ambiguity surrounding learning that the COP had either ignored or avoided.

What does this ambiguity look like? At the most fundamental level, there is a contradiction between the Green Climate Fund’s desire to learn and its transformational ambition. On the one hand, the GCF is not the first of its kind, and there is past experience to draw on, as mentioned above. Indeed, Board members frequently advocated making use of existing experience:

“Yes, we are a new fund, but we are using all the existing terminologies, instruments, all the things from existing institutions. We are not starting in a vacuum.”⁸

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Bridgetown 4.1: 00:56:58–00:57:13⁹

“It’s been pointed out that we should there not reinvent, but borrow. Best practice is out there.”

Anton Hilber (Switzerland) in Paris 1.2: 00:22:07–00:22:15

“I think we need to ensure that we don’t necessarily reinvent the wheel – as we have been saying – but we begin from what is working and move from there.”

David Kaluba (Zambia) in Bali 2.1: 03:39:35–03:39:53

⁸ For the sake of readability, hesitations (“uh”, word repetitions, etc.) have been omitted from all quotes.

⁹ This is the format used in this thesis for citing from the video recordings of the GCF negotiations that constitute the main form of data in the empirical analysis (see Section 4.2). The citations indicate the venue of the meeting recorded, the day of the meeting, and the number of the video file. Additionally, a timestamp is given in hours, minutes, and – where appropriate (i.e., for direct quotes) – seconds. A complete list of all video recordings cited can be found in the list of references (Chapter 8).

On the other hand, the Green Climate Fund was envisioned to induce a transformational shift in global economic development. Much of the contestation at the Board meetings resulted from the fact that there were competing interpretations of what that meant. But to many it was clear that this implies a departure from existing practices. Accordingly, Board members emphasised the special role of the GCF as inscribed in its mission. This, they often argued, contradicted the idea of adopting practices from elsewhere.

“We are the GCF. We need to demonstrate that we are different. [...] We should be that innovation incubator for new ideas and doing things differently. Because that’s what we are here [for]: To take risks, to push the boundaries, and that.”

Zaheer Fakir (South Africa) in Bridgetown 2.2: 01:06:59–01:07:20

“GCF should be different, should be the one that addresses the weakness from other funds. So we don’t want to replicate the failure from the other funds.”

Irfa Ampri (Indonesia) in Paris 1.2: 01:42:42–01:42:53

“We’re not compiling practices from different institutions here. We’re here to do business in a new way and in a way that GCF is mandated to do.”

George Zedginidze (Georgia) in Bridgetown 2.2: 01:08:47–01:09:00

The Green Climate Fund was caught in this contradiction between drawing on past experience on the one hand and promoting deep transformational change through new, innovative approaches on the other. Learning relies on past experience while, at the same time, the mission of the Green Climate Fund implies a shift away from the ways of old, a radical break from that experience. This contradiction was at the heart of the politics and power dynamics in the GCF negotiations. Learning does not escape or transcend these dynamics. Rather, as will be argued in this thesis, learning constitutes itself a manifestation of these dynamics.

The ambiguity between learning and ambition makes the Green Climate Fund a particularly suitable case to develop an alternative interpretation of learning as a mode of social interaction in international post-agreement negotiations. It highlights a key problem with the way learning is commonly conceptualised in theory. There is an extensive body of literature on learning, lesson-drawing, and knowledge-use in political science (Bennett & Howlett 1992; Dolowitz & Marsh 1996; Hall 1993; Rose 1991; Sabatier 1987, to name only a few of the most seminal contributions and reviews). Many of these works disregard aspects of political contestation and power. This is not so much an oversight as it is in line with their research agenda, which aimed to find alternative explanations for policy change. They have a rather functionalist view of learning as a technical, apolitical process of improving policy outcomes. This is not uncommon in research on global environmental

politics, either. Many works assume, often implicitly, that actors strive to design efficient institutions; this too readily disregards politics, for example that a certain weakness or inefficiency might be precisely in the interest of certain actors (Bernstein 2002: 3; Marcoux 2011: 147).

Such notions create a blind spot for learning in politically charged contexts. And politically charged the GCF Board meetings were. As will be explained in detail in Chapter 4 and Section 5.4, the negotiations were characterised by a sharp divergence of interests, many along a cleavage between developed and developing countries. Negotiations do not simply conclude after signing an initial agreement (Zartman 2003: 14–16). This aspect is often overlooked in the literature: “Once states become involved in an international institution, the virtues of cooperation are assumed to become self-evident and states should become disposed to greater cooperation — despite starting from widely divergent domestic political interests.” (Purdon 2013: 6) This premise can only lead to a skewed understanding of learning in international negotiations. Aspects of power need to be taken into consideration when one examines lesson-drawing and learning in such contexts. There is a mismatch between the functionalist notions in which learning is conceptualised in the literature and the political contestation that can be observed at many international environmental and climate negotiations. This thesis addresses this mismatch.

Most existing critiques levelled at the neglect of power in the conventional learning literature have offered constructivist responses. Their approaches emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons (e.g., Robertson 1991; Flyvbjerg 1998; Brock et al. 2001; McFarlane 2006; Peck 2011). They make a valuable contribution to bringing power into the study of learning. However, they are not suitable to explain learning in all contexts. A constructivist vantage point omits other forms of learning as a type of social interaction in international negotiations. Specifically, the question is what exactly the causal mechanism for the exercise of power through learning is supposed to be. The context of learning is pivotal here. There is surely explanatory value to the rationalising and legitimising power of learning, for example when it comes to internal processes in organisations and epistemic communities or political debates addressed at an audience (see Section 2.1). However, in multilateral diplomacy, neither of these factors necessarily apply. Delegates in international negotiations are not using lessons to legitimise their decisions vis-à-vis an external entity, but to negotiate among each other. And even if their beliefs are discursively influenced by lessons, it is doubtful whether they can change their political position to a large extent. As will be elaborated in the course of this thesis, delegates act as agents for their

constituencies, and they generally have little leeway to question their principals' authority (Zangl & Zürn 1996: 361).

In light of these considerations, this thesis proposes a different causal link between learning and power. Lesson-drawing and power can be reconciled within arguing-and-bargaining theory, which captures both the argumentative nature of lesson-drawing as well as strategic action as an explanatory mechanism for influence through lesson-drawing. This, however, requires rethinking how lessons fit into the framework conceptually. Arguing-and-bargaining theory proposes two modes of negotiating: consensus-driven, sincere, communicative arguing on the one hand and instrumental, interest-driven, strategic bargaining on the other. Following this framework, a situation like the one encountered at the GCF negotiations would favour bargaining as the dominant mode of negotiating. However, learning from the experiences with other international climate or development finance institutions is usually subsumed under arguing. By rethinking the way in which lesson-drawing fits into the framework, this thesis aims to both capture the argumentative verbal exchange of lessons at the negotiation table and allow for the consideration of political contestation and power by taking seriously the bargaining aspect of the theory. It proposes a view of lesson-drawing as a specific form of strategic arguing.

1.2 Existing research

Empirical research on learning in international negotiations is scarce. To be sure, there is ample work on various conceptual interpretations of learning (see Section 2.1). But there are few studies that focus on learning specifically in the context of international negotiations. This section provides an overview of pertinent academic contributions and explains how they inform and relate to this dissertation. The section starts by providing an overview of research on learning and lesson-drawing in international negotiations in general and then narrows the focus on relevant research on climate and climate finance negotiations.

In their widely-cited overview of the learning literature, Dunlop & Radaelli (2013: 610–611) describe various approaches to learning in international negotiations¹⁰ and classify them according to the extent to which actors have control over the content and the objectives of learning. Due to their article being a literature review, Dunlop and Radaelli do not go into

¹⁰ Dunlop & Radaelli (2013) refer to this as bargaining (as opposed to negotiations). The term has been changed here to avoid confusion with bargaining as it is used in arguing-and-bargaining theory (see Section 2.2).

much depth. They do assert, however, that negotiating “produces learning as the unintended product of political competition” (Dunlop & Radaelli 2013: 610). Empirical studies following this notion often focus on social learning. They analyse how policy goals evolve in the course of the learning process in institutions. Eising (2002) is a good example. He investigates learning in the negotiations leading up to the liberalisation of EU electricity markets. These negotiations are embedded into a specific context. This context, consisting of formal, standardised mechanisms and procedures as well as informal norms, provides an environment of shared beliefs and views, and it gives negotiators insights about the consequences of policy options (Eising 2002: 87, 116; Radaelli 1995: 178). Making a case against Moravcsik’s (1997) theory of liberal intergovernmentalism, Eising finds that this process of learning is able to overcome domestically formed interests: “[T]he EU institutional setting shapes strategic action by member states and alters the payoffs they attribute to different policy options” (Eising 2002: 87). Although Eising does not entirely disregard aspects of power and strategic action, he too readily assumes that learning detaches the negotiation process from these interests. Learning is seen as a phenomenon that transcends politics. If, as he says, interests and strategic action matter, then there is no reason to assume they don’t when actors draw lessons from past experiences. Eising identifies a mechanism according to which political positions change in negotiations that is somewhat similar to the one proposed in this thesis. However, the motives for actors to engage in learning in the first place play a larger role here and lead to a different assessment of the process.

Using negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as a case study, Wolfe (2010) examines the role of learning as a prerequisite for negotiating in the first place: “[T]rade negotiators in Geneva cannot bargain what they do not understand, and what they bargain must be based on consensual understanding among the relevant actors, whether or not they agree on what to do about it.” (Wolfe 2010: 1) For Wolfe, learning is a process that involves an exchange of arguments and that is “endogenous to the negotiations, because it happens through interaction” (Wolfe 2010: 28). However, not unlike Eising, Wolfe sees learning as a mechanism through which negotiators develop a new understanding of their own role, the interests of others, and the nature of the social interaction they engage in (Wolfe 2010: 28). Even if one does not dispute the possibility of such deliberative learning in international negotiations *per se*, an approach that disregards aspects of power risks misreading lesson-drawing as a genuine attempt to engage in Habermasian communicative action and would fail to recognise other, strategy-driven forms of such interactions.

Crystal (2003), too, examines learning in trade negotiations. He sees learning as an alternative “to realist (power-based) accounts of international cooperation aside from ideational socialization” (Crystal 2003: 570). Specifically, he shows that least developed countries have accepted liberal ideas about free trade in services. But rather than seeing this as a case of an actual change in beliefs, as conventional learning theory would suggest, he takes it to be the result of a more instrumental rationale: delegates adopted those ideas because they needed to attract foreign investments and assumed it would increase their chances if they did so. Crystal’s work illuminates two important aspects regarding learning that are relevant in this thesis. Firstly, he is able to produce insights that differ from what conventional theory would predict. This highlights the importance of in-depth empirical analysis of international negotiations if one is to truly understand their dynamics (see also Dimitrov 2013: 346–347; Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014; Wilson Rowe 2015; Blaxekjær 2016: 146–147; as well as Subsections 3.2.2 and 4.2.2). Secondly, Crystal offers a useful way to think about the character of lessons and learning in politics: Where most learning theories understand learning as either a change of beliefs (Levy 1994: 283) or the symbolic use of lessons to bolster political positions (Radaelli 1995: 162), Crystal shows that lessons can also be used to convey signals about the choices another actor realistically has. As will become clear below, this is reminiscent of one of the key findings in this thesis.

As mentioned above, a large strand of the literature – particularly the related literature on knowledge-use – emphasises the symbolic and rationalising use of knowledge, such as studies, reports, and lessons from past experience (Albæk 1995; Radaelli 1995; Amara et al. 2004; Boswell 2008; 2009; Lundin & Öberg 2014).¹¹ Boswell (2008; 2009), for instance, argues that organisations enhance their perceived legitimacy by drawing on expert knowledge, which may also be chosen selectively in order to substantiate certain policy preferences (Boswell 2008: 472). Works like hers are however only loosely related to this research project. They are more concerned with established bureaucracies than with ongoing negotiations. Moreover, this thesis explicitly proposes a mechanism of exerting influence through learning that is different from the conventional notions of symbolic use and legitimisation.

Grobe (2010) makes the case for a rationalist explanation of arguing as persuasion in international politics. He maintains that arguments “transmit new causal knowledge and thus help alleviate the effects of decision uncertainty” (Grobe 2010: 6). This, he proposes in

¹¹ See Subsection 2.1.2 for a more thorough review of the literatures on political learning and knowledge-use.

opposition to constructivist approaches, makes an actor change initial beliefs about causal relationships, as opposed to altering preferences (Grobe 2010: 12). Grobe's approach differs from those discussed above in that the explanatory mechanism behind the influence of learning is lowering uncertainty. In his view, learning increases clarity about causal links between policies, standards, and practices and their effects, whereas constructivists would emphasise that subjects are made to *perceive* to have greater clarity over these causal links. Like this thesis, Grobe highlights non-conventional uses of arguments in international negotiations. Grobe's main point is to develop an alternative to constructivist and conventional rationalist theories. Nonetheless, his minor points about the introduction of new causal knowledge changing the bargaining position of actors (Grobe 2010: 11–14) are not entirely dissimilar from what is found in this dissertation. Here, too, actors keep playing their “bargaining game” (Grobe 2010: 12), but adjust it in light of arguments put forth by other actors.

There are few academic contributions that look specifically at learning in international climate politics. Depledge (2006) identifies obstacles to learning in the global climate regime, concluding that what happens is the opposite of learning – ossification, as she calls it. While her contribution is largely empirical, Depledge posits that learning occurs through new technical information, the evolution of concepts and ideas, and strengthened relationships through continuous interaction (Depledge 2006: 1–2). At the same time, however, she takes issue with the assumption that regimes inherently promote learning (*ibid.*). This contradicts assumptions such as those made by Eising (2002). Instead, it is more in line with the understanding of learning that will be presented here. This thesis, too, contests the notion put forth in the conventional learning literature that power struggles are absent from processes of learning (see also the literature overview in Subsection 3.1.1). In contrast to this thesis, however, Depledge presents some of the obstacles to learning. She looks at the politics that prevent sincere technical learning whereas this thesis considers learning to be a part of the power dynamics in international negotiations.

Regarding learning in climate finance negotiations and institutions, there are few thorough academic studies that have been published to date. Skovgaard (2012; 2015; 2017b; 2017a) examines the role of finance ministries in international climate politics and policy-making. He highlights how finance ministries, particularly from countries with an Anglo-Saxon liberal tradition, engaged in policy learning as an epistemic community that framed international climate finance not as a strain on government budgets, but as a way to rectify the market failure that caused climate change (Skovgaard 2012). Bracking (2015) takes a

critical stance on exactly this “market failure frame” (Skovgaard 2012: 6). She argues that “[m]ainstream thinking on climate change governance is constrained within neoliberal policy frameworks” (Bracking 2015: 34). In her view, the Green Climate Fund is dominated by a hegemonic neoliberal paradigm that affects how lessons are drawn at the GCF as well. Lessons, then, are merely a façade hiding the fact that – as she claims – the interpretations of lessons are not even subject to negotiation, but determined by dominant discourses.

Beyond these academic contributions, there are plenty of policy papers that consider potential technical lessons for the GCF from other institutions (Ballesteros et al. 2010; Abbott & Gartner 2011; van Kerkhoff et al. 2011; Brown et al. 2013: 11–18; Polycarp et al. 2013a; Polycarp et al. 2013b). However, apart from being non-academic, these papers are not primarily concerned with the politics of learning. Their aim is instead to advocate certain lessons that the authors deem useful.

This section has reviewed existing empirical research on lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations and international climate finance politics. The section focussed on applied research that is immediately relevant to the case study. For a more theoretical discussion of learning in international negotiations, see Chapter 3, which will offer additional reviews of the conceptual literatures on both learning (Section 3.1) and negotiations (Section 3.2).

1.3 Contributions

This section outlines the contributions this thesis seeks to make. The thesis speaks to the literatures on both negotiating and learning theory. Regarding negotiating, the thesis will empirically demonstrate the applicability of arguing-and-bargaining theory to lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations. Heretofore, the arguing-and-bargaining literature has considered lessons and learning only on the margins. Examining this existing work in light of the findings from the analysis will demonstrate the need to reconceptualise how certain speech acts, such as lesson-drawing, fit into the framework (see Subsection 6.3.2).

Regarding learning, this thesis proposes an alternative way of understanding learning within the context of international negotiations. Most existing theories and empirical studies fall into one of two categories. Either, they disregard power. This is not so much an oversight as much as part of the research agenda. Scholars aimed to find alternative explanations for policy change. However, this created a blind spot for learning in the contexts of the power dynamics in politically charged international negotiations. Approaches that do take power

seriously usually emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons, often embracing a constructivist approach. As this thesis will argue, this cannot fully explain lesson-use in the specific context of post-agreement negotiations. The thesis therefore proposes a different mechanism of how learning and power are linked. In combination, the two theoretical contributions offer a renewed view on how the phenomenon of learning in international negotiations should be understood. The thesis shifts the notion from one of technical optimisation and communicative discourse to one of power and strategic action. Beyond its contribution to academic literatures, this thesis also speaks to the policy debate on one of the most topical issues in international climate politics. Climate finance is essential to manage climate change effectively and fairly. As mentioned above, drawing lessons from existing international climate and development finance institutions has been advocated by a number of observers and activists. A closer look at what this process actually implies is therefore warranted.

With regard to its method, this thesis conducts an in-depth qualitative analysis of four negotiation rounds of the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. It examines closely the actual verbal exchanges at the GCF Board meeting. Existing works on international environmental negotiations rely on second-hand textual data and armchair theorising all too often, which do not suffice for a detailed analysis of negotiation dynamics (see Subsection 2.2.1). In its empirical analysis, hence, this thesis also addresses a common shortcoming with regard to method. In terms of data, the thesis draws on video recordings of the negotiations. Although not uncommon in neighbouring social sciences like sociology or anthropology, video analysis is a novel method in International Relations research. This is largely due to the lack of availability of recordings. In the UNFCCC climate negotiations, keynote speeches by heads of government may be recorded and even broadcast live over the internet. However, when decisions are taken in the green room, there are usually no cameras. In an effort to increase transparency, the GCF has published video recordings of a number of Board meetings. The discussion of video data and analysis in this thesis may prove useful for future studies. As mentioned above, many studies of international environmental negotiations neglect the analytical level of verbal exchanges. Video data, if available, provide an excellent opportunity to remedy this problem.

1.4 Thesis structure

This section gives an overview of the thesis structure. Following the introductory chapter, the thesis will develop a theoretical framework (Chapter 2), explain the research design and

method (Chapter 3), provide an overview of the case (Chapter 4), present the findings from the empirical analysis (Chapter 5), discuss these findings in light of larger debates (Chapter 6), and summarise the main arguments and contributions (Chapter 7). The remainder of this section outlines the purpose of the individual chapters in more detail.

The theory chapter (Chapter 2: Learning and negotiating) will review the literatures on learning and arguing-and-bargaining and develop the theoretical framework for the empirical analysis. The chapter finds considerable overlaps between the way learning has been conventionally conceptualised and the concept of arguing. However, a conventional view on learning also shares with arguing a major flaw, namely its disregard for power. In its theoretical framework, the thesis reconciles lesson-drawing and power within arguing-and-bargaining theory, which requires rethinking how lessons should be understood conceptually.

The thesis will conduct a qualitative analysis of the verbal exchanges during four rounds of negotiations at the Green Climate Fund. The methods chapter (Chapter 3: Studying negotiations through video) will explicate the reasoning behind the choice of method. It will also explain and justify the coding procedure. And it will pay particularly close attention to the video recordings used in the analysis as they present a rather novel form of data in International Relations research.

The aim of the background chapter (Chapter 4: International climate finance and the Green Climate Fund) is to equip the reader with essential knowledge about the case. It will explain the basics of international climate finance in general and the Green Climate Fund specifically, its history and its key institutional and operational features. The chapter will also outline major areas of contestation during the analysed negotiation rounds. The empirical analysis will draw on some of the more technical terminology introduced in this chapter.

The empirical chapter (Chapter 5: Learning in the Green Climate Fund negotiations) will proceed to present the findings from the empirical analysis. It will examine the role learning played during four analysed negotiation rounds of the Green Climate Fund. The chapter will follow a series of questions and themes, one leading to the next. Specifically, the chapter will look at the argumentative authority that negotiators draw from lessons, the mechanism through which delegates exert influence by drawing lessons, the scope conditions for lesson-drawing as a specific mode of negotiating, and finally learning as a process of social interaction.

The discussion chapter (Chapter 6) will then reflect on the findings from the empirical analysis, relating them to larger debates in International Relations. In particular, it will consider the role of structural assets and rational behaviour in post-agreement climate politics, both in terms of empirics and theory.

Finally, the conclusion (Chapter 7) will summarise the main findings and contributions to the academic literature. It will also provide an overview of recent developments in international climate finance, and it will identify opportunities for future research.

2 Theory: Learning and negotiating

The phenomenon that this thesis examines consists of two components: learning as a form of social interaction and negotiating as both a form of social interaction and a specific context for learning. In order to establish the foundation for developing the theoretical framework, this chapter reviews the theoretical literatures on both of these components individually. It starts with the literature on learning. As will be shown below, the conventional learning literature – labelled technical learning in this thesis – is characterised by strong functionalist notions and a disregard of power. This makes it unsuitable to understand learning in contexts characterised by power dynamics. The review then introduces the literature on what can be called political learning. This literature shares the critique of the disregard of power in the technical learning literature, but the responses it offers – many of constructivist nature – are again unsuitable to study post-agreement negotiations. The discursively constructed ideas of delegates are not what primarily determines their spectrum of policy choices at the level of post-agreement negotiations. Furthermore, it is argued that it is not necessary to shift the entire ontological paradigm of conventional learning theory in order to understand learning in international negotiations. The chapter then reviews the literature on arguing-and-bargaining, which provides the framework for negotiating, i.e. the second major component. Arguing-and-bargaining theory was chosen for two reasons. First, the concept of technical learning ties neatly into the concept of arguing. Arguing does also share with technical learning the functionalist notion and disregard of power, but this is where the second reason comes in. Through the explanatory mechanisms underlying the concept of bargaining, arguing-and-bargaining theory allows retaining a view of lesson-drawing as strategic action, i.e. motivated by interests. Interlinking the two components through arguing-and-bargaining, however, requires rethinking how lesson-drawing fits into the framework conceptually. The resulting approach, which is developed in this chapter, takes power seriously while, at the same time, it does not abandon the rationalist paradigm found the conventional learning literature.

The chapter is structured as follows: It will first present two in-depth literature reviews on learning and international negotiations. The section on learning attempts to systematise the vast literature, outlining technical learning and political learning as different forms of learning that can be identified (Section 2.1). Next, the chapter turns to negotiating (Section 2.2). Again, drawing on a literature review, the chapter emphasises negotiations as a form of communication and introduces arguing-and-bargaining theory as an approach that fits this understanding. In the process, the concept of power in negotiations is also discussed.

The chapter then views both literatures in conjuncture to develop a theoretical framework for learning in international negotiations (Section 2.3). In the process, the chapter also defines experience, lessons, and learning as key concepts for the analysis. It draws the link between learning and its context and explores how learning fits into a conceptual understanding of multilateral negotiations. Finally, the chapter critically reflects on the theoretical framework and its suitability for this research project (Section 2.4).

2.1 Learning

The social science literature on learning is manifold, rooted in a range of academic disciplines. Seminal works have been published chiefly in comparative political science and sociology, but also in International Relations to some degree. Even from an intra-disciplinary political science perspective, the literature proves to be remarkably heterogeneous. There is no generally agreed definition of learning. Attempts to systemise the various approaches are as numerous as they are diverse. Bennett & Howlett (1992: 276) presented one of the earlier, widely-cited such attempts, highlighting this “definitional ambiguity”. However, the diversity of the field was already noted as early as in Weiss (1979). Although the research agenda and its theoretical underpinnings have certainly evolved since then (Grin & Loeber 2007: 214), most recent accounts still find that there has been little exchange across the various disciplines, leading to conceptual stretching (Dunlop & Radaelli 2013: 600–601).

This section reviews and systematises the diverse literature on theories of learning and lesson-drawing in the social sciences. The aim is to break these theories down in such a way that their applicability for studying learning in international negotiations can later be assessed. Furthermore, this section lays the groundwork for discussing the linkages between the learning and negotiating literatures.¹² The social science learning literature can be divided into two main strands: The first one focuses on the *effects* of learning on policy output; the second one looks at the *process* of learning, emphasising its rationalising and symbolic effects. This section differentiates theories of learning according to this cleavage. The section also considers the suitability of various streams in the literature to provide a framework for studying learning in international negotiations.

It should be noted that the literature review will focus on contributions relevant to learning in international negotiations. Negotiating is understood to be a process of social

¹² See in particular Subsection 2.3.1 on the intersections between theories of learning and negotiating.

interaction. Therefore, the review will not explicitly discuss works on knowledge and learning in policy-making that are not explicitly concerned with the *exchange* of knowledge and lessons within such social processes. Khong (1992: 20), for example, views lessons (or: analogies) “as intellectual devices often called upon by policymakers to perform a set of diagnostic tasks relevant to political decision-making”. He pays particular attention to the thought processes of individual policy-makers, as opposed to the social processes these policy-makers are involved in.

2.1.1 Technical learning

The first stream in the literature originated from a critique of pluralism and rational choice theory in the analysis of policy-making (Hall 1993). It took issue with the fact that “[p]olitical scientists have traditionally perceived policy change as a primarily the product of a power struggle among groups with different resources and values/interests” (Sabatier 1987: 681–682). Arguing that these conventional explanatory factors in political science – power and interest – cannot sufficiently explain many instances of policy change, scholars turned to learning as a new factor: “Politics finds its sources not only in power but also in uncertainty – men collectively wondering what to do.” (Heclo 1974: 305) This notion formed part of a broader deliberative turn in the social sciences and dominated the academic debate on learning in the 1990s.

This deliberative learning literature conceptualises rational actors that use lessons as tools with the explicit intention of optimising and improving policy outcomes. The focus is usually on the transfer of policies from one temporal or spatial domain to another (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996: 344; Grin & Loeber 2007: 202–210; Stone 2012). Learning is taken to be an outcome, rather than a process, a “relatively enduring” (Heclo 1974: 306) “change of beliefs (or the degree of confidence in one’s beliefs) or the development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience” (Levy 1994: 283). The ontological underpinnings of this conventional learning literature can be described as rationalist and functionalist, with a strong emphasis on agency. Learning “is predicated on the actual existence of a rational decision-making process” (Albæk 1995: 85). It can be defined as “the deliberate attempt to adjust the goals and techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information” (Hall 1993: 278). In line with this understanding of learning, much of the literature gains its relevance from the supposed benefits of learning for public policy, and it aims to evaluate ways to make policy-makers more receptive to lesson-drawing. As Howlett (2012: 539) notes, a large part of the research

revolves around either the question what constitutes learning as a social phenomenon (e.g., May 1992) or the factors that foster learning (e.g., Lester & Wilds 1990).

As a result of this intellectual history and research agenda, conventional conceptualisations of learning entertain an understanding of learning as technical. Technical learning¹³ “entail[s] an improved understanding of causal relationships in the light of experience” (Meseguer 2005) and is used to inform decision-making “in order to enhance the quality of output, thus contributing to the realization of mandated organizational goals” (Boswell 2009). In other words: Technical learning is *learning for the sake of policy*.¹⁴ In the context of international relations, this kind of learning would be an alternative “to realist (power-based) accounts of international cooperation aside from ideational socialization” (Crystal 2003: 570).

Theories of technical learning specify different types of learning with varying degrees of depth. In the institutional learning literature, it is common to differentiate between single, double, and triple-loop learning. These terms denote learning about means (how to best achieve a goal), goals (what is worth pursuing), and learning itself (learning how to learn), respectively (Saunders et al. 2011). Wolfe (2010: 6–10), to name an example from the context of negotiations, differentiates simple learning, which is the acquisition of new knowledge, and complex learning, which is an argumentative and deliberative process through which actors gain a deeper understanding of the interests of others or the nature of the social interaction they are engaged in.

As a side note, the literature on technical learning is related to the literature on policy diffusion and convergence, adding to the complexity of the field (Bennett 1991; Dobbin et al. 2007; Drezner 2005; Falkner & Gupta 2009; Meseguer 2005; Strang & Meyer 1993; Walker 1969; Woolcock 2013). As the name suggests, the literature on policy diffusion is more concerned with the phenomenon of similar policies being adopted in several polities. It is not characterised by any common commitment to a certain explanatory mechanism. This mechanism might involve learning (Boehmke & Witmer 2004; Grossback et al. 2004; Meseguer 2005; Volden et al. 2008), but it does not necessarily have to. Woolcock (2013), for instance, identifies issue linkages in bilateral free trade agreements as mechanism that brought about common rules for public procurement across countries.

¹³ Instrumental learning is a term often used instead. However, other forms of learning outlined below are also instrumental, albeit in a rather different sense. The term technical learning is used in this thesis, because it is common and less ambiguous.

¹⁴ The literature concerned with technical learning will hereinafter also be referred to as the conventional learning literature.

2.1.2 Political learning

The contentions of technical learning did not remain unchallenged. Perhaps the most salient problem with it is that it is predicated on a consensus about common goals that do not interfere with strong political interests (Weiss 1979: 427–428). Critics have also pointed out that the conventional learning research agenda is systematically fixated on policy outcomes. It too readily disregards the very processual factors it had deemed insufficient to explain these outcomes. Power and interests are surely not enough to fully explain all instances of policy change. But neither is policy change or even improvement always the end to which learning is used. In cases where political contestation is high, learning cannot be understood merely as a tool used to improve policy outcome. It is employed for political purposes. Lessons are used to selectively underline benefits or negative effects of certain policies (Robertson 1991). Actors using lessons in this way might still portray them as technical. But this alone, of course, cannot be regarded as an indication for genuine technical learning. Instead, lessons can be used to bolster political positions based on perceived interests as many scholars have argued (in the learning literature: Robertson 1991; Brock et al. 2001; McFarlane 2006; Peck 2011; in the knowledge-use literature: Albæk 1995; Radaelli 1995; Shulock 1999; Amara et al. 2004; Boswell 2008; 2009; Lundin & Öberg 2014). “Far from being a mere technical exercise, lesson-drawing is intensely political. Policymakers frequently use lessons as instruments of power to gain leverage in political conflicts.” (Robertson 1991: 75) This concept of learning can be referred to as political learning. Political learning is *learning for the sake of politics*. For the purposes of this thesis, the political learning literature can be divided further into two major strands: One emphasises the rationalising effect of lessons, and the other emphasises their symbolic and legitimising uses.

The first strand highlights learning as a way to *rationalise* political positions (e.g., Robertson 1991; Brock et al. 2001; McFarlane 2006; Peck 2011). Proponents of this view criticise that the conventional learning literature conceptualises a policy-maker “as an optimizing, rational actor, scanning the ‘market’ for potential policy products” (Peck 2011: 776) and using knowledge as “a tool for choosing among alternatives in an effort to solve problems” (Shulock 1999: 227). Rationalisation scholars “reject the functionalist view of knowledge as static, bounded and fixed, and argue instead for a view of knowledge as social” (McFarlane 2006: 296). Instead, actors are assumed to consciously or unconsciously rationalise policies that are aligned with their interests and ideas by bolstering them with knowledge and lessons. What makes rationalisation powerful is the difficultly to see and

recognise it (Flyvbjerg 1998: 229). “Politics wears the mask of knowledge” (Torgerson 1986: 39). Translated into IR theory, rationalisation as an explanatory mechanism is very much in line with constructivist thinking.

The second strand in the political learning literature examines the *symbolic use* of lessons. Political learning in that sense occurs when lessons take advantage of the “symbolic value of expressing the perceived rational foundations of choices” (Radaelli 1995: 162). This notion is prominent in the literature on knowledge-use as well (Albæk 1995; Amara et al. 2004; Boswell 2008; 2009; Feldman 1989; Lester & Wilds 1990; Lundin & Öberg 2014; Radaelli 1995; Rooney 2005; Shulock 1999; Weiss 1979; Whiteman 1985). Yet, although their subject matters are almost naturally related, the political learning and knowledge-use literatures – in the sense of an arena for academic discourse – are rather separate, and there is little exchange between them. The main reasons for this lie in the different histories of the two fields and by extension their different research agendas. The literature on knowledge-use shares with conventional learning literature certain functionalist notions in that it assumes that knowledge can and should be used to improve policy outcomes. However, particularly the more recent knowledge-use literature explores – in some sense – the opposite puzzle. In conventional approaches,

“the focus is on why, and to what extent, knowledge influences policy. The dependent variable is the impact of knowledge on policy choice. This systematically screens out the possibility that knowledge is deployed for other purposes; that knowledge is indeed being used by policymakers, but not necessarily to inform the substance of policy.”

Boswell (2009: 10)

To address this shortcoming, the knowledge-use literature looks at knowledge produced by (networks of) external experts (Haas 1992; Lövbrand 2014), internal committees (Feldman 1989), or academia (Litfin 1994; Paterson 2014: 54–58). It frequently finds that readily available knowledge or even commissioned research is not primarily used to inform policy-making. So while the policy learning literature started out claiming that lessons are indeed used in decision-making, the knowledge-use literature asks why knowledge is often *not* properly used.

In line with the political learning literature, many scholars argue that knowledge is used strategically to support political positions based on perceived interests (Albæk 1995; Radaelli 1995; Amara et al. 2004; Boswell 2008; 2009; Lundin & Öberg 2014). Knowledge turns into “ammunition for the side that finds its conclusions congenial and supportive” (Weiss 1979: 429). Similar to others (such as Radaelli 1995: 161–162; Amara et al. 2004: 77), Boswell further differentiates between two subtypes of strategic uses of knowledge:

substantiating and legitimising. Substantiating use refers to the bolstering of one's policy preferences and undermining those of rivals (Boswell 2009: 7), “lend[ing] authority to particular policy positions” (Boswell 2008: 472). Advocates of policy change use lessons selectively to underline benefits of policy transfer while opponents seek to associate said transfer with negative effects; they use lessons selectively to establish the notion that transferring desired consequences of policies is possible while undesired consequences are portrayed as caused by the specific consequences found in the policy's original context; and they drastically reduce the complexity of policy issues by drawing lessons (Robertson 1991: 59–62).

Another symbolic effect of knowledge-use and lesson-use is that of legitimisation. Here, learning actors are “fundamentally concerned to secure legitimacy, in the sense of meeting societal expectations about appropriate structures, practices, rhetoric or output” (Boswell 2008: 476). They “derive legitimacy from adapting their norms and formal structures to the expectations of their environment” (Boswell 2009: 61). The mechanism that drives this kind of learning “is not so much problem solving as the search for credibility, status, or simple conformity with international trends” (Meseguer 2005: 73). Pressures from the learners' environment are a major factor contributing to the legitimising form of learning in many approaches in the literature. They play a role in both the learning (Howlett 2012) and the knowledge-use (Weiss 1986: 214; Shulock 1999: 232; Boswell 2008: 473) literatures.

Having identified the two main streams in the political learning literature – rationalisation and symbolic learning – the remainder of this subsection discusses whether they are able to sufficiently explain the use of lessons in international negotiations and the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, specifically.

Regarding the rationalising effects of learning, it can be argued that delegates often do not have enough leeway to influence their constituency's general position, even if learning changes their beliefs on an ideational level. This is not to say that ideational factors do not matter in international climate politics. On the contrary, ideas are immensely important to the formation of constituencies' basic positions (also in the GCF Board meetings, see Section 4.1 and Subsection 4.2.2). What exactly is the purpose of climate finance? The conceptual vagueness of the GCF's mission statement mentioned in the introduction, provides actors with the opportunity to interpret this question in their own way. Some might see climate finance as a way to correct a market failure (Skovgaard 2012), others might emphasise the long-term strategic benefits of investing in the Green Climate Fund (Kotchen & Martinez-Diaz 2017). Least developed countries might emphasise the urgency

of climate action and the lack of resources in the developing world (Paris 1.2: 00:46), and so on. However, these ideas of what climate finance is or should be shape a constituency's position at a very basic level. Delegates at post-agreement negotiations have little to no chance to affect this level in any significant way (see Subsection 5.4.3 for a more detailed discussion of this). The explanatory mechanism for how learning can affect the specific case of post-agreement negotiations must therefore be a different one.

Symbolic learning, too, lacks some explanatory power when it comes to international post-agreement negotiations. Theories of symbolic learning assume the that there is an external audience or ultimate decision-making authority that must be persuaded. Boswell (2008; 2009), for example, looks at how government agencies for migration routinely refer to expert knowledge as they compete for resources and jurisdiction over policy areas with other agencies. In the Green Climate Fund, by contrast, it is the Board that takes decisions by consensus. There is no external audience that needs to be convinced of these decisions. To be sure, the GCF does report to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. Yet, the Fund's Board is tasked to reach decisions on all operational matters. The COP itself does not give preference to one position over another in these matters. For the legitimising effect of learning to materialise, there would need to be an external body that ultimately decides based on the deliberations. However, the COP does not even consider individual positions directly, only the outcome of these positions in the form decisions that were taken in the GCF Board meetings. Moreover, the GCF negotiations are characterised by strong diverging interests (see also Subsections 4.2.2 and 5.3.2). Under those circumstances, it is doubtful whether actors would change their positions when confronted by lessons that legitimise another position over their own. Negotiators might well be using lessons to substantiate their positions vis-à-vis their fellow delegates. But here, too, the question is how exactly this would allow them to exert influence in the context of post-agreement negotiations, given the limited room for delegates to move as outlined above.

2.1.3 Summary

This section has reviewed the learning literatures in the social sciences. While learning has been conceptualised in a vast number of ways, two main streams can be identified. In the first stream, scholars see learning as an alternative explanation for policy change where power is explicitly not the main explanatory factor. Part of a deliberative turn in the social sciences, this notion dominated the academic debate in the 1990s. Learning was seen as a way to find an adequate course of action in conditions of uncertainty. This sort of technical learning is learning for the sake of policy. It focusses on how learning can improve policy

output. The problem with this notion is that there are a number of presumptions that do not hold true in politically charged contexts like the Green Climate Fund negotiations, not least that it would require a consensus on policy goals that do not interfere with strong political interests.

The second stream in the literature argues that lessons are drawn selectively to rationalise or substantiate political positions. It originates from a critique of the functionalist notions in the first stream. Instead of improving policy output, learning is seen as a way to harden political positions against opposition. Political learning is learning for the sake of politics. While this stream in the literature fruitfully reconciles learning and power, it does not provide a suitable analytical lens for all contexts. Political learning usually emphasises either ideas and discourses as part of a constructivist approach or the legitimising role of learning vis-à-vis an external authority. In the context of post-agreement climate finance negotiations, these factors do not sufficiently explain lesson-use.

In order to address these shortcomings, learning needs to be conceptualised in conjunction with a theory of negotiating. The following section will turn to the arguing-and-bargaining literature, which will serve as the theoretical framework for learning in international negotiations.

2.2 Negotiating

With the review and discussion of the learning literatures concluded, this section turns to negotiating. The section pays particular attention to post-agreement negotiations. The term simply refers to all negotiation processes that follow the conclusion of an initial agreement (Jönsson & Tallberg 1998: 372; Spector 2003: 54–55). In the case of the Green Climate Fund, this agreement was reached at the 16th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Cancún, where the GCF was formally established (UNFCCC 2011c: IV.A.102–111). Post-agreement negotiations have been somewhat neglected in International Relations research. Scholars tend to focus on the high-profile process leading up to signing the initial agreement (Jönsson & Tallberg 1998). Yet, as will be argued in this thesis, the fact that there is an initial agreement has significant effects for the mode of negotiating.

Arguing-and-bargaining theory serves as the specific theoretical approach to international negotiations. It was chosen for a couple of reasons. First, as will be elaborated below, it takes seriously the analytical level of verbal exchanges. It captures negotiations as communication, which is an important empirical contribution to the understanding of lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations. Second, at the same time,

arguing-and-bargaining theory does not entirely rely on speech acts either. It considers both communicative elements and structural power assets. In this way, it captures what learning is often conceptualised as in the literature, but it also leaves open the possibility to identify different logics of interaction. Third, learning has already been conceptualised within the arguing-and-bargaining literature, albeit merely as a minor point. This enables this thesis to directly assess the existing intersections between the learning and arguing-and-bargaining literatures. See also Section 2.4 below for a critical reflexion on the choice of theoretical framework for this dissertation.

The section proceeds in four steps: Section 2.2.1 makes the case for taking seriously negotiations as a form of communication. Section 2.2.2 introduces arguing-and-bargaining theory and reviews the associated literature. Section 2.2.3 examines power in international negotiations and applies it to the arguing-and-bargaining framework. Lastly, Section 2.2.4 briefly summarises the main points.

2.2.1 Negotiation as communication

To negotiate is to communicate. Regardless of the particular theoretical perspective, negotiating always involves at its core the verbal exchange of information and arguments, threats and promises, and so on. Granted, depending on the theoretical background, these verbal exchanges are sometimes thought to be only of secondary importance compared to the material assets that negotiators bring to the table. A country's military strength matters in peace negotiations as does the size and structure of its economy in trade negotiations. This notion is commonly associated with neorealist theory¹⁵ of International Relations (Waltz 1979). Nonetheless, most scholars would probably agree that one cannot properly study and fully understand negotiations without looking at the verbal exchanges between parties or delegates. Surprisingly, this is where many empirical studies, particular of environmental negotiations, fall short. Scholars tend to neglect the communication that is at the very core of the negotiation process, making impossible a thorough empirical analysis of what happened at the negotiation table.

“Much published work offers recycled information that can be derived without negotiations actually having been observed. [...] The dynamics around the negotiation table often remain hidden. What is the verbal exchange? What are the offers and responses made during informal consultations? Relevant literature tends to avoid these questions and gravitate toward related topics such as theorizing about the creation of institutions and their impact on state behavior.”

Dimitrov (2013: 346–347)

¹⁵ Fittingly, neorealism is also referred to as structural realism.

All too often, scholars think about how negotiations play out in abstract hypothetical terms, without putting the assumptions made based on conceptual notions under empirical scrutiny (Dimitrov 2013: 346–347; Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014; Wilson Rowe 2015; Blaxekjær 2016: 146–147). Rather than thorough empirical analysis, they base their conclusions on theory and casual observation about parties' interests and structural assets.¹⁶ Even worse, with the obvious exception of constructivism, much of International Relations theory fails to take seriously verbal communication as a part of politics, discounting it as epiphenomenal (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 36–37). The processual, on-the-ground making of international politics does not receive enough attention in the analysis. “[T]he meeting spaces of international diplomacy are frequently glossed over as structured in keeping with extant global hierarchies and with predetermined interests playing out amongst the representatives of states.” (Wilson Rowe 2015: 65)

Those works that do delve into empirics tend to rely on secondary textual data, which has been criticised as armchair analyses, “text-based analyses of global politics that are not complemented by different kinds of contextual data from the field” (Neumann 2002: 628). As a result, oddly, “communication is the terra incognita of negotiation studies.” (Dimitrov 2013: 345) This creates the risk of misreading the dynamics and outcome of international negotiations as mere extensions of the structural resources that parties command (Wilson Rowe 2015: 65). To be sure, this is not to say that states' material assets do not matter. But without actually studying the communicative elements in negotiations, it is impossible to determine to what extent they shape dynamics and outcomes and how they are brought into the negotiations. Students of international negotiations should therefore take seriously the verbal exchanges on the ground in addition to the behavioural, structural contexts of these interactions. Arguing-and-bargaining theory, which will be introduced in the following subsection, allows for exactly that.

2.2.2 *Arguing and bargaining*

In light of the above considerations, this thesis draws on a theory of negotiating that emphasises communication, namely arguing-and-bargaining theory. This subsection introduces the theory and reviews the relevant literature. This discussion will form the basis for conceptualising learning in international negotiations.

¹⁶ The frustration with this shortcoming in IR scholarship may explain the recently renewed push toward the study of practice (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014; Wilson Rowe 2015; Blaxekjær 2016).

Social science disciplines often tell their histories by recounting major conceptual turns.¹⁷ Arguing-and-bargaining theory, too, is perhaps best introduced by examining its intellectual history. In the mid-1990s, there was a lively debate in German political science that was in many ways constitutive for German International Relations scholarship. The debate was initially sparked by an article by Müller (1994).¹⁸ Müller used the distinction between arguing and bargaining, which had been proposed by Elster (2000 [1991]), to introduce the Habermasian concept of communicative action (Habermas 1981a; 1981b) to International Relations theory. The key contention was that beyond solely advancing their own interests, actors also engage in genuine discourse to find solutions to societal problems. The publication coincided with the deliberative turn in democratic theory (Goodin 2008: 38–42). In its spirit, Müller sought to highlight the importance of deliberation in international politics. He aimed to close what he believed was a logical flaw in utilitarian approaches – an explanatory gap between the lack of motivation for states to cooperate implied by existing theories on the one hand and their actual observed cooperative behaviour on the other. Müller maintained that Habermas' communicative action should only be seen as a normative theory, but could also shed light on previously underexplored explanatory factors for cooperation in international politics (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 203).

Müller's article gave the impetus for the so-called *ZIB* debate – named for *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*¹⁹, the German IR journal that served as its main forum during the 1990s (Müller 1994; Schneider 1994; Risso-Kappen 1995; Keck 1995; Müller 1995; Zangl & Zürn 1996; Gehring 1996; Keck 1997; Gehring 1999; Risso 1999). The debate carried on and was introduced to Anglo-Saxon IR in the early 2000s,²⁰ with contributions focussing on both theoretical underpinnings (Risso 2000; Holzinger 2001a; Hitzel-Cassagnesa 2002; Schimmelfennig 2003a: 194–228; Müller 2004; Deitelhoff & Müller 2005; Diez & Steans 2005; Risso & Ulbert 2005; Saretzki 2009; Kleine & Risso 2010; Grobe 2010) as well as empirical evidence (Holzinger 2001b; 2004; Niemann 2004; 2006; Panke 2006; Naurin 2007; Gehring & Ruffing 2008). New articles using and engaging with arguing-and-bargaining

¹⁷ International Relations emphasises the so-called Great Debates, although the usefulness and accuracy of this narrative are contested (Schmidt 1998: 21–24; Lake 2013).

¹⁸ A number of solitary articles have sparked some deep and longstanding debates in International Relations. Consider Wendt (1992) seminal contribution to establishing constructivism as a mainstream branch of IR theory.

¹⁹ The title translates as *Journal of International Relations*.

²⁰ Similar notions had also been discussed in Anglo-Saxon academia by that time, albeit less prominently and distinctively. Hopmann (1995), for instance, maintains that negotiations can have two different emphases: bargaining and problem-solving. The latter certainly shares some characteristics with arguing, although some (German) authors like Niemann (2006) see a difference between problem-solving and arguing.

theory are published to this day (Saretzki 2009; Grobe 2010; Jörke 2013a; Seymour 2016). Although work on the theory of communicative action (Habermas 1981a; 1981b) was originally predominantly normative and focussed on the requirements for legitimate societal consensus (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 202), the arguing-and-bargaining research agenda also took on a strong empirical stance. It aimed to prove the possibility of arguing in the sense of communicative action even under realist conditions of anarchy in the international system (Mitzen 2005; Risse & Ulbert 2005; Niemann 2006; Gehring & Ruffing 2008; Deitelhoff 2009; Risse 2013).

As its name suggests, at the core of arguing-and-bargaining theory is the analytical distinction between two modes of negotiating. Arguing and bargaining are, in essence, two distinct forms of speech acts (Elster 2000 [1991]: 347; Searle 1971; 1969; Müller 2004: 397). Negotiators become speakers and address others as the listeners.²¹ Negotiating, hence, can be defined according to arguing-and-bargaining theory as the exchange of speech acts in the spectrum between the two ideal-typical modes of arguing and bargaining.

Arguing – at least in its original, ideal-typical form – is sincere deliberation. Speakers who argue aim to reach consensus by persuading through genuine claims of factual truth and normative validity. “Arguing is a mode of communication in which the power of reasoning prevails [, i.e. ... the] mutual assessment of the validity of an argument geared to reach a reasoned consensus [...]” (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352). It “proposes the truth of a factual, or the normative validity of a moral, proposition with a view to convince the target [...] of the claim made by the speaker” (Müller 2004: 397). Simply put, “arguing [...] consists of genuine validity claims regarding what is objectively true or morally right” (Seymour 2016: 577).

Bargaining, by contrast, is conflict-driven in that it aims to coerce others by means of promises and threats (Müller 2004: 397; Jörke 2013a: 353). Bargaining actors seek to maximise their gains, rather than to reach consensus (Jörke 2013a: 360–361). Bargaining is strategic action, as opposed to communicative action. Note, however, that this sharp distinction applies only to the original, ideal-typical analytical categories of arguing and bargaining and has been contested in the literature (see below).

²¹ Some English translations of Habermas’ works – such as Habermas (1984, translated by Thomas McCarthy) – use the term *hearer* instead of *listener* for *Hörer*. While *hearer* is an adequate translation, *listener* is used in this dissertation for two reasons. First, it is more commonly used in English publications on arguing-and-bargaining theory. Second, it implies the participation required for social interaction. Hearing can be coincidental; listening is a conscious act.

The two modes of negotiating have different implications for the conditions and mechanism according to which international negotiations work. Since arguing is the genuine competition of arguments, the better argument will prevail. Therefore, echoing Habermas, arguing requires genuine sincerity on part of the actors involved. Actors must be able and willing to change their views, and other parties must recognise this:

“The central distinguishing characteristic between the two [arguing and bargaining] is whether the actors assume that preferences, or ‘wants’, are up for change or not. The purpose of arguing is the transformation of preferences, which may bring the parties closer to a common position.”

Naurin (2007: 561)

Bargaining, on the other hand, requires the credibility of the promises and threats made in order to effective (Jörke 2013a: 353). Listeners will only take bargaining seriously if they think it is likely that speakers will follow up on their promises and threats.

Examining the ontological underpinnings of arguing versus bargaining, Risse (2000: 2–7) introduced the distinction between the logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness to the debate, which had been originally proposed by March & Olsen (1998: 949–954). In the arguing-and-bargaining framework, actors who bargain follow a logic of consequentialism. They “choose among alternatives by evaluating their likely consequences for personal or collective objectives, conscious that other actors are doing likewise” (March & Olsen 1998: 949). Arguing actors, by contrast, follow a logic of appropriateness. They “follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations” (March & Olsen 1998: 951). Risse (2000: 6) points out that the logic of appropriateness actually encompasses two logics of interaction: norm-guided behaviour and rule-guided behaviour. The key difference is that with norm-guided behaviour, actors have internalised these norms to such a degree that they do not realise anymore that their actions are guided by them. With rule-guided behaviour, by contrast, actors are very much aware of the rules that they follow (*ibid.*). Genuine arguing should be considered rule-based behaviour because any factual and normative claims can, in principle, be doubted and contested (Jörke 2013a: 353). This aspect will become particularly important in the analysis.

So what determines which mode of negotiating actors use? Much of the debate around arguing-and-bargaining theory has revolved around this question (Deitelhoff 2009). Regardless of the particular version of the theory, the honest answer is usually a mixed one. Most scholars agree that the distinction between arguing and bargaining is analytical. In the

empirical reality of international politics, both are said to always occur at the same time: “Pure arguing in terms of deliberative and truth-seeking behaviour occurs as rarely as pure bargaining in terms of the exchange of demands, threats, and promises, and the like.” (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352) The observation of predominant arguing or bargaining in negotiations, then, is frequently attributed to the phase the negotiations are in and what the object of the negotiations is. Specifically, a decision-making phase might focus on finding solutions through arguing, following an initial struggle for influence through bargaining (van Merode et al. 2004: 142). Or, as Holzinger (2001b) maintains, rare cases of genuine arguing occur when regulative versus distributive issues are being discussed (Müller 2004: 407).²² Again others have posited that one key factor for actors to resort to arguing rather than bargaining is that they assume the other parties’ preference to be malleable (Naurin 2007: 561).

As mentioned above, the sharp distinction between arguing as communicative action and bargaining as strategic action has been contested. While communicative action is the driver behind genuine arguing, strategic action can be the driver behind both arguing and bargaining (Müller 2004: 397). In other words, there are cases in which actors argue for strategic purposes. Schimmelfennig (2003a: 193–228) outlines rhetorical action as a strategic mode of communication in which actors use arguments not to convince under the premise of Habermasian communicative action, but to persuade an external audience under the premise of conflicting interests. Seymour (2016) adds further nuance by relating the concept of bullshitting²³ to the ideal-typical concepts of arguing and bargaining. The main difference between rhetorical action and bullshitting is that speakers who bullshit are indifferent to whether the claims they make are factually true or not (Seymour 2016: 573–575). Subsection 2.3.3 will discuss concepts of strategic arguing vis-à-vis lesson-drawing in more detail.

The concept of strategic arguing should be kept in mind for the remainder of this chapter. In fact, this thesis proposes that it accurately captures what happens when actors draw lessons in negotiations. For now, however, the purpose of this subsection was to review the underlying theoretical literature. The following table contrasts the two modes of negotiating, regarding their underlying logic, content, purpose, causal mechanism, and contextual conditions.

²² Holzinger adopts this distinction from Scharpf (1997: 124–135).

²³ Seymour draws on Frankfurt’s (2005) concept of bullshitting.

	Arguing	Bargaining
Logic	Logic of appropriateness	Logic of consequentialism
Content	Genuine validity claims about facts and norms	Promises, threats, and information
Purpose	Persuading; reaching consensus through deliberation	Agreeing; maximising gains
Causal mechanism	Trust	Credibility
Contextual conditions	Consensus-seeking/willingness to be persuaded; shared lifeworld; involvement of public sphere	Seeking to maximise gains, instrumentally rational

Table 1: The two modes of negotiating (based on Seymour 2016: 576; Jörke 2013a: 355)

2.2.3 Power

Although the ZIB debate peaked in the mid-1990s, there has recently been renewed interest in arguing-and-bargaining theory. A key motivating factor for many of the new takes on the theory stems from the way in which it considers (or fails to consider) the linkage between power and arguing (Müller 2004; Jörke 2013a; 2013b). Since this linkage is crucial to the theoretical framework for this thesis, this subsection briefly discusses the concept of power and how power is exercised according to arguing-and-bargaining theory.

