Paths to Meaningful Youth Involvement at the International Climate Change Negotiations: Lessons from COP22 in Marrakesh

Larissa Kwiatkowski
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LARISSA KWIAKTOWSKI


Abstract:

In the last decade, anthropogenic climate change has caused strong impacts on natural and human systems worldwide. It is of particular importance to include youths in the international decision-making process centred on climate change as they represent the closest living relatives to future generations. Therefore they need to have a say in the decisions affecting their future. Different schools of thought defined characteristics for ideal communication in these political decision-making arenas. The most contradicting theories are on one hand deliberative democrats who favour dialogic and consensus-based proceedings and on the other hand proponents of agonistic pluralism who prefer the conflictual elements of force and disruption in communication processes. The aim of this study is to explore synergies and intersections between both in theory contradicting paths. The study follows a case study design of the international climate change negotiations COP22 in Marrakech 2016. The data collection process involved empirical observations and semi-structured interviews with 30 international youth participants as to their experiences of participating in proceedings, petitioning politicians, and protesting outside venues. The results of this study show that young people concurrently navigate between formal deliberative proceedings and informal agonistic approaches, taking advantage of their underacknowledged positive cumulative and complementing effects. The interplay between both paths stimulates meaningful involvement for youths at the conference and within the climate change social movement. Youths navigating simultaneously between both paths are shown to have both insider knowledge about the vulnerabilities of the system and outsider knowledge providing enough distance to criticise the proceedings. Thus, these youths have the best merits to meaningfully involve in the decision making and successfully introduce change. The process of enculturation to the norms and procedural rules of the conference contributes to the level of meaningful youth involvement and determines the participation path chosen. Moreover, the results outline that the influence of each path in the decision-making process and the definition of meaningful involvement varies with the arena in which it is executed. Whereas meaningful involvement for deliberative inclined youths can be best described through a shared power youth-adult participation, youths following the agonistic path seek meaningful involvement through emotion work and empowerment expressed in direct actions and protest.

Keywords: Deliberative Democracy, Agonistic Pluralism, Youth, Climate Change, Activism, Meaningful Involvement, Sustainable Development

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Summary:

Anthropogenic climate change is one of the most complex global challenges of our times. Young people make up over half of the world’s population and therefore it is vital to include youths in the international decision-making centred around climate change because decisions made today particularly affect the livelihoods of youths and future generations. Youth is formally recognised as a major stakeholder in international environmental decision-making processes by the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development since 1992. However, compared to other stakeholder young people are less involved in formal political processes on the national and international level. Contrary, youth engagement tends to rather focus on informal approaches such as activism. Research has identified different ways on how citizens navigate in democratic decision-making processes outlining conflicting ideas on ideal communication within these arenas. The arguably most contradicting approaches are deliberative democracy which endorses dialogue and consensus as ideal communication and agonistic pluralism which favours the conflictual elements of force and disruption in communication processes. Objecting the incompatibility of both paths the aim of the study is to explore interplays and intersections between different paths to meaningful youth involvement in political decision-making centred on climate change. For this cause, data has been collected on the example of a case study at the UNFCCC international climate change conference COP22 in Marrakech 2016. The data collection process involved empirical observations and semi-structured interviews with 30 international youth participants. The study results that young people at COP22 simultaneously navigate between formal deliberative proceedings and informal agonistic approaches. Inside the conference venue these strategies manifest through deliberative approaches such as lobbying, policy work and media outreach, or more agonistic strategies such as calmer protests and actions. Outside the conference more radical agonistic strategies such as demonstrations and actions as well as civil disobedience are applied. The results of the study emphasise the cumulative and complementing effects of intersections and interactions between both paths. Youths and youth organisations that are able to utilise both approaches simultaneously have the required inside knowledge about the vulnerabilities of the system, but also the crucial distance to criticise it and are therefore most successful to achieve meaningful youth involvement and in implementing change. Further, the study stresses that the influence of each path in the decision-making process varies with the arena in which it is executed. The meaningfulness of participation paths under the deliberative lens is most likely identified as shared power youth-adult participation but also through merits such as capacity building or emotion work particularly brought forward by agonistic approaches. Such moral appeal and urgency especially brought forward by agonistic inclined youth can, therefore, contribute to more ambitious and fair outcomes and thus promote sustainable development. Although, youths may lack the same experience or legal and technical knowledge than adult negotiators, they can add other qualities that also can have a great contribution to the negotiating process.