Political science commonly distinguishes three dimensions of power (Lukes 1974; Fuchs 2005b; Barnett & Duvall 2005). In the first dimension, “*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do” (Dahl 1957: 202–203). Dahl’s seminal definition echoes the classic Weberian notion, in which power is seen as “any opportunity to enforce one’s own will within a social relation, also against opposition, regardless of what this opportunity is based on”²⁴ (Weber 1921: 28). Weber’s and Dahl’s concept of power constitute its instrumental or compulsory dimension (Fuchs 2005a: 774–775; Barnett & Duvall 2005: 49–51). The focus is on agency. Actors influence other actors directly, usually by means of coercion or creating incentives.

Unsatisfied with the narrow focus of instrumental power, Lukes (1974) identifies structural power as a second dimension. He argues that actors not only exercise power by directly influencing others, but also by influencing the structures that enable and restrict others to decide and act (Lukes 1974: 20–25). Structural power “stresses the importance of the input

²⁴ Own translation of this German original text: “jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht”

side of the political process and of the predetermination of the behavioural options of political decision-makers by existing material structures that allocate direct and indirect decision-making power.” (Fuchs 2005a: 775) Or, to phrase it by analogy to Dahl’s formula: “*A* devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to *A*” (Bachrach & Baratz 1970: 7). Lastly, actors exercise power not only when they directly or indirectly influence others to do something that might be against their interests, but also when they influence others’ interests themselves. In its third dimension, “*A* may exercise power over *B* by getting him to do what he does not want to, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants.” (Lukes 1974: 27) This form of discursive or productive power “is the constitution of all social subjects with various social powers through systems of knowledge and discursive practices of broad and general social scope” (Barnett & Duvall 2005: 55).

In the arguing-and-bargaining framework, power is exercised in its instrumental form. However, this applies to bargaining only. Negotiators who bargain aim to directly influence others’ behaviour by selectively revealing information, making promises and threats, etc. Arguing, by contrast, is in fact characterised by the absence of power – at least in its original, ideal-typical conceptualisation. To understand why this is the case, recall the research agenda behind the introduction of arguing and bargaining into International Relations. Echoing the notion of Habermasian discourse (Habermas 1981a; 1981b), arguing is a transcendental concept in a Kantian tradition (Deitelhoff & Müller 2005: 178). “Both the presuppositions about the internal orientation of the speakers and the institutional reconstruction of the ideal speech situation are thus not meant to be empirical facts that can be brought into a hard-headed positivist cause-effect relationship, confirmed and refuted.” (ibid.) Genuine communicative arguing must be understood as a Weberian ideal type (Weber 1904: 66–71). Hence, pure arguing is an analytical category and cannot be observed in any empirical reality (Deitelhoff & Müller 2005: 178). Empirical research on arguing therefore relies on measuring a figurative distance between the ideal type of arguing and actual observations in international politics (ibid.). A short distance, i.e. strong similarities between ideal type and observation, would imply the presence of arguing. Deitelhoff (2009) claims that it is possible to identify at least small islands of persuasion where arguing matters. Similarly, Niemann (2006) finds that genuine arguing most likely occurs in pre-negotiations, before any hard decisions are taken. While these scholars aimed

to find empirical proof for genuine arguing, many others assert that bargaining dominates in international negotiations (Holzinger 2001b: 441–442; Müller 2004: 416). “[E]ven ‘islands of persuasion’ cannot completely escape the realities of international relations” (Jörke 2013a: 350). Jörke (2013a; 2013b: 464) suggests that constructivist approaches are better suited to explain power in international politics and show that power relations are inherent in all social processes.

The issues with arguing vis-à-vis constructivism mirror the issues with technical vis-à-vis political learning. Genuine arguing (in the sense of communicative action) contradicts the contentious nature of the negotiations. Regardless of whether islands of persuasion exist, the salient and consequential issues that matter are politically charged to an extent that genuine communicative action does not apply. Constructivist responses to the deliberate disregard of power in the concept of arguing suffer from the same lack of applicability in post-agreement situations as political learning does. Delegates simply have little too leeway to influence their constituency’s general position, even if discourses power affects their beliefs on an ideational level (see also Subsection 5.4.2). As will be explained in Subsection 2.3.2, this thesis argues that the rationalist paradigm does not need to be abandoned in order to reconcile power and arguing-and-bargaining theory.

2.2.4 *Summary*

This section has reviewed the literature on arguing-and-bargaining theory, which serves as a theory of negotiating in this thesis. Arguing and bargaining are two distinct forms of speech acts. Arguing, in its original ideal-typical form, is communicative action. To argue means to genuinely try convincing another actor of the factual truth or the normative rightness of a claim. Bargaining, on the other hand, is strategic action. To bargain means to act strategically, using promises, threats, and information to coerce others. While arguing is notably characterised by the absence of power, bargaining actors seek to exert instrumental power. However, the notion of arguing as strictly communicative has been contested, which will be important to keep in mind throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Arguing-and-bargaining theory is well suited as this dissertation’s theory of negotiating for two reasons. First, it highlights the nature of negotiating as communication. In fact, as will be explained below, it even considers learning to be part of an argumentative process. However, as will be shown below, this thesis proposes an alternative view on the way lesson-drawing and learning fit into the framework. Second, through the concepts of bargaining and strategic action, it includes an explanatory mechanism for influence in international negotiations that remedies the problems with political learning theories

identified above. The next section will examine the intersections between learning and arguing-and-bargaining and suggest that learning in international negotiations is best understood as the strategic use of arguments.

2.3 Conceptualising learning in international negotiations

Having reviewed the theoretical literatures on both learning and negotiating, this section considers the intersections between the two. On that basis, it develops a conceptual framework for learning in international negotiations. Learning is examined as a specific mode of negotiating from a theoretical vantage point, rather than negotiations being merely considered to be the coincidental context of learning. This perspective will allow to bring power to the forefront in the analysis.

The section proceeds in three steps. First, it develops a conceptual understanding of lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations by considering the intersections between the theories discussed above (Subsection 2.3.1). In the process, it establishes the vocabulary for the analysis by defining key terms such as experience, lesson, and learning as well as the relations between them. Second, to satisfy the major criticism levelled against conventional learning theories and arguing, the section discusses how power fits into learning in negotiations. This establishes the explanatory mechanism through which learning can influence the dynamics and outcome of international negotiations (Subsection 2.3.2). Third, the section differentiates learning in international negotiations from other forms of strategic arguing (Subsection 2.3.3) and political learning (Subsection 2.3.4).

2.3.1 *Intersections: Lesson-drawing as arguing*

This subsection considers the intersections between the learning and arguing-and-bargaining literatures. While learning plays only a very minor role in the arguing-and-bargaining literature, there are some fundamental shared characteristics. Specifically, the concept of technical learning has some important features in common with ideal-typical arguing. In both concepts, it is a genuine desire to solve problems and achieve common goals that drives processes of policy-making and negotiating. It is not interests, conflict, and contestation, but a sincere striving for consensus about the best course of action. In both concepts, it is “men collectively wondering what to do” (Heclo 1974: 305). In fact, as will be explained below, learning can be conceptualised as a form of arguing. This view is generally underexplored in the literature. Learning is often mentioned in

passing in the arguing-and-bargaining literature, but it has not yet been thoroughly studied in that context (with the notable exceptions presented above in Section 1.2).

Recall that arguing describes a genuine competition of arguments in which the best argument prevails. This begs the question what factors determine whether an argument is better than another. The decisive factor in this regard are so-called external authorities. In arguing-and-bargaining theory, arguing is triadic, meaning that not only are there a speaker and a listener, the speaker must also refer to an external authority in order to bolster their claims (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 193–228; Risso & Ulbert 2005: 352–353, 357–359). These external authorities can take various forms. They can be institutional norms or public perception, for example. In addition, past experiences can serve as such reference frames. Risso & Ulbert (2005: 355, 361) refer to this as drawing analogies. Drawing lessons, hence, is understood as a specific mode of arguing in which past experience serves as the external authority that makes an argument more potent.

This thesis proposes a different explanation for how learning can influence the dynamics of negotiations, as will be outlined in the following subsection. The thesis does, however, concur with the notion that lesson-drawing can be seen as a kind of arguing. The remainder of this subsection therefore defines the key conceptual elements of that notion: experience, lesson, claim, argument, learning, as well as the relation between them.

As explained in Section 2.1, theories of learning have been systematised in a vast variety of ways. Regardless of the specific approach taken, however, the literature is usually organised according to certain cleavages. These include, for instance, the domains in which learning takes place (Grin & Loeber 2007), the role of structure versus agency (Stone 2001: 5; 2012: 487), or the cognitive capacities of the learners (Meseguer 2005). On a very general level that many of these approaches share, learning is usually seen as grounded in some sort of *experience* (see, for instance, Hall 1993: 278; Sabatier 2003: 148; Meseguer 2005: 73; Dunlop & Radaelli 2013: 599). A further differentiation is made according to the source of that experience. This source can be either exogenous or endogenous to the institutional setting in which learning takes places. On the one hand, scholars have conceptualised experiences as endogenous. Here, learning is the result of the continuous social interaction between the actors involved in the process. This interaction allows a better understanding of each other's positions and re-evaluating one's own (see, for example, Edwards 1997; Haas 2000; Eising 2002). Where learning is based on such endogenous experience – i.e. learning takes place 'within domains' (Grin & Loeber 2007: 202–210) – it is often referred to as social or organisational learning (Dovey 1997; Edwards 1997; Tsang 1997; Easterby-

Smith et al. 1998; Romme & van Witteloostuijn 1999; Bates & Khasawneh 2005). On the other hand, experiences can originate exogenously with regard to the context in which learning takes place. This exogenous experience stems from existing ways to address societal problems that could be observed elsewhere. Simply put, drawing lessons exogenously means “learning from the experience of others” (Meseguer 2005: 68). Others, here, refers to events or instances related to the one that is learnt about across domains, that is, across space (as in: across countries, jurisdictions, or institutions) or time (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996: 344; Grin & Loeber 2007: 202–210). Learning based on exogenous experience is often the subject of the literature subfield that is concerned with lesson-drawing (e.g., Rose 1991; May 1992; Levy 1994).

This thesis investigates experiences with existing international institutions and financial aid mechanisms are used. It is concerned with exogenous experience. *Lessons* in international negotiations, hence, entail references to experiences that are external to the negotiation process itself. Learning is “endogenous to the negotiations, because it happens through interaction” (Wolfe 2010: 28), but the experience is exogenous to this interaction. The experience may regard the procedure of dealing with the problem, the content of the policies to address it, as well as the conditions for a policy’s feasibility and its political repercussions (McConnell 2010: 349–350). In the context of the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, experience specifically concerns policies, standards, and practices. Policies are defined as concrete, inherently codifiable rules governing the GCF’s institutional procedures or operational features. Standards denote concrete, often numerical thresholds and principles. They are usually embedded into policies, but dealt with separately here. This is because a given lesson might relate to (and argue about) a standard, but not necessarily the policy it is embedded in. Examples for standards are fiduciary principles or social and environmental standards for entities accredited with the GCF (Bridgetown 2.3: 00:44).

Lastly, practices are non-codified ways for the Board or the Fund to conduct its business.

This thesis is further concerned with how this experience is used. Therefore, the act of using an experience in the negotiations – in the sense of referencing it or drawing conclusions from it – to bolster a claim within an argument will be called *lesson-drawing*. Lesson-drawing is a particular kind of speech act; the lesson itself is its substance. This is in contrast to many conventional definitions that focus on outcome rather than process and see learning as the revision of existing knowledge or beliefs in the light of experience. Lesson-drawing, by contrast, is more openly defined as the use of experience. It emphasises the process of learning. This also allows for the possibility that the learner’s knowledge or

beliefs remain unchanged, and thereby opens up a range of aspects that the mainstream literature on learning tends to screen out. A lesson requires interpretation. Experience is a neutral way to denote the reference a speaker is making, without applying this interpretation.

The remainder of this subsection further refines the definition of lesson-drawing given above. Lessons are used to bolster the *claims* made by the speaker. Claims, in turn, usually take the form of technical propositions. This is certainly true for post-agreement negotiations, which, at least on the surface, do not aim to resolve a conflict of interest, but primarily to sort out technical matters (Holzinger 2001b: 426). Propositions are claims that entail the best course of action to achieve a certain goal in view of the speaker. Likewise, propositions may involve the opposite, i.e. advocating to *refrain* from doing something to achieve a goal. This is in line with the definition of arguing in arguing-and-bargaining theory as it claims the factual truth of what the best course of action is. In that, this theoretical framework echoes Toulmin's concept of "the *claim* or conclusion whose merits we are seeking to establish [...] and the facts we appeal to as a foundation for that claim—what I shall refer to as out *data*" (Toulmin 2003: 90, original emphasis). Translated into lesson-drawing in international negotiations, data are the experience on which a lesson is based (Toulmin 2003: 92). Lessons, then, support claims in a way akin to what Toulmin (2003: 91) asserts for warrants: "Our task is no longer to strengthen the ground on which our argument is constructed, but is rather to show that, taking these data as a starting point, the step to the original claim or conclusion is an appropriate and legitimate one." This demonstration of the appropriateness and legitimacy of the claim, however, is not necessarily spelled out like that by the speaker: "data are appealed to explicitly, warrants implicitly" (Toulmin 2003: 92). Basing a lesson on experience and using it to bolster a claim, then, is a form of arguing. To draw a lesson is to argue.

Lastly, this thesis is not only interested in lesson-drawing, but also the larger process of *learning* in international negotiations. Negotiating, naturally, is a process of social interaction. The concept of argumentative lesson-drawing focusses on the actor drawing the lesson – i.e. the speaker in arguing-and-bargaining terms. However, as will be shown in the analysis, the process is not unidirectional. Rather, lessons and their interpretations can be contested, rejected, and the appropriateness of lesson-drawing can be dismissed altogether. This social process of negotiating lessons will be referred to as learning.

Translated into a simple flow chart, the relations between experience, lessons, and learning – within the structure of an argument – looks like this:

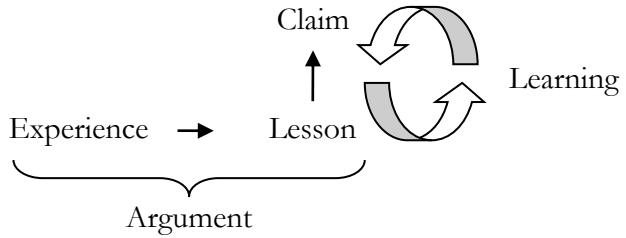


Figure 1: Experience, lessons, claims, arguments, learning, and their relations, echoing Toulmin (2003: 92–97)

Interestingly, the lesson may (in a special case discussed in Section 5.2) be used to bolster a claim that itself contains the very same lesson. When delegates make a claim about the advantages of a policy, practice, or standard, they might try to bolster that claim by referencing experience with another institution and at the same time propose to adopt the policy practice, or standards from the very same institution. The primary characteristic that makes lessons argumentative is the former aspect, i.e. the bolstering of a claim through lesson-drawing. Nonetheless, this does not exclude that the claim proposes a factual truth about the advantageousness of formally drawing the lesson that bolsters the claim argumentatively as well.

Note that with the conceptualisation of lesson-drawing and learning presented here, the ultimate intentions behind it are, at least at this conceptual stage, intentionally left open to avoid a blind spot in the analytical perspective. While this theoretical framework adopts from arguing-and-bargaining theory its conceptual vocabulary, it does not adopt the rigid mapping of communicative action onto learning as an analytical distinction. If one were to instead follow the conventional reading in the arguing-and-bargaining literature, the process of learning would, if successful, result in a belief change with the listener:

“It is quite obvious [...] that arguing can contribute to learning in that actors acquire new information and are introduced to new ways of thinking about a problem and its possible solutions. This, in turn, can induce actors to reformulate their interests according to new empirical knowledge and moral standards.”

Risse & Ulbert (2005: 365)

It is this explanatory mechanism where this dissertation’s theoretical framework differs from the view usually held in arguing-and-bargaining theory. Applying the conventional reading of learning in negotiations to the empirical analysis would imply that any empirical observation of lesson-drawing is likely an indication of Habermasian communicative action. As explained in Subsection 2.1.2, this view is problematic. There are strong interests involved at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, and arguing-and-bargaining theory

would expect bargaining to be the dominant mode of negotiating under such circumstances. With interests being as pronounced and conflicting as they were at the GCF Board meetings, one would expect actors to engage in strategic action.

Hence, the problem with the notion of learning as communicative action is that it obscures an important part of the picture. Consider the possibility of technical learning in international negotiations. Technical learning implies a consensus among negotiating parties on policy goals that do not interfere with strong political interests (Weiss 1979: 427–428). As should be obvious from the description of key areas of contestation in Subsection 4.2.2, such an assumption would completely disregard the reality of international climate negotiations. The Fund might seek to learn from best practices, but who determines what constitutes a good practice? Interests at the GCF Board certainly are divergent enough to interfere with the vague goals set out in the Governing Instrument.

The theoretical question then becomes how a theory of learning in international negotiations can incorporate notions of power. In other words, the work that must be done in the remainder of this chapter is to specify what the link between learning as arguing and strategic action would be exactly. This subsection defined lessons and learning and established conceptually that lesson-drawing can indeed be best understood as part of arguing within arguing-and-bargaining theory. The next subsection will offer a critique of the understanding of the link between learning and policy change implied by a conventional reading of learning in the arguing-and-bargaining literature. In the process, it will consider the full spectrum of logics embedded in the theory, bringing the possibility of strategic uses of lessons into purview.

2.3.2 The explanatory mechanism: Lesson-drawing as strategic action

The previous subsection introduced lesson-drawing as a form of arguing. So far, this has been in line with both technical learning theory as well as arguing-and-bargaining theory. However, as explained above, the explanatory mechanism in technical learning theory does not hold in the context of contentious negotiations. Furthermore, the notion of sincere communicative arguing neglects power dynamics in negotiations. What, then, is the mechanism behind learning? How can learning make negotiators reconsider their positions and thereby ultimately influence the course of the negotiations? This section answers this question. In essence, it assesses the logic of social interaction according to which actors learn (see March 1998: 949–954 as well as Subsection 2.2.2).

It is crucial to ensure a conceptually consistent approach when, as is done here, the analytical distinction between arguing and bargaining is broken up. The distinction between

the two modes of negotiating is central to the theory, but that does not mean that negotiations are assumed to be conducted entirely in one way or the other. On the contrary, arguing and bargaining are assumed to occur simultaneously or in alternating fashion (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352). The problem with that assumption is that communicative and strategic action represent two ontologically irreconcilable paradigms. As Müller (2004) explains, arguing and bargaining have fundamentally different underpinnings of strategic versus communicative action, individualism versus holism, and consequentialism versus submitting to the better argument. The supposed simultaneous occurrence of strategic and communicative action cannot be conceptually understood in a meaningful way. Actors are either guided by their interests and the consequences of their actions or by norms and the appropriateness of their actions. It cannot be both at the same time, because these two logics would imply contradicting courses of action throughout the negotiations. Scholars have argued that under conditions of strong and diverging interests, negotiators usually resort to bargaining rather than arguing. Holzinger (2001b: 441–442), for example, maintains that actors predominantly pursue strategic goals in negotiation and only occasionally switch to arguing. While arguing and bargaining may both occur in international negotiations, it can only be one of them that motivates negotiators' speech acts. One cannot conceptualise subjectively rational actors that seek to maximise gains and then switch to genuine communicative action when they discuss issues that have comparable salience in their set of preferences. This would be inconsistent. In light of this contradiction, this subsection answers the question whether learning in international negotiations follows a logic of consequentialism or one of appropriateness?

At its core, the contention in this theoretical framework is that lesson-drawing – despite taking the form of arguing – should be understood as strategic action, which functions according to a logic of consequentialism. Arguing seeks to justify positions against a background of divergence, dissension, or conflict over facts, norms, and interests (Holzinger 2001b: 421). Thus, while it lacks the immediate coerciveness of bargaining, it nonetheless involves certain contentiousness over what is the right thing to do, rationally or morally speaking. Instead of overriding them, as it were, arguing seeks to alter another actor's preferences in seeking agreement (Naurin 2007: 561). Successful arguing to advance one's own interests, therefore, also means, consciously or not, exerting power. "Deliberative settings are a certain way of governing the conduct of the participants, and strategically orientated speech acts, such as rhetoric, deception about hidden interests, or holding back information, are an essential part of this game." (Jörke 2013a: 360) Arguing,

hence, can under certain circumstances be seen as strategic action (see also Subsection 2.3.3 below).

Yet, the power exerted through arguing cannot be understood in the same way as power exerted through bargaining. As many scholars have stated many times, power is not only a key concept in political science but also rather difficult to define and measure. In light of the conceptual provisions of the arguing approach and the focus of this research project, it might be useful to think of power as influence which

“involves affecting the conduct of another through giving reasons for action short of threats; such reasons may refer to his advantage, or to moral or benevolent considerations, but they must have weight for him, so as to affect his decision. The influenced agent, unlike the agent who is coerced, acts freely. He may choose to ignore those considerations which influence him, and he may himself exert control over the influencing power, as in an unequal marriage.”

Scruton (2007: 331)

Speakers influence one another by invoking lessons which make their factual claims matter for the listeners. Given the unlikeliness of communicative action in politically charged contexts, this weight cannot solely consist of moral pleas or rational reasoning. The speaker must attach weight to his or her argument that transcends the level of genuine arguing in order to exert influence. In the case of lesson-drawing, speakers using lessons to bolster the claims in their arguments cannot rely exclusively on the rational insight that these lessons supposedly provide. Instead, the lesson must be infused with something that gives weight to it beyond moral rightness or factual truth. Speakers exert influence through lessons through consequentialist notions that they attach to them. Borrowing the language of practice theory (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014), speakers activate power assets during negotiations. Lessons are one particular way of doing this. These assets might be the material assets their constituency commands, their formal authority over the subject matter of the negotiations, or something else originating from within the arena of negotiating.

The same logic applies from the listener’s point of view. Listeners challenge or submit to lessons due to their own consequentialist thinking. To them, a lesson “alters the payoffs they attribute to different policy options” (Eising 2002: 87). “[T]he persuadee simply alters his initial beliefs without actually changing his preferences” (Grobe 2010: 11). Through lesson-drawing in negotiations, negotiators do not alter the wants of others, as the conventional political learning literature would suggest. Rather, lessons serve as a vehicle for bargaining and coerce others to adjust their position so as to be able to best preserve their interests. Arguing, hence, should be seen not exclusively as the mode of negotiating in Habermasian discourse, but rather as a mixture of persuasion and pressure; therefore,

processes of arguing – just like bargaining – can follow a logic of consequentialism (Jörke 2013a: 356).

Using lessons strategically, however, does not imply that speakers are able to fully anticipate their effect. Actors are assumed to be subjectively rational, which means that “they do not possess objective knowledge about the effectiveness of their [strategically used] arguments and do not necessarily use the most effective argument (only)” (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 199). This is not to say that they have no conception of its effectiveness – on the contrary. The question, then, becomes why actors would try to exert influence through argumentative vehicles like lessons – as opposed to bargain through more direct means, such as through threats or promises. Speakers must find themselves in a context where they are motivated by interest, trying to maximise their gains, but pursuing direct strategic action would not be feasible. To use a metaphor from physics, actors choose the path of least resistance when choosing their course of action. In specific contexts, lesson-drawing can be one of those paths. This will be a key question in the empirical analysis in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.4 in particular).

In conclusion, lesson-drawing is the strategic use of arguments. Hence, while the directly observable mode of negotiating is commonly associated with communicative action in the literature, the mechanism for how lessons affect the dynamics and outcome of negotiations follows the same principles as bargaining. In other words, learning in international negotiations has the appearance of arguing, but – like bargaining – is strategic, rather than communicative action. This clear notion of a logic of consequentialism addresses one of the greatest conceptual difficulties with arguing-and-bargaining theory – one that any application of it needs to find an at least implicit solution for. As Müller (2004: 396) points out, arguing and bargaining ontologically contradict each other. The coexistence of both modes of negotiating cannot be understood conceptually in a meaningful way; learning cannot be both one and the other at the same time. One of the key points of this subsection was therefore to clearly situate lesson-drawing within the arguing-and-bargaining framework, relating it to other modes of negotiation. Scholars frequently stress that both usually occur simultaneously, that is to say no negotiation is conducted through either arguing or bargaining only (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352). However, the sharp conceptual separation between arguing and bargaining creates an analytical blind spot for other important types of interaction in international negotiations, specifically in this case where arguments are being used for strategic purposes. This section has addressed this gap

on a conceptual level by explaining how learning in international negotiations fits in with the arguing-and-bargaining framework.

2.3.3 Lesson-drawing versus other forms of strategic arguing

The previous subsection conceptualised lesson-drawing as a form of strategic arguing. On the surface, lessons relate argumentatively to experience. At the same time, however, political interests underlie, inform, and structure these lessons. In other words, the underlying mode of interaction is not genuine communicative action, but strategic action. Lessons have the appearance of arguments, but they are being employed for strategic purposes. This contention is not new as such. Under certain conditions, “arguing is not an alternative to bargaining, but a means for bargaining” (Holzinger 2004: 195). This subsection differentiates strategic lesson-drawing from other forms of strategic arguing that already exist in the literature.

Rhetorical action is one of the most prominent such forms of strategic arguing. There are some pivotal overlaps between rhetorical action and strategic lesson-drawing. Therefore, it is warranted to consider whether strategic lesson-drawing could be seen as a special case of rhetorical action. “In greater detail, [rhetorical action] is the strategic use and exchange of arguments based on ideas shared in the environment of the proponents and intended to persuade the audience and the opponents to accept the proponents’ claims and act accordingly.” (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 199) Hence, lesson-drawing as conceptualised in this thesis shares with rhetorical action its most fundamental characteristic that it is the strategic use of arguments. Furthermore, rhetorical action and learning in international negotiations share the assumptions that interests and beliefs are fixed for the duration of the process. That is not to say actors cannot change their position strategically, but that the red lines remain the same. As with learning in international negotiations, “actors engaging in rhetoric are not prepared to change their own beliefs or to be persuaded themselves by the ‘better argument’” (Risse 2000: 8).

On the other hand, there are differences between strategic lesson-drawing and rhetorical action. First and foremost, the focus of inquiry is different. Rhetorical action may involve any type of argumentative claim, whereas learning as a specific mode of strategic action is of course restricted to the use of lessons. More fundamentally, however, rhetorical action is triadic. This means that not only are there a speaker and listener, but also an audience (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 193–228; Kratochvíl et al. 2006). Taking turns, speakers rhetorically compete for the audience’s support, exchanging arguments in order to persuade them of the factual truth or normative rightness of their claims. The audience in

this conceptual set-up has a passive role in that it does not contribute arguments, but it considers them and is persuaded if successful. The presence of this audience is by no means trivial, but a key aspect to rhetoric action. According to shared ideas among the members of the audience speakers select what they use in order to validate and bolster their argumentative claims (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 201; Risse & Ulbert 2005: 359). This also has an effect on the kind of arguments that can be used. “[E]xplicitly selfish interests can rarely be defended and justified in the public sphere.” (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 357) The concept of rhetoric action is most suitable to describe situations akin to a debate among politicians. They are not trying to convince or persuade each other; they are targeting the audience. A similar mechanism has been identified in international relations, where “[p]ublic talk can mitigate the security dilemma and enable interstate communicative action” (Mitzen 2005: 401).

The expectations of the public plays a motivational role in the conventional learning and knowledge-use literatures, too (Howlett 2012; Weiss 1986: 214). Learning in international negotiations, however, is different because there is no audience. The process is multilateral, not triadic. The target a speaker attempts to persuade is not external to the process of negotiation, but an integral part of it. Speakers and listeners have the exact same role in this process of social interaction, and they are constantly switching roles. The GCF Board meetings do have observers, but those do not qualify as an audience in the sense of arguing-and-bargaining theory. Firstly, while a number of meetings were broadcast over the internet, they are not open to the public. Observers need to be officially accredited. Secondly, these observers attend the meetings because they are stakeholders with particular interests. NGOs usually represent recipient groups; private sectors organisations represent certain donors. Thirdly, in the actual meetings, Board members address each other, not any observers. Observers merely get to provide short input after the Board has concluded the discussion of an agenda item, and in some instances observers even get excluded completely when the Board decides in executive session. Therefore, echoing Schimmelfennig’s argument, actors who draw lessons in international negotiations will need to invoke shared ideas and knowledge from the lifeworld not of an audience, but of each other.

Another important difference is that rhetorical action (like arguing in general) is often concerned with normative rightness, rather than claims of factual truth. To learning in international negotiations, this does not apply. While the justification for drawing a certain lesson may have a normative component, the actual lesson itself consists of factual claims

about the best course of action. Finally, rhetorical action is strategic action by definition. Learning in international negotiations, on the other hand, is strategically used, but that does not categorically exclude the possibility that the learner genuinely believes a lesson to represent the morally righteous course of action (see also Flyvbjerg 1998: 228). Moral appeals were certainly extended by some delegates during the Green Climate Fund negotiations as well (e.g., Paris 1.2: 00:46; Bridgetown 4.8: 00:18). But that does not mean that those should automatically be considered instances of rhetorical action, mainly because they lacked the audience necessary to qualify as such.

There are also important differences between strategic lesson-drawing and bullshitting²⁵ (Frankfurt 2005; Seymour 2016), another form of the strategic use of arguing. With bullshitting, which has also been framed in terms of arguing-and-bargaining theory, it does not matter whether there is any factual truth to an argument – in fact, the speaker is indifferent to that (Seymour 2016: 573–575). By contrast, lesson-drawing in negotiations is not addressed at a general audience that might misread bullshitting as sincere arguing. Instead, the listeners are the speaker’s peers. As mentioned in the theory chapter, successful bargaining requires credibility. Strategic lesson-drawing is no different in that the bargaining aspect embedded in it must hold up to the scrutiny of informed listeners. Moreover, considering the interests of parties at the GCF Board meetings, bullshitting would to an extent even be self-defeating: “BSing often works to the detriment of the same mechanisms upon which arguing, bargaining and rhetorical action rely: words lose their persuasiveness as partners reject the validity of arguments and cease to trust one another; credibility erodes as bargaining partners realize the search for agreement is a cover for conveying impressions” (Seymour 2016: 577).

In summary, strategic lesson-drawing in international negotiations, just like rhetorical action and bullshitting, is the strategic use of arguments. However, strategic lesson-drawing in negotiations is multilateral, not triadic, which means that lessons work argumentatively if they resonate with other negotiators, instead of with an audience.

Up until here, this subsection has compared strategic lesson-drawing to related concepts from the arguing-and-bargaining literature. In addition to those specific concepts, there are broader concepts of strategic framing or rhetoric that are relevant to the discussion. The remainder of the subsection relates strategic lesson-drawing to these broader concepts.

²⁵ The term may be offensive to some, but it is well established in the academic literature; owing in particular to Frankfurt’s (2005) seminal conceptualisation, which for example Seymour (2016) and Wakeham (2017) draw on.

Rein & Schön (1994; 1996) look at framing in public policy controversies. They distinguish between disagreements and controversies. Disagreements are disputes that can be resolved by examining factual evidence, whereas controversies are disputes that are immune to appeal to facts (Rein & Schön 1994: 3–5). This distinction reveals an interesting tension in the strategic use of arguments in arguing-and-bargaining theory. On the surface at least, strategically used arguments do appeal to facts (or normative rightness), but the issues they seek to resolve usually relate to material political interest. Therefore, these issues are inherently not solvable by appealing to facts. Delegates at the GCF Board meetings drew lessons to argue in favour of a particular policy's advantages, but the implementation of that policy would often have important implications for distributive mechanisms that impinged on delegates' interests.

Rein and Schön describe a frame as “a less visible foundation—an ‘assumptive basis’—that lies beneath the more visible surface of language or behavior, determining its boundaries and giving it coherence” (Rein & Schön 1996: 88). These foundations become part of social interactions through a process they call naming and framing: “From a problematic situation that is vague, ambiguous and indeterminate, each story selects and names different features and relations that become the ‘things’ of the story—what the story is about.” (Rein & Schön 1994: 26) Strategically used lessons serve a similar function, in that negotiators use them to spin the debate into a certain direction. Even when the deliberations at the GCF pertain to very specific issues like safeguards or accountability, invoking a lesson can connect them to an originally separate issue like pledging and financial contributions (see Subsection 5.3.3). Drawing a lesson introduces a new assumptive basis into the existing story, as it were.

Overall, however, Rein and Schön have a much broader focus than this thesis. They examine a multitude of types of frames (Rein & Schön 1994: 32–35). While lesson-drawing might be related to framing or even be conceptualized as a particular type of framing, a specific approach that is more immediately comparable to other learning theories was deemed more appropriate for this research project. In addition, there are more general considerations that will be discussed at the end of this subsection.

Krebs & Jackson (2007) look at what they call the power of political rhetoric. Discontent with IR's neglect of ubiquitous rhetoric and unconvinced by constructivists' conceptualisation of rhetoric as persuasion, they contend that rhetoric has a coercive effect in international politics. What explains this influence is that actors “close off routes of acceptable rebuttal” to their opponents (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 44–45). By skilfully

framing issues and relating them to rhetorical commonplaces – shared *topoi* within their audience – actors effectively limit the opportunities for their opponents to make counter-claims (ibid.) “Rhetorical action is a political strategy that seeks to twist arms by twisting tongues.” (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 42) Political rhetoric differs from constructivism, in that “rhetorical maneuver can prove critical to success in political contest even when one’s opponents have not internalized the promoted values” (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 36). The same holds true for lessons in strategic lesson-drawing. Indeed, Krebs and Jackson propose a similar explanatory mechanism to the one presented here. Like with strategic lesson-drawing, it is not persuasion but coercion that explains the influence of rhetoric (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 42–48). In fact, strategic lesson-drawing could even be conceptualised as a particular type of rhetorical action. A lesson would correspond to a frame, and a claim would correspond to the implications an actor suggests follow from that frame (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 43). There is, however, one important difference. Krebs and Jackson’s political rhetoric draws its power not from an external source but from the established narratives and rules of the game within a given rhetorical contest: “Arguments can prove powerful only when the commonplaces on which they draw are *already* present in the rhetorical field” (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 46). In strategic lesson-drawing, by contrast, actors use lessons to invoke assets which are external to the arena of the negotiations. For reasons to be discussed in the analysis (Chapter 5), they resort to lesson-drawing when they cannot invoke these assets directly. Political rhetoric exerts power through a largely self-contained logic whereas strategic lesson-drawing works precisely because it brings something to the table that lies beyond its own scope.

Tracing the roots of the kind of arguments presented by Krebs and Jackson leads to the sociological thought of scholars like Goffman (1956) and the strategic use of norms. As Schimmelfennig (2003b: 158) points out: “Rather than a Habermasian consensus of which all participants are truly convinced after the exchange of truthful arguments, Goffman’s intersubjective structure is a ‘veil of consensus’”. In this line of thinking, norms are neither deemed irrelevant in negotiations – as in strong rationalist and materialist traditions – nor do they come into play not through internalisation – as in constructivist theory (Schimmelfennig 2003b: 159). They are instead used as part of strategic action. In a similar vein, strategically drawn lessons are not the objective source of factual truth that they are portrayed as in social interactions. Nor are they the instances of communicative action that they are understood as in conventional theoretical approaches. Note, however, that the theoretical framework in this thesis does not conceptualise norms to always be used in a

strategic way. In fact, one can very well argue that norms do play a role in disciplining an actor's choice of bargaining tactics. Acknowledging this role of normative considerations and considerations about appropriateness in negotiations dominated by strategic action does not per se contradict this theoretical framework (as will be explained in Subsection 5.4.4).

While the broader concepts discussed here are closely related to the concept of strategic lesson-drawing, arguing-and-bargaining was chosen as the theoretical framework in this thesis for a number of reasons. To begin with, the thesis is not just about any type of strategic arguing, framing, or rhetorical coercion, but specifically about learning in international negotiations. As mentioned above, arguing-and-bargaining theory is well suited to reconsider the role of lessons in negotiations because it already has a conceptual understanding of lessons. Furthermore, the original conceptualisation of lessons can be linked to the conventional learning literature, which is the literature this thesis seeks to speak to and challenge. At the same time, arguing-and-bargaining theory includes a wide spectrum of modes of negotiating, which lesson-drawing – in its empirical manifestations – can be related to. It considers a range of speech acts between the two eponymous ideal-typical ones. Through the lens of arguing-and-bargaining theory, any intervention observed at negotiations can therefore be placed within this spectrum, without theoretical preconceptions about its characteristics. When emancipated from the strict distinction between bargaining as strategic and arguing as communicative, the theory is not preoccupied with a particular kind of mode of negotiating. This conceptual width helps prevent a biased view of the empirical reality of international negotiations. As explained in Subsection 2.2.1, this thesis emphasises the fact that it conducts an inductive analysis. It is its explicit ambition to study negotiations by examining the actual verbal exchanges and not rely on theoretical preconceptions of learning as framing or rhetoric.

For these reasons, while more general theories about framing or rhetoric coercion would certainly capture many relevant aspects of what this thesis seeks to understand, arguing-and-bargaining theory was a more focussed, flexible, and fitting choice for a theoretical framework in this thesis.

2.3.4 Strategic action versus other forms of political learning

Having differentiated strategic lesson-drawing from other forms of strategic arguing, this subsection points out the major differences between strategic lesson-drawing and other forms of political learning as reviewed in Subsection 2.1.2. As mentioned, most critiques levelled at the neglect of power in studies of learning have offered constructivist responses.

They emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons (e.g., Robertson 1991; Brock et al. 2001; McFarlane 2006; Peck 2011). These scholars “reject the functionalist view of knowledge as static, bounded and fixed, and argue instead for a view of knowledge as social” (McFarlane 2006: 296). The theoretical framework presented here largely concurs with the former aspect. In fact, a critique of functionalist tendencies in the learning and global environmental politics literatures was very much a starting point for it. There are, however, some key differences. In most approaches to political learning, actors consciously or unconsciously rationalise proposals that are aligned with their interests and ideas by bolstering them with knowledge and lessons. What makes rationalisation powerful – according to the proponents of this concept – is the difficulty to recognise it as such:

“The ‘untouchable’ positions of rationalizations may be due to the fact that rationalizations are often difficult to identify and penetrate: they are presented as rationality, and [...] often only a thorough deconstruction of an ostensibly rational argument can reveal whether it is a rationalization.”

Flyvbjerg (1998: 229)

Translated into IR theory, rationalisation corresponds with constructivist thought. This sheds light on one of the key differences between rationalisation and the explanatory mechanism in this thesis. While this theoretical framework conceptualises actors as subjectively rational, they still make decisions – and respond to the use of lessons – according to their rational considerations, rather than being subjected to discourses or particular ways of thinking that are by definition unrecognisable to the involved actors.

As explained above, such an approach would have limited explanatory value in the context of post-agreement climate negotiations, where delegates have only little leeway to change their positions (see Sections 1.1 and 5.3). Therefore, this dissertation’s theoretical framework and the literature on political learning rest on entirely different ontological paradigms. The key difference, however, concerns the ways in which learning influences the beliefs or positions of actors in negotiations. As explained in Section 2.3.2, this dissertation proposes a different explanatory mechanism underlying learning in international negotiations, which remains within the framework of arguing and bargaining. It emphasises the logic of consequentialism according to which speakers draw lessons in their arguments, but according to which listeners, too, choose to approve or challenge those lessons. Although they are conceptualised to be only subjectively rational, actors make these considerations while at least partially aware of the implications of lessons.

In the context of strategic action and politicised learning, the relationship between power, politics, and strategic action should be clarified. While the focus is on power dynamics and

how they shape and are shaped by learning as a form of social interaction, the politicised character of the negotiations is essential for many of the arguments presented in this thesis. To begin with, the differentiation between technical and political negotiations was key for developing the research question. To reiterate, despite the outwardly technical nature of the GCF negotiations – tasked with the Fund’s operationalisation – the issues actually discussed were inherently political. Overarching goals had been outlined in the Governing Instrument, but virtually all operational details that ultimately determine the design of redistributive mechanisms have been negotiated at the Board meetings. In light of the consequential nature of the decisions taken by the Board and the diverging interests of Board members, the negotiations produce certain power dynamics in which actors have control over different sets of assets. Whereas developed countries (more precisely, contributing countries) control financial resources, developing countries (recipient countries) have formal authority over the jurisdictions in which these resources are to be invested. The focus of the empirical inquiry in this thesis is on learning as a particular kind of social interaction that emerges in these kinds of power dynamics – a strategically used argumentative vehicle through which power can be exercised. Importantly, politicised negotiations are not equated with power dynamics here. Rather, it is argued that they are part of a set of conditions or factors that encourage certain bargaining tactics. These tactics, in turn, can be seen as an expression or manifestation of power dynamics (see Section 5.4). And they extend into and shape lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations, which is the focus of empirical inquiry in this thesis.

In conclusion, it is crucial to consider the degree to which issues are politicised because discussing political questions as if they were technical ones is a pivotal feature of strategic lesson-drawing (see Section 5.3). In order to be able to unpack the power dynamics behind lesson-drawing and learning and characterise them as a mode of negotiating, it is necessary to examine the politics at the Board meetings because the politics determined to a large extent how these power dynamics played out.

2.3.5 Summary

Drawing on the literature reviews and discussions in the previous two sections, this section has developed a theoretical framework for learning in international negotiations. Subsection 2.3.1 considered the intersections between the literature on technical learning and the literature on arguing-and-bargaining. The section established that lessons are conceptualised as part of arguing. In the process, the section also defined the key terms of

experience, lessons, and learning and outlined the relations between those concepts, proving important vocabulary for the empirical analysis.

Crucially, the framework deviates from functionalist notions in the literature with regard to the explanatory mechanism through which learning matters in international negotiations. Subsection 2.3.2 addressed this neglect of power in the literature identified earlier and examined the mechanism according to which actors exert power in international negotiations. In light of the neglect of power in the conventional literature as well as the empirical ambiguity to learning in politically charged context, the theoretical framework rejects arguing-and-bargaining theory's conventional conception of the logic of social interaction underlying learning, which is one of communicative action. Instead, it holds that under certain conditions, which will be at the core of the analysis in Section 5.4, lesson-drawing follows a logic of strategic action. In short, the theoretical framework suggests that lesson-drawing in international negotiations is argumentative in nature, but strategic regarding its intent and consequentialist regarding the underlying mechanism. Lessons are neither deemed irrelevant to negotiations – as in the rationalist-materialist view – nor to be a technical tool in negotiations – as in the functionalist view – nor to come into play through rationalisation and internalisation – as in the constructivist view. They are instead used as part of strategic action.

Lastly, Subsections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 differentiated lesson-use in international negotiations from other forms of strategic arguing and strategic action from other forms of political learning.

2.4 Critical reflexion

This section critically assesses the theoretical framework developed in this chapter. To begin with, it should be reiterated why the theoretical framework relies on a critical, open-minded reading of arguing-and-bargaining theory as its theoretical framework to study learning in post-agreement climate finance negotiations – despite criticising it for its functionalist view of lesson-drawing and learning. In this regard, two aspects are important. First, to reiterate the justifications given in the introduction to Section 2.2, arguing-and-bargaining theory takes seriously the analysis of actual verbal exchanges during negotiations. It allows for an understanding of negotiations beyond purely structuralist notions.

Second, this theoretical framework reconceptualised how lesson-drawing and learning fit into arguing-and-bargaining theory. With this, verbal exchanges, or speech acts, are not

exclusively what explains the dynamics and outcomes of negotiations. The framework puts speech acts at the centre, but it also leaves open the possibility to identify other logics of interaction and explanatory mechanisms that are activated through these speech acts. Through the concept of arguing, arguing-and-bargaining theory is linked to the conventional literature on technical learning. At the same time, through the concept of bargaining, arguing-and-bargaining theory introduces the possibility to understand learning in ways other than communicative action. Learning can be analysed in a way that reconciles conventional understandings with the reality of politically charged negotiations, bringing power and strategic action into the picture.

In addition, there is a point to be made about relevance in the academic debate. Arguing-and-bargaining theory is an important theory in international negotiation studies; it has had a profound influence in political science debates – not just in International Relations, but also in, for example, deliberative democracy theory (see, for example, Naurin 2007) and it continues to be debated. The framework developed in this chapter reconsiders the aspect of learning and lesson-drawing in the theory.

Since one of the core criticisms of arguing-and-bargain theory is that it tends to neglect power, another option would have been to adopt a perspective that puts power at the centre. Foucauldian approaches come to mind here, which have served as a point of departure for challenging arguing-and-bargaining theory (Jörke 2013a). Bracking (2015: 36), for example, argues that the Green Climate Fund's lessons are dictated by a hegemonic neoliberal paradigm, merely a façade hiding the fact that – as she claims – the interpretations of lessons are not even subject to negotiation, but determined by dominant discourses. This thesis, by contrast, aims to show how learning is used selectively and strategically; not how it is produced by discourse. Moreover, as already discussed in the introductory chapter (Section 1.1), even if beliefs are influenced by lessons, it is questionable to what extent this alone can change actors' political positions. Delegates act as agents for the constituencies, and they generally do not have the authority to question their principles (Zangl & Zürn 1996: 361). This will also be a key point in the empirical analysis in Chapter 5. Again, this is not to say that ideational factors do not matter in international climate politics. On the contrary, ideas are immensely important for the formation of constituencies' basic positions in the GCF Board meetings (see also Section 4.1 and Subsection 4.2.2). However, the contention in this thesis is that these ideas of what climate is or should be shape a constituency's position at a very basic level, which a delegation at post-agreement negotiations has little to no chance of affecting significantly.

The main explanatory mechanism in the specific case of post-agreement negotiations must therefore be a different one.

In the analytical and discussion chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), learning as observed at the GCF Board meetings will be positioned within the arguing-and-bargaining framework. In the process, the chapters will demonstrate the theory's usefulness to understand learning in international negotiations, taking seriously the role of power.

3 Method: Studying negotiations through video

This chapter explains and critically discusses the methods used for gathering and analysing data. It is imperative that this be done in an explicit manner. In order to enhance the intersubjective verifiability of the results, any research project should be clear about the methodical choices, enabling other researchers to understand, verify and criticise the approach. Therefore, this chapter carefully considers the merits and limitations of the data material and methods.

The Green Climate Fund serves as a qualitative single case study in this research project. Using a single case study has both advantages and limitations, which will be discussed in detail in the critical reflexion of the empirical analysis in Section 5.6. A single case study is a “strategy of inquiry” (Creswell 2009: 13) which aims to provide “a deep understanding of particular instances of phenomena” (Mabry 2008: 214). More specifically, this thesis investigates learning in the process of institutional creation of the Green Climate Fund as a key institutional mechanism for international climate finance. Before the thesis goes into further depth with regard to its research design, it must first clearly identify its subject of inquiry, i.e. what entity within the Fund it needs to examine. Two aspects are particularly important in this regard. First, this research project is interested in the learning in international post-agreement negotiations. Hence, naturally, the entity that is the focus of inquiry will have to be the Green Climate Fund’s main decision-making body, which is the Board (see Subsection 4.2.1 for a detailed overview of the Fund’s institutional structure). Second, the above theory chapter conceptualised learning as a phenomenon that manifests itself through speech acts in the negotiations. Lessons are strategically used arguments. Therefore, this thesis analyses data that contain a minute transcript of the verbal exchanges at the GCF Board meetings. It uses video recordings of four negotiations rounds at the Board.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 3.1 provides a brief discussion of the kind of qualitative inquiry that is conducted in this dissertation. Section 3.2 introduces the data used to study the GCF negotiations, considering their merits and pitfalls and evaluating data quality against this background. This research project draws on video recordings of international negotiations, a rather uncommon data type in International Relations research. In light of this relative novelty, the section discusses in some detail the suitability

of video recordings for studying international negotiations.²⁶ Section 3.3 then outlines thematic analysis as a method to evaluate a certain aspect of video data.

3.1 Qualitative social science research

Qualitative research in the social sciences entails a broad range of methods. While these methods vary, they share some essential epistemological traits. One of the most significant distinctions regards the type of data. Contrasted to quantitative research, qualitative data are characterised by being non-numeric and usually less structured information such as text or images (Guest et al. 2012: 5–6). These differences can be understood as a consequence of deeper underlying differences of epistemological nature (Stake 1995: 37). Echoing the Weber's seminal distinction (Weber 1922: 503–523), qualitative social science research emphasises *Verstehen* (understanding) of social phenomena over *Erklären* (explaining). Interpretation is a central technique qualitative methods, as well as a degree of openness and flexibility with regard to techniques of analysis (Mason 2002: 3–4; Lamnek 2005: 21–26). For these reasons, a qualitative approach to the analysis is well suited for the explorative and hypothesis-generating objective of this research project.

Interpretation, openness, and flexibility, however, do not imply that conducting qualitative research means ploughing through data in an ad-hoc manner. “[It] is never simply a matter of finding something lying within the data like a fossil in a rock.” (King & Horrocks 2010: 149) Merely scouring the material for common threads in this way would not deliver results with the necessary validity and intersubjective reliability. A coherent, rigorous method of analysis with a clearly defined set of rules and guidelines for the analysis is immensely important in a qualitative research design (Mason 2002: 7). “Using a method for ‘reading’ or ‘seeing’ can make research better organized” (Milliken 1999: 235).

In light of this, it is curious that researchers often merely gloss over their methods (particularly in monographs) – presumably to satisfy the requirements of their publishers. In fact, Bernstein et al. (2013) ascertain that methods frequently remain underspecified in research on global environmental governance. The merits of qualitative research are often stressed, but the specifics of the chosen approach are only vaguely discussed. However, it is essential for any qualitative research project that the intersubjective verifiability of results be maintained. Ultimately, all qualitative social research is, at its core, interpretation (Stake 1995: 8–9; Boyatzis 1998: 15; Keller & Viehöver 2006: 107). To put it bluntly, “[q]ualitative

²⁶ For an even more extensive treatment, see Feist (2016b).

study has everything wrong with it that its detractors claim” (Stake 1995: 45). To compensate for this, the researcher must ensure analytical reliability by maintaining “consistency of observation, labeling, or interpretation” (Boyatzis 1998: 144). “[P]recision in description and stringency in meaning interpretation correspond to exactness in quantitative measurements.” (Kvale 2007: 12) That being said, it is also important that the researcher maintain an open-minded approach. “[M]eticulously following steps can lead to a fixation on or romance with method at the ironic expense of creative and critical thinking” (Alvesson & Lee Ashcraft 2012: 250). Being guided by rules in the analysis is not to say that applying qualitative methods of social science is a linear process. On the contrary, the researcher must iteratively and reflexively approach the material, going through the material and codes again and again to ensure they are capturing what is required to answer the research question (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 83).

3.2 Video recordings as data

In an effort to increase its transparency as an international institution, the GCF has published video recordings of its fifth through eighth Board meeting²⁷, and again since the 13th. The analysis in this dissertation draws on recordings of the fifth through eighth meeting held between October 2013 and October 2014. At these meetings, some fundamental decisions concerning the Fund’s institutional structure and operation were taken (see Subsection 4.2.3). The total runtime of the recordings amounts to four days, fourteen hours, twelve minutes, and thirty-four seconds (110:12:34).

Considering the relative novelty of video recordings as data for International Relations research, this section first reviews how video is used in other social sciences (Subsection 3.2.1). This then allows assessing the merits and limitations for research on international negotiations (Subsection 3.2.2). The main merits of video data that will be detailed in the process are the following: First, video allows for quasi-direct observation with an unparalleled level of detail. Second, video grants virtual access to negotiations that would otherwise be restricted. Third, video documents and preserves the volatile social interaction studied which enhances the intersubjective verifiability of research results. These benefits notwithstanding, this section also takes seriously the limitations of video, as any discussion of methods or data should. Finally, Subsection 3.2.3 critically reflects on the choice of data and makes some practical remarks about conducting video analysis. Note that, due to the

²⁷ This is with the exception of the sixth meeting in Bali, for which only audio recordings are available.

novelty of video analysis in IR research, this section will elaborate on potential uses of video data in quite some detail. Due to the focus of inquiry in this thesis and the theoretical framework, the analysis will focus on the verbal exchanges in the recordings. An introduction to video analysis for IR research would however not be complete without at least acknowledging the visual and temporal dimensions in the data.

3.2.1 *Video analysis in social science research*

Video offers great opportunities for social science research, and it has been fruitfully exploited in disciplines like sociology or anthropology. In International Relations, however, video analysis is all but common. In the spirit of an aesthetic turn in IR theory (Bleiker 2001), there have been attempts to use documentary filmmaking, i.e. video *production*, as an ‘other way of knowing’ (Jackson 2015). Callahan’s *Toilet Adventures* (Callahan 2015) or Oppenheimer’s *The Act of Killing* (Cribb 2014) are examples of this. But the *analysis* of video in IR, and negotiation studies specifically, is anything but widespread. The simple reason for this is lack of availability. Cameras are usually not allowed when politics are involved. Keynote speeches and large plenary sessions aside, the actual negotiations usually happen in the green room. However, some recent negotiation recordings have been made public in an effort to increase the transparency of international institutional creation.