Keywords: Deliberative Democracy, Agonistic Pluralism, Youth, Climate Change, Activism, Meaningful Involvement, Sustainable Development

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### ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Climate Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties organised by the UNFCCC since 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP22</td>
<td>Twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties organised by UNFCCC Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COY</td>
<td>Conference of the Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCJ</td>
<td>Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTEC</td>
<td>Intergenerational Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUNGO</td>
<td>Youth constituency under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, standing for Youth Non-Governmental Organisation (Youth NGO)</td>
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1. Introduction

Young people make up over half of the world’s population (Boumphrey, 2012). In 2014 there were more young people at the age of 10 to 24 than ever before in human history, about which almost 9 out of 10 lived in developing countries (Das Gupta et al., 2014). However, young people seem to have little say in political decision-making processes on the national and international level. In fact, the level of youth participation1 in formal political processes is much lower than of older age groups as youth engagement tends to rather focus on informal political processes such as activism and other forms of civic engagement (Das Gupta et al., 2014).

One context of civic engagement that particularly implicates youths is climate change. In the last decade, anthropogenic climate change has caused strong impacts on natural and human systems worldwide. However, the global burden is not equally distributed. Multidimensional inequalities such as social, economic, cultural or political factors accelerate vulnerability and exposure to the impacts of climate change (IPCC, 2014). Thus, climate change is one of the most complex global challenges of our times and international agreements and decisions made today have direct effects on livelihoods of young people in the future. Therefore, it is indispensable to include young people in the decision-making process around climate change as they are the closest relatives to generations to come. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission Our Common Future particularly stressed the importance of inclusion of civil society and youth in particular in political decision-making about the environment and development (Brundtland, 1987). Later, in 1992 at the Earth Summit, children and young people were recognised as one out of nine major stakeholders for achieving sustainable development at the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development in Rio de Janeiro. The so-called Agenda 21 adopted at the conference clearly stressed:

'It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilise support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account' (UNCED, 1992, p.275).

Meaningful youth involvement in decision-making processes in the context of climate change is also strongly related to the Sustainable Development Goals, formally adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 as a set of 17 measurable goals. Amongst others, they aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity over a period of the next 15 year. Especially goal 13 (Climate Action), goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals) play an important role in measuring meaningful youth engagement in the climate change negotiations. Goal 13 is measured amongst others through improved education, raised awareness and human and institutional capacity building on climate change; goal 16 ensures inclusiveness, representativeness and participation at all levels of decision-making processes and goal 17 is aiming to strengthen inclusive partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society (UN, 2017). Children and young people of today will be adults by 2030, the target year for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is why 'young people’s engagement is important now, while they are still 'young', but as the timeframe for the SDGs elapses, today's young people can develop into tomorrow's active and engaged adults who continue to work for the achievement of the goals’ (Walker et al., 2015, p.24).

The main political arena for the international climate change negotiations is the annual Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, called COP. Due to its status and media coverage, it annually attracts relevant stakeholders from politics, the private sector, academia, non-profit organisations and civil society and thus records high numbers of youth participants (COP22 Press Centre, 2016). Most recently, youth actors from across the globe gathered at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP22) in Marrakech. At the

1 The term participation used in this study refers to the process of shared decision-making about issues affecting one’s livelihood (Hart, 1992).
conference, they have been involved in forms of civic engagement that ranged from activism on the sidelines to involvement in the formal decision-making process in the Blue Zone of the proceedings.

1.2. Problem Formulation

Research has identified different approaches for citizens to partake on common issues within democratic communication processes. There is a reason to believe they may also be differently valued regarding what constitutes ideal communication. Deliberative approaches based on dialogue and collaborative communication seem to predominantly receive higher value in political proceedings than the disruptive and emotional path expressed through activism. The literature often exhibits a divide across schools of thought in relation to this aspect. On the one hand, there are those that endorse an agonist approach to activism and locate few merits in the ‘exclusionary’ and elitist deliberative approaches of calmer proceedings (Sanders, 1997; Mouffe, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2010). On the other hand are deliberative democrats who cling to calmer consensus-oriented approaches: deliberation (Dryzek, 2005; Maesele, 2015; Erman, 2009). These paths to meaningful involvement are often seen as contradictory, and there are few efforts at exploring synergies and cumulative, positive effects for youth in petitioning for change. Thus, there is a need to identify interactions and intersections of the two paths and various branches between them, both theoretically and in empirical case contexts where both occur simultaneously and for the same cause.