So how can International Relations make use of video as a form of data? The answer to this question depends on the focus of inquiry. After all, International Relations is a remarkably diverse discipline. A subfield of political science at its core – examining the social interactions between polities, with power as a key explanatory factor²⁸ – IR has always borrowed from neighbouring disciplines in the social sciences. Game theory, for example, is often used to explain the outcome of international climate negotiations by means of economic concepts like interest, pay-off, and equilibrium (DeCanio & Fremstad 2013). Borrowing from sociology, the works of Michel Foucault have been *en vogue* in IR for quite a while. Discourse and governmentality have been used as a conceptual lens to explore various aspects of global climate politics (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006; Stripple & Bulkeley 2013). In order to enrich its methodical repertoire even further and make use of video material, IR can once again turn neighbouring disciplines, such as sociology (Gottdiener 1979; Knoblauch et al. 2006; Schnettler & Raab 2008), anthropology (Collier 2001), or communication studies (Hickethier 2007). In management studies and education,

²⁸ This is, of course, a matter of debate. Some approaches in IR lean heavily towards sociology. Moreover, some scholars, particularly in the UK, understand IR to have evolved from the study of history. But this is a discussion for another time.

video analysis is used to examine human behaviour in workplaces and classrooms (Mehan 1979; Maor 2000; Goldman & McDermott 2006; Heath & Luff 2008).

Two simultaneously occurring trends during the last quarter of the 20th century made video analysis possible, a methodological one and a technical one. Firstly, the interpretive turn in social science brought with it an openness toward and active search for new, unconventional, non-numerical primary data sources. Secondly, in the infancy of the technology in the 1950s,²⁹ the costs of around USD 50,000 per bulky recorder and USD 300 per tape hour would have been prohibitively high for research use (Elen n.d.).³⁰ However, from the 1980s onwards, video equipment became rapidly cheaper and technologically more sophisticated, easier to carry around and handle. This made its use for social science research more feasible:

“And if you take a stroll through a sociology department nowadays, you can expect to see that some of the working groups who are sitting at their monitors are not conducting statistical data evaluation, but watching video recordings of processes of social interactions on their screens in endless repetition.”³¹

Bergmann (1985: 299)

Visual sociology emerged as its own subfield. In particular, video is extensively employed in ethnographic studies in which researchers use it to document the behaviour of a particular social group (e.g., Patchett 2015; Garrett & Hawkins 2015).

Learning from these fields for IR research on negotiations is not straightforward, however. Most importantly, there is a difference “between video as data and video production as a process for data gathering” (Haw & Hadfield 2011: 1). In sociology and workplace studies, researchers usually use video extractively (Haw & Hadfield 2011: 2), meaning it is the researcher themselves who produces the recordings. Particular challenges arise in this data collection phase. For one thing, there is of course a risk that people act differently when they know they are being filmed for the purpose of research. This issue is not unique to video and may also be encountered in other data gathering methods such as focus groups. A specific problem with video is that the researcher has to constantly make numerous decisions in terms of what exactly they should point to camera at, when, and how. Framing and perspective are immensely important for what can be gathered from the data

²⁹ Video, that is, not film.

³⁰ This is more than USD 440,000 and USD 2,600 in 2016 dollars, respectively.

³¹ Own translation of this original German text: “Und wer heute durch ein soziologisches Institut wandert, muß darauf gefasst sein, daß manche der Arbeitsgruppen, die vor den Monitoren sitzen, nicht mit statistischer Datenauswertung beschäftigt sind, sondern Videoaufzeichnungen von sozialen Interaktionsabläufen in schier endloser Wiederholung auf dem Bildschirm betrachten.”

later in the analysis. Consequently, careful consideration has been given to the potential effects on the quality of the data and the potential impact on the validity of results (Haw & Hadfield 2011: 35–39; Heath et al. 2010: 37–60; Heath & Luff 2012) as well as to the meta-methodological practice of producing video for research itself (Mondada 2006). By contrast, video material of international negotiations, if available at all, is usually provided by the negotiating entity, which seeks to increase the transparency of the process (as is the case with the GCF video recordings). The analysis relies on already existing and officially provided recordings. This eliminates all of the issues of video production for research, but it also leads to several new challenges as will be shown below.

3.2.2 *Merits and limitations*

In 1960, the presidential candidates in the United States held their first televised debate. People who had listened to the debate on the radio reportedly found that Richard Nixon came out on top, whereas those who had seen it on television thought that Nixon, who had just been released from hospital and appeared ill and unshaven, was in fact the weaker candidate. The visual profoundly alters one's perception of social events. This subsection carefully considers the merits and the limitations of video recordings as data for qualitative analysis in International Relations research. It does so in detail to account for the relative novelty of video analysis in IR.

Video recordings allow for quasi-direct observation as if one were there and had a front-row seat. They circumvent the need to rely on textual or verbal accounts. Video recordings are a rich, multi-layered form of data (Haw & Hadfield 2011: 26), “a complex amalgam of meanings, images, techniques, shot framing, shot sequence and much more” (Rose 2000: 246). This allows qualitative social science research to study verbal exchanges and argumentative patterns as much as practices and non-speech acts. *I see* is not only the literal translation of the etymological root of *video*. It is also an idiomatic expression which means: *I understand*. Fittingly, video turns out to be immensely useful in trying to understand international negotiations in the Weberian sense of *Verstehen* (Weber 1922: 503–523).

Video recordings offer three key advantages over direct observation, i.e. physically attending the negotiations and gathering data as part of field work. This is not to argue that video analysis is in all cases preferable. On the contrary, direct observation can yield insights into aspects omitted from video recordings (see below). However, direct observation is simply often not possible. There might be a limited number of accredited observer organisations, so the researcher cannot get access to the negotiations. Or, the negotiations lie in the past. Social science research tends to avoid studying ongoing

processes, as this can lead to a range of other problems. Secondly, video allows studying international negotiations with unprecedented detail, serving as a “microscope of interaction” (Knoblauch et al. 2006: 9). Contrary to real-life, video recordings can be paused, rewound, re-watched. Video fixates the *Flüchtigkeit* (momentariness or, literally, fleetingness) of social reality (Bergmann 1985: 303). It preserves a *recording* of the negotiations, in the sense of a documentation or transcript. This allows for a very thorough analysis compared to direct observation. Researchers can pause at any moment, re-watch any segment at any time and any number of times, so that they can devote their full attention to what is happening. They do not have to listen, watch, and take notes at the same time as direct observers would. This is useful also from a practical standpoint. When something is difficult to see or hear, it is possible to simply go back in time to watch and listen to it again.

Thirdly, video enhances the intersubjective verifiability of results. A direct observer has only impressions and field notes to use as evidence. While all qualitative social research remains, ultimately, interpretation, other scholars usually do not even have the option to see what exactly was interpreted. Video recordings as a primary data source, on the other hand, can be made accessible to other researchers so that they can understand, verify and criticise the approach taken and the conclusions drawn. This can greatly enhance the validity of qualitative research.

The information embedded in video recordings can be systemised along three different dimensions of information: an audio-visual dimension, a textual dimension, and a temporal dimension. Relevant visual information includes seating arrangements, who talks to whom during informal consultations between delegates, as well as gestures and facial expressions. Additionally, video is not just what *I see*, but also what *I hear*: audio. Examples of relevant audio information are tones, hesitations, or laughter. Moreover, the audio tracks provide a minute transcript of the spoken word. They contain textual data which can be studied in terms of its linguistic properties as well as their substantive content. Finally, video has a temporal dimension to it. It does not make an impression on the viewer in instant, like a photograph would, revealing more details as the viewer’s discovers them at their own pace. Instead, video unfolds itself as it is played back. Video flows, as it were. This temporal dimension, too, can contain relevant information about the sequence, timing, and duration of events and interactions. The remainder of this subsection examines the merits and limitations of video data in more detail along these three dimensions.

The audio-visual dimension

Video recordings enable the researcher to study in detail such aspects of negotiation that go beyond what is being said, such as gestures, tones, and facial expressions (Schnettler & Raab 2008: 8–9). Drawing on psychology, these kinds of analysis have been used extensively in management studies, particularly to examine business negotiations (Niemeier 1997) and people’s behaviour in the workplace (Heath et al. 2010). Variations in gestures and tone are used to study aspects of the negotiations at a micro level, such as who has the upper hand at the moment. “Paralinguistic signs such as the tone of voice of other voice phenomena (sighing, moaning, yawning, etc.) can hint at emotions indexically, can demonstrate interpersonal attitudes” (Niemeier 1997: 294). While tone and body language are not ascribed much importance in this thesis, they do help the researcher contextualise what is being said. How contentious was an argument? Was it an unanticipated move? Video provides a good starting point to answer these types of questions. Take this image, for instance:

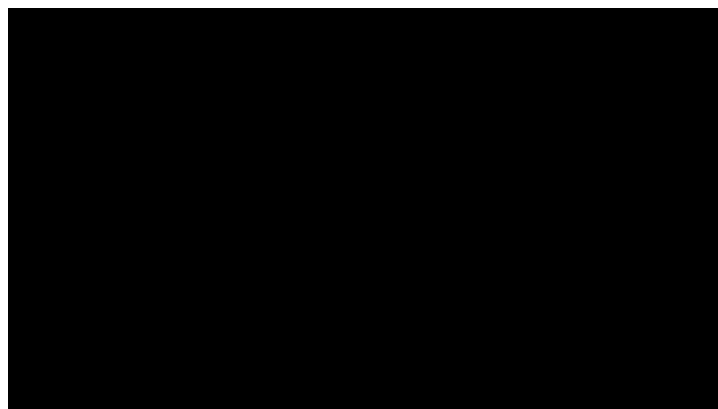


Figure 2: A Board member making an intervention (Bridgetown 1.1: 01:02:20)

Alternate Board member Bernarditas Muller of the Philippines can be seen making a statement. In the background, support staff and observers are casually working on their laptops; one seems to have dozed off.³² Muller is talking about the administrative burden of the Board meetings for her constituency. She is complaining that deadlines are too tight and decision documents too lengthy for many developing countries with limited resources and staff to thoroughly understand the implications of proposed policies. While the issue Muller raised was an important one for developing countries (see Subsection 5.3.2), the way her statement was taken up the people surrounding her indicates that this didn’t exactly come as a surprise. In fact, it had come up many times before at the GCF Board meetings.

³² To be fair, he opens his eyes a few seconds later.

Clues like this one offer context that helps the researcher assess a statement or event, regardless of whether such visual aspects are actually being analysed.

Similarly, gestures and facial expression can reveal something about delegates' own assessment of the situation. For example, one of the co-chairs at the meeting in Bridgetown, Ayman Shasly of Saudi Arabia, spoke on behalf of his constituency and objected to a decision (Bridgetown 3.15: 00:21:55–00:22:20, 01:19:23–01:20:20). This was a violation of the Board's procedures. Shasly had assumed the role of co-chair for the meeting and had no right to act on behalf of his constituency. The videos not only provide a record of this incident, they also show Shasly's behaviour immediately afterwards. He leans back in his chair, lowers his eyes, avoids looking at the other Board members. He then nervously plays with his pen and chews on it, scanning the room for reactions while rocking back in his chair. He broke the rules and he knew it.



Figure 3: Co-chair Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia) after illegally making a statement on behalf of his constituency (Bridgetown 3.15: 00:22:41)

While such observations are useful to contextualise interventions, it should again be noted that they were not systematically analysed in this thesis. In general, one should be cautious not to overstate their significance. People always move in a certain way and talk in a certain tone. Nuances are subtle, and not everything is something. Hesitations or other irregularities in the voice are not necessarily indicative of the speaker's stance toward an issue. Language barrier might simply be the problem (Niemeier 1997: 294). Indeed, some GCF Board members struggle with English more than others. Moreover, in international negotiations, cultural differences might account for differences in negotiation styles (Druckman & Mahoney 1977: 74–75; Meyer 2014).

While video is very rich in information, certain things are omitted. What people think and, obviously, what the camera does not show is not directly captured. Regarding the former point, one cannot look into people's heads. The ideas, motivations, and rationales behind their statement and actions can at best be indirectly inferred from video and similar forms

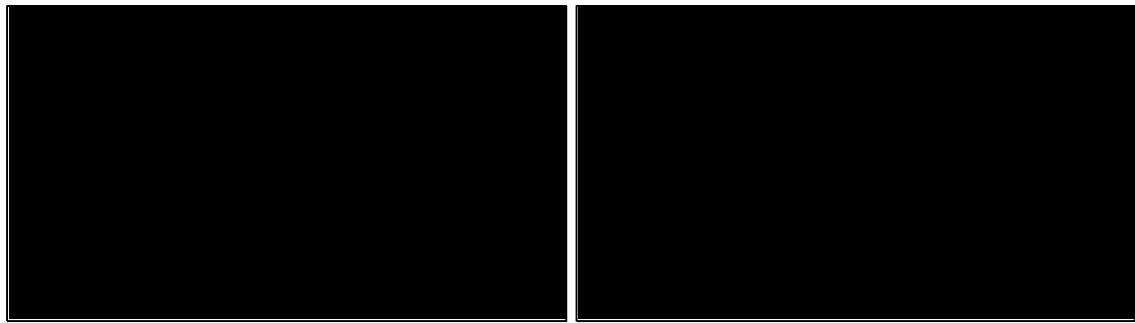
of data (Richards 1996: 199–200). Regarding the latter point, the camera only captures the formal sessions in the meeting room. Physically present at the negotiations, the researcher could devote their attention to whatever they deem most meaningful to his or her research at any given time. In video recordings, on the other hand, he or she cannot see or hear the discussions in the corridors, at lunch, etc.

Moreover, not even everything that happens in the meeting room is captured. In the image below, two Board members, Omar El-Arini of Egypt and Jan Cedergren of Sweden, can be seen turning around to consult with their advisors who are sitting behind them. Since their microphones are switched off, one cannot hear what they talk about or even know how it relates to the issue currently being discussed.



Figure 4: Omar El-Arini (Egypt, left) and Jan Cedergren (Sweden, right) turn around to consult with their support staff (Paris 1.2: 00:18:43)

Incidentally, this image also represents one of the rather rare instances where the recordings give a glance at what's happening on the side. Recall that the video material was not recorded by the researcher, but by the researched entity. This has some important implications. Highly consequential technical decisions in the recording process, regarding framing or perspective for example (Haw & Hadfield 2011: 35–39; Heath & Luff 2012), are not in the researcher's control. Video does not give the complete picture, in a figurative, but also in a literal sense. The GCF recordings have the following two main field sizes – to borrow this term from filmmaking:



Figures 5 a and b: The two field sizes in the GCF recordings: Long shot (left) and medium shot (right; both from Bridgetown 1.1)

During short intermissions, the entire meeting room is sometimes shown in a long shot. When someone speaks, the delegate is shown in a medium shot. With the exception of people in the speaker's immediate vicinity, it is not possible to gather any reactions from the recordings as they are omitted from the field of view. The same applies to sound. The audio track includes only what the microphones pick up, which are only switched on when someone speaks. This ensures audibility, but on the other hand, it is impossible to overhear conversations on the side, and even strong reactions by Board members, such as laughter, can be quite hard to hear.

In addition, it is possible that official recordings are restricted on purpose, i.e. censored. The GCF recordings are split up into several files that do not always connect seamlessly to one another. Sometimes the recordings overlap, other times pieces of uncertain length are missing. At one point during the negotiation round in Paris, at the beginning of one of those files, one of the Board members expresses his outrage, presumably at the fact that one of his colleagues called a request he extended to the Secretariat silly (Paris 1.5: 00:05:23–00:08:36). The incident he refers to, however, fell in the gap between two video files. While there is no evidence that it was cut on purpose, the fact that it is missing illustrates the potential risk of censorship with official video recordings.

The textual dimension

As an extension of the audio-visual dimension, video recordings also contain a minute transcript of verbal exchanges. In many respects, this textual dimension of video data shares both the merits and limitations with the audio-visual dimension. Video allows to rewind, to re-listen, to go back and forth in time. For example, something everyone would immediately notice is that Board members address each other by their first name, illustrating the connection that has grown between them over the years. This practice in itself is interesting, as are any deviations from it. Whenever the atmosphere got tense, Board members would refer to their colleagues by constituency rather than first name.

When delegate Henrik Harboe insisted on changing the wording of a decision, the Board member from the DRC asked why “Norway”, rather than “Henrik”, did not raise his concerns earlier (Bridgetown 3.18: 00:23:00–00:23:34). In another case, the German co-chair flippantly proclaimed: “In the international environment, I’m usually called Manfred.” (Bali 1.1: 00:52:06–00:52:12) Considering that addressing each other by first-name was an established practice at the Board, this statement seemed out-of-place. Video allows to go back a time and look for the context of that statement: About half an hour earlier, the Saudi Arabian Board member had insisted that he be called not by his name, but by his constituency (Ayman Shasly [Saudi Arabia] in Bali 1.1: 00:17).³³ The co-chair’s statement challenged this indirectly. He contrasted the formal high-level diplomatic context of the Board meeting with the informal conventions for interaction at the Fund. This gives an indication of the reasoning behind the unusual request. Even if his fellow delegates would go so far as to call his requests silly (see above), they would have to take his constituency seriously if they are to operate within the norms of diplomacy. In addition, the flippant tone of the co-chair is also captured in the video, providing further information to assess the situation. This illustrates that the distinction between the various dimensions of video recordings is merely a means to better understand the nature of the data. While the researcher might try to focus on one particular dimension, the material always presents itself to him or her in all its dimensions. One cannot listen to what people say in a video without also getting a sense of the tone in their voice.

With regard to limitations to the textual dimension the major problems described above also apply to video as transcript, too. The camera only shows the formal negotiations. What is being said on the side, during breaks, and at dinner, is not the text. Another limitation is that, while video recordings can yield insights that interviews or documents cannot, not every country can be analysed in the same depth, again due to the nature of the material available. Active participation in the negotiations varies significantly from Board member to Board member. There are some who are extremely vocal and make several, sometimes lengthy statements per hour while others take the floor only a handful of times during an entire meeting.

The temporal dimension

The temporal dimension of video can be exploited by examining the duration and the sequence of events. How long do things last and what order do they happen in? This can

³³ In a similar vein, he had demanded that a picture of his country’s flag be printed on his name plate at the Paris Board meeting.

reveal something about the dynamics of the negotiations, positions and priorities of the parties. Presenting results of video analysis can be challenging (Heath et al. 2010: 109–132). This is particularly true for the temporal dimension. One option is laying the negotiations out in sequence by interventions with the vertical axis representing time:

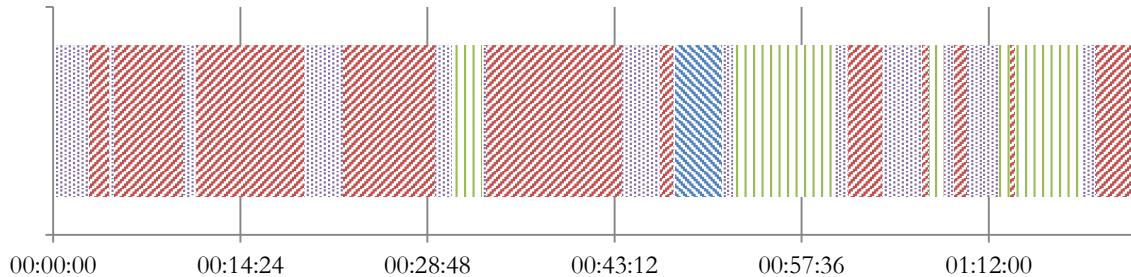


Figure 6: Visual representation of the Board discussing agenda item II at the Bridgetown meeting (1.1: 00:30:30–1.2: 00:11:11).

The above is a visual representation of the GCF Board discussion agenda item II, Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work (GCF 2014a: 1), at its eighth meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados (Bridgetown 1.1: 00:30:30–1.2: 00:11:11). Each portion of the bar represents an intervention by a delegate or a statement by a chair or Secretariat staff member. The various colour codes and fill styles indicate these categories of speakers. Moderated by the two co-chairs (violet/dotted), the Board discusses the agenda item for far over an hour. During that time, only one Board member from a developed country (blue/downward diagonal stripes) takes the floor.³⁴ The remarks he makes are very broad: the US is committed to the GCF; climate change is urgent; money is needed; the US is considering significant pledge to the Fund³⁵ (Leonardo Martinez-Diaz [USA] in Bridgetown 1.1: 01:15:54–01:19:33). All other statements are made by Board members from developing countries (red/upward diagonal stripes). Some of them ask for clarification on certain issues by the Secretariat (green/vertical stripes). Seen in a larger context, the discussion of this agenda item reflects a longstanding concern developing countries have had about the GCF. As will become relevant in the analysis in Chapter 5, long documents and tight deadlines pose a particular problem to them, considering their limited resources. However, this applies not only to the GCF Board and its work, but also to the relation between developing country entities and Fund as a whole, for which the administrative process of accreditation for example is a crucial issue due to lack of institutional capacities.

³⁴ This is with the exception of the German Board member, who acted in his capacity as co-chair.

³⁵ The pledge would be announced jointly with China a month after the meeting.

Concluding remarks

In some respects, video has advantages over interviews because it allows for quasi-direct observation, to a degree circumventing the discrepancy between what people say they do and what they actually do. In other respects, video is inferior to interviews because people's beliefs and rationales that motivate their actions can only be inferred very indirectly, and video lacks the interactivity of interviews and ability to probe and ask questions according to the researcher's interest. Video has advantages over direct observation because it reveals and documents details, acting as a minute transcript, and it is often easier to get access to than to the physical negotiation site. On the other hand, video has disadvantages over direct observation because it is limited to what the camera shows at any given time. Direct observation may enable the researcher to get a feel for the dynamics of the negotiations. Observation through video enables the researcher to map out and document the negotiations in great detail. While a direct observer will have a conceptual framework and a research question to guide him/her in terms of what he/she should look out for during data gathering, video allows things to be discovered ex-post, i.e. after the data gathering process and during the analysis. This is not only practical from the researcher's perspective, but it also benefits the validity and intersubjective verifiability of the research project. A direct observer only has subjective impressions and field notes. Video recordings as a primary data source, on the other hand, can be made accessible to other researchers so that they can understand, verify and criticise the approach taken and the conclusions drawn.

In conclusion, video analysis is an immensely promising method for studying international negotiations, but one must be aware of these limitations. Looking at timing and sequences, as with the other dimension of video, it is important not to lose sight of context. Describing the order or length of statements alone reveals little. Only by contextualising temporal aspects found in the recordings with positions, arguments, strategies, etc. can they reveal something about the importance of issues to certain parties or the dynamics in the course of negotiations.

Video recordings are an immensely useful tool for qualitative social science research. They make negotiations experiential, repeatedly and without the need to physically attend them. Consider these before and after pictures:

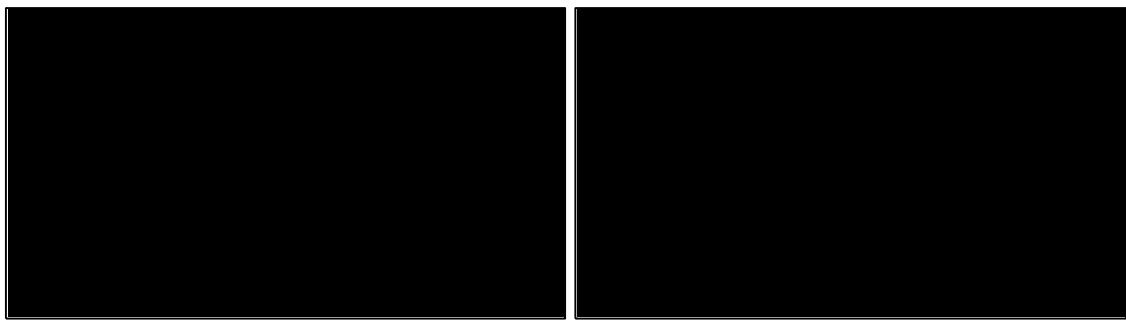


Figure 7 a and b: The co-chairs at the beginning of a meeting (left, Bridgetown 1.1: 00:08:58) and right before discussing the final agenda item (right, Bridgetown 4.10: 00:00:08)

Towards the end of the long, contentious four-day Board meeting in Barbados, delegates had switched ties and long-sleeved shirts for more casual attire and sunk into their chairs. Elaborate diplomatic jargon had been replaced by colloquial utterances like: “I have your support, Jorge, man? You are the man!” (Ayman Shasly [co-chair/Saudi Arabia] to Jorge Ferrer Rodriguez [Cuba] in Bridgetown 4.7: 00:15:24–00:15:28) Something happened between the first and the second image that significantly affected the negotiations, and that is not easily grasped with conventional methods. Video recordings provide a detailed audio-visual, textual, and temporal transcript of what happened.

3.2.3 Critical reflexion and practical remarks

This subsection critically reflects on the choice of data in light of the theoretical framework. It also makes some practical remarks regarding video analysis for International Relations research. The richness and multi-dimensionality of information embedded in video recordings poses certain challenges in itself. Complexity is one of them. There is a lot of information embedded in video that can potentially be used for social science research, but that remains untapped here. Theory is instrumental to provide a lens that can make sense of the video data. And, equally important, it acts as a mechanism to select relevant aspects for the analysis. Theory keeps the analysis focussed, which is all the more important considering how overwhelming the information in video can be. Conversely, of course, theory acting as a selecting mechanism filters out a huge part of the information embedded in the material. “Every step in the process of analysing audio-visual materials involves translation. And every translation involves decisions and choices.” (Rose 2000: 246) This is unavoidable, but due to the immense density of video it is also indispensable. In light of arguing-and-bargaining theory and its emphasis on verbal exchanges in negotiations, this thesis uses the textual dimensions of the GCF video recordings as a minute transcript of the spoken word. Other dimensions of video were explicitly not considered in the analysis. An analysis of gestures and facial expressions, for example, would have required a very

different theoretical framework as well as a different research question for this sort of inquiry to make sense. Nonetheless, the visual aspects of the recording were practically helpful during the evaluation of the data material.

Recordings of later meetings (the 13th through 17th at the time of writing) have not been included in the data material due to a number of considerations. First, the decisions taken at these meetings regarded the more day-to-day business of accrediting entities and approving project proposals, as opposed to laying the groundwork for those decisions. Second, these meetings took place rather late in the research process, which would not have left enough time for a thorough analysis.

The temporal dimension of video recordings poses some particular challenges for the analysis. One cannot skim video material to get a sense of what sort of information one could glean from it. This one will only know after already having invested a considerable amount of time and effort. Also finding a specific part in the material can be difficult. This highlights the need for a transcript. A written transcript fixates the temporal flow of video. It makes videos more easily browsable and searchable, greatly facilitating the analysis. A video transcript looks similar to transcripts of other primary data, such as interviews. Except, the temporal dimension must also be represented. Units of analysis now have a length or duration as a kind of meta-property.

As mentioned above, there is an obvious limitation with video recordings in that they do not show what the camera does not capture. In particular, the conversations outside the formal part of the meetings – such as corridor talks or working group discussions – are only indirectly reflected in the data when these discussions are referred to by delegates. While it is important to keep this limitation in mind, there are two things that may compensate for it to a certain degree. First, the goal of the thesis is to examine what kind of social interaction learning in international negotiations should be understood as. The aim is not to retrace the entire process of institutional creation or explain a certain outcome. And the forum where the phenomenon under investigation takes place is the formal part of the Board meetings. As shown above, the videos capture these meetings in an unparalleled level of detail. What is not taped was certainly relevant to the overall process, but not in the immediate interest of this thesis. Moreover, as mentioned above, video recordings have major advantages over interviews for studying certain types of social interaction. Inquiring into what transpired during negotiations through interviews depends on how the interviewees remember the events. Video may only allow to infer rationales and motivations indirectly. But if the focus of inquiry is precisely on what negotiators actually

said and did, video recordings offer an unequalled level of detail and depth. “We cannot observe directly what people think, but we can observe what they say and how they respond to claims and counter-claims.” (Krebs & Jackson 2007: 42) Video allows to observe most directly what this thesis is mainly interested in.

Second, the limitations of video recordings were offset by a number of measures. The author of this thesis followed the GCF process closely for several years, ensuring that the analytical assessments made were properly put into context. This also involved countless informal conversations with observers of the process as well as keeping up with relevant publications and reports, some of which cover the negotiations in a remarkable level of detail (Schalatek 2013c; 2014b; 2014a; 2015b). In addition, some formal interviews were conducted with Board members and observers. While these interviews did not directly yield textual data for the analysis, they provided further context and allowed for a more targeted analysis. Finally, the author of this thesis participated as an observer at the 14th meeting of the Board in Songdo in October 2014. This made it possible to at least generally assess the nature and relevance of the informal parts of the meetings for the process as a whole. These measures are meant to ensure that nothing important regarding the characteristics of learning at the GCF Board meetings was missed. They helped offset the limitations of video data to some extent. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that the data analysed in this thesis have a rather special focus and can on their own not be used to trace the entire negotiation process and fully explain certain outcomes.

Specialised software is available to facilitate qualitative analysis. Computer programmes such as Atlas.ti or MAXQDA help analyse textual data (such as documents or interview transcripts). However, even though some of these programmes do support importing video files, they are less suitable to study video recordings. Therefore, the most economical solution was to use the spreadsheet application Excel by Microsoft. Each row in the spreadsheet represents a unit of analysis (see Subsection 3.3.1 below). It is then assigned some metadata (video file, timestamp in the video, duration, speaker, the speaker’s constituency and country group). The unit of analysis is then paraphrased and coded according to the method to be introduced in Subsection 3.3.2. An example is shown below.

Figure 8: Mapping video using a spreadsheet application

Analysing video recordings is a time-consuming endeavour. When the Board discussed publishing video recordings on the internet, one Board members sarcastically remarked: “And if people wanna listen to four days of our conversations, they’re welcome to it” (Nick Dyer [United Kingdom] in Paris 3.4: 01:49:37–01:49:42), dismissing the possibility that someone would ever actually do that. And yet, this is exactly what it takes to be able to even begin conducting a video analysis. Before the actual analysis, the researcher needs to survey the material available, pause and take notes, and possibly re-listen to segments. A way to expedite this process is to increase the playback speed, a function supported by many popular media playing software programmes, such as VLC. A playback speed of 1.5 to 2 times the real-time speed has proven to be manageable, given the right amount of focus and depending on how fast the speaker talks.

There are further technical complications dealing with the video files. Some of them may seem trivial, but researchers should be aware of these potential technical issues. In case of the GCF recordings, the length of the video files available varies drastically from as long as almost five and a half hours (Bali 3.2) down to as short as nine seconds (Bridgetown 4.5). Carefully documenting the parts of the negotiations that are covered in each file is essential to find anything again later.

As of the time of writing, the GCF video recordings are no longer available on the Fund’s official website. This makes it difficult to give other researchers access to the raw data files for two reasons. For one thing, there are minor technical difficulties as the video files are quite large (about 20.8 GB in total). More importantly, however, sharing the video files would have legal implications. The GCF recordings analysed in this dissertation were produced not by the researcher, but by the GCF itself. Passing on the video files may infringe the Fund’s copyrights. While this is certainly unfortunate, other forms of data have very similar limitations. Interview recordings can have large digital footprints, too.

Moreover, it is usually not possible to share the interview recordings with other researchers due to confidentiality agreements between the interviewer and the interviewees. Lack of public availability can therefore not be considered a particular disadvantage of video recordings when compared to other forms of data. At least for some time, the recordings used to be actually publicly available. Furthermore, there are a number of third-party accounts of the analysed negotiation rounds. The Heinrich Böll Foundation, in particular, has published exceptionally detailed descriptions of positions, arguments, processes, and decisions at the GCF Board meetings (Schalatek 2013c; 2014b; 2014a; 2015b). Each of these reports is between 50 and 80 pages long. Other detailed reports are available for instance from the Climate Finance Advisory Service, an initiative led by Germanwatch, an NGO (Weischer et al. 2014a; 2014b). While these reports are of course no substitute for the video recordings, there is still a sizable amount of documentation available for each of the analysed negotiation rounds.

3.3 Thematic analysis

Having discussed video recordings as a form of data, this section turns to the method of analysis. The verbal exchanges captured in the GCF video recordings will be examined through thematic analysis. The exact definition of a thematic analysis varies in the methodological literature. It bears similarities with hermeneutic methods of analysis such as Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 2010) or Qualitative Content Analysis (Mayring 2010). In basic terms, thematic analysis can be described as “a process for encoding qualitative information” (Boyatzis 1998: 4) for the purpose of organising them and uncovering themes in the data (Attride-Stirling 2001: 387). A theme can be referred to as a pattern in the data that is in some way related to the research question (King & Horrocks 2010: 149). Such a pattern “at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998: 161). Thematic analysis is one of the most widely used techniques in qualitative social science research. In fact, studies often conduct a thematic analysis – in the sense that they identify themes in their data material – without even naming it as the method of choice. Methods frequently remain underspecified in research on global environmental governance (Bernstein et al. 2013). In an attempt to avoid repeating this problem, this section thoroughly introduces thematic analysis and carefully explains the various steps that are included in the process.

3.3.1 Units of analysis and selection criteria

As with similar qualitative methods, at the core of a thematic analysis is the multi-phase development of a system of categories. This system emerges through coding the data material, which means it is divided into units of analysis that are then each assigned one or more categories (Mayring 2010: 59; Flick 2005: 279; Meyer et al. 2000: 58). What methods and techniques exactly are used depends on a number of factors such as the subject matter of study, the research question, and the data material available (Mayring 2010: 49). Prior to coding the material into themes, it must be defined what is actually to be coded. In other words, the researcher must determine what is to be considered as units of analysis³⁶. What constitutes an individual chunk of data that is to be assigned a code – be it from a document, an interview transcript or a video recording? In this thesis, each intervention a delegate makes is considered a unit of analysis (see below). However, note that thematic analysis puts emphasis on the thematic patterns in the material, which is not necessarily tied to its formal structure. The analysis reveals patterns in the data, not how these patterns correspond to the textual structure they are embedded in. In fact, the aim is the opposite: to disentangle these patterns from the data.

Generally speaking, there are two ways in which a unit of analysis may be coded: inductively drawing on the data material or deductively with the theoretical framework as the point of departure. In light of the explorative nature of the research question, the coding process used for this project should not make any presumptions based on its theoretical underpinnings (cp. King & Horrocks 2010: 154). However, a balance must be maintained. While the codes should generally be generated unadulterated by predisposed theoretical assumptions and considerations, only relevant units of analysis are coded in order to keep the scope of the material manageable. Therefore, units of analysis are checked for relevance to the research question before being coded. Not every piece of information in the material actually contributes answering the research question. This is particularly true for extremely dense forms of data such as video recordings. It is necessary to filter information. To this end, the researcher essentially applies selection criteria to each unit of analysis. This procedure is often glossed over in the literature, but in the interest of intersubjective verifiability, it is vital to explain how units of analysis were selected and coded.

³⁶ A unit of analysis is sometimes referred to as a segment, see for example Guest et al. (2012: 50–52).

In the video recordings of the GCF Board meetings, each time a delegate takes to floor to make an intervention counts as a unit of analysis. Relevant units of analysis, then, were those in which one or more experiences, as defined above in Subsection 2.3.1, were referenced. To reiterate, this means experiences exogenous to the Green Climate Fund, for example from other international climate and development finance institutions such as multilateral development banks or climate funds. Note, however, that the source of the experience is not necessarily explicitly given by the speaker (see, for instance, Songdo 1.7: 01:10, 1.8 00:37; Bridgetown 3.15: 01:00).³⁷ Again, as outlined in the theory chapter, the experience may regard the procedure of dealing with the problem, the content of the policies to address it, as well as the conditions for a policy's feasibility and its political repercussions (McConnell 2010: 349–350).

Note that the process of dividing the material into units of analysis and using the selection criteria to check for relevance is not a linear, but a reflective one. The suitability of the selection criteria should be constantly revised during the process of applying them to the material. If there are parts in the material that appear relevant to the research question, but are missed by the current set of selection criteria, the criteria must be amended and material checked again until the selection process works adequately (Mayring 2010: 83).

It is also important that the analysis takes into account the original context of the selected units of analysis in order to achieve a holistic understanding. For example, when a Board member makes an intervention during a meeting, advocating learning from an existing financial institution, the agenda item currently discussed, interventions that preceded and followed, as well as reactions from other Board members might be important and must be considered in the analysis.

3.3.2 Coding

The coding procedure for thematic analysis can be broken down into three broad stages. Although the precise instructions and number of stages vary between the approaches in the literature, the material is, generally speaking, first reduced and descriptively coded (1), then clustered and interpreted (2), and finally combined into overarching themes (3) (Boyatzis 1998: 3–4, 29; Attriade-Stirling 2001: 390–393; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 86–91; Gibbs 2007: 42–44; King & Horrocks 2010: 149). In each stage, there will be fewer codes at a higher level of abstraction (Attriade-Stirling 2001: 390). The remainder of this section will explain the three stages and how they apply to the data material.

³⁷ This fact will actually become relevant in the empirical analysis. See Section 5.3.

The *first stage* is about getting a sense of the material and reducing it to a manageable size (Boyatzis 1998: 69). This is achieved by surveying the material and identifying relevant parts, or, in other words, splitting the material into relevant units of analysis as described above. Subsequently, each unit of analysis is assigned one or more descriptive codes that strictly do nothing more than provide self-explanatory labels, which will serve as a basis for the further coding process (King & Horrocks 2010: 152–154). The relevant units of analysis are paraphrased and shortened in order to gain a better overview of the material (cp. Mayring 2010: 70). With regard to lessons and learning as the object of research, these codes at the descriptive stage may include, for instance, sources for lessons that are mentioned in the material, reasons given for drawing those lessons, or the issue area that is being learnt about. It is imperative at this stage to hold off interpreting underlying meanings or drawing links between different parts of the material, but rather to simply organise the material so that it can be handled more easily in the actual analysis. This is to avoid running into the old problem of implicitly prefacing the empirical analysis with assumptions about the speaker's intentions. This is particularly important with arguing-and-bargaining being the theoretical framework. Predetermined theoretical notions should not affect the assessment of whether arguments are used strategically or as sincere arguing (see also Jörke 2013a: 354). In the first phase, it is important that codes remain purely descriptive.

The *second stage* in the coding process consists of the actual interpretative analysis. This is done by means of aggregating the descriptive codes from stage one as an initial step. Clustering them will allow to form a broader picture. Clusters of second-order codes are subsequently interpreted in terms of what they can reveal about the research question and finally applied to the whole data set. Drawing on the descriptive codes from stage one is not to say one shouldn't keep consulting the original data material. This ensures that the codes stay anchored within their original context. Again, the coding process is not linear. It is entirely possible that a descriptive code informs the analysis in two or even more interpretative codes. (For this paragraph: King & Horrocks 2010: 152–156)

Finally, the *third stage* in the coding process continues the refinement and aggregation of existing codes. Patterns in the data are made visible, at an even higher level of abstraction. The purpose is to crystallise overarching themes from the codes from stage two. In doing so, the third stage also shows the relationships between the overarching themes as well as key commonalities and differences, drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of the study (Gibson & Brown 2009: 128; King & Horrocks 2010: 152–158). Depending on the results

of the coding process, it may be useful to arrange the themes found into lists and diagrams (King & Horrocks 2010: 156–158) or even networks (Attride-Stirling 2001) to illustrate their relations. The following figure illustrates the coding procedure for the thematic analysis conducted in this research project.

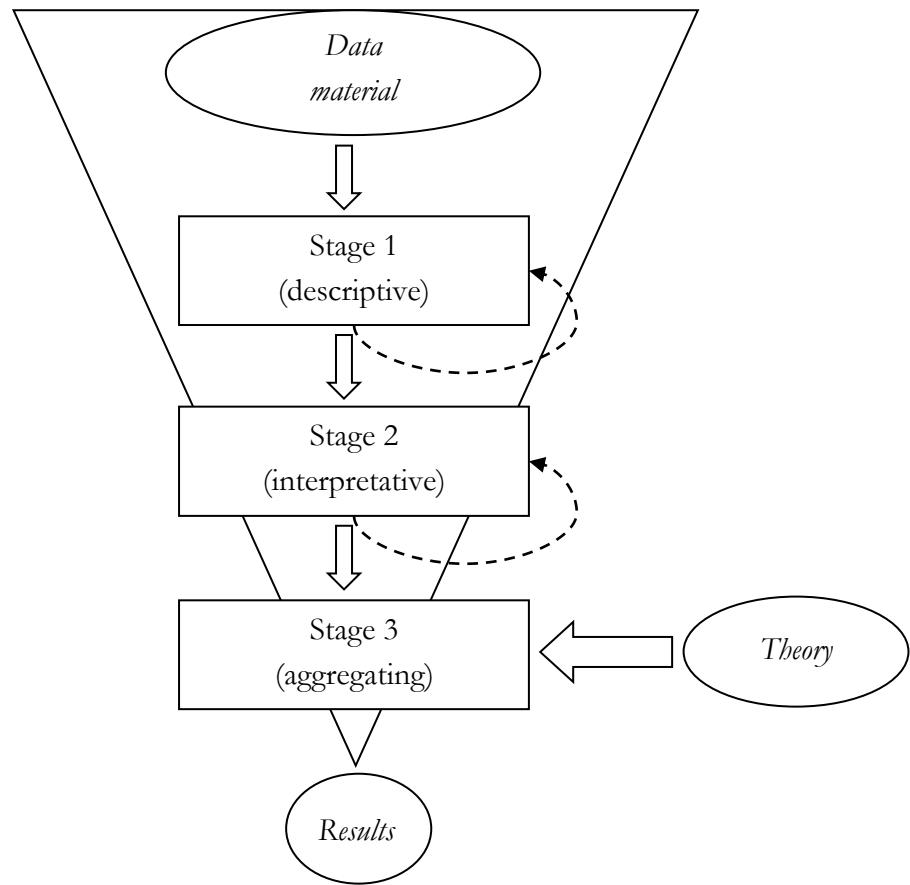


Figure 9: The inductive coding procedure illustrated

The dashed arrows indicate that each stage is not one simple step in a linear set of rules, but a reflexive process. During the analysis, already generated codes are not set in stone, but subject to constant revision. The funnel-shaped triangle illustrates the process of aggregation. At each stage, there are fewer codes which each encompass a number of codes from the previous stage.

4 Background: International climate finance and the Green Climate Fund

This chapter aims to familiarise the reader with the case used in this thesis for studying learning in international negotiations. It provides essential background knowledge on international climate finance in general and on the UNFCCC Green Climate Fund specifically. As a first step, the chapter defines international climate finance. The term has been used in various ways. Section 4.1 briefly discusses these different definitions, particularly in light of what is relevant to the GCF. Section 4.2 then introduces the Green Climate Fund as an institution. It provides an overview of its institutional structure and decision-making mechanism as well as a summary of milestones and key developments in its history. Note that this chapter remains rather descriptive in nature. Its aim is to equip the reader with a general understanding of the process that provides the basis for the subsequent analysis.

4.1 International climate finance

Anthropogenic climate change is one of the biggest societal challenges of our time. The ubiquity of this statement has almost demoted it to an empty phrase, but that does not take away from the urgency and severity of the climate change problem. While originally understood as an environmental issue, the effects of global warming, will, if not managed, be catastrophic across environmental, social, and economic dimensions (IPCC 2015: 8–16). To respond to this problem, there are two complementing general strategies. The first strategy is to mitigate global warming and its effects to the greatest extent possible. Efforts to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency feature most prominently under this strategy. The second strategy is to adapt to the consequences of climate change, acknowledging the fact that droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events are already affecting societies, particularly in the most vulnerable countries.³⁸ Although, as the Stern Review famously concluded, the economic costs of pursuing these strategies are likely to be considerably lower than the macroeconomic costs of inaction (Stern 2007: XV), both require immense up-front investment. Insulation for better energy efficiency, solar power plants generating renewable energy, irrigation systems, or dikes may pay-off in the long run,

³⁸ A third strategy – geoengineering, that is, deliberately influencing the climate in an effort to counter global warming – is currently only cautiously discussed, owing to the added economic and environmental risks of using expensive, untested, and intrusive technology. Geoengineering does currently not play a role in international climate finance.

but are costly to build and maintain. Adding to that, the economic capacities for these investments, local needs for adaptation, and the causal responsibilities for climate change are very unevenly distributed across the globe. In other words, climate change entails “a double inequality with an inverse distribution of risk and responsibility” (Barrett 2013: 1819). Having contributed least to global warming, developing countries are more vulnerable to its effects. Developed countries, on the other hand, are less affected and better equipped to cope with climate change. Although the world faces the common problem, this problem affects countries in different ways, they have different capacities to tackle it, and they bear “common but differentiated responsibilities” (UN 1992b: 1).

Climate finance is the sourcing, managing, and allocating of financial resources for the specific purpose of funding mitigation and adaptation measures. Financial flows that cross borders then become, unsurprisingly, international climate finance. Although South-South climate finance – that is, financial flows between developing countries – has emerged in recent years as well (Ha et al. 2015), international climate finance is usually more specifically understood as the transfer of resources from developed to developing countries. The UNFCCC Conference of the Parties has defined the purpose of Green Climate Fund as promoting “the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, taking into account the needs of those developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change” (UNFCCC 2011a: 2).

This definition notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge alternative definitions of the purpose of climate finance in order to better understand some of the contestation surrounding it (see also Subsection 4.2.2). At one end of the spectrum, one might have a normative view of the purpose of international climate finance. Emphasising the historical responsibility and moral obligations of developed countries, climate finance can be seen as a means of resolving the “double inequality with an inverse distribution of risk and responsibility” (Barrett 2013: 1819) that was mentioned above. From a more functionalist, liberal perspective, international climate finance can also be understood as a way to advance international climate action in light of the fact that a comprehensive, legally-binding agreement has not been reached since the Kyoto protocol and the effectiveness of the bottom-up approach of the 2015 Paris Agreement remains to be seen. Moreover, since it does not matter where greenhouse gases are emitted and economies in a number of developing countries are growing, effective climate mitigation relies on climate action in the

global South. From this perspective, climate finance can be seen as a way to ensure effective climate action in developing countries as well as future political support from the developing countries in the UNFCCC process. In more abstract terms, climate finance has also been framed as a means to correct the market failure that the costs of economic behaviour with adverse effects on the climate are not internalised into prices (Skovgaard 2012). As an extension of this view, one might even say that international climate finance, i.e. the transfer of financial resources from richer to poorer countries, is in the material interest of developed countries. Two former GCF delegates highlight that international climate finance is a cost-efficient way to manage climate change and therefore in the interests of countries that would otherwise have to bear higher future costs for loss and damage, directly or indirectly (Kotchen & Martinez-Diaz 2017). “The reality is that investments in the GCF advance the strategic interests of the United States.” (*ibid.*) In other words, international climate finance can be seen as a positive-sum game.

Although it is defined here by its purpose, there are many ways to differentiate forms of climate or development finance in terms of sources, intermediaries, instruments, and channels (Buchner et al. 2013: 6). In terms of sources, one can distinguish between money that has been contributed by public institutions and money that has been leveraged from private institutions. In terms of instruments, there are market-based ones like loans and equity and non-market based one like grants. The intricacies of these differentiations were at the heart of much of the political contestation in the GCF negotiations. This will be examined in the subsequent subsection.

The variety of climate finance definitions, the complexity of its institutional architecture, and differences in reporting schemes (or a complete lack thereof), makes measuring the volume of financial flows difficult (Clapp et al. 2012; UNFCCC 2014). Buchner et al. (2013: 6) estimate USD 356–363 billion of total investments in adaptation and mitigation measures in 2012, USD 39–62 billion of which are international climate finance. International climate finance flows through a number of intertwined channels. Some parts of the funding flow through various multilateral institutions such as funds or development banks, which act as intermediaries, whereas others go through the established bilateral channels of development agencies (Nakhooda et al. 2013b; Buchner et al. 2013: 6–16; Nakhooda & Norman 2014).

A financial mechanism transferring resources had been part of the UNFCCC since its inception, but concrete arrangements were only made later (Vogler 2016: 52–53). International climate finance rose to particular salience following the 15th UNFCCC

Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 2009. This is not so much in contrast as it is due to the fact that, by most accounts, COP 15 was a failure (Levi 2009; Bodansky 2010; Christoff 2010; Dimitrov 2010; Fisher 2010; Falkner et al. 2010: 252–253). In light of the ambition to create a new universal and legally binding climate treaty, the negotiating parties failed to deliver on the high expectations. Attempts to explain this failure most prominently include inflated expectations ahead of the negotiations, China's obstructive approach, the US's green room politics, poor organisation on behalf of the Danish presidency, as well as more structural explanations, such as the state of the world economy after the global financial crisis of 2008. In an effort to rescue the Copenhagen endeavour, developed countries pledged to provide USD 100 billion per year by 2020 in climate finance for poorer countries. With over USD 10 billion pledged, the GCF has indeed become the largest climate fund as of August 2017 (HBF & ODI 2017). The following section will introduce the GCF in more detail.

4.2 The Green Climate Fund

Having introduced international climate finance, this section recounts how the Green Climate Fund, which serves as the main case in this thesis, came about. It explains the Fund's institutional structure and the operational features that set it apart from other international climate or development finance institutions. In the process, the section highlights what was at stake during the negotiation round analysed in this dissertation and what the main areas of contestation were. The purpose of this is to provide the necessary background information on the case for the empirical analysis presented in Chapter 5.

One of the few tangible outcomes of COP 15 was the declaration of intent in its Copenhagen Accord to establish the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund, which was envisioned to become one of the main distribution channels for the USD 100 billion in international climate finance promised by 2020 (UNFCCC 2010: 7). The Fund was then formally established one year later at the 16th COP in Cancún in 2010 (UNFCCC 2011c: IV.A.102–111). Its Governing Instrument was adopted again one year later at COP 17 in Durban and defines its overarching goals, principles, and basic structure. This document states that it is the mission of the Green Climate Fund to

“promote the paradigm shift towards low emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, taking into account the needs of those developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.”

(UNFCCC 2011a: I.2)

The Fund is envisioned to play a considerable role in sourcing, managing, and distributing USD 100 billion of climate finance a year by 2020 from both public and private sources, a target set by the Copenhagen Accord. As per the Cancún agreement, this should be new and additional money (UNFCCC 2011b: 16) – as opposed to being sourced from existing development aid budgets. As of May 2017, the GCF has about USD 10.1 billion of pledged and legally signed.³⁹ It has approved 43 projects with a total volume of USD 2.2 billion in GCF contributions (GCF 2017d). Most of these contributions are given in the form of grants (42%) and concessional loans (39%) and to a lesser extent in the form of equity (18%) and guarantees (1%) (ibid.) Formally, the Green Climate Fund is “an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing countries related to mitigation including REDD+,⁴⁰ adaptation, capacity-building, technology development and transfer.” (UNFCCC 2010: 7).

4.2.1 Institutional features and decision-making procedure

This subsection introduces the key institutional entities within and related to the Fund: the Board, the Secretariat, panels and committees, and the Fund’s major stakeholders. In the process, the subsection also outlines the Fund’s decision-making procedure. Since empirical analysis will focus on the Board meetings, the subsection elaborates particularly on the Board’s mandate, composition, and procedures.

The Board

The Board is the Green Climate Fund’s main decision-making body. It is tasked with bringing the Fund into operation. It negotiates the procedures, mechanisms, and instruments for the GCF to source, manage, and allocate money (UNFCCC 2011a: sec 18). As per its mandate from the COP, this includes considering lessons from existing funds (UNFCCC n.d.; 2015: 18, 29). While the Governing Instrument and thus ultimately the COP defined the goals and targets, the decisions still to be made by the Board are substantive. The COP “has given the board substantial flexibility about how to

³⁹ Note that due to the change of government in the United States in January 2017, it is possible that the remaining USD 2 of the 3 billion pledged by the US will not actually be paid to the GCF.

⁴⁰ A UNFCCC initiative aiming to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation

operationalise the Fund” (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 1). For example, the Board was tasked to find a balance between funding adaptation and mitigation. This much is clear from the Governing Instrument (UNFCCC 2011a: I.3). But what exactly is meant by balance was left undefined and open to interpretation and debate (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 2; Schalatek 2014b: XXII; see also Subsection 4.2.2 below).⁴¹

The UNFCCC is an international treaty. As such, the signatories and parties to the UNFCCC are states. This extends into the institutional features of GCF. The Board consists of 24 members – twelve representing developed countries and twelve representing developing countries – as well as an equal number of alternate members, who act as substitutes for their associated full Board member (UNFCCC 2011a: sec 9–10). Two members of the Board serve as rotating co-chairs, again one from a developed, one from a developing country (UNFCCC 2011a: sec 13). The Board decides by consensus, but – as per the Governing Instrument – must also “develop procedures for adopting decisions in the event that all efforts at reaching consensus have been exhausted” (UNFCCC 2011a: sec 14).⁴² As of September 2017, no such procedures have been developed.

In terms of their professional backgrounds, the Board is composed of a diverse set of members. Many of them are government officials working in finance ministries or, less often, in environment, development, foreign affairs, or energy ministries. Some countries even send the minister him- or herself. In the negotiation rounds analysed for this dissertation, ministries of the environment, finance⁴³, and foreign affairs are the most common home institutions of GCF Board members. Developed country Board members mostly work for development, foreign affairs, environment, or finance ministries. For developing countries, the most common home institutions are ministries of the environment and finance. More rarely, Board members are local governors, ministers for disaster management and relief, or they were recruited from international development banks or universities.

⁴¹ The Board eventually settled on a 50-50% split between mitigation and adaptation funding at its 6th meeting in Bali (Bali 2.1: 00:12; GCF 2014c: Decision B.06/06).

⁴² The Board discussed this issue at the eighth meeting in October 2014 and deferred it (GCF 2014e: Annex II I.1.e–g), then deferred it again at the twelfth meeting in March 2016 to a point no later than the fifteenth meeting (GCF 2016c: Annex IV). At the 17th Board meeting, the lack of such procedures became a major problem when – for the first time in the Fund’s history – there was no consensus on approving a funding proposal, no consensus on rejecting it, and no agreement on the procedural implications of such an impasse. See also the overview of milestones in the GCF’s development in Subsection 4.2.3 below.