1.3. Aim and Contribution

Youths have been recognised as an important stakeholder for sustainable development already at the Earth Summit in 1992. However, comparably little academic research focussed on mapping and understanding different forms and interactions of youth participation in the international political decision-making process of climate change. The yearly COPs organised by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are the highest international political decision-making body. COPs are unique melting pots, which are seasoned with many different orientations, with respect to format for civic engagement within the youth climate change movement. Therefore, COPs present interesting case studies on how these various paths present at the event interact and blend together for implementing change on climate change policy.

Against this, the study aims to examine the reconcilability, commensurability and effectiveness of these different paths and strategies of youth engagement to achieve meaningful involvement at the latest international climate change negotiation, COP22. Meaningful involvement is understood phenomenologically from the perspective of youth participants but also evaluated against Hart’s (1992) ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’ as a more objective framework to measure meaningful involvement. This research will identify different paths of youth participation on the foundation of existing typologies for political and civic engagement such as Ekman and Amnäs (2012) typology of political participation and civic engagement. Scholars such as Ganesh and Zoller (2012, p.85) call for research that examines ‘how power negotiations influence strategies, and that even protests can be important preparatory stages for dialogue’. Hence, the results of this study can contribute valuable insights into the interrelations and interplay of different paths to meaningful involvement taken by youths at international climate change negotiations today.

Further, the study aims to reveal the vital role of non-deliberative proceedings such as activism within the negotiations that might contribute to indirect outcomes such as solidarity building, add moral weight to deliberative proceedings, or garner media attention for lobbying. In their way, they also inform and influence the politics outside of the meeting room. Thus, the study underlines that every path of involvement plays an important role in the international climate change decision-making process. With this aim in mind, the research operates with the following two research questions:

2 In this paper calmness mainly refers to, consistent with the literature, a quality of civility and reasoned argumentation in consensus driven decision-making (Martin, 2008b; Holub, 1991; Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).
1.4. Research Questions

1. In what ways do youths navigate between the deliberative and the disruptive path to civic, political engagement at the UN Climate Change Negotiations COP22 in Marrakech?

2. Are there other spectra of meaningful involvement pursued by youths, besides the two main paths at COP? If so, which?

1.5. Outline

The structure of the study will be as followed. First, Chapter 2 introduces the background and the context of this study. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical framework based on deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism and its application to the political context of climate change decision-making. In Chapter 4 a description of the case will be given, followed by a presentation of the methodology, methods and its limitations in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 and 7 present the analysis and discussion of the case study results in relation to the theoretical framework. Finally, Chapter 8 closes with the conclusions of the study. Figure 1 illustrates the outline of the research as described above.

Fig. 1. Outline of the study.
2. Background

The following abstract elaborates on the role of civil society, particularly focussing on youth in the decision-making process of climate change. First, I introduce the role of climate change as a social movement and its function for raising public awareness and monitoring the international climate change negotiations. Second, different forms of citizen involvement in the climate change movement are portrayed. Third, a literature review on typologies of citizen engagement in the climate change context is presented. Further, the particular characteristics and forms of youth engagement are discussed and finally a definition of meaningful involvement is presented aligning to the context of this case study.

2.1. Climate Change a Social Movement

A social movement can be defined as a collective form of social behaviour that is ‘explicitly organised for political action’ (Jamison, 2010, p.812) and is centred ‘around a common interest that seeks to influence collective outcomes without obtaining authoritative offices of government’ (Dryzek et al., 2003, p.2). Social movements aim to affect political change by mobilising human and material resources through forms of protest or direct actions (Jamison, 2010). The traditions of social movements can be traced back to the insurgency of the bourgeoisie against monarchy or the organised working class threatening the stability of the early capitalism and liberal state (Dryzek et al., 2003). In fact, political innovation in modern Western states can be drawn back to social movements (ibid.). Crucial to the success of a social movement is the degree to which a connection to a core state imperative can be achieved (ibid.). Once the movement can acquire entry into the state’s core, e.g. through a political party or interest group, there are no restrictions on the level of influence. At this point, they often assimilate into ‘politics’ and lose their activism status (ibid.). If no such entry is possible, the movement will encounter systematic limits to the level of engagement with the state, especially whenever it comes to defending the interests of the movement against the core state imperatives (ibid.). Activism may, in this case, become more radical, and the state may pathologize extremist positions (Martin, 2015; Theodossopoulos, 2014).

In the last four decades of the twentieth century, social movements played a vital role in the development of liberal democracies such as on behalf or against ‘women, gays, lesbians, non-human animals, peace, the environment, youth, students, racial and ethnic equality, indigenous people, hunting, religious fundamentalism, national autonomy’ (Dryzek et al., 2003, p.3). The degree of influence of a movement on the state also depends on the way a state either places barriers to the movement's influence or fosters its integration into the state (ibid.). The manifestation of such an inclusion can either be observable through forms of lobbying, participation in policy making or even creating a party (ibid.). According to Dryzek et al. (2003) depending on the inclusion or exclusion of the state, the regular trajectory of any social movement begins with a radical protest of civil society opposing the established order, gradually transitioning towards a moderate inclusion into the circles of power. In this depiction of social movements supported by Dryzek, the state is the main source of authority. Contrary, other scholars support a multi-institutional view on society where the target of social movements reaches beyond the state to other institutions or cultural meanings (Snow, 2004). This view of social movements excludes activists that are too close to the system and just reproducing the ‘rules of the game’ e.g. through lobbying (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008, p.85). These activists might be most successful in navigating in these arenas as they have the required inside knowledge about vulnerabilities of the system and thus the best ‘feel for the game’, but have ‘little interest in challenging’ it (ibid.). Contrary, activists that solely challenge the system from the outside are missing the needed insider information (ibid.). Therefore, change is most successfully initiated by activists that are both insiders and outsiders Wilde (2004).

In the last few decades environmental problems, such as biodiversity, land use, deforestation and climate change received higher priority for governments, civil society and other bodies (Smith, 2003). The sources of these problems are diverse and to a certain extent caused by everyone through daily practices of consumption and production (Newell, 2005). However, especially in western societies, many people do not feel the urgency of the climate change problem and policymakers failed to address
this global issue for a long time. Yet, civil society organisations and activists can put pressure on policymakers to address these problems through social movements (Nulman, 2016).

‘One thing that movements do is come up with ways to make the important urgent’ - Marshall Ganz (Mingle, 2013, p.2).

Thus, in this context climate change has emerged on the public agenda as one of many environmental problems addressed in the environmental movement in the 1970s (Jamison, 2010). Out of the environmental movement, the climate change movement developed later in the 1980s and grew to political significance until the 1990s (Jamison, 2010; Nulman, 2016). It can be defined as ‘an amalgam of loosely networked individuals, groups, and organisations springing out of the environmentalist development, anti-capitalist, and indigenous movements, combined with a new wave of activists and groups that had no previous ties to other social movements’ (Nulman, 2016, p.2).

Although different movement groups and organisations have different aims and objectives, the overall objective of the climate change movement is to reduce ‘negative impacts of climate change on people and the planet’ by influencing ‘political, economic, and social change’ (p.2). Generally, international movements are ‘facilitated by the creation of international institutions designed to govern the issues those movements care about. The global climate change movement is no exception’ (Caniglia et al., 2015, p.239). Hence, in the case of the climate change movement, this international institution is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992 by the United Nations. The annual international climate change debate centred around the UNFCCC conferences of the parties (COP) is driven by influential interests such as powerful countries or large polluting industries on global, regional and local scales (Newell, 2005). This process is opposing a great challenge to concerned members of civil society on how to influence the international debate promoting climate action (ibid). Thus, already from the 1980s onwards, the most significant actors in global civil society such as the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth were active on climate change issues centred around the UNFCCC conferences (ibid.). To facilitate coordination and to pool expertise and resources, civil society actors formed the coalition called Climate Action Network (CAN), which today counts over 1100 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in over 120 countries (Climate Action Network, 2017). Part of the climate change movement also is the generally more confrontational climate justice movement which derives from the broader global justice movement protesting against various negative consequences attributed to globalisation, including climate change (Jamison, 2010). Leading role in the climate justice movement plays the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice (DCJ) which is internationally supported by many international, national and regional networks and organisations (Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice, 2017).