⁴³ See Skovgaard (2012; 2017a) for a detailed treatment of the involvement of finance ministries in climate finance negotiations.

The Board usually convenes thrice a year, although additional Board meetings have been scheduled when required. In February 2016, an informal meeting was held in Cape Town, South Africa, addressing concerns that the Fund was, by the Board's own assessment, lacking a coherent strategic plan (Bose 2016). In December 2016, a fourth annual meeting was scheduled because the Board needed more time to deliver on its promise to approve funding proposals totalling USD 2.5 billion in that year (a target the Board ultimately failed to meet).

The agenda of the Board meetings is usually structured as follows. On the day before the start of the formal meeting, there is one day of informal deliberations where the groups, panels, and committees of the Fund meet to conclude any work they have been doing intersessionally. At the start of the formal meeting, after the initial adoption of agenda and the discussion of organisational matters, the Fund's various working groups and committees as well as the co-chairs give a brief report on their activities since the last meeting. Then, substantive deliberations commence. The issues discussed vary, but mostly include matters related to institutional design and operationalisation in the earliest stages of the Fund and consideration of accreditation and funding proposals in the later stages. Moderated by the two co-chairs, the Board discusses decision papers drafted and circulated by the Fund's Secretariat. If there is disagreement, the Board will discuss what should be amended. In case of more substantive changes to be made, the co-chairs will often task an informal ad-hoc group of Board members to adapt the decision paper on the basis of the points raised during the debate or even postpone the decision to the next meeting. The revised decision is then discussed again until there are no further objections. In addition to the Board members, there are representatives of the private sector and civil society with observatory status.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Green Climate Fund is headquartered in Songdo. Songdo is a planned city on the outskirts of the city of Incheon in South Korea. It is envisioned by the Korean government to be developed into a major international business hub. Among the Secretariat's most important tasks are the organisation and facilitation of the meetings of the Board meetings as well as managing applications of potential accredited entities and the pipeline of funding proposals. The Secretariat does not handle the money that has been contributed to the Fund. This is done by the World Bank, which acts as the Fund's trustee.

The Secretariat plays a role in the use of lessons at the Board meetings, as it compiles reports on the experiences of other funds as part of their preparatory work, often at the

Board's request. For example, the Secretariat looked into internationally recognised standards for fiduciary principles in order to help the Board decide what sort of principles the Fund should adopt (GCF 2013b: 5), and it considered lessons learnt in other climate funds regarding gender-issues in climate finance (GCF 2014d: ; Bali 2.1: 01:52). However, the Secretariat's capacity to conduct such research is limited; not least due the long-lasting issue of severe understaffing (see Bali 2.1: 02:00; King 2015).

Panels and committees

Over the course of its institutional creation, the GCF Board has set up various working groups consisting of an equal number of Board members from developed and developing countries. These panels' and committees' main function is to prepare and facilitate the Board's decision-making. They have a specific topical focus and are usually set up to draft working decision documents to be discussed at the Board meetings. Examples include the Risk Management Committee (e.g., Bridgetown 1.2: 01:36) or the Accreditation Committee (e.g., Bridgetown 2.10: 00:46). In addition, the co-chairs of the meetings would also occasionally form ad-hoc working groups to resolve matters – often related to the specific wording of a decision text – that the co-chairs do not think can be resolved efficiently in the plenum (e.g., Bali 2.1: 01:44).

In addition to panels that are comprised of members of the Board, there are also a number of panels or advisory groups that operate more or less independently from the Board. These independent panels have been established to ensure compliance and unbiased monitoring of results. For example, the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) assess and provides advice on the technical viability funding proposals (GCF 2015b: 1), informing the Board's decision whether to approve or reject a project. The Private Sector Advisory Groups (PSAG) makes recommendations to the Board regarding the Fund's engagement with the private sector in terms of, for instance, how much financial risk the Fund should accept (GCF 2014f) or how to best engage with local small and medium-sized enterprises (GCF 2014g).

Stakeholders

Due to the nature of the Green Climate Fund's activities, the Fund has a variety of stakeholders ranging from large international institutions down to the local communities in which projects are implemented. For the purposes of this dissertation, this overview focusses on stakeholders that are particularly relevant to the deliberations at the Board.

Contributing entities are those entities that pay money into the Fund. They include both public institutions like national governments (more specifically government agencies, i.e. treasuries and finance ministries) and private institutions like banks. In some cases, a public contributing entity is at the same time the home institution to a Board member. This aspect will be of particular importance in Section 5.3.

Institutions that wish to seek funding for climate adaptation or mitigation projects must first be accredited with the GCF before they can submit funding proposals. As of September 2017, the Fund has 54 such *Accredited Entities* (GCF 2017a: 34). They range from national and multilateral development banks (such as the German *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* or the African Development Bank) to private banks (such as Deutsche Bank or HSBC), national ministries (such as Rwandan Ministry of Natural Resources), and international organisations (such as the United Nations Environment Programme) (GCF 2017a: 26–32).

National Designated Authorities (NDAs) are national government entities – often within ministries – that serve as a point of contact between the Fund and accredited entities. All funding proposals must be approved by the respective country's (or countries') NDA(s). The purpose of this is to ensure that mitigation and adaptation projects are in line with national development strategies and national laws (see also the section below on country ownership). The UNFCCC is a convention between states. Accordingly, the GCF is mandated to take country-driven approach (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 1), and the parties to the Convention exert a degree of control over the activities financed by the GCF through National Designated Authorities. For a project to be put before the Board for approval by the Secretariat, the respective NDA (or several NDAs, in case of regional projects) must submit a letter of no objection to the GCF's Secretariat (GCF 2014b: 87–88). This means they can effectively only veto existing funding proposals. NDAs may encourage certain types of projects that fit with their government's overall development and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, but they are not the entity that instigates them.

There are a number of *observer organisations*, both from civil society (CSOs – civil society observers) and private investors (PSOs – private sector organisations). Two individuals from each of these groups are active observers who get to comment on draft decisions during the Board meetings.

4.2.2 *Operational features and areas of contestation*

This subsection provides an overview of the key features that define the GCF from an operational point of view and set it apart from other climate and development finance institutions. In the process, the subsection also highlights what was at stake at the negotiations round that were analysed for this dissertation. This is important to fully understand the main areas of contention, which the analytical chapter will draw on. As explained in the theory chapter, to argue is to justify political positions (Holzinger 2001b: 421). It is therefore imperative to understand both what these positions were and in what way they clashed. To this end, this subsection juxtaposes developed and developing countries' positions with regard to a number of key contentious operational features of the Fund, focussing on those that were particularly relevant during the negotiation rounds analysed. Note that the distinction between these two groups of countries is simplifying. Developing countries in particular are a remarkably heterogeneous group. Emerging economies on the one hand (Hallding et al. 2013) and small island developing states (SIDS) on the other (Betzold 2010) differ in many relevant respects, such as economic strength and vulnerability to climate change. However, the bipolar distinction is part of the empirical reality of the global climate regime, to the extent that it even used to be institutionalised in the UNFCCC treaty by the distinction between so-called Annex-I and non-Annex-I countries (UN 1992b: 19–20).⁴⁴ The North-South divide still dictates the composition of the GCF Board, and much of the debate in the negotiations occurred along this cleavage. This is why this distinction, albeit somewhat problematic, can be analytically useful. In this thesis, countries are grouped according to their official classification in the Green Climate Fund.

At the first meeting in Geneva, the co-chairs declared their intention to make the GCF Board “an efficient decision-making forum, rather than a negotiating body” (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 1). Translated into this dissertation’s theoretical framework, they would have preferred the Board to engage in arguing rather than bargaining. Yet, the reality looked different. The Board meetings are highly politically charged and have been described accordingly by both Board Members and civil society observers as “COP-style negotiations” (BM 1) or “mini-COPs” (NGO 4)⁴⁵. Much of the contestation during these negotiations occurred along the old cleavage between developed and developing countries:

⁴⁴ See also Section 7.2.

⁴⁵ The citations for interviews indicate the category of interviewee (BM for Board members, NGO for civil society observers) as well as an ID number for that category. A complete list of interviewees can be found in the list of references.

“And I say so because we are insisting on an element that is not significant towards helping us resolve the problem. It is about politics, about the rich versus the poor. It’s about me against you: I deserve a better life than you, and I’ll do what I can with my money. That’s what it’s about. And the years of struggle that many of us have gone through haven’t sunk in. We still are today on the old, old-fashioned way of doing things, even when the world has changed. And this is very sad.”

David Kaluba (Zambia) in Bridgetown 4.8: 00:19:19–00:20:17

This should not come as a surprise, however, considering the stakes. The COP gave general guidance, but highly consequential decisions were still to be taken at the Board meetings. These decisions shaped the Fund’s operations with regard to sources for funding, mechanisms for allocation, results monitoring and much more. While the Green Climate Fund is, as mentioned before, not the first institution of its kind, it still is unique in many ways. This is not just due to the comparatively high volume of its assets, but also due to some unique operational features inscribed in its Governing Instrument.

Climate finance versus development assistance

The distinction between climate finance and development aid has been a key issue since the inception of the idea for the Green Climate Fund at COP 15 in 2009. And it has remained contentious until the time of completion of this thesis. The principle to clearly separate between climate finance and development aid is reflected in the aforementioned condition that GCF money should come from new and additional public sources (UNFCCC 2011b: 16). Preceded by a debate about additionality that is as old as the UNFCCC itself (Jordan 1994), this phrase defines climate finance to be separate from official development assistance (ODA). As mentioned before, determining what counts as climate finance is not only difficult, but also at a core aspect in the political contestation surrounding it (Buchner et al. 2013; Roberts & Weikmans 2017).

On the one hand, there are clear overlaps between development and climate adaptation in particular. Climate change virtually always affects development and vice versa with regard to adaptation (Ballesteros et al. 2010: 53; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013: 489; Pauw 2014: 3). Climate change poses direct risk to aid investments, climate vulnerability can impinge on how investments are implemented, and, conversely, the investments themselves have an impact on the vulnerability of communities and ecosystems (Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013: 489). Therefore, some seek to mainstream climate mitigation and particularly adaptation efforts into development policy that had been ongoing for quite some time (Davidson et al. 2003; Klein et al. 2007; Gupta & van der Grijp 2010; Ayers et al. 2013).

On the other hand, labelling development aid that they already provide as climate finance would make it easier for developed countries to keep their pledges (as some argue is in fact

already happening, see Nakhooda et al. 2013a). In addition, financial contributions could be used as political leverage by subjecting them to the prior implementation of particular policies (Fairman & Ross 1996: 30–37; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013: 490).

Then again, the fact that climate finance and development are so tightly intertwined in practice also limits the kind of projects that the GCF will approve. When a funding proposal was not approved for the first time at the 16th Board meeting in April 2017, it was because several developed countries argued that the project, which sought to address drought resilience in Ethiopia (GCF 2017b), was to be considered development rather than climate adaptation. While developing countries had been quite adamant that climate finance should be kept separate from ODA flows, here they pointed out the links and similarities between the two.

The adaptation-mitigation balance

As mentioned above, the Board was tasked to find a balance between funding adaptation and mitigation, but what is meant by balance was left undefined and open to interpretation and debate (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 2; Schalatek 2014b: XXII). The Board eventually settled on aiming for a split of 50% mitigation and 50% adaptation funding at its 6th meeting (Bali 2.1: 00:12; GCF 2014c: Decision B.06/06). Yet, disagreements surrounding this issue were prevalent in many areas. There has long been a gap in terms of funding for adaptation (UNEP 2016). Developing countries stressed the urgency of adaptation and the practical problems associated with expecting too much from adaptation projects:

“[...] in the context of adaptation, I must emphasise that when you are facing extreme weather stress and you have food security issues, you don't really look at the coping by adapting some low emission practices. You need to cope because it's a matter of survival.

Tosi Mpanu Mpanu (DR Congo) in Paris 1.4: 01:44:13–01:44:34

“Again, this mantra that's repeated several times in this decision: 'based on the ability of a proposed activity to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient pathways in the context of sustainable development'. This is under adaptation! Can adaptation projects achieve this? I wish they could, but we all know that this is virtually impossible to happen under adaptation projects, and we do not wish to see this as a conditionality in the future [...].”

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Paris 1.4: 01:52:33–01:53:11

Adding further complexity to the adaptation-mitigation issue, the Green Climate Fund has a category of funding proposals that include adaptation and mitigation components, called cross-cutting projects. Since it is difficult to determine to what extent cross-cutting proposals entail adaptation or mitigation, there is uncertainty among GCF stakeholders whether the 50-50 balance is actually met (Feist 2016a). This problem is exacerbated by the

fact that adaptation and mitigation are not easily set off against each other: One could compare financial volumes of each component, but adaptation measures often cost less, which does not necessarily imply they are the smaller, less important component; one could compare impact, but then how could one possibly offset CO₂ emissions reduced and livelihoods improved in an objective fashion (Feist 2016a: 3–4)? “Mitigation and adaptation can have very different cost structures that do not translate into impact in the same way.” (Feist 2016a: 4)

Public versus private finance

The adaptation-mitigation balance is closely linked to questions about donor composition and sources for funding. To what extent should the Green Climate Fund seek to leverage private investment or rely on public money? Generally speaking, developed countries were in favour of focussing efforts on private finance (e.g., Bali 2.1: 00:39, 00:54; Songdo 3.4: 00:34; Bridgetown 2.3: 00:51; 2.6: 00:28). They argued that engaging with the private sector is simply a way of bringing in more resources, which would be necessary in order to achieve the paradigm shift set out in the Fund’s Governing Instrument (Bali 2.1: 00:39, 01:03). In this light, developed countries stressed the need to incentivise private investments, which played a big role in the negotiations (see Subsection 5.3.4).

“I think this Fund obviously needs to engage with the private sector. It needs to attract its resources; it needs to tap its expertise if we’re ever are to achieve the types of objectives that we’re talking about.”

Rod Hilton (Australia) in Bali 2.1: 01:31:15–01:31:26

The GCF has a dedicated sub-entity for private climate finance called the Private Sector Facility (PSF). Its purpose is to “provide funding to private actors, and support activities that enable private investment in low carbon and climate resilient approaches” (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 3). 20% of GCF’s total cumulative commitments are planned to go through the PSF (Shamsuddoha & Atikul Haque 2015: 3).

Developing countries cautioned against too much private sector engagement (e.g., Paris 2.1: 01:07; 2.2: 00:45). They favoured public grants and concessional loans as financial instruments in light of their adaptation and climate readiness needs (e.g., Paris 1.4: 01:12). The reasons for this are closely related to the issue of adaptation versus mitigation. Private investments would, naturally, seek the highest return on their investments and would therefore prioritise mitigation projects (e.g., Bali 2.1: 00:31). Urgent adaptation projects in developing countries would thus have to be financed from mostly public sources (Buchner et al. 2013: I–II, 12–13). Developed countries challenged that notion, drawing on past

experience of private sector entities that work successfully in the area of adaptation (Bali 2.1: 00:39).

“[A] 20% floor for private sector is already a mitigation-biased instrument, as we all know.”

Shri Dipak Dasgupta (India) in Bali 2.1: 00:29:39–00:29:52

The question of public versus private funding affects not only the adaptation-mitigation balance, but also the range of financial instruments at the Fund’s disposal. There are four main financial instruments the GCF uses: Grants, loans, equity, and guarantees. At the time of writing, 42% of GCF funding had been given in grants, 39% in concessional loans, 18% as equity and 1% as guarantees (GCF 2017e). Developed countries favoured a wide range of financial instruments, going beyond publicly funded grants and concessional loans, as well as a broad donor base which would include funding from emerging economies as well as private sector or even charitable sources (Paris 1.2 01:05; Paris 1.4: 00:36, 00:59; 01:10). Grants are obviously the most advantageous option for the recipient, but they require public money, which contributors do not necessarily expect to be repaid.

The issue of public versus private finance is also linked to the Fund’s risk appetite, i.e. what levels of financial risks (due to default, for example) it should be willing to accept and aim for. Issuing loans for adaptation projects in particular often does not yield high returns and is therefore of less interest to private investors. The GCF, it was argued, therefore needs a high risk appetite if it is to fulfil its ambitions with regard to adaptation. As one Board member put it: “If it was sound from a financial point of view, why come to the GCF?” (Zaheer Fakir [South Africa] in Songdo 2.1: 01:21:01–01:21:05)

Country ownership

Another area of contestation regarded the question of control over the allocated resources in recipient countries. In the GCF’s terminology, this is referred to as country ownership. As mentioned above, the UNFCCC is a convention between states. In line with that, the GCF is mandated to take a country-driven approach (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 1). The concept of country ownership is an integral part of that, allowing developing countries to exert control over the climate adaptation and mitigation projects to be funded within their borders. Metaphorically speaking: “I say that if you come and help me fix my leaking roof, it gives you no right to tell me how I should run my household.” (Tosi Mpanu [DR Congo] in Songdo 3.4: 00:39:07–00:39:16)

Country ownership is meant to ensure that GCF-funded projects are in line with general climate and development strategies in recipient countries. Unsurprisingly, the issue was

particularly important to developing countries (e.g., Bali 1.3: 01:17; 02:42; Songdo 2.1: 00:35; 3.4: 00:38; Bridgetown 4.4: 00:40). For instance, a developing country Board member proposed that the details of results measuring should be left to countries and not be organised at the level of the Fund (Bali 1.3: 01:17–01:22). Direct access is one of the key concepts designed to ensure a country-driven process. It allows funding to be paid to a developing country government or an appointed institution for the purposes of disbursement to domestic climate projects at the host country's discretion (Berliner et al. 2013: 1; Orenstein & Reyes 2017: 4).

Standards and safeguards

Throughout the GCF Board meetings, there were reoccurring debates about social, environmental, and fiduciary standards and safeguards. One of developed countries' primary concerns was to ensure the accountability and efficiency of financing. As all developed country Board members simultaneously represent contributing countries⁴⁶, they prioritised safeguarding mitigation and adaptation measures in return, as it were, for the financial resources they provided (Bodansky 2010). Hence, they emphasised that certain conditions in terms of standards and safeguards must be met before disbursement of funding, along with evaluation and monitoring procedures for these conditions according to established standards (e.g., Paris 1.2 01:01; Paris 2.4 00:33; Paris 3.1 00:21). Developed countries were divided, however, on how extensive the required standards should be (Paris 3.3: 00:03, 00:24; Schalatek 2013c: V). Germany, for instance, was willing to contribute money upfront (Paris 1.2: 01:32) whereas the USA and Australia insisted more that standards be met prior to resource mobilisation (Paris 3.1: 00:23; Paris 1.2 01:01).

Developing countries, on the other hand, tended to view climate finance as compensation for the consequences of climate change predominantly caused by developed countries (Bodansky 2010). Attaching conditions to contributions would, from their perspective, turn this responsibility upside down. “The logic is twisted here.” (Ayman Shasly [Saudi Arabia] in Paris 1.2: 01:47:09–01:47:11) Developed countries should be the one who moves first:

“As far as we are concerned, and as Shakespeare said, you know: The question is not: to commit or not to commit. The absolute answer is to commit and commit before we talk about anything else. We need initial capitalisation.”

Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia) in Paris 1.2: 01:48:13–01:48:29

⁴⁶ The term *donor country* is also sometimes used in the policy literature, but frowned upon by some who think it does not accurately reflect responsibility for climate change. In the words of a GCF Board member: “This is not a charity organisation.” (Ayman Shasly [Saudi Arabia] in Paris 1.2: 01:46:04–01:46:07).

Appropriately, this debate surrounding the mutual conditionality of standards and contributions has been dubbed a “chicken-and-egg discussion” (CDKN 2013): Should standards in safeguards be in place before developed countries contribute money or the other way around?

Readiness

An issue discussed at great length at the earlier GCF Board meetings was the lack of institutional capacity in some developing countries. This capacity is needed to properly receive and manage funds from the GCF while at the same time ensuring compliance with safeguards and standards (e.g., Paris 3.1: 00:27, 00:39; Bali 1.3: 03:36; 2.1: 00:33). To remedy this, the GCF provides funding specifically for enhancing the institutional capacity of developing countries in these areas. In GCF jargon, this is referred to as readiness support. “[R]eadiness is at the heart of what we expect the GCF to be.” (Patrick McKaskie [Barbados] in Bridgetown 3.8: 00:29:31–00:29:37) The limited institutional capacity in developing countries that readiness support is meant to address played an important role in the negotiation rounds studied for this dissertation (see Subsection 5.3.2 in particular). The issue affected many matters, some of which brought to light certain divergences between countries. For example, when the Board discussed the Fund’s policy regarding the reimbursement of travel costs (Bali 1.2: 00:31–01:13), developing countries were keen to emphasise the importance of travel support. Developed countries on the other hand – while acknowledging that this is important for least-developed countries – pointed out that many developing countries do have the capacity to pay for their travel costs and, importantly, did not consider the issue so urgent that it should be discussed by the Board, instead pressing to proceed to discussing substantive, i.e. non-administrative matters (e.g., Bali 1.2: 00:53, 00:56).

Gender

The Fund takes a gender-sensitive approach (UNFCCC 2011a: I.3). This means that funding proposals are required to take gender aspects into consideration and make special provisions if necessary. In addition, the gender-sensitive approach should in principle also apply to Secretariat staffing and Board member selection (UNFCCC 2011a: II.C.2, II.E.1). Yet, at the time of the seventh Board meeting in Songdo, only five out of 48 Board members (including alternates) were female, which was just over ten percent.

Although there was relatively strong agreement among Board members about the importance of gender aspects, it featured quite prominently in several debates (e.g., Bali 2.1:

01:47–03:04; Bridgetown 4.7: 01:11–01:39). Notably, Board members emphasised that gender issues are an important aspect to many of the Fund’s potential investors (Bridgetown 4.7: 01:21). Arguments of that nature will be important in the empirical analysis (see particularly Section 5.3).

4.2.3 *Historical milestones*

To conclude this introduction to international climate finance and the Green Climate Fund, this last subsection recounts important milestones throughout the Fund’s history from its inception to the 17th Board meeting in July 2017, which is the latest meeting at the time of writing.

When the Green Climate Fund was formally established in Cancún in 2010, a Transitional Committee (TC) was set up *ad interim* as per a COP 16 decision. Its task was to work out the basic institutional structure for the Fund (UNFCCC 2011c: IV.A.109). The TC convened four times between April and October 2011. Several members of the TC went on to become regular members of the GCF Board, which for the first time convened in Geneva in August 2012. The table below provides a comprehensive overview of the GCF Board meetings as of September 2017 and key issues that were discussed at each meeting. This dissertation analyses recordings of meetings 5 to 8.

No	Date	Place	Key issues and decisions
1	23–25 August 2012	Geneva, Switzerland	First meeting after the Transitional Committee concluded its work.
2	18–20 October 2012	Songdo, South Korea	Slow progress and resurfacing divergence of goals; the Board selected Songdo as the location for the Fund’s headquarters (Schalatek 2012: III)
3	13–15 March 2013	Berlin, Germany	Laid the foundations for future decisions about the Fund’s operational features, in particular regarding the Fund’s Business Model Framework (Schalatek 2013b: III, V–VIII)
4	26–28 June 2013	Songdo, South Korea	Focussed on discussing the Fund’s Business Model Framework (Schalatek 2013a: IV)
5	8–10 October 2013	Paris, France	Determined eight essential requirements for the initial resource mobilisation of the Fund (Schalatek 2014b: XXII, see below)
6	19–21 February 2014	Bali, Indonesia	A contentious meeting with “few decisions and much discontent” (Schalatek 2014a: III). Only two of the eight essential requirements were decided (<i>ibid.</i>)
7	18–21 May 2014	Songdo, South Korea	Decided that projects should be approved based on development potential as opposed to financial viability (Rai & Smith 2014a). Decided on the

			outstanding six essential requirements, making the Fund technically operational.
8	14–17 October 2014	Bridgetown, Barbados	First meeting in a small island development state. Highly charged deliberations. Huge agenda deemed unmanageable by some (Schalatek 2015b: 1). Nevertheless, some key decisions on the accreditation process, results management and performance measurement, and a potential veto by recipient countries were taken (<i>ibid.</i>)
9	24–26 March 2015	Songdo, South Korea	First set of implementing entities accredited (Schalatek 2015a: 1)
10	6–9 July 2015	Songdo, South Korea	Accredited 13 new entities, some against strong opposition from civil society observers due to their history of financing fossil fuel industries (above all Deutsche Bank); decided to provide more funding for direct access and readiness support (Trunk 2010: 2–5)
11	2–5 November 2015	Livingstone, Zambia	On the eve of the much-anticipated COP 15 in Paris; first meeting where projects were approved, i.e. money allocated: eight projects worth USD 168 million; cut-off point for this dissertation
n/a	2–4 February 2016	Cape Town, South Africa	Informal, out-of-schedule meeting; dubbed crisis meeting by observers; aimed to devise a grand strategic plan for the Fund (Bose 2016)
12	8–10 March 2016	Songdo, South Korea	Adopted a strategic plan, which, designed as a living document is meant to clearly communicate the Fund's vision (Kakakhel 2012)
13	28–30 June 2016	Songdo, South Korea	Discussed a programmatic approach in which programmes "would encompass several projects and could increase efficiency and effectiveness" (Eckstein et al. 2016)
14	12–14 October 2016	Songdo, South Korea	The Board appointed a new Executive Director; project proposals and applications by accredited entities were approved as a package with hardly deliberations in the plenum, much to the chagrin of civil society observers
15	13–15 December 2016	Apia, Samoa	Extra meeting in addition to the usual three per year; focussed on approving more projects in order to bring the Fund closer to allocating USD 2.5 billion in 2016, which ultimately failed (ended up at USD 1.48 billion)
16	4–6 April 2017	Songdo, South Korea	First time a funding proposal was not approved (some developed country Board members argued that the project (drought resilience in Ethiopia) was development rather than climate adaptation). This sparked an additional controversy over the rules of procedure, regarding what should happen in the absence of consensus. The meeting ended without those issues being resolved.

17	3–6 July 2017	Songdo, South Korea	Board members discussed the implications of the new US government’s intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement earlier that year (Bose 2017b). Civil society organisations expressed their disappointment over the amount of closed sessions during the meeting, which were neither accessible to observers nor broadcast over the internet (Bose 2017a).
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Table 2: List of Green Climate Fund Board meetings

The remainder of this subsection highlights some of the key milestones and developments throughout the course of the negotiation rounds listed above.

The Fund’s aforementioned mission, promoting a “paradigm shift towards low emission and climate-resilient development pathways” (UNFCCC 2011a: I.2), was operationalised in what the GCF calls its Business Model Framework (BMF; Schalatek 2013c: X). The BMF represents a fundamental decision in terms of how entities would access GCF funding (CDKN 2013). It includes a number of Board decisions which outline the most basic characteristics of the Fund, for example what sort of financial instruments it should use (GCF 2013c), what the modalities for access to funding should be (GCF 2013a; 2013b), and how results should be monitored (GCF 2013d; 2013e). In that context, the Board debated whether the Fund should follow a wholesale or retail model, although the use of these terms was controversial since it is not in the Governing Instrument (Schalatek 2013b: VI–VII). Essentially, the question was whether the GCF should distribute money through existing channels like a wholesale dealer or engage with recipient institutions directly like a retailer (*ibid.*). As a compromise, the metaphorical language was scrapped and replaced by the decision that the GCF should “commence as a fund that operates [both] through accredited national, regional and international intermediaries and [directly through] implementing entities” (GCF 2013c: 4).

The Board identified eight essential requirements for the Fund to be able to commence its initial resource mobilisation. In essence, these requirements cover all the structural elements necessary to receive, manage, and allocate funding and relate to most of the institutional and operational features examined above. The eight essential requirements were:

1. an initial results management framework
2. an initial proposal approval process, initial modalities for mitigation and adaption as well as the Private Sector Facility
3. policies and procedures for allocation of Fund resources
4. procedures for accrediting entities and intermediaries

5. a financial risk management framework
6. an investment framework
7. the structure of the Fund and the Secretariat (Rai & Smith 2014b: 1).

The sixth and seventh meetings of the Board largely focussed on taking the decisions necessary to fulfil these requirements. At its seventh meeting in Songdo, the Board finalised and adopted all decisions that were still outstanding. With the operational procedures in place, the Green Climate Fund was open for business from this moment on.

Another noteworthy meeting of the Board was the 11th, which took place in Livingstone, Zambia, from 2 to 5 November 2015. This was on the eve of COP 21 in Paris, a highly anticipated global climate summit and widely regarded as the most important such gathering since COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009. At the meeting, after much deliberation, the Board approved the first set of funding proposals, and can therefore be regarded not just as technically operational, but also as factually operating from that point forward. The Fund was now receiving contributions, managing the money through its interim trustee, the World Bank, and allocating it to Accredited Entities to implement concrete climate adaptation and mitigation projects. At this milestone in the Green Climate Fund's history, it had USD 10.2 billion pledged by 34 countries for initial capitalisation. USD 5.83 of that had been signed, i.e. legally contributed (GCF 2015a: 1). As of May 2017, the Green Climate Fund is the largest multilateral climate fund, both in terms of pledges and legally signed contributions (HBF & ODI 2017).

The aim of this chapter was to introduce and familiarise the reader with international climate finance in general and, in more detail, the Green Climate Fund, specifically its institutional structure and decision-making procedure, key operational features and areas of contestation, and important milestones in the process of the GCF's institutional creation. The next chapter will present findings from the empirical analysis of four the GCF's negotiation rounds, where the Board discussed to many of the issues described here.

5 Analysis: Learning in the Green Climate Fund negotiations

This chapter presents the main empirical findings, drawing on an in-depth qualitative analysis of video recordings of four negotiation rounds of the Green Climate Fund Board. Following the theoretical framework⁴⁷ and contrary to what conventional arguing-and-bargaining theory suggests, this chapter will demonstrate that negotiating patterns that have the form of arguing are not necessarily attempts to persuade others of the validity of certain facts, the moral superiority of certain norms, or the genuinely perceived better option. As a consequence, lesson-drawing in post-agreement negotiation cannot be understood as Habermasian communicative action. This would neglect the role of power. With contestation being tangible at the Board meetings over the redistributive issues under discussion, there is no reason to assume that lessons are exempt from power struggles. Lesson-drawing should be seen not as a transcendence, but as a manifestation of the exercise of power. This in itself is already in contrast to the way lessons are usually understood in both arguing-and-bargaining theory and the conventional technical learning literature. In addition, seen from the opposite angle, the chapter shows that interest-laden aspects of negotiations do not necessarily take the form of hard bargaining. It proposes an explanation for the frequent referencing of experiences from existing institutions at the GCF and for how lesson-drawing is able to influence the negotiations.

The chapter will start off by providing a descriptive outline of different types of lessons in Section 5.1. In addition, the section will give an overview of how frequently the individual types of lessons were drawn and by whom. The analysis will then be structured along a series of key themes and questions, one leading to the next. Section 5.2 will follow the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, which conceptualised lesson-drawing as part of an argumentative process. In order to empirically confirm that this is indeed the case, the section will examine the argumentative use of lessons and explain how lessons resonate with the listener. However, the fact that lessons are used argumentatively does not have any particular implications about what the speaker seeks to accomplish by drawing a lesson. Does he/she genuinely aim to persuade another as arguing-and-bargaining theory would suggest, or is there something else? One can observe argumentative lesson-drawing and theorise about its effects, but it is really the logic underlying the negotiations that matters

⁴⁷ The analysis will draw on the theoretical framework developed in Section 2.3. As such, it will make heavy use of the conceptual vocabulary introduced there. In particular, the distinction between experiences, lessons, and learning (Subsection 2.3.2), the roles of speakers and listeners (Subsection 2.2.2), and the concepts of power and influence in negotiation (Subsection 2.3.3) will be of relevance.

for a meaningful understanding of learning. This question is at the core of Section 5.3. It looks at how lessons were linked to delegates' interests and demonstrates how lessons are used not to the ends that are associated with arguing, but that they are rather used strategically to bargain by proxy. Furthermore, the section proposes an explanatory mechanism for lessons to exert influence in international negotiations, in line with the theoretical considerations made in Chapter 2.

The finding that lessons are indeed used strategically leads to another question: If it is political interest rather than consensus that encourages negotiators to draw lessons, then why would they bother to argue rather than bargain in the first place? Why would delegates go out of their way and bargain by proxy, instead of perusing their interests more directly? This aspect is discussed in Section 5.4, which asks why actors draw lessons strategically. It outlines the scope conditions that make lesson-drawing in international negotiations more likely. Lastly, as outlined in the theory chapter, learning is a social process that involves not only the actor drawing a lesson (the speaker), but also those who the lesson is directed at (the listener). Section 5.5 addresses that aspect and investigates how delegates negotiate the argumentative validity of lessons. To conclude, section 5.6 offers a critical reflexion on the analysis and its limitations, and section 5.7 provides an extensive summary of the main empirical findings.

5.1 Types of lessons

In order to lay the foundation for the empirical analysis in this chapter, this section outlines some of the main features in the system of categories that emerged from the data material. The section presents a typology of lessons. It characterises the ways in which negotiators made references to existing experiences with other international institutions. Examining their general thrust, the section distinguishes four general types of lessons: Positive lessons, negative lessons, comparisons, and rejections and dismissals. The aim of the section is to provide a vocabulary for the subsequent empirical chapters and to convey a sense of the ways in which speakers used the various types of lessons. Note that the purpose of this is not yet to analyse *why* lessons were used in the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, but more generally to describe *how* they were used.

5.1.1 *Sources for lessons*

To begin with, this subsection gives a short overview of the sources delegates drew lessons from. In total, Board members referenced 37 different organisations. These mostly

included closely-related climate or development finance institutions – such as the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, or the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation. More rarely, delegates also referenced standards and frameworks like the Equator Principles or international institutions from rather different areas – such as the World Trade Organization or the United Nations Security Council. Note, however, that about 36% of lessons did not make a reference to any specific institution. In those that did, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was the most commonly mentioned, followed by the Adaptation Fund. As the longest-serving entity under the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC (Ballesteros et al. 2010: IX), experience with the GEF is not only relatively plentiful, but highly relevant, too, since the Green Climate Fund is an entity within the same institutional framework. The following graph shows the institutions mentioned most often by country group.

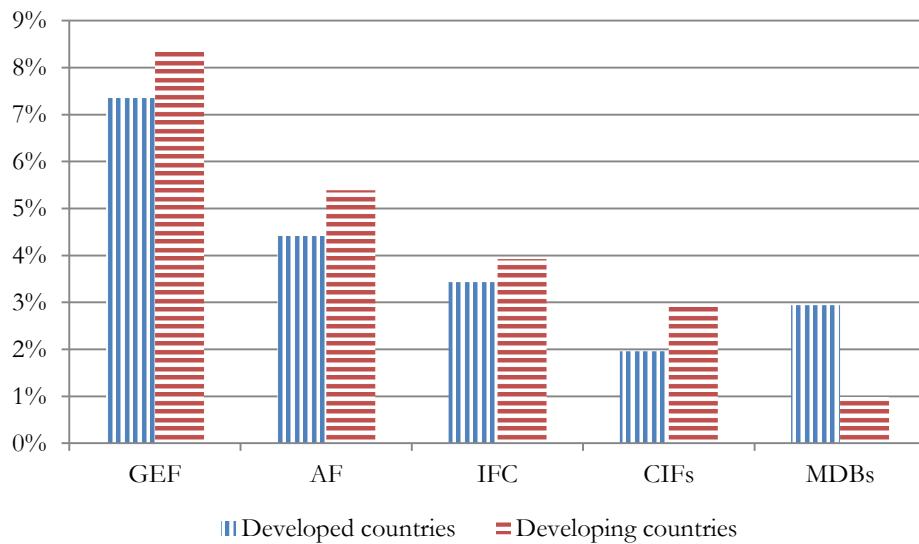


Figure 10: Sources for lessons by country group

Notably, developing countries referenced multilateral development banks much less often. They tended to be less inclined to adopt policies from MDBs since they advocated a shift from the existing policies and practices in international development and climate finance that these institutions represent (see also Subsection 4.2.2).

5.1.2 Positive lessons

“Why not look at what we already have developed at the GEF? [...] We have these definitions. They have been worked on a lot by many folks over many years. Why not borrow some of those?”

Leonardo Martinez-Diaz (USA) in Songdo 3.3: 00:43:54–00:44:22

Most intuitively perhaps, the first type of lesson can be called a positive lesson. Positive lessons advocate the assessment and adoption of a policy, standard, or practice, entirely or in part, that has been – in the view of the speaker – successfully employed before by other institutions. While the specific context always needs to be taken into account, certain categories that emerged in the coding process were particularly indicative of positive lessons. These categories included *Adopt in order to ease administrative burdens*, *Adopt to speed up the Fund's operationalisation*, and *Adopt to have something to fall back on*.

At face-value, positive lessons are largely consistent with what the conventional learning literature of the early to mid-1990s would classify as drawing lessons across domains, i.e. across institutions and/or time (Rose 1991; May 1992; Levy 1994; Dolowitz & Marsh 1996: 344; Grin & Loeber 2007: 202–210). A positive lesson may concern the procedure of dealing with a problem, the content of the policies to address it, as well as the conditions for a policy's feasibility and its political repercussions (McConnell 2010: 349–350).

Positive lessons were the most common type of lesson drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. 52 percent of all learning-related interventions included a positive lesson. Interestingly, developed countries invoked positive lessons considerably more often than developing countries. Of all positive lessons from the analysed Board meetings, 69 percent came from developed countries (31 percent from developing countries). When developing country Board members did draw positive lessons, they were often concerned with easing the administrative burden of accreditation procedures (see also Subsections 5.3.2 and 6.2.2).

5.1.3 Negative lessons

“We must be cognisant of the lesson of the other multilateral funds have brought after the attempt to measure results from each project in attempt to define national-wide or sector-wide indicators. [sic] The objective of the Fund [the GCF] in this case is to make an improvement with regard to these older practices.”

Angel Valverde Gallardo (Ecuador) in Songdo 1.8: 00:42:59–00:43:24

Negative lessons are, unsurprisingly, the counterpart to positive lessons. Here, too, the speaker evaluates an experience from another institution. But instead of advocating to replicate it, the notion is the opposite. The speaker cautions against a particular standard, policy, or practice because it had led to undesired results in his or her view. Note that negative lessons do not imply that the speaker rejects the general idea of learning from another institution. On the contrary, the speaker proposes to look at what went wrong and adapt the standard, practice, or policy accordingly. The most prominent categories for this type of lesson were *Avoid repeating mistakes* and *Avoid known problems*. In the former, Board

members warn against implementing a policy, standard, or practice due to its undesired consequences and propose to adapt it accordingly. In the latter, the focus is shifted from the policy, standard, or practice to the issue they are supposed to solve. Here, delegates would recount problems that occurred at other institutions and propose to learn from this experience so that the problems can be avoided.

A negative lesson may seem akin to what the conventional learning literature calls drawing lessons from policy failure (May 1992: 341–343). However, this is only a cursory reading. Drawing lessons from policy failure means drawing on experience from something that is regarded to be a failure by both the source institution and the learner. Hence, drawing lessons from failure presupposes a shared understanding of goals across institutions. As this thesis investigates learning in international negotiations that are driven by interests, this is not considered a necessary condition for a negative lesson. Arguing that a policy, standard, or practice is flawed and that the GCF should not repeat the mistakes made is an entirely subjective assessment by the speaker. It does not necessarily reflect the assessment of the source institution. In other words, a Board member might draw a negative lesson from an experience while the institution he or she refers to sees it entirely as a success.

Negative lessons were most often used by developing country Board members. Of all negative lessons in the analysed meetings, about two thirds (63 percent) came from developing countries (37 percent from developed countries). In conjunction with positive lesson use, this shows how reflective the different types of lessons are of the different priorities of developed versus developing countries. While developed countries prioritised accountability, which could be achieved by adopting tried-and-tested policies, developing countries emphasised – through the way they used lessons – the ambition of the GCF to do things differently, i.e. not like they have been done elsewhere.

5.1.4 *Comparisons*

“So, I think what we need to do in the small group is just take those different layers, look at them, and sort them out, but not strip them back to the point that when you compare them with CIF and GEF, they look some sort of a poorer, worn-out version.”

Josceline Wheatley (United Kingdom) in Songdo 1.8: 00:25:37–00:25:54

In addition to lessons that sought to adopt policies from another institution or avoid repeating its mistakes, Board members more generally referenced experiences with regard to the broader context in which the Fund operates. These references can be called comparisons. All positive and negative lessons ultimately involve an implicit act of comparing. It is necessary to contrast the current or desired state of the Fund with the

situation in other institutions. A comparison as a type of lesson, however, does not as such contain notions about the feasibility or desirability of a policy, standard, or practice. Instead, it is meant to test proposals against the existing environment in international climate finance. Comparisons are about benchmarking, conveying a sense of what is reasonable, feasible, or established and therefore – importantly – expected by other actors in the field.

Board members used comparisons to highlight the expectations that (potential) stakeholders have from an international climate finance institution like the GCF (category: *Compare to compete*). For example, the Cuban Board member compared the service fees that the Board considered to what other institutions charge. He argued that entities will not seek funding through the GCF if conditions are more difficult than in other funds (Bridgetown 3.9: 00:18). Moreover, comparisons were drawn to better understand how things work in other institutions and illustrate the anticipated effects of a policy, standard, or practice (category: *Compare to predict*). By making comparisons, delegates drew conclusions from the developments in other institutions in order to predict what the future development at the GCF is going to be like or what the practical operation of the Fund will likely involve. For example, one Board member referenced experience from the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds, where sophisticated investment plans are drafted by national focal points. He concluded from the comparison with the provisions proposed in the GCF document under discussion that the Board was making assumptions far from the reality of what happens on the ground (Songdo 1.7: 00:42). Another example is that a Board member read out from a report by the GEF, stating that there would be no earmarking of financial contributions. Yet, he continued, contributors tend to attach conditions to their payments nonetheless (Bridgetown 4.8: 00:15). Hence, according to his argument, having a policy against appropriation might not have any actual effect at all.

Contrary to the other types of learning identified in this section, comparisons were quite evenly used by developed (42 percent) and developing countries (58 percent). However, the way comparisons were invoked in the negotiations certainly differed between the two groups of countries as will be explored in the course of the analysis.

5.1.5 Rejections and dismissals

“My question to the body is: Is it really possible to have this perfect result for something in the future, simply by comparing what other funds are doing, have been doing, without due regard to the experience gained and accumulated in these other funds?”

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Songdo 1.8: 00:50:29–00:50:58

Lastly, the fourth type of lesson that can be identified are rejections and dismissals. In many respects, this type of lesson is unlike the other three. It essentially entails the proposition of a non-lesson, the rejection of the notion that learning would be meaningful or feasible. The speaker explicitly opposes drawing lessons from past experience. Hence, dismissals and rejections differ from negative lessons in that they entail not the rejection of a particular standard, policy, or practice, but the rejection of the idea that the Fund should draw lessons from other institutions in the first place. Board members who rejected lessons argued that certain institutions were unsuitable as sources for lessons due to incompatible or undesirable characteristics (category: *Unsuitability due to characteristics of source*; e.g., Songdo 1.6: 01:03; Bridgetown 2.11: 01:08, 4.1: 02:26). Or, Board members were more generally concerned that the very act of adopting a standard, policy, or practice from another institution would be incompatible with the Fund's mission to tackle international climate finance in new ways (category: *Incompatibility with the GCF's mission*; e.g. Songdo 1.6: 00:43; Bridgetown 2.3: 01:06).

Even more so than negative lessons, dismissals were by far most commonly used by developing countries. Of all dismissals in the analysed Board meetings, 85 percent came from developing countries (15 percent from developed countries). This reflects some fundamental differences between the positions of the two groups of countries: How can the Green Climate Fund promote a true shift from existing paradigm when – at the same time – it relies on existing best-practice to inform its operational design. As the relative frequencies of the various types of lessons shows, there is a clear difference between developed and developing countries in terms of what side of this spectrum they emphasised. While developed countries were much more inclined to adopt existing standards, policies, and practices, developing countries tended to be more of the view that this would dilute the Fund's objectives.

The following table provides an overview of the types of lessons described in this section.

	Positive lesson	Negative lesson	Comparison	Rejection/ dismissal
Key categories	Adopt to speed up; Adopt to fall back; Accredit to ease burden; Done before; Works well elsewhere	Avoid repeating mistakes; Avoid known problems	Compare to compete; Compare to predict	Unsuitability due to characteristics of source; Incompatibility with the GCF's mission; Reject to reassure
Developed/ developing country usage split	64% / 36%	37% / 63%	45% / 55%	15% / 85%

Table 3: Types of lessons

The following graph visualises the differences between developed and developing countries regarding the use of the four types of lessons.

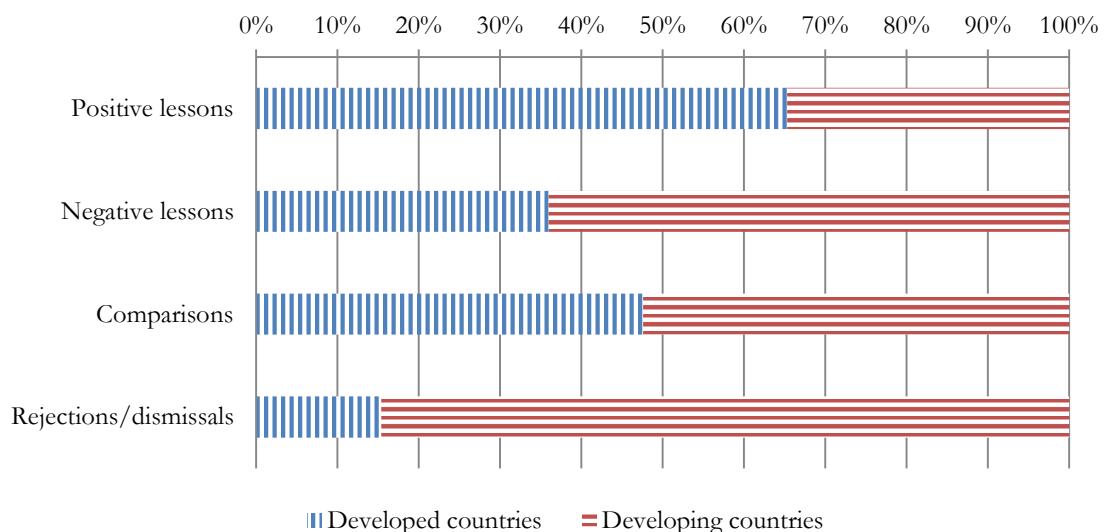


Figure 11: Types of lessons by country group

An in-depth analysis of how the types of lessons were used in the GCF Board meetings will be presented throughout the remainder of this chapter. Moreover, the differences observed between developed and developing countries will be taken up again in the discussion chapter (particularly in Subsections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2).

5.2 Enhancing authority: The argumentative use of lessons

Arguing-and-bargaining theory conceptualises lessons as particular speech acts within processes of arguing (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 355, 361). This thesis does not aim to refute this classification of lessons per se, but it proposes a different view of how lessons are used. The purpose of this first section is to confirm empirically the theoretical assumption that lessons were indeed used argumentatively at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. It is

essential to not merely claim that lesson-drawing occurred at the GCF Board meetings, but to empirically demonstrate that it happened and what it looked like. Moreover, the section also explores *why* delegates drew lessons argumentatively, i.e. how it improved their chances to exert influence. This involves analysing how arguments were able to resonate with listeners, i.e. how lessons lend argumentative authority to the speaker. This will then be expanded upon in a later section, showing that the credibility a lesson bestows upon the speaker is necessary for its strategic use.

The section proceeds in three steps. First, it confirms empirically that lessons were indeed used argumentatively at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings (Subsection 5.2.1). Second, the section analyses how delegates used lesson within the structure of an argument as outlined in the theory chapter, i.e. how lessons were used to bolster factual claims (Subsection 5.2.2). Third, the section discusses why actors would invoke argumentative lessons in negotiations in the first place (Subsection 5.2.3). In other words, while Subsection 5.2.2 will analyse how lesson-drawing bolsters the claim made in an argument, Subsection 5.2.3 will look at how lesson-drawing bolsters the authority of the speaker who makes the argument.

5.2.1 *Lessons and arguments*

In Section 2.2, arguing was defined as a mode of negotiating that aims to convince listeners of the factual truth or normative rightness of a claim. Taking this definition as a point of departure, it is evident from the GCF video recordings that lessons were indeed used by delegates to bolster claims and proposals made during their interventions. In fact, for reasons to be explored further in Section 5.4, most of the interventions at the meetings can be classified as arguing rather than bargain, again merely on the face of it. This was also true for lessons the delegates drew from experiences with other international climate and development funds.

Recall from the theory chapter (particularly Subsection 2.2.1) that arguing “proposes the truth of a factual, or the normative validity of a moral, proposition with a view to convince the target [...] of the claim made by the speaker” (Müller 2004: 397). Accordingly, a lesson on its own does not constitute a complete argument. Rather, an argument includes both making a claim *and* support for that claim (see Subsection 2.3.2). Without this support, arguments would merely be statements or contentions. Actors must also explain the reasoning behind their claims. “Arguing is a mode of communication in which the power of reasoning prevails.” (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352) Experiences from other international climate and development finance institutions were referenced extensively at the Green

Climate Fund Board meetings to provide that argumentative reasoning. Hence, lessons were used to bolster factual claims made by delegates about the merits and limitations of policies, standards, and practices.

As explained in the previous subsection, both positive and negative lessons were drawn in this context. On the one hand, delegates drew positive lessons (e.g., Paris 1.2: 00:21; 1.4: 00:59; Songdo 1.7: 01:10; 3.3: 00:41; Bridgetown 1.3: 01:14; 2.1: 01:12; and many more). There was a strong notion that the Green Climate Fund “should [...] not reinvent, but borrow. Best practice is out there.” (Anton Hilber [Switzerland] in Paris 1.2: 00:22:09–00:22:15) To name an example, the definition of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises was directly adopted from the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation (GCF 2014h: 3, see also the Board’s deliberations on this issue in Bridgetown 3.11: 00:32–00:52). For another example, a developed country Board member proposed adopting the definitions of mitigation and adaptation from the Global Environment Facility (Songdo 3.3: 00:41).

On the other hand, delegates also drew negative lessons (e.g. Paris 1.4: 01:39; 3.1: 00:27; Songdo 1.8: 00:42; 4.6: 00:07; Bridgetown 2.10: 01:06, 01:13; 4.1: 02:43; and many more). For example, the Ecuadorian Board member warned against using broad indicators in the GCF’s Initial Results Management Framework as this had led to problems in other funds (Songdo 1.8: 00:42). The Congolese Board member said that recent experience with the Adaptation Fund showed that a funding cap per country is problematic (Bridgetown 2.10: 01:06).

The assessment presented here is largely congruent with the assumptions found in the theoretical literature. It is an agreed-upon, albeit only marginally discussed notion within arguing-and-bargaining theory (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 355, 361). If one follows this theory, however, the occurrence of lesson-drawing could be seen as an indicator for islands of persuasion (Deitelhoff 2009) – in a setting of multilateral diplomacy which is mostly characterised by bargaining processes (Jörke 2013a: 357). What is essential here is to confirm that lessons were indeed used as arguments in the sense of arguing-and-bargaining theory. Lessons conveyed claims about factual truth about the standard, policy, or practice under discussion at the GCF Board meetings. The nature of the social interactions that these lessons were used in will be determined in the course of this chapter.

5.2.2 *Prima-facie plausibility*

“Having too many indicators creates the risk that the Fund’s operations are getting too complicated. And this is a lesson from other funds.”

Henrik Harboe (Norway) in Bali 1.3: 03:27:19–03:27:26

What is striking about both positive and negative lessons is that in many cases they were not explicated any further beyond simply making a reference to an experience. Negotiators often did not elaborate on the experiences they drew on. Instead, in the case of positive lessons, they simply pointed out that whatever they are proposing works well in other institutions (category: *Works well elsewhere*; e.g., Songdo 1.7: 00:12, 01:10; Bridgetown 4.1: 02:03). In essence, Board members relied on what can be called the *prima-facie plausibility* of the problem-solving abilities of lessons, echoing Boswell (2009: 5)⁴⁸. Mere mentioning of the fact that previous experiences had been assessed was used as a way to bolster a proposition argumentatively. The corresponding category was among the most common in the data material.

To give an example, after he proposed to implement a competitive application process for funding projects, the American Board member mentioned that the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program uses such a process and simply claimed that it is working well for them (Songdo 1.7: 00:12:51–00:18:13). He added that many countries present at the Board meeting had contributed to that programme (*ibid.*). However, he added no further elaborations as to why he thought it was working well or to what extent such a policy would be transferable to the Green Climate Fund. As an even more extreme variant of this, it was also common for Board members to simply point out that a proposed policy, standard, or practice has been or is being applied at other institutions already. They frequently did not offer any explanation as to why this should be an indicator for the suitability of this particular policy, standard, or practice for the Green Climate Fund (category: *Done before*; for example in Bali 1.3: 03:26; 2.1: 03:41; Songdo 1.7: 01:11, 1.8: 00:37, 3.4: 00:14, 01:25; Bridgetown 3.8: 01:04, 3.15: 01:00, 4.1: 01:52, 4.7: 00:41). As a matter of fact, in about one third of all coded interventions, no specific institution was referenced. The mere fact that something had been used elsewhere is taken to suffice as a justification for the legitimacy of a lesson. No further elaboration as to how this indicates that this practice would be appropriate for the GCF as well was apparently deemed necessary. For example, developed countries offhandedly mentioned that a voting

⁴⁸ Boswell examines the use of knowledge in more general terms rather than just the use of lessons, but the idea is equally applicable here.

procedure in absence of consensus would be “fully consistent with practice in all institutions that have to move large amounts of resources” (Leonardo Martinez-Diaz [United States] in Bridgetown 4.1: 01:54:58–01:55:04).

By drawing lessons in such a way, speakers make the validity of their claims more plausible. They demonstrate that what they propose has already been deemed feasible by another institution. Importantly, however, rather than providing evidence for their claim, they at most implicitly suggest that there is evidence. If another institution uses a particular standard, policy, or practice and is satisfied enough with it not to abolish it – the argument goes – it must be one that should at least be considered as an option. Referencing such options in positive lessons does not even necessarily involve the explicit reference to the institution where it has been done before. Simply stating this enhanced the authoritative potential of an argument. For example, to support the idea for the Fund to hire a sort of brand ambassador for the Fund, one Board member simply remarked: “Further, on the eminent person, we think that is a good idea. There have been other examples of inviting eminent persons, wherever they come from, to moderate such a process [...]” (Norbert Gorißen [Germany] in Songdo 3.4: 01:25:11–01:25:25). The inverse of this was also used: Delegates framed the fact that what they proposed has *not* been done before as a problem. For example, the French delegate pointed out that “to [his] knowledge, there is no precedent of a fund having both a framework agreement and project agreement. And that seems to be a problem.” (Frederic Glanois [France] in Bridgetown 4.1: 00:40:29–00:40:40) As a softer variant of this, Board members pointed out that a certain practice is unusual in other institutions (Bali 1.1: 00:19).

The discussion of voting procedures in the absence of consensus is a good example of negotiators harnessing the *prima-facie* plausibility of lessons to support their arguments. Aiming to enhance the Fund’s decision-making reliability in the case of the absence of consensus, some developed countries proposed to link voting rights at the Board meetings to the volume of financial contributions a Board member’s constituency makes. Developing countries, unsurprisingly, strongly opposed this. They feared voting rights would be proportional to the volume of financial contributes, as seen at other institutions. Seeking to avoid the detrimental effects of adopting such a procedure, they, too, drew lessons from these existing institutions, albeit rather negative than positive ones (e.g., Bridgetown 4.1: 02:43). Nonetheless, developed countries unabashedly continued to advocate a contribution-based voting system in the absence of consensus. When, during the debate, developing countries strongly argued that decisions should always be made by

consensus, developed countries even claimed that drawing a positive lesson will, by Board members' own estimates, not have any actual effect at all. Adopting a voting system as a fall-back option served exclusively the purpose of improving the Fund's perceived reliability with donor institutions (see also Subsections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4). Take these two interventions, for example:

“And we can look at the example of the GEF, which in 20 years has never used its voting system.”

Andrea Ledward (United Kingdom) in Bridgetown 4.1: 02:08:12–02:08:18 (complemented by Ludovica Soderini [Italy] at 02:11)

“This is a process that has been used successfully for years in the IFC⁴⁹, and I am not aware of an instance in which a country has actually objected, having them provided with advance notice and a fixed period of time within which to comment.”

Marisa Lago (United States) in Bali 2.1: 03:32:46–03:33:01

These are good examples of how lessons were used to make arguments more plausible and, at the same time, did not include any claims about causal relations. Both interventions invoked past experience to assure other delegates that a certain undesired outcome or event is unlikely, without offering any more abstract explanation as to how the experience is applicable to the Green Climate Fund. The lessons did not convey any abstract reasoning. They merely enhanced the plausibility of the argument made in the intervention by illustrating the absence of a causal relation.

This subsection looked at how lessons were used argumentatively to bolster propositions at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. It found that speakers attempt to make their claims more plausible by drawing lessons. The key point to take away is that speakers relied on the *prima-facie* plausibility of lessons, that is to say, in many cases they did not provide further explanation with regard to how exactly, through which logical mechanism a lesson supports the particular claim made. Speaking in conceptual terms, delegates provided backings for the claims, but no warrants.

5.2.3 *Claiming expertise*

The above subsection showed how lessons were used argumentatively to bolster positions at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. The underlying, more general question behind this is how the use of lessons enhances the argumentative authority of the speaker. In other words, the above subsection analysed how lesson-drawing bolsters the *claim* made in an argument; this subsection turns its attention to how lesson-drawing bolsters the authority

⁴⁹ The International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group

of the *speaker* who makes the argument. The answer is important to understand how the observed practice of lesson-drawing at the GCF Board meetings ties into the theoretical concept of arguing.

Turning back to the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, arguing-and-bargaining theory gives a clear answer in that regard. Invoking lessons lets the speaker demonstrate his or her competency regarding the matter at hand. Bolstering their proposals by drawing lessons from past experience rationalises the claim and thereby legitimises the intervention.

As Risse & Ulbert (2005: 359) point out:

“It does not suffice that actors claim to hold legitimate knowledge, they also have to prove that the way in which they acquired this knowledge meets certain criteria of validity and can be shared intersubjectively.”

Risse & Ulbert (2005: 359)

Indeed, at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings delegates often claimed the authority to assess the value of lesson by emphasising their own experience. As pointed out in the background chapter on the GCF, several Board members had at some point been also members of the board of other climate or development finance institutions. Both developed (e.g., Songdo 1.9.: 00:34, 4.1: 01:01; Bridgetown 3.8: 00:24, 4.1: 02:11) and developing countries (e.g., Songdo 1.7: 00:42, 3.4: 00:09, 4.6: 00:14) enhanced the argumentative authority of the lessons they drew by claiming competence through personal experience. Board members often stressed their ability to genuinely assess a policy, standard, practice first-hand, without seeing it through the filter of others, because they had seen how it actually works on the ground (e.g., Bali 1.3: 02:12; 2.1: 00:45, 02:12, 03:01; 2.2: 00:03; Songdo 3.4: 00:08)

“This is from experience we have had on the ground dealing with the implementation of adaptation programmes.”

David Kaluba (Zambia) in Bali 1.3: 02:12:47–02:12:58

“[M]aybe I should explain why I say this. And this is based on experience. And for those who don’t know: I’m also a contributor to some other funds. As small as it may be, but I do contribute. And in other funds where I contribute, I have found that to be, to become a contributor – that’s a personal thing, so it’s not... it hasn’t been studied by consultants and put into a paper and adopted by... This is my own view!”

Zaheer Fakir (South Africa) in Songdo 3.4: 00:09:20–00:09:50

“Having been involved in international after international organization that is trying after the fact to go back and integrate gender into the organization’s thinking, I feel that we have an opportunity here to get it right from the start.”

Marisa Lago (United States) in Bali 2.1 03:01:24–03:01:40

In order to exert influence, lessons need to resonate with the listener. In order to resonate with the listener, the listener needs to accept that the factual and normative claims embedded in the lesson are true and righteous. By drawing lessons, the speaker argumentatively enhances his or her authority to speak on the matter. Emphasising their personal involvement with the experience, actors prove that the way in which they acquired their knowledge meets certain criteria of validity (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 359).

This aspect of negotiating has recently been discussed quite extensively elsewhere, albeit not explicitly with regard to learning. From the perspective of practice theory, actors claim competence as they “seek to establish their mastery of the game by framing particular issues and positioning themselves as leaders” (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 895).⁵⁰ A similar thing happened at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. Lesson-drawing enhanced the authority of the speaker, allowing him or her to claim competence and signal that the knowledge they impart on others is legitimate and valid. This authority applies not only to the lesson itself, but also to the speaker. Demonstrating command over the technical knowledge and experiential capability required to draw relevant lessons in the first place is in itself an act of claiming competence (cp. Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 895).

Importantly, claiming of competence is contingent on not only the person of the delegate and his or her demonstrated expertise. It also detaches the argument from the political interests of the speaker’s constituency. This is one of the most important aspects about enhancing authority through lesson-drawing. When a speaker makes a proposal based on his or her constituency’s interests and then bolsters this proposal by invoking a lesson, the intervention is no longer simply a contention, demand, or the like. Rather, it turns into a claim about factual truth. Any attempts to dismiss the demands made in the intervention stand against this claim and must either try to countervail or outweigh it with something else (for example another claim). Or, the listener must engage with the original claim and try to refute it. In other words, it is the very use of a lessons to enhance the speaker’s authority that makes it argumentative in the sense of arguing-and-bargaining theory.

The need to claim expertise at the Green Climate Fund Board is enhanced further due to the nature of the questions discussed. They concerned highly technical issues – as opposed to the broader goals and strategies debated in high-level politics at the UNFCCC COPs. Such technical issues – like fiduciary principles or accreditation modalities – contributed to the need to use lessons argumentatively. As others have emphasised, knowledge tends to

⁵⁰ Wilson Rowe (2015) demonstrates what this looks like empirically using the case of the negotiations for the UNFCCC REDD+ mechanism.

have particularly pronounced substantiating functions “where the debate revolves around technocratic issues rather than interests or values” (Boswell 2009: 61).

5.2.4 *Summary*

As a first step, this section has empirically confirmed that lessons were indeed used as part of arguments. The experiences from other international climate or development finance institutions were used by delegates in the form of lessons to argumentatively bolster the claims made in their interventions. The section first established that GCF delegates did in fact draw lessons (Subsection 5.2.1). The section then investigated how lessons enhance the speakers’ chance to convince another of the factual truth or normative rightness of their claims. Two aspects were considered in this regard: the way in which speakers make their claims more plausible through the use of lessons (Subsection 5.2.2) and the reasons why the process of arguing requires them to do so in the first place (Subsection 5.2.3).

This was an important first step in the analysis of learning in international negotiations at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. However, the question that follows is through what mechanism lessons can exert influence. The findings from this section do not at all give the complete picture. This should be quite obvious when one considers the description of the GCF Board meetings provided in subsection 4.2.2. The high degree of political contestation over the Fund’s operational features is in stark contrast to the notion of communicative action. In light of the political contentiousness, this notion must be reconsidered. Having established empirically that lessons are indeed used as arguments, the next section will examine whether these arguments were used in the way that arguing-and-bargaining theory would predict. The section will demonstrate that lessons drawn at the GCF negotiations may appear like arguments, but are not used with the intention to convince others and reach consensus on the best course of action. The section will show that instead arguments served strategic functions.

5.3 Exerting influence: Bargaining by proxy

“Everybody who preceded me presented [a] very convincing argument. I don’t know how this will help us to reach a consensus on a decision.”

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Bali 2.1: 01:11:43–01:12:00

The previous section examined how the use of lessons enhances the authority of the speaker and, thus, what makes the use of lessons argumentative in the sense of arguing-and-bargaining theory. However, as explained in the theory chapter and illustrated by the

above quote, arguing convincingly is not an explanatory mechanism for influence in politically charged negotiations. This section takes into more careful consideration the contexts in which lessons are drawn. It analyses their substantive thrust and reveals their links to interests and contestation at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. The purpose of this is crucial to the overall argument of the thesis. On an empirical level, it answers the question why listeners would care about the lessons speakers draw at the negotiation table. What is the mechanism that makes lessons resonate with listeners? On a conceptual level, this serves as a probe into the nature of lesson-drawing in international negotiations as a social phenomenon. So far, the findings from the analysis are by and large in line with the functionalist notions found in the conventional literatures on learning and arguing. This section, however, brings power dynamics back into the picture. Diverging interests often got in the way of consensus, even if the arguments presented were convincing on a technical level. However, as shown in the previous section, lessons were often used for their *prima-facie* plausibility, enhancing the speaker's authority to speak on the matter at hand. To the extent that lessons lacked substance, the question of how they can influence negotiations becomes even more obvious.

This section will unpack the power dynamics in learning and arguing in three steps: First, it shows that lessons were tightly linked with parties' interests. Subsection 5.3.1 investigates this aspect and establishes that lessons are not used in the sense of Habermasian communicative action. At the surface, lessons seemed to contribute to bringing the Fund into operation. However, as will be explained, they were very much geared towards the speakers' interests.

Yet, the fact that lessons reflected delegates' interests alone does not imply anything about their effectiveness as an argumentative vehicle in negotiation. Interest-laden argumentative lessons alone would leave the listener cold, as it were. In this light, Subsection 5.3.2 picks up on the definition of influence given in the theory chapter (Scruton 2007: 331). It analyses how speakers attached weight to the lessons they drew. In particular, this involved comparisons (see Subsection 5.1.4), which was particularly common with lessons seeking to provide shortcuts or interim and fall-back solutions. The implications of this – namely that this is essentially bargaining by proxy – will be considered in the subsequent subsections: Subsection 5.3.3 analyses how drawing comparisons enabled delegates to openly play two-level games and harness extra-institutional expectations as leverage. Finally, Subsection 5.3.4 ties the analysis back to lesson-drawing and shows how this leverage attached weight to lessons.

5.3.1 Ensuring operational capability

Before this chapter turns to examining the power of lessons, this subsection takes the lessons drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings at face-value. It does not analyse their relationship with arguments or their strategic use, but their substantive content. The substantive content of lessons relates to their immediate, concrete implications as proposed by the speaker. In other words, the analysis of substantive contents deliberately looks at lessons as if they were instances of technical learning, in the sense of the conventional learning literature. This is an important first step for three reasons.

First, the substantive perspective acknowledges that, despite their clear link to power dynamics, the purpose of the GCF post-agreement negotiations was not solely to resolve a conflict of interest, but also – on the surface even predominantly – to sort out technical matters (as is the case in many negotiations, cp. Holzinger 2001b: 426). For a complete and thorough understanding of the GCF Board meetings, it is therefore important not to abandon this perspective and look what exactly delegates *claimed* they sought to accomplish by drawing on the experience with existing climate and development finance institutions.

Second, it is necessary to be able to disentangle the two levels of content embedded into the lesson itself, substance and strategically used argument. The more conventional distinction of technical versus political learning, by contrast, is less concerned with difference in the content of the lesson, but rather with their different thrusts in regards to the speaker's intents. To make such distinctions *ex ante* based on the purpose of learning would mean to ignore the face-value substance of lessons. This, in turn, would mean to presuppose what is yet to be shown in the analysis.

Third, it is important to provide an assessment of what aspects negotiators actually proposed learning about. After all, one can only understand how lessons can resonate with other delegates if one knows about their substantive content. As was explained in the theoretical chapter – this is a precondition for learning to help the speaker to exert influence and use learning strategically. For these reasons, the focal length of the analysis is set on the substantive content of lessons in this subsection.

Lessons were almost exclusively portrayed as contributing to ensuring the Fund's operational capability in some way. Two of the most common kinds of positive lessons, shortcircuiting and providing fall-back options, both served this function. Shortcircuiting means proposing the adoption of established policies, standards, and practices from other international development and climate finance institutions for the explicit purpose of

saving time (e.g., Paris 1.2: 00:37; Songdo 1.5: 00:14; Bridgetown 2.2: 00:03, 00:30). This, delegates argued, would allow the GCF to avoid the lengthy and politically cumbersome process of designing and discussing new policies specifically for the GCF.⁵¹

“If the Fund wants to be able to show something on the ground, we need to move swiftly. And therefore, it makes sense that we utilise some of the procedures that have already been used for some of the institutions and not start at square one.”

Stefan Schwager (Switzerland) in Bridgetown 2.2: 00:30:23–00:30:46

“When we think about a gender policy, we think it is relatively straightforward and that there are excellent examples that can be looked to in other institutions. So I do think this can be done efficiently and quickly.”

Marisa Lago (United States) in Bali 2.1: 02:11:23–02:11:36

The salience of shortcircuiting is unsurprising, considering the political contestation at the Green Climate Fund. As explained in Subsection 4.2.2, the Board meetings progressed rather slowly. The Fund’s high ambition and the urgency of climate action combined with the vague definition of its mission politically charged the deliberations at the Board meetings. Both the overall process of institutional creation of the GCF, in the sense of its bringing it to operation, as well as many individual Board meetings took much longer than originally projected. In fact, at some Board meetings only very few decisions were taken before the Board rushed through them towards the end (particularly at the eighth meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados). The slow progress exacerbated the pressure of the Board to bring the Fund into operation and deliver on the expectations of the COP and their home ministries.⁵²

Using lessons as a shortcut constituted a solution to this problem that many Board members advocated. Rather than enduring the cumbersome and lengthy process of having to design and subsequently agree on new policies specifically for the Fund, the Board would often rely on existing policies in order to expedite this process. The “pragmatic approach” of shortcircuiting (Norbert Görissen [Germany] in Bridgetown 2.2: 00:36:19–00:37:31) was, unsurprisingly, proposed most often when time was of the essence, which was often the case, particularly towards the end of meetings: “For two days, we have tried to do it right. Now, in this last day, let’s do it well... and fast!” (Jose Salceda [Philippines/chair] in Bali 3.1: 00:02:57–00:03:05) For example, the Board was particularly inclined towards shortcircuiting when discussing fast-track accreditation, i.e. an expedited accreditation procedure for entities (Bridgetown 2.2: 00:03:33–01:18:03). Beyond the

⁵¹ The most relevant category for shortcircuiting is *Adopt to expedite*.

⁵² See also Subsection 5.4.3 on the implications of this aspect.

time-saving aspect, the fact that stakeholders can be expected to be familiar with policies adopted from elsewhere was often seen as beneficial as well, potentially expediting the process even further.

In a similar vein – i.e., relying on existing best-practice because of their supposed widespread acceptance – lessons provided policy options to fall-back on. In addition to saving time, drawing positive lessons from existing institutions, Board members argued, would also facilitate reaching agreement as the policies to be adopted – be it permanently or merely on a temporary basis – had been established elsewhere before. Hence, a second substantive use of learning at the GCF Board meetings was to provide interim solutions via positive lessons while the Fund would develop its own policies, standards, and practices. The most relevant category for providing fall-back options was *Adopt temporarily*. For example, the GCF's accreditation committee adopted environmental and social standards for the accreditation of entities from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation⁵³ on an interim basis (Songdo 1.5 00:14; Bridgetown: 1.3: 00:20).

“We have defined the environmental and social safeguards, and we are using the IFC model to start with, saying that this is on an interim basis because they are well-known to everyone, and we know what we are talking about.”

Jan Cedergren (Sweden) in Songdo 1.5: 00:15:52–00:16:09

The notion here is that these policies were already familiar to the GCF as an institution and had already been put to under the scrutiny of the decision-body of another international climate finance or development institution.

To understand how this substantive function of lessons aided in ensuring the operating capacity of the Fund, interim and fall-back solutions should be viewed in light of both the contentiousness at the GCF Board meetings as well some features arising post-agreement character of these negotiations. In particular, recall the Board's mode of decision-making. The way decisions are taken at the Board carries the inherent risk of creating a stalemate. As per its Governing Instrument, the Board decides by consensus (UNFCCC 2011a: II.C.5). This means that a single Board member could, in principle, block any and all decisions. In addition, there was – as of the 11th Board meeting – no mechanism in place that regulates what would happen in the absence of consensus. Adding to that, the strong and conflicting preferences of Board members further decrease the chance for speakers to actually shift listeners' positions. This creates a looming chance of deadlock, an eventuality Board members were certainly aware of (see, for example, Paris 1.2: 00:42). Another factor

⁵³ IFC, an international financial institution under the umbrella of the World Bank Group

was that the decision to establish the Green Climate Fund had already been made at the COP. Crucial milestones for its operationalisation – above all the 21st UNFCCC COP in Paris – were approaching regardless of the progress made at the Board meetings. Proposing positive lessons in the form of interim and fall-back options provided default policies and standards that can stay in place no matter how quickly the Board would be able to reach consensus on the matter in question. And whether the Board would reach consensus during the meeting was always far from certain. This constellation created uncertainty among donor institutions⁵⁴ with regard to whether the Board will be able to reliably carry out its day-to-day duties as the Fund's decision-making body, accrediting entities and approving funding proposals. The potential uncertainty concerned many Board members, who feared for the Fund's credibility and capitalisation (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:33:15–03:14:48).

Drawing lessons to provide interim and fall-back solutions accomplished two things against this backdrop. First, it manifested a policy option the speaker would at least not be opposed to and second, once established, the interim solutions would serve as a point of reference for future deliberations on the same matter. Additionally, constant emphasis of the fact that existing policies and standards are merely adopted on an interim basis (e.g., Songdo 1.5: 00:14; Songdo 1.6: 01:03, 01:10) made them more acceptable to many delegates due to the perceived prospect of renegotiating these policies and standards at a later date.⁵⁵

To give an example for the threat of deadlock, many developed countries advocated establishing a voting procedure in case of the absence of consensus, which they said is important to ensure the Fund's credibility (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:07) and not to become paralysed in its capability to make decisions (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:52). Existing practices at other institutions served as blueprints for the solution to this problem: “The principles that are outlined here strike us as very appropriate and fully consistent with practice in all institutions that have to move large amounts of resources.” (Leonardo Martinez-Diaz [USA] in Bridgetown 4.1: 01:54:54–01:55:04) The French Board member argued that linking votes to contributions has worked well for institutions like the GEF, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and others because the prospect

⁵⁴ See also Subsection 5.3.3 below on the role of the expectations of donor institutions.

⁵⁵ Some delegates were actually concerned about the possibility that this might never happen, urging fellow Board members to see adopted policies and standards merely as weak reference points (Songdo 1.6: 00:49) or to set a fixed timeframe for the Fund to develop its own policies and standards (Songdo 1.6: 01:15).

of a higher share in voting rights incentivises higher contributions (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:03). For many developed countries, learning served as a means for creating a safeguard to have *something* in place for the Fund to fall back on in case no consensus could be reached.

In summary, lessons drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings mainly aimed to contribute – on the surface – to ensuring the operative capability of the GCF. However, as mentioned in the introduction to this section, this is not the complete picture. In a sense, lessons drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings married two different types of goals. On the one hand, lessons were, at least on the surface, predominantly concerned with the Fund’s successful bringing into operation. On the other hand, the experiences behind the same lessons were routinely aligned with the speaker’s interest. Having discussed the former aspect here, the following subsection will explore the latter aspect.

5.3.2 *Trojan lessons*

Having analysed how lessons were linked to supporting the Fund’s bringing into operation, this subsection investigates how these lessons were, at the same time, tightly linked with the speakers’ interests. Crucially, however, the same was true for the interests of the listener. Lessons often exhibited a double link to the interests of both the lesson-drawing delegate and the one he or she was addressing. Such lessons will be referred to as Trojan lessons. Metaphorically echoing Odysseus’ famous ruse from the *Odyssey* (Homer 1919: book 8, verse 482), a Trojan lesson is one that resonates with the listener because it is aligned with his or her interests, but, importantly, it comes piggybacked with the proposed adoption of a standard, policy, or practice that the listener would likely not agree with on its own or at the very least not see as a priority. From the perspective of the speaker, a Trojan lesson serves as a vehicle to bring certain aspects into the discussion that would, for reasons to be discussed in detail in Section 5.4, be difficult to bring up directly. In other words, a Trojan lesson links a substantive lesson that is in alignment with the listener’s interests with an additional proposition that is in alignment with the speaker’s interests.

One of the most salient examples of this linking of interests through Trojan lessons regarded the limited institutional capacity in many developing countries to apply for and properly manage climate finance (see Subsection 4.2.2). Developing countries attached weight to their lessons by embedding the indirect threat of insufficient capacity to comply with standards drawing. In this context, they frequently emphasised the importance of easing administrative burdens:

“[...] T]he process of getting accreditation seems to be a very tedious one. [...] Over the years, there’s so few organisations that have been accredited that I think it’s worthwhile for us to look why many organisations have not been able to get this accreditation and to determine whether all the requirements are absolutely essential for what we need.”

Audrey Joy Grant (Belize) in Paris 3.1: 00:39:50–00:40:21

“On the Performance Measurement Framework, we would like to encourage the Secretariat to base [it] on existing measurement systems, which developing countries have made effort to accommodate to.”

Monica Victoria Hidalgo Andino (Equador) in Bali 1.3: 03:37:00–03:37:15

Shortcutting was proposed as a remedy – albeit in this case not only to save time, but also effort. This notion was particularly relevant in light of the limited institutional capacities of many entities from developing countries – both stakeholders of the Fund and the home institutions of delegates themselves – to meet extensive accreditation and project application requirements or for developing country Board members to adequately prepare for the meetings. Board members frequently pointed out the significant administrative burden for developing countries to engage with the Fund on various levels (e.g., Paris 3.1: 00:39; Bali 1.3: 03:26, 03:28; 2.1: 03:36; 2.2: 00:20; Songdo 1.6: 00:43; 1.7: 00:30, 00:50; Bridgetown 1.1: 01:01, 01:29; 1.3: 00:54). Concrete complaints ranged from limited funding for travel expenses (Bali 1.2: 00:40–00:52) to staffing and expertise, and potential language barriers (Bridgetown 4.7: 00:41)⁵⁶ and seemingly trivial issues like slow internet connections in developing countries, which make it difficult to receive and process large decision draft files (Bridgetown 1.1: 01:29).

Such administrative obstacles to engaging with the Fund sparked two opposite kinds of responses that involved drawing lessons. First, developing countries drew negative lessons (as introduced in Subsection 5.2.1) in an attempt to convince their Annex-I-colleagues of the seriousness and the implications of the issues. They pointed to their observations that entities had already struggled to get accreditation with other funds (e.g., Paris 3.1 00:27, 00:39). As they apparently lacked the institutional capacity for this process, the lesson was to examine the problems they were having and be cautious not to replicate them, i.e. keeping processes simple and accessible. For instance, the Zambian Board member opposed adopting accreditation procedures from the Adaptation Fund as they did not

⁵⁶ Similar concerns were also raised with regard to the Fund’s Secretariat. The Secretariat had long suffered from understaffing (King 2015), and Board members saw adopting policies, standards, and practices from other institutions as a way to substitute internal external expertise. The Swedish Board member, for example, argued that the Adaptation Fund had an excellent accreditation procedure with good experts involved and proposed to fast-track entities that are already accredited with the Adaptation Fund (Paris 3.1: 00:18; see also Songdo 1.6: 00:39).

accommodate appropriately for limited institutional capacity in his opinion (Paris 3.1 00:27).

Second, as a response to the administrative challenges seen at other institutions, developing countries drew positive lessons from these institutions, proposing to adopt their existing standards and policies. Regarding slow internet connection speeds, for example, the Cuban Board member suggested adopting the practice of using Word documents, as done by the World Trade Organization, instead of PDF files (Bridgetown 1.1: 01:29). In addition to Board members' constituencies, also many National Designated Authorities⁵⁷ consider the process of engaging with the GCF to be too cumbersome in light of their limited institutional capacity (Feist 2016c). Positive lessons proposed the adoption of accreditation registers from other funds (category: *A credit to ease burden*; e.g., Paris 3.1: 00:18, 00:21; Songdo 1.6: 00:43; Bridgetown 2.2: 00:12, 00:36). In GCF jargon, this is referred to as fast-tracking.

It is important to note that in all of these examples, there is a double link between ensuring the operating capacity of the Fund and the listeners' interests on the one hand and the speaker's interests on the other. Hence, they are examples of Trojan lessons. The necessity of easing administrative burdens – which is in the interest of the speaker – was argumentatively bolstered by drawing lessons from experience of other international climate and development finance institutions. Furthermore, adopting policies from these institutions was proposed as a means to ensure the operational capability of the Fund, which was very much in the interest of the listener. Therefore, this was a Trojan lesson. However, this does not yet sufficiently explain the core question that guides this section: Why would an argumentatively used, interest-laden lesson resonate with listeners? The treatment in this subsection already hinted at the answer: It is implied that the listener will not get something they want if the lesson is not adopted. In the case of administrative burdens, this would be the compliance with a certain standard. The mechanism behind this will be unpacked further in the following subsections, which will also give further examples for Trojan lessons.

⁵⁷ As explained in the background chapter, National Designated Authorities (NDAs) are national government institutions – often ministries – that serve as a connection between the Fund and the accredited entities that develop mitigation and adaptation projects. All funding proposals must be approved by the affected country's NDA so as to ensure it is in line with national development strategies.

5.3.3 *Extra-institutional expectations*

So far, this section has shown that lessons drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings were used to – on the face of it – ensure the effective bringing into operation of the Fund. Furthermore, the section has shown that delegates drew Trojan lessons. They drew lessons that reflected both the speaker’s and the listener’s interests. Building on that analysis, this present subsection demonstrates that lessons exerted a coercive force. It further underlines that lesson-drawing in international negotiations should not be misread as sincere arguing. While lessons were used argumentatively, they also involved indirect threats – a feature associated of course not with arguing and communicative action, but with bargaining and strategic action.

The remainder of this section proceeds as follows. First, this subsection analyses the characteristics of comparisons to other climate and development finance institutions, albeit not for the immediate purpose of drawing a lesson from these institutions (see also Subsection 5.1.4). Then, the section analyses how speakers harnessed extra-institutional pressures from these comparisons, and it looks at how lessons resonated with listeners by these invoking extra-institutional pressures (Subsection 5.3.4). In the process, the section explains how speakers effectively leveraged extra-institutional pressures to bargain by proxy.

As defined in the theory chapter, to exert influence through arguing is to attach weight to arguments (Scruton 2007: 331). Linking speaker’s and listeners’ interests through Trojan lessons achieved exactly that. It was implied in the arguments delegates put forth that these interests are linked also causally. The Fund cannot have one without the other. To reiterate the example from above, developing country Board members implicitly argued that if developed countries wanted extensive social and environmental standards, they will also need to address the limited institutional capacities in many developing countries. A solution to this was drawing lessons from the ways other institutions had dealt with this in the past. Refusal to heed these lessons on part of the listeners would ultimately harm the Fund’s bringing into operation. Lesson drawing was linked to ensuring operating capability. In this way, speakers attached weight to their lessons.

Yet, the analysis is not finished at this point. Understood purely in the terms outlined above, lesson-drawing would still have all and only the characteristics of arguing. While their true intentions are only known to the speakers themselves, the kind of speech acts they perform indicate communicative action, as per arguing-and-bargaining theory. According to speaker’s arguments, the purpose of drawing specific lessons was to ensure

the operational capabilities of the Fund. However, further analysis reveals that the mechanism through which actors exercise power through lessons did have a crucial coercive element to it. This is where comparisons came into play (see Subsection 5.1.4). Board members frequently drew comparisons with other funds and institutions that highlighted pressing the necessity to compete with other funds (e.g., Bridgetown 1.3: 00:42, 3.10: 01:26; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 2.5: 00:14; 4.3: 00:37). As explained in Subsection 5.1.4, Board members would compare to compete in order to understand the expectations that (potential) stakeholders have of the GCF. These expectations are shaped by the way other, similar institutions have done things.

The same applied to private investors. Comparisons were used to point out the need to compete with existing development and climate finance institutions. Key to the GCF's success, the argument goes, was to offer private investors something beyond what the alternatives that are out there do (e.g., Paris 1.1: 01:57; Bali 2.1: 01:28; 2.2: 00:10; Songdo 3.4 00:34).

“The Fund is not alone in the world of climate finance. It’s a new kid on the block. There are existing institutions which are also looking for funding. And so, the new kid on the block needs to be able to persuade others that there is an added value to use this channel.”

Manfred Konukiewitz (Germany) in Paris 1.1: 01:57:35–01:58:03

“If I were to be a potential investor and I look at this document, I don’t know what you’re gonna be investing in.”

Zahir Fakir (South Africa) in Songdo 3.3: 00:26:03–00:26:09

“[W]e have to move quickly. Unless we move really quickly, we cannot involve [the] private sector. And then, thereby, we might lose the opportunities.”

Tamonori Nakamura Kentaro (Japan) in Bali 2.2: 00:13:34–00:13:44

As the active observer for Private Sector Organizations pointed out: “[T]he biggest deterrent for private investment is most certainly uncertainty.” (Abyd Karmali [PSO] in Songdo 1.7: 01:38:42–01:39:49) The comparisons Board members made showed their commitment to counter such uncertainty and instead offer investors added value.

How do these comparisons tie back into lesson-drawing at the Green Climate Fund negotiations? Positive lessons were often linked to the expectations certain (potential) stakeholders of the Fund have and aimed at providing familiarity to those stakeholders for their working relation with the GCF. These links to the expectations of stakeholders then served as additional justification for the lesson.

Relevant stakeholders from the GCF’s environment include a range of entities: (Potential) Accredited Entities seeking funding from the GCF potentially as well as contributing

entities, both domestic public institutions (mostly national treasuries) and international institutions (mostly multilateral development banks or private institutional investors) that invest money in the GCF. Importantly, the reasoning behind the notion that the Fund needed to adopt existing policies, standards, and practices from other institutions in order to provide familiarity to these (potential) stakeholders played out slightly differently depending what kind of stakeholder institution was under discussion. In the following, the various stakeholders are examined in turn with regard to the deeper reasoning behind instances of lesson-drawing associated with them, starting with the concerns of the Fund's Accredited Entities.

As explained in the background chapter, Accredited Entities are institutions that seek funding from the GCF to realise their mitigation and adaptation projects. They mostly include multilateral development banks like the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (GCF 2016a). In addition to the fact that the Green Climate Fund was still a new institution, the novelty inherent in its mission posed a challenge to (potential) stakeholders of the Fund. They needed to familiarise themselves with this new player in climate finance, its procedures, requirements, and terminology, which – to make matters worse – in many respects differed from what was already out there: “GCF documentation requirements are demanding and often confusing.” (Ballard-Tremeer 2015) From the perspective of potential stakeholders, this difference is associated with the costs of developing a routine for interacting with the Fund. For existing climate and development finance institutions that these stakeholders already have a relationship with, there are no such additional administrative costs involved. As a consequence, the Board was concerned that potential stakeholders could be hesitant to put in the required effort to understand how the GCF is going to operate, what it will be looking for in terms of funding proposals, etc. Building confidence for investors was one of the Board's key concerns (e.g., Paris 1.2 00:04; Songdo 1.7: 01:25; emphasised also by the active observer from Private Sector Organizations in Songdo 1.7: 01:38).

Board members highlighted the expectations of stakeholders – in the below examples potential Accredited Entities – by making comparisons (e.g., Paris 1.1: 01:57; Songdo 1.7: 00:50, 4.3: 00:37; Bridgetown 3.9: 00:18). The GCF, it was argued by both developed and developing countries, needed to meet these expectations. Otherwise, stakeholders would turn to more familiar institutions instead of taking on the extra burden of engaging with the GCF.

“I would be discouraged. The GEF, they have a focal area for climate change. I know the game; I know the rules; I will go there. It’s easier. I’ll just go there. I understand also the CIF’s rules. I will go there. So this is the kind of competition; we’ll have competition between funds, due to the complexity, or at least a perceived complexity, of the process described here.”

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Songdo 1.7: 00:54:29–00:54:59

“I’m well aware of that, and it’s a key issue, and it’s done in other funds, and we wanna be at least as good as them.”

Anton Hilber (Switzerland) in Songdo 4.3: 00:38:55–00:39:03

Positive lessons were then proposed as a response. The aim was to enable the Fund to keep up in this competition. Adopting standards, policies, and practices from other institutions would provide the required familiarity and thereby reduce barriers to engaging with the Fund. As an extension of that, it was often proposed to automatically accredit entities that are already approved by other institutions deemed trustworthy (category: *Accredit to ease burden*; e.g., Paris 3.1: 00:18, 00:39; Bridgetown 2.2: 00:12, 00:36). This would facilitate engagement with the GCF even further. These entities would be able to skip the accreditation procedure and thereby save the associated administrative costs.

At first glance, providing familiarity to stakeholders may appear like sincere argumentative lesson-drawing, i.e. an instance of communicative action. After all, it only aims at facilitating the Fund’s bringing into operation. However, the supposed priority of ensuring operating capability was linked to the speaker’s interests through Trojan lessons. Indeed, a closer look reveals that this also applies to arguments about familiarity and uncertainty.

While fulfilling the expectations of potential Accredited Entities was generally endorsed by both developed and developing countries, doing the same for domestic contributing institutions was more contentious. The expectations of these institutions played a large role during much of the deliberations. Board members would often emphasise the concerns of their home institutions and other institutions in their constituencies – such as finance, foreign, or development ministries or treasuries. The underlying concerns about the expectations of home institutions also extended to substantive issues, i.e. standards, policies, and practices. Here, these expectations were used to gain argumentative leverage in the negotiations by developed country Board members. As previously explained, certain policies and standards – mostly regarding fiduciary standards and social and environmental safeguards – were a key priority to most developed countries. These policies and standards were framed as an essential requirement for the Fund to be able to mobilise any capital at all, as these were said to be consistent with the preferences of national treasuries. “Contributors need to be able to make a convincing case to their budget authorities”

(Manfred Konukiewitz [Germany] in Paris 1.1 01:57:20–01:57:25). The standards developed country Board members proposed were portrayed as non-negotiable, the “thing we need to convince our treasury officials” (Rod Hilton [Australia] in Paris 1.2 01:01:52–01:01:54, see also for example Paris 1.2: 01:18; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 4.11: 00:44; Bridgetown 2.2: 09:31).

“[T]he first set of conditions or incentives that we think must be in place – and this is before a dollar can flow, and this won’t come as a surprise to anyone – is that we need to have the best-practice fiduciary principles and standards. We need to have environmental and social safeguards; an appropriate structure and administrative policies [...]; policies for accreditation so we know who we’re working with and can have the confidence that the people we are working with are delivering on those safeguards as well; and an appropriate risk management procedure. So they’re what I would call the tier one, the absolute core. Because basically, without those things in place, we couldn’t get a dollar out of our treasury if we tried.”

Rod Hilton (Australia) in Paris 1.2: 01:01:06–01:01:48

In essence, the Australian Board member was telling his fellow delegates: If the Fund fails to meet the expectations of the Australian government, funding will be at risk. This argument draws potency from the fact that its subject matter pertains to the heart of the GCF’s operations. Developing countries as the beneficiaries of GCF and those most vulnerable to climate change had little choice but to take this issue seriously. However, the pressure to comply with the expectations of external stakeholders was argumentatively constructed to some degree. Many of these stakeholders cannot really be regarded as external to the GCF. Public contributing institutions – the entities that supposedly demanded certain policies or standards – were not external to the speaker, but rather entities within his or her constituency, in most cases even within the same domestic government. Delegates frequently created an artificial division between them and their constituencies. For example, the British Board member told her colleagues that the UK (i.e. her delegation) was fully committed to the Fund, but the UK’s ministries still had to be convinced (Bridgetown 2.2: 00:09).

This constructedness of the extra-institutional pressure underlines its strategic use. But it does of course not imply that it was untruthful. Drawing lessons strategically is not to bullshit. Contrary to bullshitting (Seymour 2016), speakers take into consideration the factual truth behind their claims. However, this does not mean that speakers cannot act strategically at the same time. As two former American Board members recall:

“[W]e worked abroad with leaders from other countries to design the GCF and make it operational. At home, part of our job was to provide budget justifications to Congress in support of the multilateral initiative. The reality is that investments in the GCF advance the strategic interests of the United States.”

Kotchen & Martinez-Diaz (2017)

Delegates do need to convince their national ministries and other institutions. That claim in itself is not false. But that does not preclude the possibility of using it strategically. In other words, not only did extra-institutional expectations matter for shaping the propositions of individual Board members. They were also an integral part of strategic action at the negotiations, being actively and openly deployed by delegates as leverage. Extra-institutional expectations are not merely circumstance. They become themselves a vehicle for the advancements of the speaker’s interests.

5.3.4 Attaching weight to lessons

The extra-institutional expectations of the Fund were used to attach weight to lessons. In their efforts to exploit the strategic potency of their lessons, Board members openly played two-level games⁵⁸. They drew attention to the fact that the Board’s range of viable policy options was effectively limited by the expectations of other actors. In case of domestic actors, these were, as explained above, not entirely external, but in many cases Board members’ home institutions. Similar to how the Board sought to provide familiarity to potential Accredited Entities, developed countries highlighted the expectations of public contributors using comparisons. Positive lessons, in this case primarily in the form of shortcircuiting, were then proposed as the solution to what developed countries portrayed as the Fund’s compulsion to comply with these expectations:

“[W]hatever we decide around this table, it’s obvious that all those potential donors, they will have their own views of what is essential to be able to fund. And they will not ask us about that. They will have their own views. So, I think we need to be in line with general good standards in this field which means good fiduciary standards, respectful environmental, social safeguards, and so on. So, that is no choice. We have to have it. [...] A possible shortcut that we could make is of course that there are other institutions that have accredited a number of institutions like the Adaptation Fund, like the GEF.”

Jan Cedergren (Sweden) in Paris 1.2: 00:37:55–00:38:57

⁵⁸ This terms was coined by Putnam (1988: 434), who defined the domestic level as one where “domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies” and the international level as one where “national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures”. While the analysis presented here focusses on the international level, it is very much pressure from certain domestic groups (government entities, in this case) that is important.

This same principle applied to both public and private stakeholders. Institutional investors, it was argued, are more likely to invest into structures that are familiar to them (e.g., Bridgetown 3.10: 01:55) and, therefore, the Fund should transfer these structures (i.e. policies, standards, and practices) from other institutions. Drawing lessons for the supposed purpose of fulfilling of stakeholders' expectations served an argumentative function in the sense that the lessons drawn are attached to the speakers' interests and – importantly – they were made resonate with the listeners' interests. As outlined above in Subsection 4.2.2 on key areas of contestation, developing countries prioritised climate finance from public sources, as opposed to focussing on leveraging private money. By linking the conditionality to this key preference, this form of lesson-drawing attaches weight to the argument for the listeners. This allows it to resonate with the listeners' own preferences and exert influence. It argumentatively justifies the selection of lessons developed countries drew from existing funds. Adopting from other funds catered to developed countries' preferences without making it too obvious a demand. Rather, they were argumentatively constructed as a necessity dictated by entirely external factors. Drawing lessons, hence, served as a vehicle to substantiate a controversial political argument by masking its argumentative, political nature. In the case of adopting a policy, standard, or practice to appeal more to private investors, Board members projected the necessity for this onto an external entity they have no direct control over, although in the case of public contributing entities, these entities are not as external as they are portrayed to be.

The expectations from the Fund's institutional environment enable a kind of indirect bargaining, which is effectively *bargaining by proxy*. Recall that influence was defined in the theory chapter as “affecting the conduct of another through giving reasons for action short of threats” (Scruton 2007: 331). The extra-institutional expectations make it immediately clear to the listener that the lessons conveying those reasons “have weight for him, so as to affect his decision” (ibid.). The expectations from the institutional environment give speakers the opportunity to build pressure towards their favoured decision without explicitly making any coercive statements. Since the listeners operate under the same extra-institutional expectations and pressures, they could immediately recognise the weight that is attached to a lesson. Delegates circumvented the restrictions to hard bargaining by projecting a threat they cannot credibly make onto an outside actor who is supposedly out of their sphere of influence. This is the essence of bargaining by proxy. The coercive aspect of this exemplifies the fact that negotiating always means both arguing

and bargaining to some extent (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352), even in situations where bargaining is difficult. Bargaining by proxy is a curious hybrid between arguing and bargaining where both forms of negotiating occur not in sequence, but within a single instance. It is not entirely arguing because arguing is negotiating short of threats, and there is certainly a coercive element to be found here: If certain expected standards are not met, there will be no money.

On the other hand, bargaining by proxy cannot be regarded conventional bargaining either. Apart from the fact that it is – at least within the logic of the argument – not the speaker who extends the threat, bargaining by proxy still has the argumentative element of trying to persuade, rather than to coerce. Competition with other funds is said to imply that the GCF cannot freely pursue own priorities if it is to achieve its aims. Competition as an external, structural force dictates a certain approach, essentially depoliticising the issue. Framing strong financial principles and standards as an indisputable precondition argumentatively erases alternative approaches from the agenda.⁵⁹ Framing conditions for financial contributions in this way is used as leverage as it subjects funding to the prior implementation of particular policies (see also Fairman & Ross 1996: 30–37; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013: 490).

Through lesson-drawing, interested-based power struggles are brought into the negotiations in an indirect way. This also means that delegates did not pursue “strategies of arguing” (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 354). The drawing of lessons cannot be seen as a systematic approach trying to persuade others. Rather, it was the other around. Delegates used arguments strategically in the form of lessons. They applied coercive momentum to their lessons and arguments. The *prima-facie* plausibility and claiming of expertise, combined with the weight attached through bargaining by proxy, acts as a substitute for the credibility that bargaining requires. As explained in the theory chapter, bargaining requires credibility to be effective (Jörke 2013a: 353). With lessons used argumentatively to bargain by proxy, this credibility is conveyed by invoking assets external to the actual negotiation process which have weight for the listener.

Importantly, attaching weight to lessons in this way does not alter listeners’ preferences. As mentioned in Section 1.3, this is not dissimilar to what Crystal (2003: 559) finds with regard to negotiations on trade in services, where “the demands for better offers from the

⁵⁹ In a similar vein, unpopular policies were often framed to be *alternativlos*, meaning ‘without alternative’, in German politics particularly around 2010 in an attempt to discursively depoliticise the issue at hand; climaxing in the oxymoronical expression ‘*alternativlose Entscheidung*’ (a ‘decision without alternative’, Biermann 2010). When there is no alternative, there is no decision.

emerging market countries served to create a link between these negotiations and the investment decisions of private actors". Contributions to the GCF are used as political leverage by subjecting them to the prior implementation of particular policies (Fairman & Ross 1996: 30–37; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013: 490). This leverage, however, is realised indirectly. Using lessons strategically, delegates exercised power at the GCF Board meetings not through rationalisation or symbolic use of lessons, but through veiled coercion. Trojan lessons attach weight to arguments, as a result of which the listener "alters the payoffs they attribute to different policy options" (Eising 2002: 87). "[T]he persuadee [the listener] simply alters his initial beliefs without actually changing his preferences" (Grobe 2010: 11). Through lesson-drawing, negotiators do not alter the wants of others, as much of the political learning literature would suggest. Rather, the wants stay constant (for reasons to be further examined below), but negotiators argumentatively bring up lessons, which serve as a vehicle for bargaining and coerces others to adjust their position so as to be able to best preserve their interests.

5.3.5 *Summary*

This section analysed how lessons are used strategically and how actors are able to exert influence through drawing lessons. In doing so, this section also refuted the notion that would follow out of a straight-forward application of arguing-and-bargaining theory on the case: lessons would be seen as arguments (which they are, on the face of it), and arguments are used in the context of communicative action (which, as was demonstrated, they are not). The section shed light on the strategic use of lessons by linking them to parties' political positions. Delegates invoked Trojan lessons, i.e. lessons that seemingly serve a common goal (see Subsection 5.3.1) or that are aligned with something the listener wants. At the same time these lessons were piggybacked with the interest of the speaker (Subsection 5.3.2).

However, strategically used lessons on their own have no inherent features that would make them resonate with the listener. As outlined in the theory chapter, speakers must attach weight to lessons. Further analysis then showed how this was achieved (Subsection 5.3.3). By drawing comparisons, delegates created pressure for the GCF to compete. They pointed out that sufficient financial contributions would be at risk should the GCF lack competitiveness or fail compliance with certain standards. Board members argumentatively created a division between them and their constituencies. They stressed that the Board's range of viable policy options was limited by the expectations of these constituencies. Bestowing this sense of necessity onto lessons essentially means bargaining by proxy:

Speakers make lessons resonate with listeners by reflecting a threat onto another entity that is supposedly out of their sphere of influence. Lessons become a vehicle for indirect bargaining.

This finding begs a further question: Why did negotiators go about it like this? If the driver behind lesson-drawing are indeed actors' interests; if actors pursue strategic action; if speakers draw lessons not seeking consensus, but to maximise their gains, then why did they not bargain in the first place and deploy more directly the structural assets that the coercive force of their lessons is based on? Why did delegates resort to bargaining by proxy at the GCF Board meetings? This question will be at the core of the next section.

5.4 Scope conditions: Why do actors draw lessons strategically?

The two key insights from Sections 5.2 and 5.3 can be summarised as follows: On the one hand, lesson-drawing has the appearance of arguing, and it is used to enhance the authority of the speaker. On the other hand, actors draw lessons not for communicative purposes, as both conventional learning and arguing-and-bargaining theory would suggest, but for strategic purposes. With regard to which mode of negotiating lesson-drawing corresponds to, the former insights points towards arguing, while the latter was found to be akin to what is usually associated with bargain. In light of these insights, it might appear that lesson-drawing in international negotiations is somewhat ontologically schizophrenic. Such a split in the understanding of lesson-drawing would ultimately run into the very same problem that Müller (2004: 396) pointed out in his critique of the arguing-and-bargaining framework: The two modes of negotiating have fundamentally different ontological underpinnings of strategic versus communicative action. Strategic and communicative action occurring simultaneously cannot be understood in a conceptually meaningful way (see Subsection 2.3.2 for a thorough discussion). As shown in Subsection 4.2.2, parties at the GCF Board meetings had strong and diverging interests regarding key issues. Scholars have pointed out that under such conditions, negotiators usually resort to bargaining rather than arguing (Holzinger 2001b: 441–442). But why, then, was lesson-drawing – which would usually be regarded as an indication for arguing – so prominent in the negotiations? As Müller (2004: 407–408) emphasises, Holzinger does not explain why actors would bother to argue at all. Since, in her model, actors seek to maximise their gains both when they argue and bargain, one would expect them to seek to coerce rather than convince. Less poignantly, Panke (2012: 394) says that arguing, including expertise-based arguments such as lessons from past experience, is more common in negotiations over regulative, as

opposed than redistributive issues. Climate finance negotiations are redistributive by definition. Yet, lesson-drawing as a form of arguing can frequently be observed at the GCF Board meetings. How can the two different modes of interaction be conceptually reconciled within the same empirically observed instances of lesson-drawing?

One way to square this circle would be to stick with the common assumption in the literature that arguing and bargaining usually occur simultaneously. Considering that lesson-drawing in negotiations was found to be, as it were, communicative action for strategic purposes, it might appear that lesson-drawing in international negotiations is arguing and bargaining happening simultaneously within one and the same speech act. As was established above, lessons are used as arguments, but with the intention to bargain by proxy. This, however, would be a misconception of how the kind of lesson-drawing observed at the GCF Board meetings should be understood. In order to specify the role of lessons even further, this section continues to refine the concept of lesson-drawing in international negotiations by delimiting its scope conditions as a specific mode of negotiation. This regards both the scope conditions within the institutional setting for learning in international negotiations as well as those factors that lie beyond the particularities of the GCF's Board room.

The delimitation of scope conditions specifies more clearly the ontological underpinnings of lesson-drawing in international negotiations. This is achieved by spinning this chapter's core question in a more applied way: Why would lesson-drawing matter from the perspective of the speaker? Why would actors opt for this indirect way of disguising their attempts to bargain through Trojan lessons, considering that it might come at the additional political cost of having to argue for or against certain lessons? What conditions make actors susceptible to lesson-drawing as a mode of negotiating? The analysis so far has shown that and how lesson-drawing is used, but this does not explain why it is used. Why would actors bother to use lesson-drawing as a means to bargain by proxy when they could just bargain using more direct, conventional methods? What factors are likely to contribute to the use of learning as mode of negotiation between arguing and bargaining? Simply put: Why do actors draw lessons strategically? The answer to this question will also reveal which logic of social interaction underlies lesson-drawing in international negotiations, one of appropriateness or one of consequentialism.

This section approaches these questions in three steps. First, it considers to what extent the availability of suitable experience is a scope condition for the strategic use of lessons in international negotiations (Subsection 5.4.1). Second, the section looks at the extent to

which both policies and interests need to be malleable for strategic lesson-drawing to make sense (Subsection 5.4.2). Third, it introduces the expectations from the GCF's institutional environment as a decisive factor for actors to resort to lesson-drawing (Subsection 5.4.3). Finally, it considers the role of norms and appropriate behaviour for this mode of negotiating (Subsection 5.4.4).

5.4.1 Experience and technical decisions

As a basic condition for lesson-drawing in negotiation to occur, one should consider whether it is necessary that suitable experience is actually available. The arguing-and-bargaining literature does mention this aspect, be it only in passing. According to Risse & Ulbert (2005: 354–357), drawing analogies – i.e. learning argumentatively from past experiences – becomes an important mode of negotiating in cases where there are no existing standards in the institutional environment, but where similar institutions exist from which lessons can be drawn.⁶⁰ The existing institutional landscape of international climate finance certainly provides ample opportunity to draw such lessons (Nakhooda et al. 2013b: 1; Schalatek 2014b; Afful-Koomson 2014).

However, as the analysis has shown, the suitability of an experience is in the eye of the beholder, i.e. the speaker who draws a lesson. Lesson-drawing in international negotiations is strategic action. What determines whether an experience can be used as a lesson is therefore determined by its suitability in the view of the speaker, not by some extra-subjective measure. Still, speakers need to strike a balance between drawing on an experience that serves the point they are trying to make and its perception as a reasonable alternative within the lifeworld shared with listeners. As alluded to in Subsection 5.3.4, speakers need to take into consideration the perceived accuracy of their claims. This is particularly relevant in settings like at the GCF Board meetings, where technical experts negotiate – compared to situations in which listeners are part of a more general-public audience. This assessment coincides with the conventional arguing-and-bargaining literature (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 354).⁶¹ Nonetheless, the availability of suitable experience

⁶⁰ Risse & Ulbert (2005) make this point about normative claims, as opposed to concrete factual claims policy propositions, but the general question of the availability of suitable experience is the same.

⁶¹ Here, actors who draw lessons are referred to learners as knowledge brokers or norm entrepreneurs, depending on whether they propose a factual or a normative truth, respectively (Risse & Ulbert 2005: 354). However, that literature still assumes that actors take this into consideration with the genuine intention of engaging in communicative action. Rather than using arguments strategically, actors use “strategies of arguing” (*ibid.*).

for lesson-drawing is to a certain degree arbitrary and therefore no scope condition for lesson-drawing in negotiation.