2.2. Citizen Involvement in the Context of Climate Change

Commonly, environmental decisions made by environmental agencies and governments in international negotiations are often multi-faced and characterised by a plurality of conflicting environmental values that seem to be irreconcilable (Smith, 2003). In the capitalistic system, decision-making is frequently dominated based on the knowledge of so-called experts and political representative, so that the interests and needs of larger groups in society are systematically excluded (Connelly et al., 2012). Reflecting the plurality of different values in the climate change movement and the struggles of citizens to participate in the international debate around climate change, civil society organisations have developed different strategies and approaches for influencing the political decision-making process. Sometimes movements follow a ‘dual-track approach’ applying disruptive forms of participation outside the arenas of decision-making to attract attention, but follow calmer civil styles of involvement on the inside of decision-making arena (Martin, 2008b, p.31.). Relating to Martin (2008a) also Dodge (2009) stresses that civil society organisations use both discursive and coercive forms of power to respond to the hegemonic power relations in the deliberative system. Whereas, discursive approaches are normally based on persuasive measures trying to convey an idea to the decision makers, coercive forms, involve actions of force and coercion, such as threatening to leave or disrupt the deliberative process, to raise pressure and ensure equal democratic procedures (Smith and Brasset, 2013). Similar, strategies are deployed by the climate change movement ranging
from more formal deliberative approaches based on dialogue and construction of partnerships, to more informal, confrontational and disruptive approaches using mediums of protest and shaming (Newell, 2008). Indeed, there is a large variety of channels in which dissent toward this dominant belief system can be expressed (Martin, 2008b).

In the following section, I contextualise the deliberative and agonistic path to meaningful involvement in the context of climate change. A full elaboration of each path is to be found in the theoretical framework.

2.2.1. Deliberative Path

Deliberative democracy and thus the deliberative path to political participation particularly is aligned under the merits such as free, equal and reasoned argumentation (Holub, 1991; Gutmann and Thompson, 2004; Mansbridge et al., 2012). Scholars such as Niemeyer (2013) endorse deliberative democracy for having the best requirements to promote meaningful involvement of citizens in the international climate change debate. Although decentralised, small-scale deliberative institution designs might lead to higher degrees of participation, larger-scale institutions are necessary to tackle transboundary and global environmental problems, involving a plurality of values and commitments (Connelly et al., 2012). According to Dryzek (1995), deliberative structures can effectively deal with these high degrees of complexity and uncertainty arising with global environmental challenges. Although Niemeyer (2013) concedes that deliberative democracy is difficult to achieve, he stresses that it offers substantial benefits in reshaping the public response to climate change, and possibly, also the nature of politics itself.

2.2.2. Agonistic Path

Contrary to the deliberative path the agonistic path to political participation endorses the benefits of disruptive and coercive forces to confront hegemonic political conflicts openly (Mouffe, 1999). In environmental public debates, citizens are rarely involved in discussing their ‘concerns on an equal playing field with technical experts’, due to their lack of expertise in technical terminology, language, authority and status (Simmons, 2007, p.6). Maeseele (2015) criticises that especially in the climate change discourse scientific expertise is often represented as the only legitimate basis for policy making. Therefore, this superiority of rational, scientific based decision-making in consensual UN climate politics functions as an ‘exclusionary mechanism for anyone questioning the (neoliberal) alliance between science and policy’ (Maeseele, 2015, p.392). Continuing on that note, Swyngedouw (2010) stresses, that particularly in the light of climate change politics, recognising conflict and difference are essential for creating a different possible socio-environmental future. Such recognition is key to the agonistic path to public participation, which emphasises power asymmetries (Young, 2003).

2.3. Typology of Citizen Involvement in the Climate Change Context

In the previous paragraph, I have outlined two inherently different paths of involvement in the political climate change context: The deliberative path and the agonistic path. The following section delineates an overview of various typologies of citizen involvement identified in previous research that are relevant in the climate change context.

Nulman (2016) describes five different mechanisms (disruption, public preference, political access, the judicial mechanism and international politics) on how social movements influence climate change policies. It is common that movements use several mechanisms at the same time during their campaigns (ibid.). Starting with the disruption mechanism, supporters of this mechanism argue that positive outcomes can be achieved through direct actions and protests that interfere with functions in society or the state (Nulman, 2016). These acts of disruption can be a tool to attract media attention or
to influence public awareness, even as it simultaneously accomplishes a practical function, such as stopping a development by squatting. At times, the drama of the action communicates non-verbally (Martin and Varney, 2003). Second, the public preference mechanism builds on the assumption that politicians desire public approval. In this way, the movement can gain policy influence indirectly through the public (Nulman, 2016). Third, through political access mechanism, a social movement can influence decision-making by having direct access to the formal political arena and filling out a political office (ibid.). Fourth, the judicial mechanism aims to achieve policy influence through bringing a case to court, and fifth the international politics mechanism refers to pressure techniques that can be brought upon decision makers through forces outside their country (ibid.). Adding to these set mechanisms Amnå (2012) stresses that new social movements have found new innovative forms of transforming conventional ways of political participation which do not need active political involvement to engage civically. The following abstract gives an overview of different frameworks for political civil society involvement outlined in previous research.