Another aspect that should be considered is the fact that, being post-agreement negotiations, the Green Climate Fund Board meetings dealt with technical issues. As others have argued, the technical nature of negotiations is conducive to the role of lessons and knowledge (Boswell 2009: 61). The argumentative use of lessons even requires this technical nature. Indeed, delegates at the GCF Board meetings drew lessons almost exclusively in the context of technical discussion, such as performance measurement standards, resource mobilisation, or accreditation of entities (Songdo 1.6: 00:27; 3.4: 00:14; Bridgetown 2.2: 00:38). Only under such circumstances does it make sense to argue about the applicability of experience for the decisions to be made. Pre-agreement negotiations primarily setting general goals and targets could potentially be more conducive to direct bargaining, rather than bargaining by proxy through lesson-drawing. By contrast, in negotiations that are technical by nature, it makes more sense to reason about the technical aspects through arguing, which specifically includes drawing lessons. One can only argue over norms and facts, but not promises and threats. Interestingly, this turns a dominant notion in the conventional learning literature upside down, namely that lesson-drawing serves a primarily technical function of finding the best course of action. In the case of lesson-drawing at the GCF Board meetings, the fact that issues are technical is actually a prerequisite to a strategic use of lessons, rather than an indicator for communicative deliberations.

5.4.2 Low institutionalisation and inelastic interests

While the nature of the experience available neither directly enabled nor restricted strategic lesson-drawing at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, the context of lesson-drawing did matter immensely. This will be explored in two steps in this subsection and in the following one. This subsection identifies a two-part scope condition for strategic lesson-drawing, consisting of a low degree of institutionalisation in combination with inelastic interests and contestation with regard to the issues under discussion. In other words, this subsection looks at the extent to which policies and interests need to be malleable. These two aspects work in conjuncture. Taken together, they represent a necessary condition for lesson-drawing in negotiations. However, as will become clear in the course of this subsection, they have opposite directions of effect. In order for argumentative lessons to be used strategically, decisions must matter, and the issues they concern must be contentious at the same time. Simply put, the decisions are still up for grabs, but the wants

are not. The below elaborations on these scope conditions also show how the notion of strategic lesson-drawing in some respects contradicts key assumptions of the conventional learning and arguing-and-bargaining literatures.

Regarding the degree of institutionalisation of the Green Climate Fund, recall that lessons are, on the face of it, used argumentatively, as has been empirically confirmed in Section 5.2. Such argumentative patterns of negotiating are often said to be of particular importance in the initial stages of negotiations, when parties' preference are still assumed to be malleable (Zangl & Zürn 1996; Schimmelfennig 2003a: 284–285; Naurin 2007: 561). The Green Climate Fund Board meetings are at a similar stage in the negotiation process. The Board had considerable decisions to make in terms of how to operationalise the Fund (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 2; Schalatek 2014b: XXII; see also Subsection 2.2.2). This also affected lesson-drawing. The adoption and implementation of a certain policy requires that decisions about it are still to be taken; that the standards, policies, and practices the lessons are about can still be influenced. Indeed, negotiators frequently emphasised this aspect in the context of drawing lessons from other institutions. Developing countries, in particular, stressed that the issues discussed at the GCF Board meetings had the potential to change the rules of international climate finance (e.g., Bridgetown 2.2 00:44; 01:05, 01:07). This is what is meant here by low degree of institutionalisation: The stuff the GCF Board talks about is still up for grabs.

Notably, this is a point where the concept of strategic lesson-drawing as examined in this thesis challenges notions from the conventional learning literature. Proponents of a conventional view on institutional learning maintain that standardised mechanisms and procedures provide an environment of shared beliefs and views that is conducive to learning (Eising 2002: 87, 116; Radaelli 1995: 178). While that may be true for the type of technical learning they talk about, strategic lesson-drawing is fostered by the exact opposite circumstances. The GCF Board meetings are not embedded in an established institutional environment that would facilitate technical learning in the sense of the conventional literature. On the contrary, the Fund's operational design was very much at the centre of the negotiations. Most notably in the analysed negotiation rounds, the Board established and debated eight essential requirements for the initial capitalisation of the Fund (e.g., Songdo 1.6: 00:00–01:49; see Subsection 4.2.3). These included, for example, the initial results management framework (Bridgetown 2.5: 00:00–2.7: 00:21). In addition, the Board discussed many operational features that were no less consequential, such as the Fund's performance measurement framework (Bali 1.3: 02:41). Hence, the Green Climate Fund is

simultaneously an arena for negotiations as well as the subject of these negotiations. The Fund's Governing Instrument may outline abstract overarching goals and the rules of procedure (UNFCCC 2011a: 4–5). But even the procedural matters that were the subject of negotiations and lesson-drawing had significant substantive implications. For example, the Board extensively discussed and ultimately did not agree on procedures that apply in case it fails to reach consensus (Bridgetown 3.15: 00:38; 4.1: 01:33–03:14).⁶² As mentioned above, lessons were used frequently in that context (e.g., Bridgetown 4.1: 01:52, 02:13, 02:54, 03:01, 03:08). On a substantive rather than procedural level, the condition of a low degree of institutionalisation even applies to the general goals and principles of the Fund. Again, while abstract goals have been determined by the COP via the Fund's Governing Instrument, the concrete implications of these goals are still being negotiated at the Board. For instance, the COP had tasked the Board to find a balance between funding adaptation and mitigation, but left the exact meaning of balance open for interpretation (Schalatek & Nakhooda 2013: 2; Schalatek 2014b: XXII).⁶³ Again, this shows how the scope condition of a low degree of institutionalisation leads to opposite conclusions from those that are often made in the conventional learning literature. There, policy goals are commonly seen as a rather fixed, exogenous variable. Learning is regarded as a means to the end of achieving those goals.⁶⁴ By contrast, strategic lesson-drawing (or any form of strategic action in negotiations) is made more likely if the goals are at least vague enough that highly consequential policy decision can still be influenced.

So, while the conventional literature on institutional learning highlights the importance of an established institutional context of routine interactions to facilitate and foster learning, the strategic use of lessons in international negotiations has the opposite requirement. Policies must still be malleable; things must be up for grabs. The remainder of this subsection explores whether the same is true for the interests of the actors involved. Must interests, too, be malleable as a scope condition for strategic lesson-drawing in international negotiations? At least some degree of political contestation must certainly be a scope condition for strategic lesson-drawing in international negotiations. In fact, this can be said

⁶² This became a problem again at the 16th Board meeting in Songdo when there was no consensus to approve a certain funding proposal (FP 46 on drought resilience in Ethiopia, see GCF (2017b)), no consensus to reject it, and no consensus what this stalemate means.

⁶³ As mentioned before, the Fund has since settled on a 50/50 balance between adaptation and mitigation. However, there has been a debate about to what extent the official numbers suggest that this balance is actually maintained (Feist 2016a).

⁶⁴ This notion is frequently attributed to the earlier learning research agenda especially, but it is still very often present in contemporary studies, be it only implicitly (see, for instance, Knopf 2003; Siebenhüner 2008; Hartlapp 2009; Storbjörk 2010).

for any strategic action for that matter. This is almost self-explanatory. As explained in the theory chapter (Subsection 2.2.1), bargaining is a mode of negotiating in which actors seek to maximise their gains. As a prerequisite for this, there must be gains to be maximised: Actors must have interests, which are conflicting with other actors' interests for strategic action to make any sense. As noted already by Weiss (1979: 427–428), technical learning relies on a consensus on policy goals that do not interfere with political interests. Accordingly, studies have pointed to the fact that the technical use of knowledge by politicians is often inversely proportional to the degree of contestation (Lundin & Öberg 2014: 30, 39, 44).

However, not just the contestation itself, i.e. the divergence in political positions, but also the origin of the interests behind them matter. Delegates are sent to the Board meetings with a clear mandate from their constituencies, from which they cannot deviate much at their own discretion. This fact further limits the chances for lessons to be drawn in genuine attempts to argue in the sense of communicative action. It basically enhances the conclusion from the above subsection: Not only is there contestation around key issues at the GCF negotiations. Additionally, in post-agreement negotiations, delegates' interests cannot easily change as they are disciplined by the formal mandate from their constituencies. Even if the individual listener would be entirely convinced by the speaker's arguments, he or she would still be bound to representing his or her constituency's interests. This problem was already noted early on in the *ZIB* debate:

“Delegates (*agents*), however, generally do not have the liberty to question their constituencies' (*principals*) interests. If they, in spite of that, adjust their interests and beliefs following a discourse of communicative action in international negotiations, they need to at least convince their *constituencies* that these new interests and beliefs are right. The success of such an attempt at convincing on a secondary level is by no means guaranteed.”

Zangl & Zürn (1996: 361, original emphases)⁶⁵

Indeed, this was evident in the negotiations. The primacy of constituencies' preferences over delegates' positions affected many aspects of the Board meetings, down to things as seemingly trivial as linguistic issues: When the Egyptian Board member was displeased with the specific choice of words in a draft decision, he later revealed his actual concern to be

⁶⁵ Own translation of this German original text: „Delegierte (*agents*) besitzen aber im allgemeinen nicht die Freiheit, die Interessen der Konstituenten (*principals*) in Frage zu stellen. Wenn sie trotzdem aufgrund eines verständigungsorientierten Diskurses bei internationalen Verhandlungen diese Interessen und Überzeugungen anpassen, müssen sie zumindest ihre *constituency* davon überzeugen, daß die neuen Interessen und Überzeugungen richtig sind. Der Erfolg eines solchen Überzeugungsversuchs auf einer zweiten Ebene ist keineswegs garantiert.“ (original emphases)

specifically about the fact that “[o]utput and outcome, they mean the same in Arabic because I have to write a report in Arabic [to his superiors]” (Omar El-Arini [Egypt] Paris 2.3: 01:31:19–01:31:24). Interventions like this one might seem trivial, but they are telling. The change in phrasing had no substantive implications for the decision under discussion. The Board member’s only concern at this moment was to be able to report accurately to his constituency. This was by no means an isolated instance. Constituencies’ preferences, particular those of contributing countries, came into play frequently in this fashion (Paris 2.3: 01:30; Bali 2.1: 02:22; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 4.11: 00:10; Bridgetown 2.2: 09:31; 3.9: 00:18). Board members often mentioned is passing how their positions about specific decisions were shaped by the general mandates from their constituencies: “My ministers are clear that we should support action on gender when we can.” (Josceline Wheatley [United Kingdom] in Bali 2.1: 02:22:24–02:22:31) Also beyond the formal negotiations, delegates emphasised that they were working in the strategic interest of their constituencies (Kotchen & Martinez-Diaz 2017).

So, delegates’ positions are, at their core, not negotiable vis-à-vis their constituencies.⁶⁶, ⁶⁷ To complicate things further, the constituencies at the GCF consist in most cases of more than one national government. 19 out of 24 Board members represent a constituency that comprises several countries (e.g., the seat shared by Russia and Switzerland) or even entire regions (e.g., the seats representing Latin America and the Caribbean) or groups of countries (e.g., the seats representing least developed countries and small island developing states). Even if a Board member were genuinely persuaded that his or her constituency should revise a particular position, this would mean that he or she not only had to convince their own government, but in most cases also coordinate between the countries in the constituency.

This complexity combined with the constituencies’ primacy lead to a situation where – to borrow a term from economics – delegates’ positions have little elasticity.⁶⁸ Even if one

⁶⁶ Conversely, international environmental organisations require some degree of autonomy from their principals in order to be able to learn in a conventional, technical sense (Siebenhüner 2008: 112).

⁶⁷ This assessment takes seriously the importance of the domestic level for international politics, which is something IR theory had lacked for some time, particularly with regard to international climate politics (Paterson 1996: 73–74). Examples for IR theories that do consider domestic interests in that regard are Neoclassical Realism (Purdon 2013) and Liberal Intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1997). From the latter’s standpoint, this in a sense means “taking preferences seriously” (Moravcsik 1997: 513). Yet, at this stage, it does not terribly matter whether these are primarily the preferences of private actors who pass them on to their governments on the international stage.

⁶⁸ In economics, elasticity is a measure for the extent to which supplied or demanded quantities of goods respond to changes in the market price (Mankiw & Taylor 2014: 72, 83).

would assume, for the sake of argument, that a delegate is persuaded by a lesson and alters his or her individual view of a particular issue, this could at best result in a minor change in the preferences he or she represents at the Board. Delegates have clear mandates from their constituencies, from which they cannot deviate much. This is evident and actually leveraged in the process of bargaining by proxy whenever Board members point to the expectations of their national governments (see Subsection 5.3.3).

Genuine arguing requires the willingness to be convinced by the listener (Seymour 2016: 576). Even though lesson-drawing at the GCF Board meetings might occasionally look like arguing, it cannot be arguing in the sense of communicative action because it, due to this low elasticity of interests, lacks this essential requirement.

This subsection has considered the effects of a low degree of institutionalisation, political contestation, and interest inelasticity on lesson-drawing at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. It argued that decisions must still be malleable and that interests must be strong and diverse for strategic lesson-drawing to make sense. Actors must have specific goals that can, in principle, be realised while at the same time, these goals are different and often incompatible with those of other actors. This alone, however, does not fully answer the question why actors draw lessons strategically. The scope conditions summarised above apply to all sorts of strategic action. A low degree of institutionalisation, political contestation, and interest inelasticity are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for strategic lesson-use in international negotiations. They do not fully explain why actors would try to bargain indirectly, why they would draw lessons to bargain by proxy. In order to arrive at a full understanding of this phenomenon, more factors must be taken into account. The following subsection will add another crucial missing piece to the puzzle.

5.4.3 Political commitment and pressure for agreement

The above subsection considered the effects of a low degree of institutionalisation, political contestation, and interest inelasticity on lesson-drawing at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. Things need to be still up for grabs, there need to be divergent views on what these things should look like, and actors' positions need to be rather inelastic. This kind of constellation is a necessary condition for strategic lesson-drawing to make sense in international negotiations. Yet, it does not fully explain what this section initially set out to determine: Why do actors resort to strategically drawing lessons in the first place? Why would they bargain by proxy instead of employing more direct tactics? This subsection addresses this aspect and identifies the credible commitment to climate finance on part of

delegates' constituencies as well as extra-institutional pressure for agreement as the main factors.

The above subsection considered the effect of a low degree of institutionalisation. Decisions must still be malleable for lesson-drawing to make sense. However, a low degree of institutionalisation (Subsection 5.4.2; see also Scharpf 1997: 136) and the subjective nature in terms of what qualifies an experience for lesson-drawing (Subsection 5.4.1) do not mean that anything goes. There are several factors that constrain the use of past experience for strategic gain in negotiations. Such restrictions, as will become clear in the course of this subsection, stem from the expectations of the institutional environment of the Fund, both in terms of the domestic as well as the international level. Similar to what can be observed at negotiations in other areas such as trade (Woolcock 2017), different fora for deliberations on different levels interact with each other. This interaction creates a situation conducive to lesson-drawing as a mode of negotiating. In addition to factors contributing to the feasibility of learning as a likely mode of negotiation, there are important conditions that lie beyond the scope of the Green Climate Fund as an institution. These pressures originate from outside the institutional context of the GCF. Specifically, they stem from two levels: The Board member's constituencies, represented by their domestic governmental institutions; and the international institutional environment the GCF is formally accountable to.

To start with, this section considers the effect of the GCF's institutional environment. Contrasting strategic lesson-drawing in negotiations with rhetorical action (Subsection 2.3.3), it was argued above that one of the key differences between the two modes of negotiating stems from the fact that negotiations do not have a public audience in a strict sense. Indeed, compared to other issue areas in international or domestic politics, the Green Climate Fund negotiations are not exposed to a high level of public perception. Learning is a process of social interaction among negotiators that is not contingent on the approval of an external entity *per se*. However, this does not exclude the possibility of external pressures to make a mark. As explained in Chapter 4, the Green Climate Fund is accountable and reports to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. This adds pressure on the Board in two ways. First, the Fund, which is "an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention" (UNFCCC 2010: 7), is exposed to the COP's expectations as an extra-institutional pressure, which Board members and co-chairs were very much

aware of (e.g., Bali 3.1: 00:00; Songdo 2.1: 00:02; Bridgetown 2.10: 00:20; 3.10: 00:14).⁶⁹ While the Board had considerable leeway for the interpretation of the goals set by the COP as mentioned several times above, Board members explicitly regarded the expectations of higher level climate diplomacy as one of the key motivations for a timely *conclusion* of the negotiation rounds:

“And, I guess, this Board will be seeding the failure for 2015 agreement if we do not really come to a resolution that we really need to incentivise governments to submit their commitment.”

Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia) in Paris 1.2: 01:46:50–01:47:04

“The success of the Green Climate Fund is the defining element for success of COP 20 in Lima and COP 21 in Paris the next year. So the eyes of the entire community around the convention, the larger community of development, and indeed the entire world are on us to deliver sort of the key ingredient for a global accord.”

Manfred Konukiewitz (Germany) in Bridgetown 1.1: 00:13:30–00:14:14

“There is a great deal of political pressure out there, a momentum to see this Fund up and running by September when the heads of state meet in New York.”

Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia) in Songdo 2.1: 00:07:15–00:07:25

“The Fund, at its initial stage, should ensure that its relative modalities are simple and feasible. We cannot further make things complicated. Only in this, we can be sure the Fund [will] be operationalised at an early stage and increase the international community’s confidence in the Fund.”

Liang Ziqian (China) in Bali 2.1: 00:18:23–00:18:52

It was the Board’s main task to bring the Fund into operation. The effect of higher-level diplomacy on the ability of the Board to decide – and by extension the limitation to make threats to oppose certain decisions – was spelled out clearly in this intervention by the Egyptian Board member when the Board was discussing country ownership and the no-objection procedure:

“I don’t actually see divergences. I think I see different interpretations for decisions this body made [the Board], and this body is abiding by decisions of the COP, the Governing Instrument, and the decisions of the Board itself. So, I wouldn’t call this divergence, I would call this just different positions regarding decisions that were taken.”

Omar El-Arini (Egypt) in Bali 2.2: 01:01:35–01:02:09

Second, Board member’s constituencies have already made the commitment to bring the Fund into operation. While there was intense debate at the Board about the operational

⁶⁹ This predominantly relates to the Board’s task to make the Fund operational, but it also extends to the very practice of lesson-drawing itself. As mentioned elsewhere the COP explicitly requested the Board to take heed of lessons from existing funds (UNFCCC n.d.; 2015: 18, 29), rendering learning a formal requirement.

details of the Fund, the decision that it should be operationalised at all had been made already. This decision is not the Board members' to question. As explained in the previous subsection, delegates "generally do not have the liberty to question their constituencies' [] interests"⁷⁰ (Zangl & Zürn 1996: 361). Put simply: No deal was not an option. All delegates were on a mission to operationalise and manage the GCF. Profound differences notwithstanding, Board members were disciplined by the fact that the GCF board meetings are post-agreement negotiations. Their governments had already made a commitment to the Fund. It was never a question whether the Fund should be put into place; parties instead negotiated over how this should be done.

This is not to say that one would expect the existing political commitment to facilitate consensus in the negotiations. On the contrary: Due to the redistributive nature of the negotiations and based on the observable political contention, this thesis has maintained that the GCF Board meetings are all but the purely technical deliberations they are sometimes portrayed as. Existing political commitment, in this case, is not expected to foster agreement.

How, then, does this political commitment affect lesson-drawing in the Green Climate Fund negotiations? The answer is that the formal obligation to adhere to the COP's mandate and the existing credible commitment on a higher political level make direct bargaining unfeasible. Conventional bargaining tactics, such as threat of deadlock or withdrawal, would lack credibility at this stage of technical post-agreement negotiations considering the high-level political commitment to the Fund that countries have already made. As explained in the theory chapter, "[t]he reference point [for bargaining] is the credibility of [...] threats and promises." (Jörke 2013a: 353) Conversely, hard bargaining is not feasible under conditions of existing high-level political commitment due to the lack of credibility of the associated bargaining tactics. Bargaining by proxy is used as a substitute for direct bargaining. Board members resort to openly playing two-level games (see Putnam 1988), balancing these expectations from the international communities and their constituencies' set of preferences.

Looking at the findings from this section in combination, the question posited at the beginning can now be answered: Why do actors invoke lessons for strategic purposes? Or, put differently, under what conditions is using lesson strategically a viable option in multilateral negotiations? As this section has asserted, in situations where hard bargaining is

⁷⁰ Own translation of this German original text: „besitzen aber im allgemeinen nicht die Freiheit, die Interessen der Konstituenten [...] in Frage zu stellen“

not possible due to the lack of credibility of associated tactics (such as a threat of withdrawal), but where there are inelastic and conflicting interests as well as a low degree of institutionalisation, negotiations may have the appearance of reasoning, but involve highly politicised power struggles. This also applies to the use of lessons. Modes of negotiating beyond the conventional dichotomy between arguing and bargaining, such as lesson-drawing, occur where neither the sufficient conditions for arguing nor the sufficient conditions for bargaining are given. By learning in international negotiations, speakers embed their interests into something that has the form of a genuine argument in the sense of communicate action, circumventing the issue that direct bargaining would lack the necessary credibility. Strategic lesson-drawing in international negotiations simultaneously allows speakers to advance interests in situations where that would be difficult to do directly, *and* it improves their chances of doing so successfully.

5.4.4 Norms and appropriateness

One additional factor still needs to be discussed with regard to strategic lessons-drawing at the GCF Board meetings: the role of norms and appropriate behaviour. For the purposes of this discussion, “regulative norms, which order and constrain behavior” (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 891) seem to be particularly relevant. This subsection evaluates to what extent regulative norms contributed to constraining viable modes of negotiating. In other words, did Board members also resort to bargaining by proxy because direct bargaining would have violated certain norms? Hard bargaining, then, would be constrained not because actors fear retaliatory counter-interventions or because it is in their self-interest, but because these norms are perceived as legitimate (Hurd 2003: 383–389). The subsection examines this question on three levels. It looks at climate justice arguments in the GCF negotiations, more general diplomatic norms in the UNFCCC process, and the effect of the presence of observers. Furthermore, the section considers how normatively motivated behaviour fits into the theoretical framework for this thesis.

In global climate politics, three general normative issue areas can be identified: the North-South duality over historical responsibility for climate change, the problem of sharing the costs for mitigation, and vulnerability and urgency of climate action (Audet 2012). The hypothesis is that these issues make it difficult for developed countries to bargain openly by making demands and issuing threats. In light of the “double inequality with an inverse distribution of risk and responsibility” (Barrett 2013: 1819), it would simply be inappropriate for developed country delegates to do so. Strategic lesson-drawing and bargaining by proxy, then, reduces developed countries’ normative exposure as it implies

that their proposals are not what they want, but what the reality of climate finance requires. Their propositions are framed as a factual necessity for the successful operationalisation of the Fund and, thereby ultimately for the success of international climate finance.

So how salient were normative issues at the GCF Board meetings? Not so much historical emissions, but vulnerability and urgency for developing countries to adapt to climate change were indeed occasionally mentioned (e.g., Paris 1.2 00:46; Bali 2.1: 00:23; Songdo 3.4: 01:39; Bridgetown 3.12: 00:09; 3.14: 00:17; 4.8: 00:18).

“Look, I’m sitting here; I have a constituency that is in desperate need of funds. [...] People cannot afford to go a day without adaptation. [...] We have lived through the Somalia drought⁷¹, and I’m surprised memories are so short. It’s not a thing of the future, ten years from now, two years from now, or even one year from now. I am talking about the now. We have run out of time. People are dying.”

David Kaluba (Zambia) in Paris 1.2: 00:46:35–00:48:22

“The world is like the Titanic. Is doesn’t matter if you are in first class, second class, or you are the machine operator of the ship. It is sinking. We need [to take] real urgent measures, and for that, we need money.”

Jorge Ferrer Rodriguez (Cuba) in Bridgetown 3.14: 00:20:39–00:20:55

Interventions like these appealing to the moral responsibility of developed countries were made occasionally by developing country Board members. On the whole, however, they were a rather rare occurrence. Other developing country delegates even raised concerns about moral appeals and urged their colleagues to focus on the technical matters at hand (Paris 1.2: 00:50; Bridgetown 3.12: 00:09). The fact remains that the GCF Board meetings were very technical negotiations in terms of their subject matter. They were not concerned with normative responsibility or humanitarian urgency, but with allocation mechanisms, procedures for accreditation and monitoring, and so on. Normative questions were not often and systematically discussed or used as leverage. Furthermore, developed country Board members frequently made statements about efficiency and accountability that contradicted to some extent the normative goals supposedly championed in international climate finance. The British Board member, for example, openly declared her government’s priority to ensure “good value for money for the UK taxpayers” in her very first intervention at the GCF Board (Andrea Ledward in Bridgetown 2.2: 00:10:23–00:10:26). However, note that she spoke of her government’s priorities, not her own. Many similar instances of Board members argumentatively manufacturing a separation between them and their constituencies were already discussed above (e.g., Paris 1.1 01:57; 1.2: 01:01,

⁷¹ He is most likely referring to the severe drought and famine in the Horn of Africa in 2011 and 2012 (OCHA 2011).

01:18; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 4.11: 00:44). Although the British Board member's intervention may be seen as argumentatively setting up extra-institutional expectations (see Subsection 5.3.3), there is no immediate way for her in this instance to exploit this verbally distancing herself from her constituency for bargaining by proxy. As a representative of a country with very high cumulative historical emissions, it might simply have been inappropriate for her to portray this priority as her own. Again, this reduces the normative exposure of developed country delegates. They distance themselves from normatively problematic statements by attaching them to their constituencies. This makes it more difficult for other delegates to directly criticise these problematic statements as they would only be able to shoot the messenger, as it were.

Yet, it would be a rather narrow view to attribute normatively constrained behaviour only to the moral responsibility for climate change or the humanitarian urgency of climate action. Norms do not necessarily come into play in such an immediate way. In addition, the general norms of climate diplomacy are passed down from the annual Conference of the Parties. Delegates frequently emphasised the importance of the UNFCCC's expectations about decisions and procedures at the GCF (e.g., Bali 3.1: 00:00; Songdo 2.1: 00:02; Bridgetown 2.10: 00:20; 3.10: 00:14, see also Subsection 5.3.3). While moral issues might have been less visible at the Board meetings, the norms of climate diplomacy frequently extended into the GCF's Boardroom by way of the extra-institutional expectations discussed above. This also included expectations about the conduct of Board members. Most of them are professional civil servants and diplomats. The technical nature of the negotiations did take precedence over the underlying normative issues, but it also defined the appropriate conduct as informed, professional, diplomatic, and factually grounded. Strong conflicting interests do not mean that anything goes. Bargaining, including bargaining by proxy, is to some extent always guided by norms which dictate what is and what is not appropriate to do in negotiations (Müller 2004). Also recall that the GCF was formally tasked by the COP to consider lessons from past experience (UNFCCC n.d.; 2011a; 2015: 18, 29). Drawing lessons became, in the specific context of post-agreement climate finance negotiations, part of the set of expectations towards actors' behaviour. At the same time, actors used them to package their interests into a format that is compatible with those very same expectations – they used lessons to bargain by proxy (e.g., Paris 1.2: 01:01, 01:18; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 4.11: 00:44; Bridgetown 2.2: 09:31; see also Section 5.3). In that sense, extra-institutional expectations can be seen as both normatively restricting and technically enabling certain bargaining tactics.

The fact that the GCF Board meetings were conducted in open session may have contributed to the compliance with norms and diplomatic standards of appropriateness. In addition to the formally accredited active observers present in the Boardroom, the negotiations were broadcast over the internet.⁷² Granted, there are few instances where Board members acknowledged the fact that the negotiations were under scrutiny from observers. Pressure from the COP and the Fund's general institutional environment was mentioned very often (e.g., Paris 1.1: 01:57; 1.2: 01:18; Bali 2.1: 01:28; 2.2: 00:10; Songdo 1.8: 00:24; 3.4 00:34; 4.11: 00:44; Bridgetown 2.2: 09:31; see also Subsection 5.3.3). Pressure from observer groups was hardly mentioned at all. On the contrary, video recordings and observers were downplayed by GCF Board members. One of them thought it was doubtful that the video recordings would receive much attention at all (Paris 3.4: 01:48). At a the 17th Board meeting, the acting Chair, who was a Board member during the analysed negotiation rounds, refused to let a civil society observer give any input until after the decision was taken (Lennon 2017). Nonetheless, these instances illustrate that Board members were at least conscious of the fact that they were being observed. And the video recordings of course also mean that the COP can potentially review the conduct at the Board meetings.

It is difficult to empirically ascertain the actual disciplining effect that the presence of observers and cameras had. Assuming that negotiators had bargained more directly if the entire negotiations had taken place behind closed doors would be counterfactual. The informal parts of the negotiations, where no observers or cameras where present, certainly played out differently, according to both remarks from Board members (Paris 1.2: 01:45) and interviewees (BM 1). But they actually characterised the informal consultations as more candid and less politically charged:

“It’s amazing how when we sat yesterday⁷³ around the tables, and we talked to each other, it was such a different setting. We were very comfortable, very candid, very open, exchanging views, speaking, you know, like we are, you know, a team of friends and trying to solve problems. But when we come back here, you know, we come back to our constituencies’ positions.”

Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia) in Paris 1.2: 01:45:03–01:45:25

⁷² Speaking in terms of arguing-and-bargaining theory, the observers of the Board meetings technically do not qualify as an audience. This is because speakers do not aim to convince these observers of anything, contrary to rhetorical action or bullshitting (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 193–228; Risse & Ulbert 2005: 352–353, 357–359; Kratochvíl et al. 2006; Seymour 2016). Instead, it is the listeners they are trying to influence.

⁷³ During the informal part of meeting

In addition, the non-normative scope conditions analysed in this chapter still apply. Also behind closed doors, delegates in post-agreement negotiations cannot credibly bargain for all-or-nothing if their constituencies have already committed to establishing a fund with certain overarching goals.

Regardless of the disciplining effect of observers and video recordings, the role of the norms of international climate diplomacy should be taken into account as another factor constraining hard, direct bargaining. Acknowledging this, however, raises a question of ontological nature. Beyond the more general discussion of how norms fit into rationalist versus constructivist paradigms (Checkel 1997), a problem arises from within the internal logic of arguing-and-bargaining theory: How can one avoid running into the trap outlined by Müller (2004: 396)? As explained in Section 2.3.2, Müller shows that arguing and bargaining are two fundamentally different modes of interaction that even contradict each other. Actors are either guided by their interests and the consequences of their actions or by norms and the appropriateness of their actions. In the theory chapter and throughout the analysis, it was maintained that negotiators act according to a logic of consequentialism. So does the fact that normative consideration may have encouraged negotiators to bargaining by proxy contradict this assessment? Seeing this as a contradiction would be misreading in what way norms influenced the choice of strategic vehicles in the negotiations. The reason why influence can be exerted through lessons in the model presented in this thesis is solely one of consequentialism (as will be explained in Subsection 5.5). Speakers affect a listener's position solely due to the listener's considerations about the consequences. This does not exclude that speakers might resort to the use of lessons also due to considerations about the appropriateness of their interventions. The reasons actors resort to lessons is not necessarily the same as the reason actors can exert influence through them. Negotiators act strategically in the sense that they pursue certain goals, and they do so with means they deem both suitable *and* appropriate. "In negotiations, it is appropriate for actors to pursue their self-interest unless it collides with a valid norm that prescribes different behaviour." (Müller 2004: 416)

In light of the role of norms, one could argue that the technical nature of the negotiations further enabled the political struggles about the redistributive mechanisms in the Fund to play out in full. When it is inappropriate for negotiators to further their own interest, it is an obvious choice to project these interests onto claims of factual truth and embed those claims into lessons, as explained in the previous two sections. Although it is clear to developed countries that there are certain moral responsibilities and that there is urgent

need for climate action, it is still entirely appropriate for them to completely disagree with developing countries about purely technical matters. Argumentative speech acts (though strategically used) provided a way to bring political interests to the negotiation table that was both appropriate and feasible. In that sense, norms and appropriateness can be seen as an additional scope condition that made bargaining by proxy and lesson-drawing a more likely choice for negotiators. Combined with the UNFCCC's mandate to consider past experiences, appropriateness inadvertently makes lessons a particularly suitable vector for bargaining by proxy.

In conclusion, normative considerations were likely conducive to the choice of strategic lesson-drawing as a vehicle for bargaining by proxy. They work in a different way, but have a similar effect as the scope conditions analysed heretofore. Importantly, however, normative considerations do not alter the logic of interaction. It is still consequentialism that shapes the dynamics of the negotiations. Introducing the logic of appropriateness does not contradict the role of high-level political commitment for delegates' room to manoeuvre in post-agreement negotiations. Direct, hard bargaining would not only lack the necessary credibility. It would also be not appropriate. Although empirically much less salient than the other scope conditions identified in this section, diplomatic norms made strategic lesson-drawing a more appropriate choice vis-à-vis direct bargaining.

5.4.5 Summary

This section had two aims, an empirical one and a conceptual one. Empirically, it sought to answer the question why actors would resort to strategic lesson-drawing as opposed to more direct forms of bargaining. This required investigating the scope conditions for strategic lesson-drawing in the GCF Board meetings. Conceptually, the section aimed to disentangle the logics of social interaction behind arguing and bargaining. It determined that lesson-drawing follows a logic of consequentialism.

The section first considered whether the availability of suitable experience and the technical nature of the negotiations should be seen as one of those scope conditions. It found that while the suitability of experience is a matter of perspective in light of diverging interests, the fact that the GCF post-agreement negotiations were largely technical on the surface is important. One can only argue over norms and facts, not promises and threats.

The subsection then considered the degree of institutionalisation and delegates' interests. It showed that decisions must still be malleable and that interests must be strong and diverse for strategic lesson-drawing to make sense. Actors must have specific goals that can, in principle, be realised while at the same time, these goals are different and often

incompatible with those of other actors. Strong, here, refers not only to the fact that they are conflicting, but importantly that they also have little elasticity during the actual process of individual negotiation rounds – due to the preferences set by the constituency. The inelasticity of interests also decreases the chances for genuine arguing in the sense of communicative action. Delegates cannot persuade other negotiators to change their positions because these other negotiators do not have the authority to change them.

The low degree of institutionalisation combined with the high degree of political contestation explains why actors would engage in strategic action. However, it does on its own not explain why they would do so indirectly, i.e. why they would draw lessons to bargain by proxy. Therefore, the section examined the credible commitment by delegates' constituencies to bringing the Fund into operation. The commitments render conventional bargaining tactics ineffective as those rely on the credibility of promises and threats. In addition, the diplomatic norms of technical climate negotiations render further unfettered bargaining tactics inappropriate as well. In order to be able to act strategically under such conditions, speakers circumvent the restrictions to unfettered bargaining by bargaining by proxy.

In short, strategic action is more likely in situations where there is (a) a low degree of institutionalisation and (b) fixed and strong interests on part of delegates. A low degree of institutionalisation implies that policies are still up for grabs; inelastic interests mean that the wants are not. These two circumstances in conjuncture would usually favour hard bargaining approaches. However, (c) with the existing commitment in post-agreement negotiations, there is external pressure for agreement. Finally, (d) it would be inappropriate for actors to make threats and deviate from the diplomatic norms international climate politics. These factors constrain hard bargaining. Actors need to resort to other forms of strategic negotiating. Lesson-drawing is one of them. The scope conditions and their links are illustrated in the figure below.

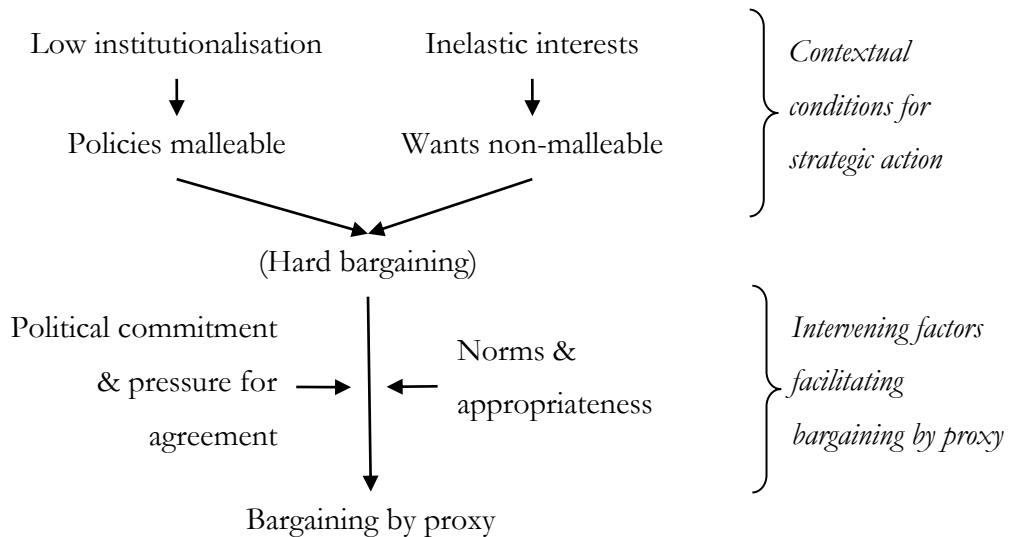


Figure 12: The links between the scope conditions for the strategic use of lessons

The final part of the definition of influence from the theory chapter has not been fully considered yet in the analysis: “The influenced agent, unlike the agent who is coerced, acts freely. He may choose to ignore those considerations which influence him, and he may himself exert control over the influencing power, as in an unequal marriage.” (Scruton 2007: 331) The next subsection will address the role of the listener, analysing how the listener may challenge lessons and himself or herself exert influence through lesson-drawing. This will add a crucial final step to the analysis because the process of learning in international negotiations as a whole includes by the definition given in the theory chapter not just the speaker, who draws the lesson, but also the listener, at whom the lesson is addressed.

5.5 From lessons to learning: The role of the listener

It takes two to tango. As outlined in the theory chapter, learning is a process of social interaction. As such, it involves not only the actor drawing a lesson (i.e., the speaker), but in addition one or several actors listening and responding to that lesson. This links back to the key difference between lesson-drawing as a mode of negotiating and other forms of strategic arguing, specifically rhetorical action: Learning is multilateral, rather than triadic. Arguments are not chosen to appeal to an external entity; they are addressed at other parties in the negotiation. Since all these other parties are listeners only for the duration of a given intervention and will eventually turn into speakers themselves, lessons can be complemented, challenged, or outright rejected. This in turn means that for a lesson to be

either adopted or rejected – which is to say to complete the learning process – the listener must accept or refute the factual claim argumentatively embedded into the lesson.

This section considers the role of the listener. It shifts the attention from the strategic use of lessons to learning in international negotiations as a process of social interaction. The section is structured as follows: Subsection 5.5.1 explores on a general level how lessons themselves became the object of negotiation at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, substantiating the claims made above about their refutability. The subsequent two subsections then analyse the possible outcomes of this process on both ends of the spectrum: Subsection 5.5.2 considers the dismissal and rejection of lessons while Subsection 5.5.3 discusses their potential adoption.

5.5.1 Negotiating a lesson

When listeners react to a lesson, then lessons themselves become the object of negotiation. Learning in multilateral negotiations is a multidirectional process. Strategic lesson-drawing in negotiations, as has been established in the previous sections, consists of interventions that have the form of arguing, but serve as vehicles for bargaining. It is thus deployed for strategic purposes. This assessment leads to a further question regarding the power dynamics in learning as a process of social interaction, beyond the potential influence of singular lessons: Are delegates aware of each other's strategic use of learning or do they take it to be genuine arguing? In the former case, one would expect that delegates also respond strategically to the strategic use of lessons. Put in a more abstract way, the question is whether the model of the negotiator in the theoretical framework extends beyond the level of the individual. Theoretically speaking, there is no reason to assume that it would not. After all, all actors can draw lessons; speakers do not forever remain speakers. They take the role of listeners, too.

Board members essentially found themselves negotiating lessons. Learning at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings did not happen outside of, but was itself subjected to dynamics of negotiation. Just as lessons can be a strategic vehicle for negotiating, lessons themselves can be negotiated. In practice, this would often take one of two forms. Either, Board members would draw counter lessons, where they oppose one lesson with another one. Or, they would pick up a reference made by a colleague to then offer his or her own interpretation.

As an example of the former case, i.e. one lesson countered by another one, the Congolese Board member – simultaneously enhancing authority by referring to his own first-hand experience – drew a negative lesson, warning about the limits of using a particular indicator

(Songdo 4.6: 00:14). In response, the British Board member claimed the contrary was true, that there were other institutions where this indicator was in place and considered to be useful (Songdo 4.6: 00:19).

Lesson use sparked further lesson use. The Board's discussion of procedures in the absence of consensus illustrates this nicely (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:33–03:14). During this debate, 33% of interventions referenced experience with other climate or development finance institutions. The first to draw lessons in the discussions of this agenda item was the American Board member. He argued that there is middle ground between MDB-style voting and full consensus. Drawing a positive lesson, he pointed out that other institutions have tackled this problem as well, such as the GEF (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:52). This was supported by three other developed country Board members, namely the French, British, and Italian delegates, who argued that voting rights – as practiced at IDA, GEF, IFAD, and many others⁷⁴ – would incentivise more contributions (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:03) and – judging by the GEF's experience – likely not be used at all (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:07, 02:11).

These contentions were then strongly opposed by developing country Board members, likewise relying on lessons to bolster their claims. Pointing to the Global Fund, the Multilateral Fund, the Montreal Protocol, and the UNFCCC, the Philippine Board member argued that the GCF this far had failed to clearly define what constitutes consensus and what constitutes its absence. She also dismissed drawing lessons from the GEF as it, with its majority voting system, did not fulfil the requirements of a transparent system of governance (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:13). In a similar notion, the South African Board member rejected drawing lessons from these, in his view, non-democratic institutions (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:26).⁷⁵ The important take-away from this is that lessons were often responded to with further lessons in counterarguments.

As mentioned at the beginning of this subsection, there was a second form of negotiating lessons: References to the same institution were made during the deliberations, but with different interpretations in terms of the implications for the Green Climate Fund. Board members offered alternative interpretations for the same lesson. For example, drawing lessons to fulfil expectations and provide familiarity to stakeholders did not go unopposed. While concerns about uncertainty and lack of familiarity were often shared, some Board

⁷⁴ The International Development Association, the Global Environment Facility, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development

⁷⁵ Note that lessons were not exclusively negotiated along a developed-developing country cleavage. In another example, the French and the American Board member maintained different views about what lessons to draw from the policy on capital cushions employed by IDA (Songdo 2.5: 00:10, 00:14).

members from developing countries doubted that adopting from other institutions would provide a complete solution to this problem:

“The world outside doesn’t know what the GCF’s procedures are going to be like. The criteria are not well-established. We are taking some lessons from other funds that are happening, but the initial process is likely to be crucial for us.”

Shri Dipak Dasgupta (India) in Songdo 1.7: 01:26:28–01:26:45

This type of lesson can be referred to as a dismissal. Instead of adhering to established standards, policies, and practices, they put emphasis on the initial encounters that stakeholder would have with the Fund (see also Subsection 5.5.2).

The fact that lessons were frequently countered by listeners shows two things. First, it means that negotiators have no way of knowing whether their lesson will be accepted by fellow Board members and to what extent it can actually influence them. While they do use learning strategically, they are merely subjectively rational, which is to say they have no objective knowledge about the effectiveness of their argument (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 199). Secondly, lessons used argumentatively can also be countered argumentatively and, if successful, weakened. The same is not true in the case of hard bargaining. A promise or a threat may be answered by extending another promise or threat, but that does not affect the presence of the initial promise or threat; it persists as an object in the negotiations. Lessons and their implications, on the other hand, are discussed and the form of arguments and can therefore negotiated. This is one of the key points to take away from this section. And it will be important to keep this in mind for the discussion chapter.

5.5.2 Rejection and dismissal: How lessons are challenged

The credible political commitment examined in Subsection 5.4.3 does not imply that delegates have no room to manoeuvre. They are able to respond to the veiled coercion embedded in lesson-drawing. As has been argued elsewhere,

“relative-gains concerns are not in themselves determinant of state behaviour. [...] S]tates will vary in their sensitivity to relative gains concerns because climate change is a two-level game involving international political forces (international and state specific) as well as domestic ones to which state leaders must respond.”

Purdon (2013: 4)

In addition to negotiating lessons by offering alternative interpretations or countering them by drawing another lesson, the act of lesson-drawing itself can be challenged, too.

The above example of procedures for the absence of consensus (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:33–03:14) sheds light on this particular way of challenging lesson-drawing. As mentioned, the South African Board member dismissed drawing lessons from certain International

Financial Institutions because these were not democratic institutions (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:26). Taking a closer look how lessons were received at the GCF Board meetings, the fact that lessons are indeed frequently shaped by the interests of the speaker did not escape the attention of other Board members. On the contrary, delegates recognised attempts to draw 'Trojan' lessons that primarily cater to the speaker's interests. They would then complain, for instance, that references to certain institutions had been left out from decision drafts (Bridgetown 4.10: 03:09) while certain undesired others had been included (Songdo 3.4: 01:18; Bridgetown 4.1: 03:01). As the Norwegian Board member put it, the Board should learn from what is relevant, not what they like best (Songdo 3.4: 01:18). Essentially, Board members countered positive lessons by way of exposing them as cherry-picking. As explained in Subsection 5.1.5, Board members *rejected* the applicability of a certain experience to the Green Climate Fund or even entirely *dismissed* the appropriateness of drawing lessons to inform the GCF's design in the first place.

By far the most prominent justification for rejection pertained to the Fund's mission to induce a paradigm shift in global economic development pathways. Although, as explained in the introductory chapter, it was initially unclear and contested what that exactly implies, Board members – particularly from developing countries – often stressed that the Fund should do things differently compared to existing climate finance institutions (e.g., Songdo 1.8 00:45, 00:50; Bridgetown 2.2: 00:44).

"We are the GCF. We need to demonstrate that we are different. [...] We should be that innovation incubator for new ideas and doing things differently. Because that's what we are here [for]: To take risks, to push the boundaries, and that."

Zaheer Fakir (South Africa) in Bridgetown 2.2: 01:06:59–01:07:20

However, a dismissal does not mean that the speaker is entirely opposed to learning altogether. Rather, dismissals have to be seen in context. They often referred to a specific practice, standard, or policy or more general characteristics of the institutions that was referenced. As the following quote illustrates, Board members occasionally rejected certain sources of lessons while advocating to include others.

"What I need to have is not looking at biased samples of relevant funds and institutions which do not cover the broad basis of representative institutions around the world that are engaged. It's not just GEF, it's not the World Bank that are the only institutions."

Shri Dipak Dasgupta (India) in Bridgetown 4.1: 03:09:45–03:10:07

Interventions like this one also illustrate that Board members were very much aware of the selectivity involved with lesson-drawing. In particular, developing countries worried that extensive adoption of positive lessons would lock the GCF into the ways of old, which the

Fund's mission explicitly strive to go beyond.⁷⁶ They often responded by dismissing lesson-drawing and highlighting the Green Climate Fund's mission:

“We’re not compiling practices from different institutions here. We’re here to do business in a new way and in a way that GCF is mandated to do.”

George Zedginidze (Georgia) in Bridgetown 2.2: 01:08:47–01:09:00

Lessons were used to emphasise the objectives of the Green Climate Fund by contrasting them with those of existing institutions. As outlined in Chapter 4, the Green Climate Fund was – born out of the ashes of Copenhagen, as it were – envisioned to accomplish nothing less than to induce a transformational shift in global economic development pathways. Granted, it had not been clearly defined what this actually means – i.e. how the transformation would work and what the end result would look like; in fact, this had been at the heart of the negotiations. Nonetheless, developing countries firmly concurred on the notion that paradigm shift implies a departure from business as usual. In their interventions, they frequently highlighted this as an absolute necessity to fulfil the GCF's mission (e.g., Songdo 1.8: 00:02; 1.9: 00:24; 3.2: 00:37; Bridgetown 2.2: 01:08; 3.8: 00:47; 4.1: 03:08).

Since developing countries emphasised this shift from the status quo as one of the GCF's main objectives, one could suspect that comparisons with the *status quo* – i.e. existing climate or development finance institutions – were a key aspect in this regard. However, dismissals were more prominently used in this context. Using dismissals and underlining the GCF's special mission, developing country delegates explicitly rejected drawing lessons from institutions such as the Global Environment Facility or the World Bank (e.g., Bridgetown 2.2: 01:05; 4.1: 03:08). Given the distinctive mission of the Green Climate Fund, it was argued, learning from these existing institutions would be unsuitable. The point most often emphasised was that the Fund's *modus operandi* should be different from business-as-usual, a radical break from the experience with other climate and development finance institutions.

What is important to note about rejections and dismissals is that they counter strategic lesson-drawing on the very same level that strategic lesson-drawing occurs: on the level of arguing. This is how the power exerted through bargaining by proxy can be challenged in a way that direct bargaining cannot. For example, Board members dismissed the notion that the GCF is in competition with other funds that played a key role in creating pressure by invoking expectations from the Fund's institutional environment (see Subsection 5.3.3):

⁷⁶ See Section 6.1.2 for a detailed, more abstract discussion of this aspect.

“So at the end of the day, the whole purpose of what we are doing here is really to build confidence. It’s a confidence building measure. We’re not competing with one another. We’re not trying to compete between the Fund and the GEF or CIF or World Bank or development banks; none of that. What we are trying to do here is we want to have a simple start for the Fund, addressing those issues of concern; address the issues that would build enough confidence to operationalise the Fund.”

Ayman Shasly (Saudi Arabia/Co-chair⁷⁷) in Songdo 2.1: 00:04:38–00:05:11

Indeed, looking at which Board members dismissed and rejected lessons most often reveals an interesting dynamic between developed and developing countries. As mentioned in Section 5.1, dismissals and rejections were by far most commonly used by developing countries. This difference reflects the different solutions to the aforementioned dilemma the two groups of countries seek to implement: How can the Green Climate Fund be something new and different if – at the same time – it relies on existing best-practice to inform its design. As the relative frequency of the various types of lessons identified in this chapter shows, there was a clear difference between developed and developing countries in terms of what side of this spectrum they emphasised. While developed countries were much more inclined to adopt existing standards, policies, and practices (for reasons to be explained below), developing countries tended to be more of the view that this would dilute the Fund’s objectives. The Cuban member explicitly spelled this out after rejecting the idea to adopt existing language into a GCF decision:

“One of the main reasons why developing countries supported the creation of GCF was precisely to change the rules of the game in climate change finance and not to continue business as usual.”

Jorge Ferrer Rodriguez (Cuba) in Bridgetown 2.2: 00:45:23–00:45:38

In cases where developed country Board members did explicitly dismiss learning, the thrust was rather to reassure other delegates that a proposed policy or standard, albeit invoking certain connotation, was not intended to be similar to the experience used for the lesson (category: *Reject to reassure*). For instance, the Dutch Board member argued that a voting procedure in the absence of consensus was needed, but she dismissed learning from multilateral development banks in this context, underlining that the GCF’s voting procedure was to be different (Bridgetown 4.1: 02:32).

⁷⁷ While the Board member who is quoted above acted in his capacity as Co-chair at the time, he does represent a developing country constituency (albeit one with special interests, cp. Depledge (2005: 12–14)), and he is known to have spoken on behalf of his constituency despite acting as Co-chair (Bridgetown 3.15: 00:21:55–00:22:20, 01:19:23–01:20:20; see also Subsection 4.2.2).

5.5.3 Adoption: How the power of lessons materialises

The above subsection analysed listeners rejecting certain lessons or dismissing the appropriateness of lesson-drawing altogether. On the other end of the spectrum, listeners occasionally accepted the speaker's lesson. This is where the power of lessons materialises, as it were; where the policy, standard, or practice the speaker proposes is adopted. The question of why listeners would accept consequential lessons at all is important to understand learning in international negotiations. The answer ties into the issue of exerting power through lessons. It solves a seeming contradiction between the adoption of lessons and a key scope condition for drawing lessons. If it is the case that parties' preferences have little elasticity, then how can it be that a lesson which conflicts with these preferences is adopted at all? This question is at the core of this subsection. The subsection further refines the explanatory mechanism for exerting influence through learning in international post-agreement negotiations. Note, however, that the outcome of international negotiations is not mono-causal (see also the critical reflexion in Section 5.6). Individual decisions cannot be traced back solely to the use of one lesson or another because learning is of course but one mode of negotiating. Therefore, expanding upon the analysis this far, this subsection examines the mechanism of how the power of lessons materialises in more abstract terms.

Subsection 2.3.2 discussed power and learning in international negotiations from a theoretical perspective. The critique presented there highlighted two possible ways in which power is thought to be exerted. Approaching the phenomenon from a constructivist and from a rationalist perspective, they emphasise the ability of lessons to rationalise and substantiate political positions, respectively. Both approaches leave out one important part of the equation. They are based on the assumption that actors are at the very least sporadically not aware of the nature of what they are being presented with when a speaker draws a lesson. In a context like the one encountered at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, where, as explained in Section 4.2, interests are conflicting and contestation is high, how can one assume that a listener is not aware that lessons would be shaped by those interests? Indeed, Board members were very much aware of the fact they were negotiating between different interests: "I'm saying 'negotiating'. To be honest with you, we are negotiating here. I'm afraid to use that term, but we are negotiating in this Board." (Ayman Shasly [Saudi Arabia] in Songdo 1.4: 01:03:09–01:03:16, see also Bridgetown 4.8: 00:19).

In addition, delegates all have their own interpretations of the experiences with existing finance institutions through their work, albeit from diverse professional vantage points (see Subsection 4.2.1). In other words, the listener would not lightly accept the argument embedded in a lesson as factual truth. Moreover, considering that delegates are able to challenge each other's interpretations of lessons (see Subsection 5.5.1), it is not plausible to assume that they generally see lessons put forth by others as genuine information about causal links. The same that can be said to refute the concept of genuine arguing can also be put forth against the concept of strategic arguing (as suggested by Grobe 2010).

Therefore, it is instead suggested here that the primary mechanism through which learning in post-agreement negotiations exerts power is one of veiled coercion. Veiled coercion is conveyed via bargaining by proxy as analysed in Section 5.3. Bargaining by proxy means to indirectly signal coercive intentions that would not be feasible or appropriate to state outright. Actors argumentatively subject themselves to a factor outside their control and derive weight for their argument from it. When the Australian delegate framed certain standards and safeguards as an indispensable requirement for any capitalisation from public sources (Paris 1.2: 01:05), he did not give developing countries a reason to accept his proposal because of the technical merits of his argument, but because the argument was infused with the veiled threat of insufficient funding. Similarly, developing countries portrayed their positive lessons about the easing of administrative burdens as a condition for the adherence to the standards and safeguards that developed countries had demanded (e.g., Paris 3.1: 00:39).

Translated into the standard power vocabulary in International Relations, the notion is still one of instrumental power. Like with bargaining, power is exercised through its instrumental dimension. Yet, for the reasons discussed in Section 5.4, it is conveyed more indirectly. It is not bargaining, but bargaining by proxy. With bargaining by proxy, instrumental power does not draw directly on the structural assets. Instead, the speaker frames the issue in a way that highlights the effective choice constraints for the listeners (e.g., Paris 1.2: 00:37, 01:05; 3.1: 00:39). For example, the French Board member argued that relying solely on grants as a financial instrument – as preferred by developing countries – will not generate the resources needed (Paris 1.4: 00:59). Drawing positive lessons from other funds and adopting a wider range of instruments involving private money – as preferred by developed countries – is proposed as a solution (*ibid.*)

This is how power can be exerted through learning. Negotiators circumvent the constraints on direct, hard bargaining. Power must be activated, translated into actual influence in a

manner similar to the one described by Adler-Nissen & Pouliot (2014). Learning is a way to achieve this. Lessons convey coercive factors in the way illustrated by the above example of the French Board member and those presented in Section 5.3. A lesson “alters the payoffs they attribute to different policy options” (Eising 2002: 87). “[T]he persuadee simply alters his initial beliefs without actually changing his preferences” (Grobe 2010: 11). This is important because in bargaining-centred rationalist explanations, lessons would otherwise be “regarded as mere cheap talk and thus have no effect on the outcome” (Grobe 2010: 11). In effect, the mechanism here is similar to Krebs & Jackson’s (2007) contention that rhetorical or argumentative patterns can in many cases be best understood in the context of coercion.

An understanding of learning in international negotiations that takes seriously the strategic use of arguments also offers a solution to another question raised by Müller (2004). He asks how, from a rationalist perspective, speakers can possibly “induce in their audience the belief that they are trustworthy” (Müller 2004: 400). One cannot reasonably apply two different ontologies to the speaker and the listeners, respectively. If one is to be seen as subjectively rational, then so is the other. Therefore, if a speaker tries to use an argument strategically, he or she must also be conscious of the fact that the listeners have similar intentions. As a consequence, he or she must constantly be suspicious about the true intentions behind any speaker’s argument. The answer this thesis suggests is that speakers do not need to induce in their listeners the belief that they are trustworthy because the underlying logic of their speech acts is one of consequentialism. Delegates who argue embrace strategic action. Their arguing follows a logic of consequentialism. However, specific contextual conditions in post-agreement negotiations force them to, on the surface, choose a seemingly communicative approach vector. They seemingly negotiate according to a logic of appropriateness. Drawing lessons, that is to say invoking lesson from past experience, is a way to achieve just that.

The adoption of lessons also highlights an important difference between strategic lesson-drawing and conceptualisations of learning that emphasise constructivist notions of power. Strategic lesson-drawing does not necessarily construct a certain perception of issues. Rather, it is a vehicle allowing actors to bargain where it would otherwise not be appropriate or credible. Learning in international negotiations is not exerting discursive power because it does not shape the ideas and wants of other actors. Learning in international negotiations is wielding influence during actual deliberations by invoking

assets that cannot be activated directly, but need to be translated into local influence, as Adler-Nissen & Pouliot (2014) put it.

In conclusion, answering this subsection's core question of how it can be that lessons which conflict with inelastic preferences can be adopted at all: Actors accept lessons precisely if and when they resonate with their existing interests. This is how lessons exert influence as defined above (Scruton 2007: 331). In order to achieve this, the speaker must attach weight to the argument through bargaining by proxy as explained in Section 5.3. Speakers invoke structural assets in their lessons that they cannot bring to the table directly due to their constituencies' credible commitment (see Subsection 5.4.3).

One should bear in mind the focus and extent of the analysis conducted here. The aim of this thesis was to develop a better understanding of learning as a particular kind of social interaction in international negotiations. It was neither the point of the thesis to argue that learning is an exhaustive explanation for certain outcomes, nor would there be enough data to support that. Each decision taken by the Board is influenced by a myriad of factors that were not accounted for in this thesis, as this would have been out of its scope and ambition. The point of this subsection was to explain and illustrate the mechanism according to which strategic lesson-drawing can exert influence in international negotiations. The point was not to argue that this influence can fully explain their outcome. See also the critical reflexion below.

5.5.4 Summary

The previous sections in this chapter focussed on speakers strategically drawing lessons in negotiations. However, laid out in the theory chapter, learning is a social, not a unidirectional process. As such, it involves at least two actors: a speaker and a listener. This section has addressed this aspect. It analysed how lessons were received and responded to at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. Specifically, the section first established that, while the technical suitability of an experience does not necessarily restrict the speaker who draws the lesson (see Subsection 5.4.1), these aspects become indeed relevant when one considers the learning process as a whole. Lessons can be challenged and their suitability, applicability, and legitimacy can be negotiated among delegates (Subsection 5.5.1). The section then went on to consider two archetypal outcomes of this negotiation process: The rejection of specific lessons or dismissal of learning altogether (Subsection 5.5.2) and the adoption of lessons (Subsection 5.5.3).

The analysis also revealed differences between the way in which developed versus developing countries engage in the learning process during the negotiations. This cleavage

reflects differences between structurally strong actors (i.e., those who have command over the resources the negotiations are about) and structurally weaker ones. Importantly, this section showed how the act of negotiating lessons counters strategic lesson-drawing on the same level that strategic lesson-drawing occurs: on the level of arguing. This is how the power exerted through bargaining by proxy can be challenged in a way that direct bargaining cannot – an important aspect to keep in mind for the discussion of the empirical findings in Chapter 6.

5.6 Critical reflexion

This section critically reflects on the limitations of this study and the validity of its findings. Crucially, owing to the rather narrow focus of the research project on learning in international negotiations, the study did not aim to fully process-trace or measure the impact of learning on the decisions taken. While clear patterns of strategic lesson-drawing were revealed in the analysis, they are but one element of strategic action in negotiations and never the sole reason for any given outcome. Assuming otherwise would be counterfactual and therefore essentially guesswork. Neither was it the aim of this thesis to minutely assess the impact of learning on the adoption or rejection of specific policies. Rather, the aim was to investigate the character of learning in international negotiations, using the Green Climate Fund merely as an in-depth case study. This is not so much a shortcoming of the research question or the method, but rather a consequence of this dissertation's focus of inquiry that one should be aware of when drawing conclusions from its findings.

Another important aspect to recall in this regard is that this thesis sought to answer the question why actors use lessons in post-agreement climate finance negotiations. This is explicitly a process-focussed question, as opposed to outcome-focussed one. The thesis did not primarily look at the impact that lesson-drawing has on the outcome of negotiations. While both types of inquiry can be insightful, the former is often neglected. Research questions like the one asked in this thesis shift the attention toward the making of international climate finance politics. Other scholars, from various vantage points, have cautioned against overlooking how power is exercised, by only asking to what effect it is exercised (Doty 1996: 4; Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014; Wilson Rowe 2015). As pointed out several times above (see Chapter 1 and Subsection 2.2.1 in particular), emphasising these aspects about learning reveals dynamics that escape the attention of other research questions and theoretical frameworks. The implications of these dynamics for both an

empirical and theoretical understanding of post-agreement climate finance negotiations will be explored further in the discussion chapter below (Sections 6.2 and 6.3).

Another potential point of criticism regards the fact that a single case study was conducted. This, however, is thought to be justified in light of four considerations: the exploratory, inductive nature of the research project, the prominence of learning in the negotiations under study, the societal relevance of the Green Climate Fund, and the unique characteristics and contexts across cases. First, this thesis conducted an exploratory, inductive analysis. The aim was not to test an existing theory, but develop a new understanding of the nature of lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations. This required a level of analytical depth that warranted the focus on a single case. Second, learning seemed of particular importance at the Green Climate Fund for several reasons. There was a formal mandate by from the Fund's supervising entity to consider lessons from past experience (UNFCCC n.d.; 2011a; 2015: 18, 29). Such experience was ample and extensively discussed among policy and civil society observers (Nakhooda et al. 2013b: 1; Schalatek 2014b; Afful-Koomson 2014; Fairman 1996; Streck 2001). The latter were particularly strong advocates of drawing lessons (Ballesteros et al. 2010; Abbott & Gartner 2011; van Kerkhoff et al. 2011; Brown et al. 2013: 11–18; Polycarp et al. 2013a; Polycarp et al. 2013b; Huq 2017; Nakhooda et al. 2013b: 1; Afful-Koomson 2014; Ayers & Abeysinghe 2013). On a related note, the GCF's added value to the existing international climate finance architecture was at the core of much debate around the Fund institutional creation. This added value, too, can only be considered properly through careful comparison with existing climate and development finance institutions. A good understanding of how lessons relate to the Fund's ambition to be transformative is even more important in this light. Third, the Green Climate Fund was a particularly interesting object of study due to its huge role in international climate finance. Its mission is to induce a paradigm shift in global economic development pathways (UNFCCC 2011a: I.2). It was founded as a vehicle for sourcing, managing, and allocating a large chunk of USD 100 billion dollars in climate finance annually by 2020. It is, at the time of writing, the largest international climate finance institutions in terms of pledges. And it has, as a result, been at the centre of academic and political debates. In light of these aspects, the Green Climate Fund Board meetings lent themselves particularly well to study learning in international post-agreement negotiations and can be regarded to hold particularly high societal relevance. Fourth, each case of international negotiations has unique characteristics and contexts. As a consequence, similar looking phenomena or their scope conditions might be rather

different in nature across cases. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Subsection 6.2.3. For future research, nonetheless, a large comparative study of learning in various types of international negotiations could yield more general insights with regard to the factors that make strategic lesson-drawing more likely.

The fact that a single case study was conducted also ties into the generalisability of the findings. Recall that it was not the empirical ambition of this thesis to show that, contrary to what others have maintained (Mitzen 2005; Risse & Ulbert 2005; Deitelhoff 2009; Risse 2013), genuine arguing in the sense of Habermasian communicative action is generally not possible in international negotiations and that arguing will always be used strategically. Rather, the direction of inquiry should be seen the other way around. The research question was developed in light of the contradiction between the communicative notion that learning is often linked with in conventional theory on the one hand and the empirically observed political contestation in the context of learning on the other. In other words, this dissertation sought to provide an alternative explanation for learning in international negotiations within the same ontological paradigm set out in arguing-and-bargaining theory. It did not mean to imply that lessons will always be used strategically in international negotiations. Instead, it demonstrated that under certain scope conditions, learning is not what it appears to be or what it is assumed to be in much of the literature. Lessons from past experience may well inform policy-making – particularly in a nascent institution like the Green Climate Fund. Yet, in these redistributive negotiations, lessons from the past clash with political contestation. Learning in post-agreement climate negotiations, hence, cannot be understood merely in terms of technical deliberations in the spirit of Habermasian discourse. This would mean misreading the role that lessons actually play in the process.

It should also be noted that the argumentative patterns that attached weight to Trojan lessons by drawing comparisons and invoking the pressure of extra-institutional entities did by no means always occur in immediate conjuncture with lesson-drawing. Delegates did not always (although occasionally; e.g. Paris 1.1: 01:57; 1.2: 00:37) warn against the expectations of treasuries and private investors, for instance, in the same breath as they drew on past experience. Such interventions did occur, however, and they shaped the contexts in which lessons were drawn. It was therefore important for the analysis to consider not just the interventions in which delegates refer to past experience, but in addition the background of argumentative patterns in which they did this. The video

recordings proved to be excellent data material for this, as they allowed for a continuous re-evaluation of the negotiation rounds.

Another potential issue is that some scholars would certainly reject veiled coercion as the main explanatory mechanism. They would argue that “[p]olicy [...] is not shaped simply on the basis of ‘good’ research or information, nor does it emerge simply from bargaining amongst actors on clearly defined options and choices” (Brock et al. 2001: 1). However, such studies look at the formulation of ideas and interests in more general terms, rather than how these ideas and interests play out at the negotiation table. For the reasons discussed above, learning in post-agreement negotiations fits better with an explanation that assumes interests to be fixed for the duration of the negotiation rounds.

One should also keep in mind that the negotiation rounds of the GCF Board meetings include discussions on a myriad of issues and draft decisions – with varying levels of salience, consequence, and, importantly, contestation. Certainly not all of these issues and decisions satisfy the scope condition of inelastic interests (Subsection 5.4.2). Notwithstanding Müller’s (2004) point about the ontological incompatibility of arguing and bargaining, the question is whether this would mean that a different kind of learning took place in the deliberations on less contentious issues – a kind of learning more akin to genuine arguing on islands of persuasion (Deitelhoff 2009). Looking at these less contentious issue areas, however, it is conspicuous that, while contentiousness is difficult to measure, there is clearly a relation. The less contentious an issue area was, the fewer lessons delegates drew in the deliberations. Take for example the Board’s discussion of whether delegations should have voting rights at the Fund linked their constituency’s pledges (Bridgetown 4.1: 01:29–03:14). In this long and contentious debate, 12 out of 36 interventions (33%) made references to past experience at least once. In contrast to this, during the Board’s discussion of performance indicators for adaptation projects (Bali 1.3: 01:07–02:24), members very much agreed that measuring the success of adaptation projects is difficult and should best be done by the country concerned (Board members supporting each other’s arguments e.g. at Bali 1.3: 01:21, 01:31, 01:39, 01:44, and 01:51)⁷⁸. The American Board member characterised the discussion as “one of the most robust [...] and one of the least divisive, where we all seem to be pulling in the same direction” (Bali 1.3: 02:18:25–02:18:32). Despite the fact that there is plenty of experience with measuring the success of adaptation projects, for example in the Adaptation Fund, only two interventions

⁷⁸ In addition, both civil society and private sector observers viewed the Board’s discussion favourably (Bali 1.3: 02:03, 02:06).

make any reference to this experience (9%). Both issue areas lent themselves to lesson-drawing, but it occurred mostly where contestation was high. While these are merely illustrative examples, a correlation between contestation and lesson-use as described here could clearly be observed. Lesson-drawing did not constitute islands of persuasion because it rarely happened where actors did not have strong strategic interests.

Nonetheless, a few words of caution are in order about the explanatory power of learning. Firstly, lesson-drawing is but one particular kind of speech act, and learning is but one kind of mode of negotiating in multilateral diplomacy. Naturally, the deliberations were conducted in a variety of ways, which may or may not revolve around learning, but all have an impact on the dynamics and outcomes of the meetings. In other words, there are many intervening variables. However, keep in mind that it was not the intention of this research project to fully explain a certain outcome of the GCF Board meetings. Rather, the goal was to explain why delegates drew lessons; as what type of social interaction learning in international negotiations is best understood. The data and analysis in this thesis was geared toward the focus of inquiry. This also means that the data and analysis were not suited to fully explain the outcome of the negotiations. In addition, reducing the complexity of social interaction to make it understandable is not only unavoidable. It is even at the core of what social science research does. A qualitative analysis, it can further be argued, is particularly well suited to address the issue of intervening variables since it does not categorise blindly, but pays careful attention to the contexts in which strategic lesson-drawing occurs.

Secondly, as alluded to in Section 5.5, lessons can be challenged, which by extension means that their strategic use in international negotiations is not guaranteed to be effective by any means. Bargaining by proxy draws on structural assets that are activated during the negotiations. But structural assets do not guarantee a favourable outcome. This aspect has important implications that will be discussed in further detail in Section 6.2 below. Thirdly, a general challenge of conducting empirical analysis within the arguing-and-bargaining framework is that, “[c]onsidering that it is not possible to look into the minds of actors, how can empirical research differentiate clearly between sincere reasoning and strategic reasoning?” (Jörke 2013a: 354) This common problem of social science research cannot be entirely avoided. As mentioned above, all qualitative social research remains, ultimately, interpretation (Stake 1995: 8–9; Boyatzis 1998: 15; Keller & Viehöver 2006: 107). However, this problem was alleviated to the largest extent possible through a number of measures: The thesis made use of video recordings that provide an unfiltered transcript of verbal exchanges at the negotiation table, allowing to analyse what negotiators actually said as

opposed to what they recall in interviews (see Subsection 3.2.2). It considered not just instances of lesson-drawing, but also their immediate and larger contexts (see Subsection 3.3.2 and Chapter 4). And it also considered the argumentative and substantive aspects of lesson-drawing, not just the strategic aspect (see Section 5.2 and Subsection 5.3.1).

Another limitation that should be mentioned here again regards what the data do and do not include. Due to the nature of the data material, this thesis did not systematically look at the informal part of the GCF negotiations. This would include consultations in small groups⁷⁹ or informal talks between delegates in the corridors or over lunch. However, this does not depreciate the validity of the findings for a number of reasons. For one thing, the focus of inquiry is on learning in negotiations as a form of communication. The verbal exchanges during the actual Board meetings were therefore key to the analysis. In addition, the informal part is by no means completely separate from the formal part of the negotiations. Rather, small groups make regular progress reports and put amended decisions before the Board for consideration, and delegates would often tell of their informal talks with other Board members in their interventions. Finally, the video analysis conducted for this thesis was flanked by closely following the proceedings, conducting informal interviews with Board members, their advisors, and observers. For a more detailed discussion of the limitations of the data material and how this thesis compensated for those limitations, see Subsection 3.2.3.

Lastly, it should be noted that there were of course nuances within each of the two groups of countries often juxtaposed in the analysis.⁸⁰ As mentioned above, developing countries, in particular, are a remarkably heterogeneous group. Emerging economies on the one hand (Hallding et al. 2013) and small island developing states (SIDS) on the other (Betzold 2010) differ in many relevant respects, such as economic strength and vulnerability to climate change. This was reflected in delegates' interventions at the GCF Board meetings. Saudi Arabia strongly emphasised the responsibility of developed countries (e.g., Paris 1.2: 01:45) in light of the fact that it is the biggest oil producer of the OPEC countries and has corresponding economic interests. Zambia, on the other hand, highlighted the urgency of climate action and the moral obligation of the same in order to prevent further suffering from droughts and other adverse effects of global warming (e.g., Paris 1.2 00:46; Bali 2.1:

⁷⁹ In UNFCCC or UNFCCC-linked negotiations, small groups are working groups consisting of a number of delegates. They are often set up in an ad-hoc manner to resolve certain issues or contestations. The results are usually reported to a superior body (the Board in case of the GCF) and put before it for decision.

⁸⁰ See also Section 7.2 on how the GCF Board meetings reflected grander themes in climate finance politics.

00:23; Bridgetown 4.8: 00:18). Regarding developed countries, European countries like Germany or Sweden were by and large more willing to commit, whereas the USA and Australia insisted on conditionality for contributions (e.g., Paris 1.2: 01:05). Such nuances notwithstanding, the bipolar distinction between developed and developing countries is part of the empirical reality of the global climate regime, to the extent that it even used to be institutionalised in the UNFCCC treaty by the distinction between so-called Annex-I and non-Annex-I countries (UN 1992b: 19–20).⁸¹ Regarding the GCF, the North-South divide still dictates the composition of the Board, and, as the analysis has shown, much of the debate in the negotiations occurred along this cleavage. The distinction, it can therefore be concluded, was analytically useful and adequate.

5.7 The strategic use of lessons in international negotiations

This section presents a detailed synopsis of the empirical findings presented in this chapter. It aims to link them back to the overarching core themes and questions that guided the analysis. First, the chapter investigated how lesson-drawing increased the authority of the speaker as a prerequisite to use lessons as part of arguing in negotiations. Second, the analysis asked why others should care about the lessons that are drawn, which meant looking at how actors exert influence through drawing lessons. Third, the thesis examined why actors would exert influence in this specific way in the first place. Fourth, it provided a treatment of the learning process as a whole, taking into consideration the role of the listener. This section concludes the main analytical chapter by providing a concise summary of the key findings for all of these major questions.

The first section in this chapter established that lessons were indeed used argumentatively at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings and analysed how they enhance the argumentative authority of the speaker. The section considered two aspects: the way in which delegates make their claims more plausible through the use of lessons and the reasons why the process of arguing requires them to do so in the first place.

The question is, however, why listeners would care about the arguments made. Section 5.3 went on to demonstrate how speakers make lessons resonate with listeners. In other words, the section introduced aspects of influence and power into the analysis. It demonstrated that speakers attach weight to their lessons by invoking structural assets in their arguments and, in this way, use them indirectly. They bargain by proxy. In their effort to exploit the

⁸¹ See also Section 7.2 on to what extent that particular distinction holds up today.

potency of the lessons they draw, Board members openly play two-level games, stressing that the Board's range of viable policy options was effectively limited by the expectations of their national governments. Bestowing this sense of necessity onto lessons essentially means bargaining by proxy. Actors make their argumentative lessons resonate with listeners by projecting a threat (i.e. a vehicle for bargaining) onto another entity that is supposedly out of their sphere of influence. So while the debate may not be directly and openly about interests, this does not alter underlying interest structures *per se*. Through lesson-drawing, interested-based struggles are brought into the negotiations in a more indirect way. This is the strategic use of lessons; using lessons which are characterised by having the form of an argument, but which serve as vehicle for bargaining and are thus deployed for strategic purposes.

The insights from the first two sections then led to a further question: Why do actors bargain by proxy, instead of uttering typical bargaining vehicles, such as threats and promises, directly? Why would speakers go out of their way and use lessons strategically to advance their interests? To answer this question, Section 5.4 considered a range of scope conditions, which, in their interplay, foster the strategic use of lessons. First, there needs to be a low degree of institutionalisation, i.e. policies, standards, and practices are still susceptible to change. Second, there are strong conflicting interests regarding the issue under negotiation. In other words, the wants are not up for change. The parties involved need to have interests that are inelastic, i.e. strong and rather stable throughout the negotiations. In the short run, the wants are not up for change. This sort of scenario would usually be conducive to bargaining, according to conventional arguing-and-bargaining theory. However, bargaining is not available as a feasible mode of negotiating due to certain restrictions. Typical bargaining tactics – promises, commitments, threats – require credibility to be effective, as explained in the theory chapter. If delegates have no credible control over the assets that promises or threats are about, they cannot bargain effectively. At the same time, again due to circumstances outside of the scope of the actual negotiations, delegates are determined to reach an agreement of some nature. Due to political commitment on a higher diplomatic level as well as high extra-institutional pressure for agreement, no deal is not an option. In addition, negotiators are bound by the norms that govern international climate diplomacy. Hard bargaining would not only be unfeasible, but also inappropriate.

When actors would, but cannot bargain and cannot back out either, negotiating through lesson-drawing becomes a viable tactic. Post-agreement climate negotiations take place

under different circumstances than their high-level counterparts. The fact that an initial agreement has already been signed preempts effective bargaining using conventional tactics, such as threat of withdrawal, as those would lack the necessary credibility. In this light, delegates adjust the mode of negotiating, but without changing the underlying logic of interaction. On the contrary, lesson-drawing not only reflects that adjustment, but becomes itself a vehicle for strategic action. Actors accept a lesson precisely because it resonates with their existing interests. This is how lessons exert influence as defined above (Scruton 2007: 331). Note that the way in which the story of empirical discovery was told in this chapter – from enhancing argumentative authority to veiled coercion to scope conditions – does not imply a strictly unidirectional, linear relationship between those aspects. The links between them work backwards as well. The argumentative nature of lesson-drawing analysed in Section 5.2 is not a side effect, but a requirement for strategic lesson-use to be effective. In light of the scope conditions outlined in Section 5.4, actors still need to play by the rules of arguing in order to be able to bargain by proxy.

Finally, the Section 5.5 explicitly considered learning as social interaction in negotiations, rather than merely the drawing of lessons. It inquired into the ways in which listeners respond to lessons. Lessons can be challenged and their suitability, applicability, and legitimacy can be negotiated among delegates. The section considered two archetypal outcomes of this negotiation process: The rejection of specific lessons or dismissal of learning altogether (Subsection 5.5.2) and the approval and adoption of lessons. The analysis revealed differences between the way in which developed versus developing countries engage in the learning process during the negotiations. This cleavage reflects differences between structurally strong actors (i.e., those who have command over the resources the negotiations are about) and structurally weaker ones. Importantly, this section showed how the act of negotiating lessons counters strategic lesson-drawing on the same level that strategic lesson-drawing occurs: on the level of arguing. This is how the power exerted through bargaining by proxy can be challenged in a way that direct bargaining cannot.

To conclude this synopsis, it should be reiterated in what way the insights differ from what other studies have found with regard to the strategic use of arguments. Learning in international negotiations, it was argued above, is the strategic use of lessons as a specific kind of argument. It shares that characteristic with the concept with rhetorical action. However, learning in international negotiations differs from rhetorical action crucially because it does not require an audience. Learning is multilateral, rather than triadic. This

means that arguments are not chosen to appeal to an external entity, but delegates among each other. Contrary to the dominant notion in much of the conventional literature, it is, in this case, not rationalisation that makes it powerful. Rather, learning exerts power by activating structural assets that are then used as a form of veiled coercion – hence according to a logic of consequentialism. Yet, they are inclined to resort to learning not due to hard restrictions, but a logic of appropriateness for which the situation calls. Listeners who are persuaded by learning, in turn, do so due to consequentialist considerations. Ultimately, consequentialism is the logic of social interaction that underlies learning in international negotiations. Hence, as set out in the introduction (Chapter 1), a constructivist approach is not required to explain the extensive use of lessons at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings.

Expanding on the table from Subsection 2.2.2, the key properties of learning in international negotiations compared to conventional arguing and bargaining can be summarised as follows.

	Arguing	Bargaining	Lesson-drawing
Logic	Logic of appropriateness	Logic of consequentialism	Logic of consequentialism
Content	Genuine validity claims about facts and norms	Promises, threats, and information	Promises, threats, and information embedded into validity claims
Purpose	Persuasion; consensus deliberation	reaching through	Agreeing; maximising gains
Causal mechanism	Trust		Credibility through veiled coercion
Contextual conditions	Consensus-seeking/willingness to be persuaded; shared lifeworld; involvement of public sphere	Seeking to maximise gains, instrumentally rational	Seeking to maximise gains; low degree of institutionalisation; high degree of contestation; credible commitment

Table 4: Lesson-drawing as a mode of negotiating (based on Seymour 2016; Naurin 2007; Jörke 2013a; Müller 2004: 396–397; Schimmelfennig 2003a: 203, 206; as well as own considerations)

It is important to reiterate that by no means do all lessons drawn at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings involve an element of veiled coercion. As discussed in Section 5.2, delegates also enhance their argumentative authority and legitimise their interest-laden interventions through lessons. While this is a common practice at international negotiations, its effectiveness and therefore, ultimately, the power exerted through this kind of learning seem doubtful. Owing to the inelastic interests and contestation surrounding

the issues being discussed as well as the expectations and commitments of constituencies and high-level fora, delegates are unlikely to change their standpoint on issues without the coercive factor that bargaining by proxy provides. Speakers resort to bargaining by proxy due to precisely the same expectations and commitments that make conventional bargaining tactics unfeasible in the first place. Lessons are not only drawn to bargaining by proxy. But it is bargaining by proxy through which lessons exert power in international negotiations.

Conceptualising learning in international negotiations as veiled bargaining that takes the form arguing also explains away the double puzzle described in the introduction (Chapter 1) and the theoretical framework (Chapter 2): On the one hand, one should expect predominantly strategic action at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, considering the high degree of contestation around the redistributive mechanisms being negotiated. On the other hand, as explained in the introductory chapter, learning, in the sense of referencing past experiences – which mainstream learning theory commonly understands as communicative action – can be constantly observed at the Board meetings. The answer to this puzzle is that learning is a mode of negotiation – adopted due to restrictions on what is feasible and appropriate – which has the form of arguing, but ultimately follows a logic of consequentialism. Therefore, it is a form of strategic action.

6 Discussion: Implications for practice and theory

This chapter considers the empirical findings in a broader context. The role of learning in (environmental) post-agreement negotiations is linked back into the existing literatures on learning and negotiating. The aim is to discuss the findings both in terms of their empirical implications as well as International Relations as a discipline. What do the findings tell us about grander debates in IR beyond the phenomenon of learning in international negotiations or the specific case of international climate finance? Having discussed in detail how the findings fit within the arguing-and-bargaining framework, this chapter takes a further step back and explores the larger effects of learning on the dynamics of negotiations and the implications for their theoretical understanding.

Within the UNFCCC system, there are a number of post-agreement negotiations on the implementation of certain treaty provisions (see Subsection 6.2.3). For example, the negotiations revolving around REDD+ have been characterised by similar circumstances of highly technical, intimate rounds where delegates work out the politically charged details against the backdrop of fixed commitments from high-level politics (Wilson Rowe 2015). While learning from the past in an attempt to improve a new institution's effectiveness is generally commendable, this thesis has highlighted how learning in post-agreement negotiations is shaped by power dynamics. Civil society and policy observers made recommendations about how the Green Climate Fund or other post-agreement institutions can draw lessons from past experiences (e.g., Ballesteros et al. 2010; Abbott & Gartner 2011; van Kerkhoff et al. 2011; Brown et al. 2013: 11–18; Polycarp et al. 2013a; Polycarp et al. 2013b). They should be aware that these recommendations are exposed to – and become part of – the politically charged contexts and power dynamics in the decision-making procedure.

The discussion chapter is structured along four broader themes. The first recounts the key empirical insights that provide the basis for the discussion. The chapter will also refute possible alternative explanations of lesson-drawing and learning at the Green Climate Fund that conventional theoretical approaches would imply (Section 6.1). In the second theme, the chapter will discuss the implications of the empirical findings (Section 6.2). It will explore learning in international negotiations in the context of the structural power asymmetries between countries and consider the effects of learning on continuity and change in international negotiations. It will also discuss what has come to be known as the structuralist paradox, i.e. the old question of how the weak can successfully negotiate with the strong. The chapter considers learning to be a partial solution to the structuralist

paradox, highlighting its implications on path dependency in international institutions and global North-South politics. Thirdly, this chapter will turn to the theoretical implications of the empirical findings (Section 6.3). Specifically, the section will look at questions regarding the role of structural assets in multilateral institutions, and will discuss the empirical findings from this thesis in light of relevant academic debates. Finally, the discussion will reflect on the suitability of its methodical approach for International Relations research (Section 6.4).

6.1 Key insights and antitheses

This section briefly summarises the key findings from the empirical analysis that form the basis for the more abstract discussions later on (Subsection 6.1.1), and it re-evaluates these findings in light of prominent alternative explanations for lesson-drawing and learning in the literature (Subsection 6.1.2).

6.1.1 *Findings*

To fully explain the significance of the empirical findings, one should first recall some important conceptual observations about the learning and negotiation literatures. Learning, in its conventional understanding, has notions reminiscent of those of functionalist theories, in which actors seek to improve policies by drawing lessons from past experiences. Such an understanding of learning neglects power and interest. To be sure, this was a side effect of the questions these theories seek to answer. Their research agenda aimed to find alternative explanations for policy change, but this creates a blind spot for learning in politically charged contexts. For this reason, conventional concepts of learning tie neatly into the concept of sincere arguing, in the sense of arguing-and-bargaining theory. Arguing is a mode of negotiating in which actors genuinely seek consensus by exchanging arguments. Arguing, hence, shares with conventional conceptualisations of learning the aim to find the best course of action. And, as a consequence of that, both neglect power. Conventional learning theory and arguing-and-bargaining theory have been criticised for this, most often from a constructivist perspective. These responses emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons. This thesis maintains that this complete change of ontology is not necessary to understand the relation between learning and power in international negotiations. Therefore, Section 2.3 set out an alternative conceptualisation, in which lessons are used as arguments – as arguing-and-bargaining theory would predict – but not used in terms of communicative, but strategic action.

The first task for the empirical analysis was to demonstrate that lessons at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings were indeed used argumentatively and examine why actors would gain from that within the logic of the theoretical framework (Section 5.2). Up to this point, however, the analysis was still very much in line with the concepts of sincere arguing and technical lesson-drawing. The next important question was to what effect these lessons were actually used in the GCF negotiations. The analysis revealed not only that lessons were indeed used strategically, but also traced how they were used (Section 5.3). Lessons, it was shown, serve as argumentative vehicles to bargain by proxy. Delegates circumvent the restrictions of hard bargaining by projecting a threat they cannot credibly make onto another actor who is supposedly out of their sphere of influence. This mechanism of influence, this causal link between lessons and power solves two theoretical problems encountered with other approaches, a general and specific one. Regarding the general one, lesson-drawing understood as bargaining by proxy shows how the conceptualisation of learning through arguing-and-bargaining theory – as opposed to constructivist approaches – allowed to view learning in a way other theories would miss. While still following a clear logic of social interaction, bargaining by proxy only works in conjuncture of both modes of negotiating: arguing *and* bargaining. Lessons are used argumentatively, but for strategic purposes. Arguing was not dismissed in this thesis as the common, but flawed way of understanding learning in negotiations, but kept as an integral part to both the theoretical framework and the analysis.

Regarding the specific theoretical problem, lesson-drawing understood as bargaining by proxy explains away certain problems that strategic uses of arguing in negotiations usually have: How can speakers effectively deceive listeners about their intentions? How can they pretend to engage in communicative action when they really pursue their own interests? The solution to this problem that results from the findings of this dissertation is that they do not need to, because they coerce listeners indirectly. These insights, in turn, lead to another simple, but crucial question: Considering that political interests and contestation are prevalent at the GCF Board meetings, why don't delegates simply negotiate in the most obvious terms under these circumstances, which would be through direct, hard bargaining? The analytical chapter turned to this puzzle and outlined the scope conditions for learning in international negotiations, answering the question why actors learn strategically (Section 5.4). The analysis found that a low degree of institutionalisation, inflexible positions and a credible commitment on a higher political level as well as expectations from the institutional environment are conducive to modes of negotiating whose form follows a

logic of appropriateness in its diplomatic context, but whose purpose and thrust are very much in line with a logic of consequentialism.

Lastly, the analytical chapter examined what happens after a lesson has been drawn (Section 5.5). Up until that point, the analysis had for the most part considered the role of the actor drawing a lesson, i.e. the speaker. But learning, just like negotiating, is a process of social interaction that requires a speaker and at least one listener. They do change roles throughout the process, but there must always be someone who draws a lesson and someone who this drawing of a lesson is addressed at. The analysis of the role of listener yielded two key insights. First, it was found that actors very much negotiate the lessons of others, possibly even rejecting them. Second, when lessons get adopted due to the veiled coercion embedded in it, the underlying notion of power is one of instrumental power (like it would be with direct bargaining), but it is activated in an indirect way. Negotiators signal coercive intentions that would not be feasible or appropriate to state outright. These two findings are intertwined. Since using lessons strategically means exerting power rather indirectly, the chances of successfully challenging certain lessons increase because lessons are challenged on the same indirect level as they are drawn (for a more in-depth discussion of that aspect, see Subsection 6.2.1 below).

Conversely, the empirical findings imply that actors did not exclusively or even primarily invoke lessons to profit from the “symbolic value of expressing the perceived rational foundations of choices” (Radaelli 1995: 162). This certainly plays a role when speakers enhanced their argumentative authority by drawing lessons. But, as this dissertation maintains, it is not the way in which actors can exert power through drawing lessons. Delegates adjust the mode of negotiating to the requirements arising from certain scope conditions, but without changing the underlying logic of interaction. On the contrary, lesson-drawing not only reflects that adjustment, but becomes itself a vehicle for strategic action. Key differences between the findings from this dissertation and alternative explanations drawn from conventional approaches will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection.

6.1.2 *Antitheses*

Having summarised the key empirical insights from this thesis, this subsection takes another look at the earlier critique levelled at the explanatory power of conventional learning theories in post-agreement climate finance politics. It examines possible alternative explanations for learning in international negotiations commonly found in the literature. The section makes the case that these explanations cannot sufficiently explain learning in

international negotiations as observed at the GCF Board meetings. The purpose of this is to acknowledge and refute these antitheses and thereby enhance the validity of the findings. Specifically, this section addresses two alternative explanations for the use of lessons in negotiations: Learning as pure technical learning and genuine communicative action as well as learning as symbolic action. Note that the point of this section is not so much to develop new arguments, but rather to clearly spell out how the above analysis and discussion refutes the common analytical approaches to learning. After all, the aim of this thesis was to challenge dominant notions in these literatures.

To begin with, the lesson-drawing and learning observed at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings cannot be understood as genuine communicative action or pure technical learning. Here, the dominant notion would be that learning is in fact merely a reference frame (or external authority) for arguing in the sense of communicative action. To respond to that notion, first recall that both conventional approaches to learning and communicative action take the same ontological vantage point in that they assume a genuine attempt to improve policy output through a process of drawing lessons and exchanging arguments, respectively.

“It is quite obvious [...] that arguing can contribute to learning in that actors acquire new information and are introduced to new ways of thinking about a problem and its possible solutions. This, in turn, can induce actors to reformulate their interests according to new empirical knowledge and moral standards.”

Risse & Ulbert (2005: 365)

Crucially, this assessment is informed by the authors’ underlying assumption that genuine arguing in the sense of communicative action is generally possible in international politics, which is what they are seeking to demonstrate empirically. This too readily gives up the possibility that the knowledge brokers and norm entrepreneurs they talk about are not seeking to reach consensus through truth-seeking and genuine deliberation, but rather motivated by strong interests that are merely exchanged in a mode of negotiation reminiscent of arguing. Moreover, as Müller (2004: 396) points out, the argument is somewhat self-contradicting. While not all issues are equally contentious, negotiators seek either consensus or maximising their gains. They cannot do both at the same time. This makes islands of persuasion (Deitelhoff 2009) rather unlikely. While lesson-drawing is not inherently strategic, lessons are used particularly often in the context of particularly contentious issues, as shown in Section 5.4. And as Section 5.3 demonstrated, lessons might be on the surface geared toward ensuring the Fund’s bringing into operation, but Trojan lessons come piggybacked with the speaker’s interests. Actors are able to exert

power through Trojan lessons by drawing on extra-institutional pressures for agreement, openly playing two-level games. In that light, lesson-drawing in international negotiations is indeed tightly linked to expectations from the Fund's institutional environment, but not in the way that for example Boswell (2009: 61) would predict.⁸² She assumes that organisations "derive legitimacy from adapting their norms and formal structures to the expectations of their environment". However, as this thesis has shown, this does not apply to lesson-drawing in international negotiations under the scope conditions laid out in Section 5.4. While actors do need to take expectations into consideration, this does not determine the substantive thrust of their interventions, but it does restrict their form. In other words, it determines the mode of negotiating.

It is important to note that the critique of alternative explanations of learning is not levelled at the theory of Habermasian discourse *per se*. Habermas's theory pertains to social interaction on a much more general and abstract level. Nor is the case study conducted in this thesis meant to refute the possibility of genuine deliberation and learning in international politics, as postulated by Mitzen (2005), Deitelhoff (2009), Kleine & Risse (2010), or Wolfe (2010). Rather, this thesis maintains that there are certain constellations in which actors seemingly argue – as claimed by the aforementioned authors – but that the fact that they argue alone cannot be understood as an indication of genuine deliberation in the sense of communicative action.

There are, as explained in the theory chapter, a number of theoretical and empirical approaches to learning that do take power seriously. These approaches usually emphasise the symbolic or rationalising effects of lessons. The reasoning behind strategic lesson-drawing is different from legitimisation. There is an extensive body of literature concerned with this political learning and the symbolic use of knowledge, as mentioned above in the theory chapter (Radaelli 1995: 162; e.g., Amara et al. 2004; Boswell 2008; 2009). Echoing Boswell's (2009) definition of legitimising symbolic knowledge-use, symbolic learning can be defined for the purposes of this section as learning for the sake of meeting the expectations of the learner's environment. Learners signal that they adhere to appropriate, established, or trending practices. In other words, symbolic learning is learning for the sake of showing that one has done it. In relation to the GCF Board meetings, this would mean to learn – in the sense of making references to existing financial institutions – in order to adhere to the requirements imposed by the Conference of the Parties – and by extension

⁸² Boswell analyses the use of knowledge in more general terms, not just lessons, but her findings could in principle apply here, too.

the Governing Instrument – or the delegates’ governments. Members of the Board report to both their governments as well as the COP. Considering lessons from existing funds is a formal requirement from the COP. In this light, drawing lessons could be seen as a way for Board members to legitimise their decisions vis-à-vis their national governments and the COP as being based on experience. Symbolic learning would then be the driving motivation behind references to past experiences. However, the analysis in this thesis demonstrated that this is not the case. Lessons were used as part of strategically deployed arguments at the GCF negotiations and cannot at all be reduced to mere symbolic acts. Delegates did not draw lessons for the purpose of drawing lessons, but in order to be able to negotiate strategically in an environment that constrains more direct approaches. Take for example the adoption of other institutions’ procedures as a fall-back option to enhance the GCF’s perceived reliability with important stakeholders (see Subsection 5.3.1). This type of lesson could give the impression that lessons were in fact drawn as a symbolic act. After all, according to the advocates of these positive lessons, it was very much about signalling, specifically about signalling to the Fund’s stakeholders that there are contingency plans in place. However, while such symbolic actions may be used to enhance the persuasiveness of arguments (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 200), they themselves are not parts of arguments in the same way as lessons are. What fallback options seek to demonstrate to the GCF’s institutional environment is not the act of lesson-drawing itself, but rather the substantive content of the lesson. They do not pertain to learning itself, but rather to the particular procedure that was proposed to be adopted. Therefore, although there is an aspect of signalling involved – i.e. doing something for the purpose of reassuring an external entity – the object of that exercise is not the act of learning itself. In addition, given that lessons drawn at GCF Board meetings being tightly linked to the key areas of contestation, it seems unlikely that the primary purpose of these lessons would be symbolic in that sense, which would mean they escape the political contestation penetrating virtually all aspects of the negotiations.

In conclusion, contrary to what might be expected considering the Fund’s mandate to draw on existing experience and the urge by experts to do so (as outlined in Chapter 1), symbolic action was not found to be a significant driver behind learning at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings. Having reviewed the main findings of this thesis and how they refute alternative understandings of learning in international negotiations, the remaining sections in this chapter will explore the effects of learning on the dynamics and outcome of negotiations, both with regard to their empirical reality (Section 6.2) as well as their

conceptual understanding (Section 6.3). What implications does the strategic use of lessons have for the way negotiations work and the outcomes that are plausible? How do the findings tie back into grander debates in International Relations?

6.2 Empirics

This thesis focussed on analysing international climate finance negotiations. But it has yielded insights that can inform an understanding of international climate politics in more general terms as well as grander debates in International Relations. This section discusses the empirical implications of the findings. It considers the effects of learning as a mode of negotiating on power asymmetries in multilateral diplomacy and, by extension, it discusses whether learning holds a solution to the structuralist paradox (Subsection 6.2.1). Thereafter, this section considers the opposite argument and explicates why learning does not level the playing field as much as it might seem (Subsection 6.2.2). Finally, the section discusses strategic arguing and its scope conditions across various cases of international negotiations (Subsection 6.2.3).

6.2.1 *The structuralist paradox*

The scope conditions outlined in Section 5.4 affect all parties. Due to these scope conditions, structural assets that would usually be materialised through direct bargaining play a lesser role, and instead actors argue strategically and bargain by proxy. As shown in Section 5.5, lessons can be challenged and contested in the same form in which they are created: as arguments. Bargaining by proxy, hence, is softer than direct bargaining. This has important implications for the power dynamics in multilateral diplomacy. Most crucially, it matters to parties that are relatively weak, i.e. states that suffer from a relative lack of relevant assets, in particular size of the economy, government budgets, staffing of delegations, etc. In situations of hard bargaining, such actors would naturally find themselves at a disadvantage. Yet, there are opportunities for smaller states to exert influence in international climate negotiations despite such structural shortcomings. Such opportunities have been explored elsewhere. (Betzold 2010), for instance, shows how small island developing states were – to some degree – able to borrow power through invoking the moral obligations of more powerful countries and linking their own interests to theirs in UNFCCC negotiations. Panke (2012: 393) argues that the “influence of small states and small state coalitions is strongest in earlier stages of negotiations, when dynamics of argument and persuasion prevail over bargaining”. Following this argument, one would

expect that the influence of small states is relatively strong in post-agreement negotiations such as the GCF Board meetings because, as established above, these negotiations are, at least on the face of it, dominated by arguing rather than bargaining. But does the fact that actors resort to strategic lesson-drawing really boost the potential influence of smaller, less powerful states in multilateral environmental diplomacy? This question links back to grander debates in International Relations, namely the structuralist paradox, that is, the old question of if and how the weak can successfully negotiate with the strong (Zartman & Rubin 2000a: 3; Drahos 2003; Sell 1996). Drawing on the empirical analysis of learning at the GCF Board meetings, this section contends that while arguing can open trajectories that would in principle allow smaller parties to circumvent global power hierarchies, learning, specifically positive lessons, are also a way of extending these existing hierarchies onto the level of post-agreement negotiation.

In purely material terms, developed countries are certainly more powerful. They may have agreed to contribute money, but questions like how much of it exactly is to come from public source, under what conditions, etc. are the issues very much at the heart of the GCF negotiations. However, command over material assets does not necessarily translate directly into influence at environmental negotiations (Dimitrov 2013: 342; Sjöstedt 2000: 194). Drawing on Zartman & Rubin (2000b), Betzold (2010) calls the strategy of drawing on external reference frames to gain influence in negotiations borrowing power.⁸³ This research highlights how developing countries as the supposedly weaker party refer to norms to attach moral weight to their arguments (Zartman & Rubin 2000b: 278–279; Betzold 2010: 136–137; Sjöstedt 2000: 193–195). Moreover, they align their arguments with the interests of other, stronger parties in the negotiations (Zartman & Rubin 2000b: 278; Betzold 2010: 136–137). In a similar way, developing countries can improve their relative standing in post-agreement climate finance politics by borrowing power from past experience. This works because – due to the scope conditions discussed in Section 5.4 – all parties need to bargain indirectly. The mode of decision-making in the UNFCCC system further enhances the potential leverage that developing countries have. As the GCF Board decides by consensus, all members, including those representing developing countries, effectively possess veto power. At the negotiation table, developed countries, therefore, also need to *argue* in favour of their positions as much as developing countries do. After all, arguing means seeking consensus through talking (Holzinger 2001b: 419). This also explains how learning can be a trajectory for influence of the structurally weak.

⁸³ Note that Betzold does not engage with arguing-and-bargaining theory specifically.

As a consequence, the same properties of post-agreement negotiations that foster strategic lesson-drawing can contribute to levelling the playing field to a certain extent. This is due to what practice theorists might call local influence (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014). Practice theory makes a distinction between exogenous, structural resources on the one hand and those that are endogenous to the forum social interaction, locally produced on the other. They argue that structuralist perspectives in International Relations fail to show how exogenous resources are translated into influence – that is, power without apparent coercion – and how this influence can also be generated within a process of social interaction, without reliance on structural resources that are entirely exogenous to this process (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 890).

“In fact, for relational scholars, it would seem that capabilities pre-exist power relations as exogenous, latent resources: they are already there, so to speak, waiting to be activated in a particular context. [...] However, [...] we argue that this power baseline of pre-existing assets does not exhaust the variety of resources that structure power relations. [...] In other words, some power resources are produced locally, in and through a particular practice.”

Adler-Nissen & Pouliot (2014: 893)

While this thesis does not employ practice theory, this notion provides a useful way of thinking about the kind of influence that learning produces. From a purely structuralist perspective, any account of the Green Climate Fund Board meetings would be seen as rather one-sided. Developed countries, all of which are contributors to the Fund, have control over the financial resources that the negotiations are about. Structuralists would assume that this is an immensely powerful card to play in the negotiations. Yet, there are several aspects to the GCF Board meetings where developing countries got their way. For example, the Board decided at its seventh meeting in Songdo that projects should be approved based on their development potential, rather than their financial viability, which is an issue developing countries had strongly argued for against opposition from developed countries (Rai & Smith 2014a).

There are of course multiple aspects that must be taken into consideration to fully explain outcomes that run contrary to structuralists’ expectations. Ascribing them solely to learning would be mono-causal. Yet, strategic lesson-drawing influences post-agreement negotiations in a certain direction. Lessons, in practice theory terms, are produced locally. Enhancing authority through learning as discussed in Section 5.2 is a prime example of that. “The way in which the game is played, not just its rules or the distribution of tokens among players, is crucial for explaining its outcome.” (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 894) As explained in the theory chapter, bargaining depends on credibility. In technical post-

agreement negotiations, such as the Green Climate Fund Board meetings, the grounds for that credibility are lacking, and the playing field is levelled to some extent. Drawing lessons from past experience means to highlight the assumptive necessity of a certain policy, standard, or practice.

6.2.2 Manufactured path dependency in international institutions

The above section considered the possibility of lesson-drawing as mode of negotiating to level the playing field between structurally better equipped developed countries and structurally worse equipped developing countries. Despite the strong indications of this possibility, some caution is advisable. Learning can be a way to activate power locally, and the appropriateness associated with learning as a diplomatic practice can level the playing field to some extent, since all delegates are subjected to the same informal norms. However, the question is whether this really offers a solution to the structuralist paradox.

To be sure, asserting that strategic lesson-drawing can serve as a trajectory for structurally weaker parties to exert influence on the stronger ones is not to say that (a) material power assets that pre-exist the negotiation space can be taken out of the equation and (b) that lesson-drawing as a way of strategic arguing generally plays out in favour of the weaker party in international negotiations. Regarding the former point (a), bargaining by proxy requires that the speaker has structural assets at his or her disposal whose weight can be put on the table at the negotiations. For promises and threats embedded into lessons to be credible and deployed successfully, they need to be backed up by structural assets. In particular, developed countries brought to bear their control of the material resources that are at the heart of the negotiations (see Section 8.2). Bargaining by proxy only makes sense from the speaker's point of view if he or she actually has control over exogenous, structural resources that are being negotiated.

On the other hand, the fact that lessons that are used to bargain by proxy can be contested (see Section 5.5) means that there is an increased chance of resisting veiled threats, compared to direct, hard bargaining. The immediacy of bargaining is dictated by its material reality. When this reality transcends onto the level of argumentative learning, there is a chance to resist it on this level by putting into question the validity of those lessons and arguments. The factual validity of lessons can be contested and negotiated. The material reality of credible promises and threats cannot.

Regarding the latter point (b), there are indications that learning does not help the weak negotiate with the strong in all circumstances. First, many types of lessons – namely shortcircuiting, interim and fall-back options, and the easing of administrative burdens –

inherently favour existing approaches over new ones. Learning, hence, facilitates a mechanism where policies, standards, and practices default to or gravitate towards what has been done before. And that is, in the case of the GCF, in the interest of developed countries. Stronger parties in negotiations generally prefer to maintain the *status quo* as they have benefitted from it in the past. In other words, strategic lesson-drawing can be employed by those actors to lock in pre-existing policy solutions. Obviously, stalemate favours the party which is least favourable towards change. But in a context where grander political commitments – in this case, decisions at the Conference of Parties and considerable contributions from major players such as the US and China – make a stalemate non-desirable, adopting existing best-practices can be a means of minimising change in a more subtle way. At the GCF Board meetings, parties all seemingly pressed for progress in the negotiations, but learning to some extent disguised the fact that some preferred business-as-usual approaches over new ways of doing things.

This is also reflected in the use of positive lessons to provide shortcuts and familiarity and, ultimately, bargain by proxy (see Section 5.3). While both developed and developing countries used lessons strategically, it is possible to discern variations in lesson use that hint at the diverging positions of these groups of countries, regarding the purpose of international climate finance in the general and the Green Climate Fund specifically.

It was usually developed countries that resorted to building pressure by drawing comparisons to – supposedly – competing funds. The majority of positive lessons at the analysed Board meetings came from developed country Board members, which further supports the assessment that drawing lessons tends to favour those who oppose change. When developing country Board members did draw positive lessons it was often to ease the administrative burden of accreditation procedures (see also Subsection 5.3.2). In other words, the specific strategic use of lessons by developed versus developing countries is highly reflective not only of their respective sets of preferences, but also of the kind of structural assets they can potentially attach to the lessons they draw in their attempts to bargain by proxy. The following graph shows the relative frequencies⁸⁴ of the various types of lessons for developed and developing countries.

⁸⁴ The relative frequency is determined by dividing the number of units of analysis that have been coded as a particular type of lesson (positive, negative, comparison, dismissal) by the total number of coded units of analysis.