Ekman and Amnå (2012) developed a typological framework for political participation and civic engagement making a clear distinction between manifest forms and latent forms of political participation. Latent forms of civic political participation take place in the civil domain, involving activities such as volunteering and other types of social involvement (Ekman and Amnå, 2012, p.295). Manifest political participation refers to actions aiming to directly influence decisions and political outcomes in the public or the political domain, where citizens can exercise their political rights formally through participation in the political process or outside the formal political domain through attendance of demonstrations (p.296). Further, manifest political participation can also occur in the market domain, where critical consumers can influence the market through their consumer behaviour (p.296). In this typology, Ekman and Amnå (2012) distinguish two forms of manifest political involvement. On the one hand, formal deliberative political participation refers to political behaviour typically linked to membership in any party or organisation with distinct political agenda (ibid.). On the other hand, agonistic extra-parliamentary political participation can be expressed through legal forms of activism and protest behaviour such as participating in demonstrations or joining a social movement or illegal forms such as acts of civil disobedience and violent actions (ibid.).

Connelly et al. (2012, p.78) divides deliberative proceeding into two subgroups and distinguishes informal political approaches such as ‘contact and influence through discreet lobbying behind the scenes’ from ‘formal lobbying through governmental institutions and bodies’. Contrary agonistic forms of participation such as ‘demonstrations and marches’ serve as visible evidence of public support and ‘media stunts’, further spread messages to a wider audience (Connelly et al. 2012, p.78). Additionally, ‘non-violent direct action’ through acts of civil disobedience and ‘violent direct action’ constitute to more radical forms of environmental actions (p.78), insofar as they depart from the status quo of conventional channels for participation.

Newell (2005) defined three distinct involvement categories of civil society organisations at COP. More conservative approaches so called inside-insider which follow traditional strategies such as lobbying can be distinguished from inside-outsider approaches, which chose more confrontational strategies to influence the formal policy processes (p.99). Further, outside-outsider strategies do not aim to be involved in the formal policy negotiations, but ‘rather seek to draw attention to the impacts of the problem on existing patterns of inequality and social injustice through a variety of campaigning tools and technologies of protest’ (p.100). The following table 1 gives an overview and comparison of typologies of civic political participation developed by previously mentioned scholars:
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<td>Manifest Political Participation</td>
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<td>with political agenda</td>
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<td>Participation)</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
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<td>• Joining social movement</td>
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<td>• Advance climate change action within</td>
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<td>• Access to decision-making</td>
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<td>Aim:</td>
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<td>• Advance more drastic climate action</td>
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<td>Strategies:</td>
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<td>• Research for public audiences</td>
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<td>• Use of media</td>
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<td>• More confrontational lobbying styles</td>
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<td>Aim:</td>
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<td>• Questioning the current framing of the</td>
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<td>current climate change negotiations</td>
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<td>• Raising of public awareness about climate</td>
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<td>justice</td>
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<td>Strategies:</td>
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<td>• Protest and demonstrations</td>
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<td>• Actions and side events</td>
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<td>Cross-movement mobilisation</td>
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<td>Political access mechanism</td>
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<td>Judicial mechanism</td>
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<td>International politics mechanism</td>
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<td>Public preference mechanism</td>
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<td>Disruptive mechanism</td>
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Table 1. Mapping of literature on the path to political participation of civil society.
2.4. Youth Civic and Political Engagement

Reviewing literature on political youth engagement, it appears that in general, forms of youth engagement do not differ significantly from the strategies used by other adult civil society actors. Therefore, the typologies of civil and political engagement outlined above can be applied in the youth context. Nevertheless, although strategies of engagement seem to equal each other, there may be distinct forms of youth engagement that can be discerned. Therefore, the following abstract outlines the similarities and differences of political youth engagement compared to adult civic political engagement.

‘Youth should be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making at local, national and global levels’ - Ban Ki-moon former United Nations Secretary-General, (UNDP, 2014, p.iii).

Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 account for a fifth of the world’s population, and in many developing countries 50 percent of the population is below the age of 25 (UNDP, 2014). Despite these numbers, youths only seem to play a minor role in formal political decision-making. On the one hand, a reason for the underrepresentation of young people in decision-making processes appears to be the lack of political awareness, knowledge or disinterest in politics by younger generations (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Bynner & Ashford, 1994). On the other hand, poor design of participatory public processes and insufficient resources can lead to poor levels of youth participation in decision-making processes (Kara, 2013). However, although youths may have lower levels of formal political engagement, young people tend to be more involved in informal processes such as activism, protests and campaigns, as well as in civil forms of engagement such as volunteering for a social cause (UNDP, 2014; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

2.4.1. Deliberative Path: Civic Engagement

Similar to adult civic engagement, youth civic engagement is characterised through formal deliberative practices (McCants, 2007). Youth civic engagement is defined as ‘young people developing the skills and habits needed to actively shape democratic society in collaboration with others’ (Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing, 2003). Youth civic engagement includes engagement in democratic processes inside organisations and within the broader community (ibid.). Further, youth civic engagement can occur in different forms and contexts and various spheres such as ‘public, market, civil and personal’ (Shaw et al., 2014, p.301). In their typology of civic youth engagement Etra et al. (2010) identified the following types of political youth engagement: Advocacy and campaigning is engagement that involves activities such as advocating and volunteering activities with the aim to raise public awareness for changing ‘a cultural norm, social norm, or government policy’ (p.10). Governance engagement is expressed through lobbying and other involvement in the policy process (ibid.). Youth Media engagement involves any traditional and new media produced by young people for a young or adult audience, and Youth Leadership aims at exercising leadership skills through participation in workshops, conferences or volunteer activities (ibid.). According to Bulling et al. (2013) formal, deliberative practices is key to political youth participation. The ‘influence of deliberation is critical for the success of deliberative youth participation. Without influence, the risk is that participation will be seen as tokenism’ (p.413). Moreover, Bulling et al. (2013) stress the importance of including youth deliberation in wider arenas of deliberation with other voices from different ages and interest groups to prevent an isolation of the youth voice.

2.4.2. Agonistic Path: Youth Activism

Informal agonistic youth engagement in political decision-making is defined as youth activism (McCants, 2007). Youth activism helps to generate new resources and fosters policy or other long-term changes (ibid.). Further, it involves actions that go beyond routines and conventional politics and are characteristically more energetic, innovative, passionate and dedicated (ibid.). Youth activism is any action performed by young people to achieve social, political, or economic transformation and is traditionally more associated with radicalism and action-based activism (ibid.). Although young people play a visible role in governance through demonstrations, protests and being agents of change, often there are no existing mechanisms for meaningful inclusion of youth in the political landscape
(Flanagan, 2010). Hence, the level of involvement, representation and consultation remains low (ibid.).

2.4.3. Intermediate Path: Youth Organising

Complementing his framework of civic engagement and activism, McCants (2007, p.3) identifies Youth Organising as incorporating both, youth engagement in civic participation and activism. Youth Organising is the phenomenon in which young people engage in civic and political activities such as civic engagement as well as activism, aiming to critically analyse ‘power relations in society as well as sustained engagement with the community’ (p.3). ‘Youth organising is a youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organising and advocacy and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities’ (Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing, 2003,p.9). Youth organising pushes adult-determined limitations of traditional youth engagement and is based on power and leadership of youth acting on youths defined issues in their communities through activities including community research and development, analysis of politics and direct action (ibid.).

2.5. Meaningful Youth Involvement

There are different ways in which young people chose to potentially influence political decision-making, and as described above they deploy different strategies for meaningful involvement. To be able to understand the reasoning and interplays of different paths, it is inevitable to consider the term meaningful involvement in this research further. Therefore, the following section starts by giving a definition of meaningful youth involvement based on current literature. Second, the ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’ by Hart (1992) is presented as a tool to evaluate meaningful involvement in the context of this study. An empirical definition of youth involvement at COP is presented later in Chapter 5.

Meaningful involvement in democratic practices is a basic human right (UNDESA, 2012), comprising a key pillar of the environmental justice discourse (Laurent, 2011). Exploring the term meaningful involvement great variety of definitions and criteria have been defined by different scholars and the international community. According to UNDP (2014) meaningful youth involvement has one or more of the following three attributes:

(1) First, it can be consultative participation in ‘an adult-assigned consultation process’ where young people have a certain mandate and are able to make their voices heard through advocacy work (ibid.).