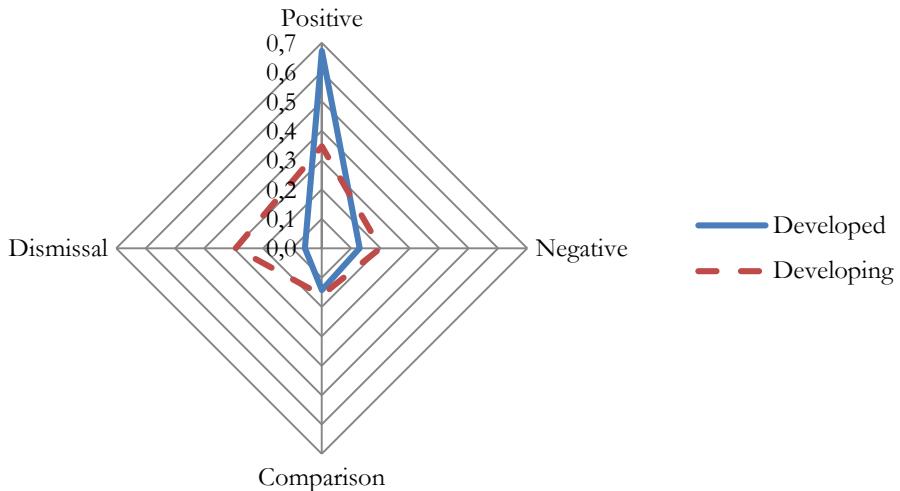


Figure 13: Relative frequencies of types of lessons drawn by developed versus developing countries

Developing countries were much more diverse in their use of the different types of lessons, but they used dismissals relatively often. This is indicative of the different preferences the two groups of countries had regarding the Fund's aforementioned ambiguity between the old and the new, i.e. relying on best practice on the one hand and doing climate finance differently on the other. Since positive lessons mean advocating the adoption of existing standards, policies, and practices, their importance for developed countries implies that those countries favoured drawing on best practice as a solution to the ambiguity. Conversely, the – admittedly less distinct – focus of developing countries on dismissals gives reason to believe that they chose the latter option, i.e. to emphasise new ways of doing international climate finance.

As the analysis in Subsection 5.5 has shown, developing countries seem to have been aware of the long-term implications of positive lessons outlined in this subsection and tried to reject certain lessons or dismiss lesson-drawing altogether. Developing country Board members also more commonly drew negative lessons. Of all negative lessons from the analysed meetings, about two thirds came from developing countries. Contrasting this with the assessment of positive lessons shows how reflective the differentiated use of different types of lessons was of the diverging interests of developed versus developing countries as outlined in Subsection 4.2.2. While developed countries prioritised accountability – which could be achieved by adopting tried-and-tested policies – developing countries emphasised – through the way they used lessons – the ambition of the GCF to do things differently. Learning in international negotiations, it is important to note, does not necessarily imply change. On the contrary, as the empirical analysis in Chapter 5 has shown, lessons are used

strategically and can therefore also be used strategically to oppose change. Lesson-drawing is a mechanism by which actors manufacture path dependency across international institutions. This provides a possible explanation as to why institutions reproduce outcomes of the predecessors. Granted, learning in international negotiations is merely one piece of this puzzle, but one that should not be overlooked. Regarding international climate finance negotiations – and the Green Climate Fund Board meetings in particular – delegates (e.g., Songdo 1.8: 00:02; 1.9: 00:24; 3.2: 00:37; Bridgetown 2.2: 01:08; 3.8: 00:47; 4.1: 03:08) as well as civil society observers (e.g., Reyes 2016; Best & Rai 2016; Transparency Korea Chapter 2017) have often feared that the GCF is not truly innovative and resorts in many instances to business as usual, replicating what other institutions have done and therefore ultimately failing its ambition to induce a true paradigm shift. Strategic lesson-drawing offers an explanation for this that is not immediately obvious.

6.2.3 Strategic arguing and its scope conditions

This subsection compares the findings from the analysis to other cases of international environmental or economic negotiations. It does so with regard to both the characteristics of bargaining by proxy as well as its scope conditions. As the discussion will show, both the characteristics and the conditions may differ significantly from bargaining by proxy in other international negotiations despite very similar appearances of observed phenomena – and vice versa. Individual cases and their contexts must be examined carefully before conclusions can be drawn.

There are a number of arenas for negotiations within the broader UNFCCC process. Many of those share some pivotal characteristics with the GCF Board meetings. The post-agreement negotiations around the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, for example, have similarly been characterised by a lack of consensus about the implementation of its rather vague mission (Johnson 2016; Gewirtzman et al. 2018). Another often shared characteristic is that these negotiations focus on the seemingly technical implementation of political decisions. Wilson Rowe (2015), for example, looks at the post-agreement negotiations for REDD+. The technical nature of the negotiations, she argues, changes the rules of the game: the dynamics in post-agreement negotiations cannot be understood as mere extension of global power hierarchies (Wilson Rowe 2015: 65). Using practice theory, Wilson Rowe shows that actors need to establish their competence before they can exert influence. They “seek to establish their mastery of the game by framing particular issues and positioning themselves as leaders” (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 895). As mentioned in Subsection 5.2.3, this is reminiscent of claiming expertise

through lesson-drawing that can be observed at the GCF Board meetings. Despite the rather different theoretical approach, there are certain overlaps. The scope conditions for bargaining by proxy identified in this thesis may foster further similar negotiating patterns. In particular, the technical nature of the subject matter alongside clashing interests seems to contribute to this. “[W]ithin the context of an interest conflict, arguing is not an alternative to bargaining, but a means for bargaining.” (Holzinger 2004: 195) Additionally, there needs to be one or several aspects about the negotiations that render direct bargaining unsuitable, inappropriate or otherwise ineffective. In the case of the Green Climate Fund, these are in particular the existing political commitment (a characteristic of post-agreement negotiations) as well as the standards for appropriate conduct in climate diplomacy.

However, this is not necessarily always the case. The scope conditions outlined in Section 5.4 should be understood as the key drivers of strategic lesson-drawing and bargaining by proxy within the specific context of the Green Climate Fund. One might observe patterns in negotiations seemingly very similar to strategic lesson-drawing, but upon closer investigation these might turn out to have rather different characteristics. Studying the eastern enlargement of the European Union, Schimmelfennig (2003b) makes the case for the strategic use of norms that bears resemblance to the strategic use of lessons. Similar to strategic lesson-drawing and bargaining by proxy, negotiators are both enabled and restricted through using norms strategically.

“On one hand, community members use community values and norms to increase the legitimacy of their preferences and their bargaining power in EU negotiations; on the other, they are constrained in their behavior by the need to preserve their image as impartial and consistent adherents of the community ethos.”

Schimmelfennig (2003b: 180)

Yet, Schimmelfennig sees the strategic use of norms not as the activation of structural assets under conditions that make hard bargaining unfeasible or inappropriate. Rather, in line with constructivist notions, he sees it as an alternative: “strategic arguing and shaming can alter the game and bring about integration outcomes, which cannot be explained on the basis of actor preferences and material bargaining power” (*ibid.*). Different modes of negotiating – here, the strategic use of norms and the strategic use of lessons – share some important characteristics, but they function according to different underlying principles.

Another point of caution is that similar phenomena might be driven by rather different contexts across cases. Indirect vectors for influence are not exclusive to post-agreement negotiations. Strongly diverging interests are also clearly evident at the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which precede the GCF Board meetings (Depledge 2006). In

addition, the COPs exhibit some similar scope conditions similar to those at the GCF. Namely, they are open to observers and at least in certain issue areas quite technical. Indeed, the diplomatic norms discussed in Subsection 5.4.4 apply to the level of the COPs as well and constrain negotiators in their conduct. On the other hand, the negotiations are about more general political goals and targets and forms of agreement, as opposed to their technical implementation. And although negotiation patterns similar to bargaining by proxy might be observed at the COPs, there are differences with regard to the motivating factors behind them and the mechanism through which they can affect the negotiation dynamics. A greater variety of negotiation styles and strategies can be observed at the COP level. For example, countries tend to employ harder bargaining tactics when they are pressured by strong domestic interest groups (Bailer 2012). At the GCF, by contrast, pressure from constituencies and private actors does not lead to more direct bargaining, but is instead exploited to indirectly attach weight to lessons (see Subsections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4).

Even if the underlying explanatory mechanism is very similar to bargaining by proxy, there might be different scope conditions or reasons for actors to resort to a particular mode of negotiating. For instance, Daoudy (2009) examines negotiations about water between riparian parties in the Euphrates and Tigris region. She finds that, not unlike Trojan lessons, weaker parties were able to wield influence by framing their position as one of few viable options that are in line with the interests of stronger parties: “[T]raditional elements of power, such as upstream positions, military and economic resources, do not constitute the only sources of power. [...] Downstream or more vulnerable riparians can invert situations of power asymmetry by acting on the basin-dominant riparian’s interests and thus reduce its alternatives.” (Daoudy 2009: 361) Here, it is not existing political commitment or appropriateness that brings forth a certain mode of negotiating, but simply the fact that weaker parties do not have the structural assets to effectively back up direct bargaining tactics (see also Subsection 6.2.1 on the structuralist paradox). Daoudy’s explanation would not hold for the GCF, since here the structurally stronger parties, too, resorted to bargaining by proxy. The example shows that the scope conditions for very similar kinds of soft bargaining tactics vary depending on the context. Bargaining by proxy may be encountered in other negotiations as well, including on different levels within the UNFCCC process. However, one should be cautious about the specific reasons for negotiators to resort to a particular type of tactic. While the phenomenon might look similar to strategic lesson-drawing or bargaining by proxy, the drivers behind it need to be understood in their specific contexts. In other words, the fact that the GCF Board

meetings are post-agreement negotiations has certainly enhanced the likelihood and significance of learning as a mode of negotiating. But that does not mean that it is a necessary condition for strategic lesson-drawing or similar negotiation tactics to be used in any and all cases.

The inverse is also true. Just as much as the scope conditions analysed in Section 5.4 are on their own not enough to assume that bargaining by proxy took place, signs of arguing in redistributive and politically charged negotiations do not automatically mean that these arguments were part of bargaining by proxy. Reinhard (2012), for example, shows that in EU treaty negotiations, states with the highest dependencies on European cooperation resort to normative arguments the most. Here, the parties that engage in arguing have little control over any structural assets that can be argumentatively activated through bargaining by proxy. Arguments are used not as a vehicle for bargaining, but in lieu of the assets necessary to back up bargaining by proxy.

The key takeaway from this discussion is that each case of negotiations and their contexts must be examined in-depth before conclusions about the phenomenological nature of social interactions and their scope conditions can be drawn – even if, on the surface, there are similarities can be observed across cases.

6.3 Theory

Having discussed the main findings and their empirical implications, this section turns to theory. It evaluates what the findings imply for a theoretical understanding of multilateral negotiations. The section also reviews the role of structure from a more conceptual perspective, which is important for a thesis that focusses largely on agency in its empirical analysis. As Alexander Wendt (1987: 337) famously wrote, “all social scientific theories embody an at least implicit solution to the ‘agent-structure problem,’ which situates agents and social structures in relation to one another.” In actuality, social processes are neither solely determined by structure, nor solely by agency. In fact, their interplay through learning in negotiations is crucial, as discussed in the previous section. This section aims to spell out this interplay more clearly in conceptual terms. The first subsection will address its implications for rational behaviour and the role of structure in more general terms. The second subsection will then talk more specifically about arguing and bargaining in international politics.

6.3.1 Rational behaviour and the role of structure

The analysis in this thesis offered an explanation of learning in international negotiations that focusses on the strategic use of lessons and does not rely on a constructivist approach. This is by no means a trivial differentiation. In any theory that emphasises discursive power (see subsection 3.2.3), there might well be a link between the material world and discourses, but by and large discourses are produced and reproduced in their own right. Learning in international negotiations as analysed in this dissertation is explicitly linked to structural assets. Bargaining by proxy through drawing lessons only works if the speaker can draw on an asset that is external to the deliberations. This supports the claim by Adler-Nissen & Pouliot (2014) that structural assets must be claimed locally. Using learning to bargain by proxy can be seen as a form of translating material power assets into influence where these assets cannot wield influence directly. Strategically used lessons as a locally produced form of power are hence often complemented – if not made possible – by exogenous resources, i.e. resources and assets external the negotiations (cp. Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 894).

One should be cautious about drawing conclusions about the rationality behind the strategic deployment of lessons. Actors are assumed to be subjectively rational in the context of learning in international negotiations, which is to say they cannot have objective knowledge about the effectiveness of their argumentative contentions (cp. Schimmelfennig 2003a: 199). This applies to lesson-drawing as well. In this dissertation's theoretical framework, negotiators act strategically in the sense that they pursue certain goals, which they are aware of, and they do so in ways they deem suitable and appropriate. Actors resort to indirect, veiled ways of bargaining under certain scope conditions that make more direct bargaining tactics unfeasible or inappropriate. Drawing lessons to exert influence is an alternative strategy in such contexts, not something actors would pursue under all circumstances. Actors do not have any way of knowing exactly how effective these means are and neither are they necessarily aware of the reasons they chose those means in particular. The link between power and learning (Sections 5.2 and 5.3) and the scope conditions for lesson-drawing in multilateral diplomacy (Section 5.4) are the results of an empirical analysis, not a map tracing the thought process of the actors involved. The fact that lessons are used strategically refers primarily to them being linked to actors' interests. It is less so a proposition about the degree of consciousness with which actors resort to lesson-drawing specifically. Saying that lessons are used strategically is not to say lesson-use is planned long ahead of time, but rather that their strategic use is one of many aspects of diplomatic practice in international negotiations.

The previous section emphasised the empirical findings of this dissertation with regard to the role of structure for learning in international negotiations. In that regard, taking structure seriously does not, as some have assumed, “imply the erasure of human subjectivity” (Walker 1993: 98–99). Drawing lessons as a means to bargain by proxy implies that it is still human actors who determine the course and outcome of post-agreement negotiations. While these actors are only subjectively rational, which is to say they cannot have objective knowledge about the effectiveness of their argumentative contentions (cp. Schimmelfennig 2003a: 199), structural resources on their own do not secure a favourable outcome either. As others have argued, power stemming from material recourses usually does not translate directly into influence in environmental negotiations (Dimitrov 2013: 342). With strategic lesson-drawing, this thesis identified a mechanism through which they do translate into influence indirectly.

This mechanism also explains away certain problems that would be associated with alternative conceptualisations of learning in international negotiations (see Subsection 6.1.2). Specifically, regardless of whether it’s for genuine persuasion or politically charged rationalisation, the use of arguments in negotiations always raises the question of how speakers can convince or deceive listeners about their intentions. As Müller (2004: 400) puts it, the question is “how speakers can induce in their audience the belief that they are trustworthy” within a rationalist paradigm in arguing-and-bargaining theory. One cannot meaningfully apply two different ontological assumptions to the speaker and the listeners, respectively. If one is to be seen as subjectively rational, then so is the other. Therefore, if a speaker tries to use an argument strategically, he or she must be conscious of the fact that the listeners might not only have similar intentions, but also, as a consequence, he or she must be suspicious about the true intentions behind the speaker’s argument. Hence, “uncertainty and anarchy in rational choice create for the sender an intractable veil of ambiguity for each signal received.” (Müller 2004: 399) The answer to this problem given by the empirical analysis in this thesis is that they simply do not need to. The underlying mechanism of argumentative learning is not one of trust, but of indirect, veiled coercion, bargaining by proxy. As noted already in the introduction, the key to this answer was to rethink how lesson-drawing fits conceptually into the arguing-and-bargaining framework. Further contributions to this framework that can be drawn from the analysis in this thesis will be discussed in the next subsection.

6.3.2 Arguing and bargaining: Thoughts on a long-lasting debate

The discussion of theoretical perspectives on arguing and learning in international negotiations in Chapter 3 offered a critique of the ontological assumptions underpinning arguing-and-bargaining theory, drawing in particular on the works of Müller (2004) and Jörke (2013a; 2013b). The empirical findings from this dissertation confirm the gist of this critique, especially regarding the nature of arguing in international negotiations. Much of the theoretical assumptions do not hold when one considers the circumstances in which arguments are used in strategic action as opposed to Habermasian communicative action.

In general, it seems empirical work on arguing and bargaining has kept the two modes of negotiating analytically too separate. In some ways, this is understandable. After all, the analytical separation is one of the key contributions of the theory, providing a conceptual lens to study international negotiations and how they play out. This is perhaps the consequence of two circumstances: On the one hand, the literature has always emphasised that arguing and bargaining are analytical, ideal-typical categories and that in actuality, both modes of negotiating virtually always occur in conjuncture. On the other hand, more recent critiques (Müller 2004) pointed out the fundamental ontological differences between arguing and bargaining, which means the simultaneous occurrence of both modes of negotiating cannot be understood conceptually in a meaningful way (as explained in Subsections 2.3.2 and in the introduction to Section 5.4). Instead of providing a solution to this inherent contradiction, many empirical works, with some notable exceptions (Schimmelfennig 2001; 2003a; Seymour 2016), simply avoided it by trying to identify instances of arguing in negotiations that were for the most part dominated by strategic action (Holzinger 2001b; Deitelhoff 2009). Or, they focussed on the sequences or conditions for each mode of negotiating to be used (Zangl & Zürn 1996; Schimmelfennig 2003a: 284–285; Naurin 2007: 561). While several authors stress that “bargaining and arguing are not modes of communication in opposition to each other, [...] but each has different functions in conflict resolution”⁸⁵ (Holzinger 2001a: 243), they still treat them as separate phenomena in the analysis. Scholars somewhat neglected cross-cutting modes of negotiating, such as rhetorical action or lesson-drawing as conceptualised in this dissertation.

The remainder of this theoretical discussion considers, among other things, the implications of deviating from the common research agenda in the arguing-and-bargaining

⁸⁵ Own translation from this German original text: “dass Verhandeln und Argumentieren keine oppositionellen Kommunikationsmodi sind, [...] sondern dass sie je unterschiedliche Funktionen bei der Konfliktlösung übernehmen”

literature. According to a prevailing contention, actors resort to arguing rather than bargaining when they assume other actors' preference to be malleable (Zangl & Zürn 1996; Schimmelfennig 2003a: 284–285; Niemann 2006; Naurin 2007: 561). This, however, can be seen from another perspective as well. The fact that arguing remains the only viable negotiation strategy does not imply that power and interest can be taken out of the equation. As the analysis has shown, negotiators invoke lessons, which are arguments on the face of it, despite the fact that – as shown in Subsection 5.3.3 – other parties' preferences are hardly malleable at all. Argumentatively aligning one's own proposition with other parties' preference through lesson-drawing allows actors to attach weight to their interventions and make them resonate with others. Granted, arguing-and-bargaining theory originally understands arguing to be explicitly communicative, that is, non-strategic. Therefore, one should bear in mind that sincere arguing in terms of the arguing-and-bargaining framework is entirely different from using lessons as arguments. However, this relates to the underlying logics of social interaction. Arguments – whether being used communicatively or strategically – empirically look the same on the surface. After all, that is the whole point of bargaining by proxy through arguing in the first place, as demonstrated in Section 5.4. Therefore, it is an important insight that the phases of negotiations in which arguing-and-bargaining theory usually expects arguing to occur more prominently are – under the conditions laid out in Section 5.4 – not the primary determinants of the use of arguments in negotiation.

Section 5.4 proposed a number of scope conditions for the strategic use of lessons to make sense. In principle, these scope conditions do not conflict with the established assumptions in the arguing-and-bargaining literature to the extent to which it expects strategic rather than communicative behaviour from actors. In fact, it has long been argued in the arguing-and-bargaining literature that “[i]n negotiations, it is appropriate for actors to pursue their self-interest unless it collides with a valid norm that prescribes different behaviour” (Müller 2004: 416)⁸⁶. In such cases, arguing replaces bargaining whenever there is “a collision of the pursuit of self-interest with a given norm” (*ibid.*).

However, this thesis maintains that, given the scope conditions of strategic lesson-drawing, there can be a primacy of self-interests and strategic action in spite of a collision with the appropriateness that the scope conditions require. Delegates continue to bargain in such cases, albeit not directly in a conventional arguing-and-bargaining sense, but by proxy (see Subsection 5.3). This means that the underlying logic of interaction does not shift from one

⁸⁶ Emphasis omitted; quoted original text all in italics

of bargaining to one of arguing, but it remains the same. Delegates merely adjust the form of their interventions to meet the requirements of appropriateness dictated by the factual and normative contexts of the negotiations (see also Subsection 5.4.4). The credible commitment from its constituency makes it impossible for a delegation to credibly threaten to withdraw from the GCF. So instead, delegates convey this threat by proxy through arguing. They use veiled coercion that neither lacks the credibility that direct bargaining would require, nor does it violate the diplomatic appropriateness of the concrete negotiation situation. But it is still coercion. In addition, the restrictions to direct bargaining do not merely induce this shift in the way strategic action plays out in the negotiations, but, as discussed in Section 6.2, they also change the power dynamics among parties to some extent.

As Müller (2004) rightly points out, it can ultimately only be communicative *or* strategic action that drives delegates' interventions, not both. The two logics are conceptually irreconcilable. While arguing and bargaining may occur simultaneously at negotiations, it can only be one of them that drives decision-making and interaction. One of the key points of this thesis in that regard is that negotiations may look like arguing from the appearance of the interventions exchanged. But in actuality, they can still be driven by strategic action. The fact that influence means "affecting the conduct of another through giving reasons for action short of threats" (Scruton 2007: 331) should not distract from the fact that there are threats that follow from the reasons given – even if those reasons, in the sense of speech acts, do not themselves include those threats directly. Misreading casual observations by theorising from afar without the necessary empirical scrutiny (Dimitrov 2013: 346–347; Wilson Rowe 2015) can happen particularly easily with negotiations that are set up to sort out highly technical matters after an initial agreement has been made, as is the case with the Green Climate Fund. The fact that they are post-agreement negotiations does indeed affect them (see Section 5.4), but it only affects the way in which interests are conveyed. It does not negate these interests. While one would – also through the lens of arguing-and-bargaining theory – immediately observe the political contestation at the GCF Board meetings, one should not make the mistake of misreading lesson-drawing in these negotiations as islands of persuasion (Deitelhoff 2009) in this figurative sea of contestation. This insight cautions against the notion that arguing and bargaining can be neatly separated analytically, simply by offhandedly including a disclaimer that in actuality, they occur simultaneously. As shown in the analysis in this thesis, in certain conditions, arguing can appear genuine, even though a closer investigation reveals that it follows a logic of strategic

action. Section 5.3 detailed how lessons at face value seem to advance the GCF's bringing into operation, providing solutions to common problems. But the section also revealed how lessons are simultaneously linked with the speaker's interests. As mentioned before, looking at arguing and bargaining in conjuncture was not a purely academic exercise, but brought real value to the empirical analysis. While still following a clear logic of social interaction, bargaining by proxy only works in conjuncture of both modes of negotiating: arguing *and* bargaining. Lessons are used argumentatively, but for strategic purposes. Arguing was not dismissed in this thesis as the common, but flawed way of understanding learning in negotiations. It was kept as an integral part to both the theoretical framework and the analysis.

It should be mentioned that many arguing-and-bargaining scholars do acknowledge that arguing may be used for strategic purposes, not just communicative ones (Schimmelfennig 2003a: 194–228; Müller 2004: 397). One of the specific contributions of this thesis was to show that this includes lesson-drawing, which had previously only been mentioned in passing. This finding also highlights the importance of in-depth empirical studies if one is to properly understand the dynamics of negotiations, as will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

6.4 Method: Studying post-agreement negotiations

Equipped with a conventional theory of learning or the conventional understanding of arguing from arguing-and-bargaining theory, a cursory analysis of the Green Climate Fund Board meetings might yield a number of results reinforcing theoretical preconceptions. After all, as pointed out several times, the lesson-drawing observed has superficial properties that are entirely reminiscent of technical learning and arguing. Only an in-depth analysis of the verbal exchanges at the negotiations table and their contexts allowed this thesis to reach a different, more nuanced conclusion. This illustrates the importance of thorough academic research on environmental post-agreement negotiations in political science and International Relations. As argued in the theory chapter (Subsection 3.2.2), to negotiate is to communicate. A number of scholars have emphasised the importance of a thorough empirical examination of actual verbal exchanges and practices around the negotiation table (Dimitrov 2013: 346–347; Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014; Wilson Rowe 2015; Blaxekjær 2016: 146–147). The analysis conducted in this thesis has reinforced this notion.

In particular, the findings about the scope conditions for lesson-drawing (Section 5.4) provide further insights with regard to effective research methods for studying international negotiations. A remote armchair assessment of party behaviour at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings would have had to rely on a purely structuralist perspective emphasising the actors' material assets in the negotiations. This highlights the merits of thorough qualitative analysis. Quantitative studies focus on pre-existing structural assets and tend to disregard what happens on a micro-level at the negotiation table. Often drawing on game theory, they aim to explain decision-making for example in high-level climate politics at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (Hovi & Areklett 2004; Wood 2011; DeCanio & Fremstad 2013). While these works have their merits, their assumptions about the role of structural assets cannot simply be translated onto the level of post-agreement negotiations. Importantly, it should be reiterated that this is not due to the fact that these negotiations are merely technical deliberations. On the contrary, the GCF Board meetings were highly politically charged. Rather, this is due to some of the scope conditions identified in Section 5.4. A low degree of institutionalisation (Subsection 5.4.2) combined with inelastic interests and credible political commitment (Subsection 5.4.3) means that parties cannot bargain as directly as their material interest would dictate – and perhaps as game theory would suggest – but must instead take into consideration these circumstances and adapt the way they bargain accordingly. This is something a game-theoretical analysis of the Board meetings would likely have missed.

6.5 Summary

This chapter considered the broader implications of the findings, with regard to both empirics and theory. With regard to empirics, the section looked at the implications of the findings for a broader understanding of international environmental negotiations, path dependency in international institutions, and North-South politics in international climate finance. At first glance, it might appear that learning can offer a solution to the structuralist paradox, i.e. the question of if and how the weak can successfully argue with the strong. The scope conditions for strategic learning outlined in Section 5.4 also contribute to levelling the playing field to some extent as proposals need to be argued for by all parties alike. The fact that actors resort to a mode of negotiation like lesson-drawing means that hard bargaining positions get transformed into softer arguments. These arguments can be contested by offering counterarguments. The validity of lessons can be negotiated on the level of arguing. Credible promises and threats could not. However, while lesson-drawing

both necessitates and enables to locally produce power, it does not necessarily favour the weak. On the contrary, learning, due to its inherent reliance on *past* experience, favours actors who are opposed to change. In order to bargain by proxy, actors still need structural assets to activate through their lessons. In other words, negotiations in which learning plays a big role tend to default towards existing policies, rather than creating new ones.

With regard to theory, the section assessed the way in which the findings feed back into a theoretical understanding of structural assets in multilateral negotiations. Negotiators who draw lessons strategically follow a logic of consequentialism. Yet, as per the scope conditions summarised above, they are inclined to resort to learning not due to hard restrictions, but a logic of appropriateness for which the situation calls. Listeners who are persuaded by learning, in turn, do so due to consequentialist considerations. Ultimately, consequentialism is the logic of social interaction that underlies learning in international negotiations. Contrary to the dominant notion in much of the literature that is critical towards conventional approaches to learning, it is not rationalisation that makes it powerful, neither in a constructivist nor in a rationalist sense. Rather, learning exerts power by activating structural assets that are then used as a form of veiled coercion; hence the logic of consequentialism.

The artificial distinction between arguing and bargaining, even if merely analytical, omits the view of the hybrid logics of social interactions that occur in certain contexts. Learning has been identified in this chapter as such a hybrid logic. Given both high-level political commitment to international cooperation and strongly diverging interests, bargaining is not a feasible logic to pursue, but the intentions and motivations behind it persist. In such cases, the purpose and content of bargaining can spill over into other modes of communicating and negotiating. Actors seek to maximise gains by embedding promises and threats into arguments. They do so in order to comply with the requirements of appropriateness as outlined above.

This summary concludes the empirical analysis and discussion. The next and final chapter will offer some concluding remarks, and it will assess potential areas for further research on learning in international negotiations.

7 Conclusion

This concluding chapter reflects on the key findings and insights from the empirical analysis and discussion, highlighting this dissertation's contributions with regard to learning in international negotiations, the politics of international climate finance, and video analysis for International Relations research. In addition, the chapter recounts some of the recent developments in international climate finance and the Green Climate Fund that have occurred since the negotiation rounds under study. Lastly, the chapter outlines potential areas for further research.

7.1 Learning in international negotiations

The analysis and discussion in this thesis has, it is hoped, contributed on several levels to the literatures on learning and international negotiations. The purpose of this section is not to summarise the main findings (for that, see Subsection 6.1.1). Rather, the aim is to highlight what these findings contribute on a meta-level to the discipline of International Relations. There are three major areas that deserve to be mentioned in this regard: the specifics of international post-agreement negotiations, learning as communicative versus strategic action in international negotiations, and the characteristics of negotiations as communication.

This thesis examined post-agreement negotiations, an area in International Relations which has not received the attention it deserves. Scholars often focus on the process leading up to signing the initial agreement (Jönsson & Tallberg 1998). This is a shortcoming not only because it fails to satisfy academic curiosity. Distinctly technical, but crucial decisions are often taken on the post-agreement level in international climate politics in particular. Furthermore, post-agreement negotiations cannot necessarily be understood in the same way as their high-level counterparts. Indeed, a number of the peculiarities found in the empirical analysis came to down the fact that the Green Climate Fund Board meetings are post-agreement negotiations that follow the accords and agreements forged at the UNFCCC climate summits. With regard to the GCF, the expectations of the Conference of the Parties stand out in particular as both a vehicle to argumentatively exert pressure in the negotiations (see Subsection 5.3.4), a large part of the reason why actors resort to lesson-drawing as a mode of negotiating in the first place (Subsection 5.4.3), and one of the key considerations as to why existing non-functionalist theories of learning and negotiating are of limited explanatory value in certain circumstances (Subsections 2.1.3, 2.2.4, 2.3.4, and 5.4.2). Simply put, the agreement that precedes the negotiations affects the rules of game

quite significantly, not only – as would have been obvious – through the particular provisions of this agreement, but also through the very fact that there is an initial agreement.

Regarding the role of communicative versus strategic action in international negotiations, this thesis addressed important gaps in the literature. The analysis addressed a blind spot in arguing-and-bargaining theory. It demonstrated empirically that the distinction between arguing and bargaining, while analytically useful, omits the view of the context-specific functions that these modes of negotiating serve. In situations of both high-level political commitment to international cooperation and strongly diverging interests, bargaining is not feasible to pursue, but the intentions and motivations behind it persist. In such cases, the purpose and content of bargaining can spill over into other modes of negotiating. Against this backdrop, the role of lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations must be reconsidered as well. Many discussions of arguing-and-bargaining theory mention learning only in passing. This thesis thoroughly examined learning from that perspective. It presented a way to understand the role of lessons and learning in international politics that does not neglect notions of power – without having to change the entire ontological paradigm, as previous critiques of the conventional learning literature have.

Note that the empirical claim was not that genuine arguing in the sense of Habermasian communicative action is categorically impossible in international relations. Neither did this thesis claim that arguing will always be used strategically in negotiations. Rather, the direction of inquiry was, in a sense, the inverse. The research question was developed in light of a contradiction between communicative action, which learning is often portrayed as in conventional learning theories, and the observed political contestation in the context of learning. In other words, this thesis sought to provide an alternative explanation for learning in international negotiations within the same ontological paradigm that underlies arguing-and-bargaining theory. It did not mean to imply that learning in international negotiations will under all circumstances be used strategically. Instead, it showed that under certain scope conditions, learning is not what it appears to be and what it is taken to be in much of the literature. Lessons from past experience may well inform policy-making, in particular in a nascent institution like the Green Climate Fund. Yet, in these redistributive negotiations, where interests and positions clash, lessons from past experiences face inelastic political positions. Under these circumstances, beliefs and preferences are not easily changed. Learning in post-agreement climate negotiations, hence, cannot be understood as part of merely technical deliberations in the spirit of Habermasian discourse.

Such an analytical lens would misread the role that lessons actually play in the process. This dissertation's findings have further implications for larger debates in International Relations, particularly regarding the role of structural assets in negotiations. Since the scope conditions that make strategic lesson-drawing a viable option in negotiations apply to all actors, this can potentially level the playing field and improves chances for the structurally weaker parties to exert influence (see Subsection 6.2.1). However, positive lessons also solidify the ways of old, as it were. Learning tends to favour those who have benefitted from the *status quo* (see Subsection 6.2.2).

Notwithstanding the rejection of learning as communicative action, this thesis took seriously the fact that negotiations consist of verbal exchanges and maintained that they should be studied as such. In that light, it examined one particular way in which “strings actually get pulled” (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot 2014: 890) in multilateral diplomacy. This addresses a shortcoming identified by many scholars in the study of international environmental politics in particular, but also more generally in the recent literatures on multilateral diplomacy and negotiation. Many have criticised what can be termed ‘armchair analyses’ (Neumann 2002: 628). Such analyses are conducted without thorough examination of actual verbal exchanges at the negotiation table (Dimitrov 2013: 346–347). In response to that criticism, this thesis contributed to remedying the problem that “communication is the terra incognita of negotiation studies” (Dimitrov 2013: 345).

7.2 The politics of international climate finance

The cleavage between developed and developing countries has been a longstanding characteristic in international climate politics, to the extent that it even used to be institutionalised through the distinction between Annex I and Non-Annex I countries under the UNFCCC (Depledge 2005: 21, 26–32; 2006: 9). However, the world has changed since this distinction was established at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (UN 1992b: 32–33). There are indications that the distinction might neither be empirically accurate nor analytically useful anymore. China is a good example to illustrate this. For one thing, the country has undergone a remarkable economic transformation: Its GDP increased from USD 427 billion in 1992 to USD 11.1 trillion (in 2017 USD) in 2016, and its CO₂ emissions increased from 2.7 million kilotons in 1992 to 10.2 million kilotons in 2013, making it the largest emitter in the world (World Bank 2017a; 2017b). On the other hand, China has turned from a player generally opposed to international climate action to a

global leader with regard to solar energy production (Hughes & Meckling 2017: 257).⁸⁷ China has also contributed to international climate finance, albeit not directly to the Green Climate Fund. Its example illustrates that, in many respects, the old distinction between Annex I and Non-Annex I countries does no longer hold.

Yet, much of the political contestation that can be observed at the Green Climate Fund Board meetings still occurs along that cleavage. Importantly, this also applies to the way lessons were used at the GCF Board meetings. In particular, developed countries often relied on creating pressure by invoking the expectations of stakeholders, only to then offer adopting existing policies from other institutions as the solution (see Section 5.3). Developing countries, on the other hand, drew negative lessons more commonly, or even dismissed the suitability of lesson-drawing altogether (see Subsection 5.5.2). This indicates what side countries emphasised in the ambiguity between the GCF's transformational ambition and its desire to learn from existing experience (see Chapter 1): Developing countries had hoped after COP 15 in Copenhagen that the Green Climate Fund would mark the beginning of a new *modus operandi* in international climate finance. Developed countries, on the other hand, prioritised leveraging private finance and adhering to tried-and-tested standards, which – deliberately or not – resulted in them partially opposing the paradigm shift and the developing countries' position and preserving the *status quo* (see Section 6.2)

The cleavage at the GCF Board meetings reflected grander themes in climate diplomacy, and, to be sure, there are differences within the two groups of countries as well. European countries such as Germany or Sweden were by and large more willing to commit whereas the USA and Australia seemed more cautious and insistent with regard to conditionality (see Subsection 4.2.2). This split among developed countries has often been observed in international climate politics (Brenton 2013: 541), and, incidentally, the 5th Board meeting in Paris took place only about a month after Tony Abbott was elected Prime Minister of Australia, who famously reverted the country's plans for a carbon tax and an advanced emissions trading scheme. Saudi Arabia emphasised developed countries' responsibility for climate action. The country has been known to attempt to assume leadership and speak for the developing world (Depledge 2006: 12–13). This must also be seen in light of the fact

⁸⁷ The reasons for that cannot be sufficiently discussed here. There are a number of explanations for the shift in China's stance toward both national climate policy and international climate politics. For example, some argue China now seeks to present itself as a responsible actor in international relations (Fuqiang et al. 2017: 3). Furthermore, China sees investment in renewable energy not only as action for climate mitigation, but also as an economic measure to promote of new industries (Qi & Wu 2013: 308; Gunther 2017).

that Saudi Arabia as the biggest oil producer of the OPEC countries has economic interests that would be severely affected by the paradigm shift that the Green Climate Fund was founded to facilitate. Zambia, as an example of a least developed country, frequently highlighted the urgency of climate action and the normative obligation to act against global warming (see Subsection 5.4.4). During the Board's discussion of the mitigation-adaptation balance (see Subsection 4.2.2), further well-known patterns of differences between developing countries emerged. Least developed countries and small island developing states – such as Zambia or Benin and Barbados or the Dominican Republic – opposed the allocation target of 10% for adaptation in countries particularly vulnerable to climate change (Bali 1.2: 00:23, 00:27, 00:33, 00:50). The priority of countries with larger economies such as China, Brazil, India, or Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, was to oppose setting a cap for the funding that can be received per country, as this would limit the GCF funding they could potentially receive (Bali 1.2: 00:16, 00:20, 00:28, 00:31).

The divide between developed and developing countries at the GCF Board meetings found in this thesis confirms impressions from observers of the negotiations (e.g., Abbott & Gartner 2011: 7; Schalatek 2014b: III). The politics of the Green Climate Fund are reflective of both negotiations for other international climate finance institutions as well as high-level UNFCCC summits. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) went through conflicts between developed and developing countries similar to those that can be observed at the GCF (Fairman 1996). One of the developing country Board members expressed his frustration about this:

“And I say so because we are insisting on an element that is not significant towards helping us resolve the problem. It is about politics, about the rich versus the poor. It's about me against you: I deserve a better life than you, and I'll do what I can with my money. That's what it's about. And the years of struggle that many of us have gone through haven't sunk in. We still are today on the old, old-fashioned way of doing things, even when the world has changed. And this is very sad.”

David Kaluba (Zambia) in Bridgetown 4.8: 00:19:19–00:20:17

Reflecting about the reasons for this, the above quote already hints at the suspicion that it is about money. While developing countries are not excluded from making contributions to the GCF, the Fund's purpose, as per its Governing Instrument, is to provide financial resources to developing countries (i.e., Non-Annex I countries) only (UNFCCC 2011a: II.2). The cleavage between developed and developing countries hence overlaps with that between contributing and recipient countries. For that reason, the divide was tightly linked with interests and positions, and it affected the different ways in which developed and developing countries used lessons strategically in the negotiations.

Observers and Board members were right to call the Green Climate Fund Board meetings “COP-style negotiations” (BM 1) or “mini-COPs” (NGO 4). The GCF negotiations reflected larger cleavages, interests, and strategies in high-level international climate politics – to the extent that the GCF Board meetings can indeed be seen as a microcosm of the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties.

7.3 Video analysis for International Relations research

This dissertation explored some new ground as far as the discipline of International Relations is concerned. Video recordings were used as the main form of data. As explained in Chapter 3, it is quite uncommon for such recordings to be available. But in instances where they are available, the multi-layered nature of video data offers great opportunities for in-depth qualitative analysis of verbal exchanges and argumentative patterns as much as practices and non-speech acts. In fact, Section 3.2 may be read as a guideline for any future International Relations research that analyses video data.

As elaborated elsewhere (Feist 2016b), video analysis is well suited to study multilateral diplomacy. Interviews, the most common data gathering method, can, if conducted skilfully, reveal something about people’s perceptions, motives, and beliefs. However, studying social phenomena through interviews means studying them through an added layer of filtered perception. What interviewees claim or even think they said and did is not necessarily what they actually said and did. Video recordings enable non-participant observation. This eliminates the need to rely on textual second-hand accounts. Video is therefore a great tool to study not ideas and thought patterns or the textual representations of the discourses they produce (see Bueger & Gadinger 2015: 451–452), but what negotiators actually say and what they actually do: argumentative patterns and practices.

The crux of video analysis for International Relations research is that the data material usually cannot be produced by the researcher. This is a disadvantage compared to more conventional methods for studying international negotiations. With interviews, it is the researcher who chooses – within reason – which questions to ask. With participant observation, it is the researcher who chooses where to look and what to do. In international negotiations researchers are however usually not allowed to bring and operate their own camera. They must rely on the material provided by the very same entity they wish to study. As a result, video analysis of negotiations is only possible where material is available. The GCF did publish video recordings of Board meetings, but ceased to do so

after the 8th meeting, resuming only from the 13th meeting onwards.⁸⁸ And the Board has become somewhat less receptive to the idea of publishing video recordings. At its 17th meeting, the Board extended the usual informal consultations and decided to have them closed to observers and not broadcast over the internet (Bose 2017a). Moreover, the researcher has to rely on the quality of the material provided. Certain technical and highly consequential decisions in the data gathering process, such as framing or perspective, are not in the researcher's control at all (see the discussion Subsection 3.2.2).

These limitations notwithstanding, video recordings offer great opportunities for IR research and negotiation studies in particular, allowing to study speech acts and practices in unparalleled levels of detail and enhancing intersubjective verifiability of research results. In light of cheaper video technology and increased demand for transparency, more international organisations might consider publishing video recordings in the future. Researchers can then draw on the discussion presented in Chapter 3.

7.4 Recent developments at the Green Climate Fund

This section highlights some of the developments that have transpired since the GCF negotiation rounds analysed in this thesis. As of September 2017, the Board has convened a total of 17 times. The phase of institutional creation has been more or less concluded since the eleventh Board meeting in Livingstone, Zambia, in November 2015. This was the last meeting before the highly anticipated 21st UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Paris, which culminated in the conclusion of the Paris Agreement, the most significant international climate treaty since the Kyoto Protocol of 1997. The Board meetings since then have largely dealt not so much with the Fund's institutional and operational design. Instead, the focus has been on three other areas. First, the Board continued to approve project proposals. In this regard, a number of Board members, the Secretariat's former Executive Director, as well as civil society observers have criticised that the portfolio is largely uninventive, advocates business-as-usual, and does not induce a true paradigm shift in global economic development (Feist 2016c). The Board has been quite open-handed as far as the approval of funding proposals is concerned. As of September 2017, it has only once rejected a proposal. This happened at the 16th meeting in April 2017 on the grounds that the project in question dealt with development, rather than climate adaptation (see also Section 4.2). Second, the Board accredited more entities to work with the GCF. Third, the

⁸⁸ At the time writing, the video recordings of the 13th through 17th Board meeting are available online at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/board-meetings/video-recordings>.

Board attended to administrative business and refined administrative procedures. For example, the Board appointed a new Executive Director in October 2016. Also, the Fund now requires accredited entities to specify amounts for funding of mitigation and adaptation separately in cross-cutting proposals (GCF 2016d: 01:02). This attenuated the lack of a clear distinction as discussed in Subsection 4.2.2.

Interestingly, at its most recent meetings at the time of writing, the GCF Board put emphasis on ensuring complementarity and coherence with other international climate funds. While this had been part of the Fund's mission from the beginning as per the Governing Instrument (UNFCCC 2011a: section 33), the issue has gained more prominence after the 21st COP in Paris instructed the Board to improve complementarity and coherence (UNFCCC 2016: decision 7/CP.21; GCF 2016b). This is in contrast to the strong notions of competition invoked at earlier Board meetings (e.g., Paris 1.1: 01:57; Songdo 1.7: 00:50, 1.8: 00:24, 4.3: 00:37; Bridgetown 3.9: 00:18). These notions formed an important part of bargaining by proxy (see Subsection 5.3.2).

As of the final stages of writing this thesis, the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America was cause for concern and uncertainty among observers and practitioners of international climate finance. The president-elect had expressed his strong opposition to climate policy. The change of government is indeed likely to have implications for contributions to the GCF. Although nothing has formally happened as of the time of writing, the new President Donald Trump did announce that he would withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement and not honour the pledges his predecessor had made (Colman & Mathiesen 2017). In anticipation of the budget cuts to environmental and climate policies, President Barack Obama had transferred USD 500 million to the Green Climate Fund during his final week in office (Slezak 2017; Kirby 2017). This was on top of the 500 million that had already been paid in at that point, but it still left the US two billion short of their original pledge of three billion. A few weeks later, the new President's budget outline did in fact call to "cease payments to the United Nations' (UN) climate change programs by eliminating U.S. funding related to the Green Climate Fund" (OMB 2017: 33). The Fund's recent push toward leveraging more private funding may be seen as a response to that (GCF 2017c). At any rate, the uncertainty about future rounds of capitalisation is one of its key challenges to come.

7.5 Future research

The empirical analysis conducted in this thesis has – it is hoped – made a contribution to the academic literature as reiterated in the first three sections in this chapter. But as is often the case, the empirical findings give an impetus for further research. This section outlines some of these opportunities.

It would be interesting to compare additional modes of negotiating to lesson-drawing with regard to its scope conditions and its effects on the salience of structural aspects. The scope conditions developed in Section 5.4 increase the probability of actors resorting to lesson-drawing as a specific mode of negotiating, as explained there. Yet, there is no inherent reason why the strategic use of arguments couldn't take other forms besides lesson-drawing. While there is no audience in international post-agreement climate finance politics that would be required for rhetorical action, it is possible that arguments are used strategically in other ways that do not involve learning. Of particular interest would be how the implications of structural assets and continuity and change in international institutions differ from the implications of lesson-drawing and learning in international negotiations. As argued in Subsection 6.2.3, the particularities of each case should be considered carefully.

Another area for further research regards the role of learning in other arenas for multilateral diplomacy. Within the UNFCCC system, there are a number of post-agreement negotiations on how to implement certain treaty provisions. As mentioned above, in the negotiations revolving around REDD+ (Wilson Rowe 2015), for example, had quite similar conditions of being highly technical, rather small-scale, and intimate post-agreement negotiations. Comparing the results from this study to the findings from this dissertation would provide an opportunity to refine the understanding for the conditions under which learning shapes the dynamics and outcome of negotiations and in what ways.

7.6 Final remarks

The Green Climate Fund was founded to achieve nothing less than induce a fundamental paradigm shift in global economic development. This ambition is as urgent as it is grand. International climate finance is vital to mitigate global warming and support vulnerable communities adapt to its effects. The desire to learn from past experiences during the crafting of one of the key climate finance institutions is therefore certainly commendable. Yet, one must not neglect the power dynamics that shape this process. Learning does not transcend politics. An in-depth qualitative analysis of video recordings of four negotiation

rounds at the GCF found that lessons are used as vehicles to bargain by proxy. Lesson-drawing is strategic and political. Actors align the lessons they draw with their own interests and use them to constrain the spectrum of policy choices that others can effectively pursue. The fact that lesson-drawing plays out in this particular way is in many ways attributable to the fact that the GCF Board meetings are post-agreement negotiations, which, while equally politically charged, take place under different circumstances than their high-level counterparts. An initial agreement has already been signed. This preempts effective bargaining using conventional tactics, such as threat of withdrawal, as those would lack the necessary credibility. In this light, delegates adjust the mode of negotiating, but without changing the underlying logic of interaction, as the application of alternative theoretical frameworks would have implied. On the contrary, lesson-drawing not only reflects that adjustment, but becomes itself a vehicle for strategic action. Lesson-drawing enables delegates to bargain by proxy.

While the analysis found that lesson-drawing at the GCF Board meetings is ultimately strategic action, its nature does have a certain ambiguity to it. On the one hand, actors seek to maximise gains; the power mechanism behind learning is one of veiled coercion. On the other hand, lessons, understood as a particular kind of speech act, are parts of arguments. The coercive aspect of learning solves the credibility issue the speaker is faced with due to the political commitment manifested in the initial agreement. Using lessons argumentatively (regardless of whether for sake of furthering their own interests or not), actors would face issues trying to signal their genuine intentions, knowing that listeners are aware of the possibility that any argument is deployed for strategic, rather than communicative purposes. Bargaining by proxy as the mechanism behind exerting power through learning explains this problem away. The structural exigencies implied in bargaining by proxy exercise a coercive force on the listener.

Learning in international negotiations can be understood in the context of strategic action. Learning reflects and affects the power dynamics at the negotiation table. This does not mean that one should refrain from learning in environmental institutional creation. However, advocates of learning should be aware of this. While this thesis presents a contribution to the academic literature, it may provide some insights for practitioners and observers as well. The fact that direct bargaining is replaced by softer argumentative speech acts like lesson-drawing levels the playing field between developed and developing countries to some extent. The argumentative nature of lesson-drawing means that lessons can be challenged by drawing counter-lessons. The same kind of response would not be

effective if negotiators bargained directly. This is how the rules of the game are both reflected and influenced by learning in international negotiations.

8 References

8.1 Video recordings

This section contains a list of all video recordings cited in this dissertation. For the sixth meeting in Bali, only audio recordings are available. The recordings were downloaded for analysis from the official GCF website at <http://www.gcfund.org/meetings/video-recordings-and-documents/videos/> on 10 March 2015. At the time of writing, the recordings are no longer available on the Internet. See also in Subsection 3.2.3.

- Paris 1.1: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 1 (8 October 2013), part 1 of 5 (runtime: 02:26:02).
- Paris 1.2: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 1 (8 October 2013), part 2 of 5 (runtime: 02:21:00).
- Paris 1.4: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 1 (8 October 2013), part 4 of 5 (runtime: 02:00:59).
- Paris 1.5: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 1 (8 October 2013), part 5 of 5 (runtime: 00:27:02).
- Paris 2.1: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 2 (9 October 2013), part 1 of 5 (runtime: 01:39:42).
- Paris 2.3: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 2 (9 October 2013), part 3 of 5 (runtime: 02:14:26).
- Paris 2.4: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 2 (9 October 2013), part 4 of 5 (runtime: 02:00:33).
- Paris 3.1: Fifth Board meeting in Paris, France, day 3 (10 October 2013), part 1 of 5 (runtime: 02:15:30).
- Bali 1.1: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 1 (19 February 2014), part 1 of 3 (runtime: 02:10:59).
- Bali 1.2: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 1 (19 February 2014), part 2 of 3 (runtime: 01:23:42).
- Bali 1.3: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 1 (19 February 2014), part 3 of 3 (runtime: 03:52:44).
- Bali 2.1: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 2 (20 February 2014), part 1 of 2 (runtime: 04:00:16).
- Bali 2.2: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 2 (20 February 2014), part 2 of 2 (runtime: 01:18:29).
- Bali 3.1: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 3 (21 February 2014), part 1 of 2 (runtime: 03:35:16).
- Bali 3.2: Sixth Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia, day 3 (21 February 2014), part 2 of 2 (runtime: 05:27:00).
- Songdo 1.4: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 1 (18 May 2014), part 1 of 9 (runtime: 01:09:49).
- Songdo 1.6: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 1 (18 May 2014), part 6 of 9 (runtime: 01:49:09).
- Songdo 1.7: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 1 (18 May 2014), part 7 of 9 (runtime: 01:56:02).
- Songdo 1.8: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 1 (18 May 2014), part 8 of 9 (runtime: 01:23:50).

Songdo 1.9: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 1 (18 May 2014), part 9 of 9 (runtime: 01:16:14).

Songdo 2.1: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 2 (19 May 2014), part 1 of 5 (runtime: 02:08:18).

Songdo 3.2: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 2 (19 May 2014), part 7 of 4 (runtime: 00:56:32). *See the note below on the file numbering.*

Songdo 3.3: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 2 (19 May 2014), part 8 of 4 (runtime: 01:15:19). *See the note below on the file numbering.*

Songdo 3.4: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 3 (20 May 2014), part 1 of 4 (runtime: 01:58:35) *See the note below on the file numbering.*

Songdo 4.11: Seventh Board meeting in Songdo, South Korea, day 4 (21 May 2014), part 11 of 19 (runtime: 01:15:36).

Bridgetown 1.1: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 1 (14 October 2014), part 1 of 3 (runtime: 01:38:59).

Bridgetown 1.3: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 1 (14 October 2014), part 3 of 3 (runtime: 01:36:00).

Bridgetown 2.2: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 2 (15 October 2014), part 2 of 12 (runtime: 01:18:00).

Bridgetown 2.3: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 2 (15 October 2014), part 3 of 12 (runtime: 01:30:00).

Bridgetown 2.6: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 2 (15 October 2014), part 6 of 12 (runtime: 01:26:00).

Bridgetown 2.10: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 2 (15 October 2014), part 10 of 12 (runtime: 02:08:03).

Bridgetown 2.11: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 2 (15 October 2014), part 11 of 12 (runtime: 01:23:59).

Bridgetown 3.1: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 1 of 18 (runtime: 02:15:30).

Bridgetown 3.8: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 8 of 18 (runtime: 01:35:24).

Bridgetown 3.9: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 9 of 18 (runtime: 02:08:03).

Bridgetown 3.10: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 10 of 18 (runtime: 02:08:03).

Bridgetown 3.11: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 11 of 18 (runtime: 00:52:26).

Bridgetown 3.15: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 3 (16 October 2014), part 15 of 18 (runtime: 01:47:13).

Bridgetown 4.1: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 4 (17 October 2014), part 1 of 11 (runtime: 03:24:50).

Bridgetown 4.4: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 4 (17 October 2014), part 4 of 11 (runtime: 02:03:33).

Bridgetown 4.8: Eighth Board meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, day 4 (17 October 2014), part 8 of 11 (runtime: 00:43:45).

Note: Songdo 3.1 to 3.3 are actually recordings number 6 to 8 of day 2 of the meeting (rather than recording 1 to 3 of day 3, as the numbering would indicate). The files were labelled incorrectly on part of the Green Climate Fund. To avoid confusion, the GCF's original numbering has been kept.

8.2 Interviews

All interviewees are anonymised. Their names and affiliations are known to the author of this dissertation.

- BM 1: Interview conducted with a member of the Green Climate Fund Board in Paris, France, on 4 December 2015.
- NGO 1: Interview conducted with a civil society observer of the Green Climate Fund in London, United Kingdom, on 18 November 2015.
- NGO 2: Interview conducted with a civil society observer of the Green Climate Fund in Paris, France, on 1 December 2015.
- NGO 3: Interview conducted with a civil society observer of the Green Climate Fund in Paris, France, on 1 December 2015.
- NGO 5: Interview conducted with a civil society observer of the Green Climate Fund in Paris, France, on 4 December 2015.

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