(2) Second, it can involve collaborative participation, where youths are regularly involved in political decision-making processes as voters, political parties or as advocacy group (ibid.).

(3) Third, meaningful youth engagement can involve youth-led participation that guaranteed young people direct impact on the decision-making process within their communities and organisations (ibid.).

‘Meaningful youth participation and leadership require that young people and young people-led organisations have opportunities, capacities, and benefit from an enabling environment and relevant evidence-based programmes and policies at all levels’ (UNDESA, 2012). Enabling youth power in decision-making and integrating them into all aspects of policy development are vital components of meaningful involvement (Cook, 2008). However, according to Kara (2013, p.564), even well-intended youth participation mechanisms can suffer from ‘poor design, insufficient resources and inadequate skills’ which prevent meaningful involvement. Therefore, ‘due attention should be paid to the differentiation between meaningful youth political participation and tokenistic, pseudo-participatory activities’ (UNDP, 2014). Kara (2013) continues, that meaningful youth involvement includes both, sufficient quantity, but also quality of involvement opportunities (ibid.). Until recently, literature mainly focused on the scope of participation identifying who participates, how many or how often
(Morrissey, 2000). However, ‘the quality of participation has been largely ignored in the literature’ (p.62). Hence, evaluating the quality of youth participation is vital, as youth involvement in the decision-making process is not only about achieving better outcomes but also ‘improving the ability of youth to understand their role as citizens in a democracy’ (Kara, 2013, p.564).

2.5.1. Barriers to Meaningful Involvement

Youths still experience major obstacles regarding effective and meaningful participation. According to Arnstein (1969), barriers for achieving high levels of citizen participation can be allocated on both sides, powerholders and citizens. On the powerholder side, such barriers are paternalism and resistance to power redistribution, poor community, political infrastructure and knowledge base as well as difficulties to organise a representative on the citizen side (ibid.). According to UNDP (2014) challenges to youth political participation occur at the three levels. ‘On the individual level, barriers comprise the lack of technical skills; motivation, especially to participate in formal, adult led processes; economic resources; and awareness and knowledge’ (p.18). On the organisational level, youth-led organisations might face challenges regarding limited economic resources and organisational knowledge, procedural challenges of including youth in old political structures, low visibility of results or the use of language and technologies that are repellent to youth (ibid.). Finally, external barriers such as structural constraints like age restrictions or cultural and social norms prevent youths from participation (ibid.).

2.5.2. Measuring Meaningful Involvement

Arnstein (1969) developed the ‘Ladder of Citizen Participation’ as a typology to measure citizen participation and the quality of involvement in political decision-making processes. Arnstein’s ‘Ladder of Citizen Participation’ ranges from the level of non-participation and tokenism towards levels with higher degrees of citizen power (ibid.). According to Arnstein, citizen participation is a ‘categorical term for citizen power’ based on the redistribution of power and the deliberative inclusion of citizens who have been excluded from political and economic processes earlier (p.216). ‘There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process’ (p.216). Real citizen participation can only be achieved through redistribution of power (ibid.). On the basis of Arnstein’s work, Hart (1992) adapted her framework to children and youth participation in particular. Youths at the international climate change negotiations can best be described as young adults, not children. Thus, the participation of these young adults can best be termed by using Hart’s ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’, but complementing some elements of Arnstein’s adult framework for citizen participation. Table 2 consolidates similarities and differences between both frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rung</th>
<th>Arnstein (1969) Level of Involvement</th>
<th>Hart (1992) Level of Involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Citizen Control</td>
<td>Youth initiated, shared decision with adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delegated power</td>
<td>Degree of citizen power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Adult initiated but shared decisions with youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Placation</td>
<td>Consulted and informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Assigned but informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>Tokenism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>Non-participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>Decoration</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Non-participation</td>
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</table>

2.5.2.1. Non-Participation

Both Arnstein and Hart identify the lower rungs of the ladder as non-participatory. According to Hart (1992), (1) Manipulation occurs if children do not understand their actions. (2) Decoration refers, for example, to those frequent occasions when children are given T-shirts related to some cause, and may sing or dance at an event in such dress, but have little idea of what it is all about and no say in the organising of the occasion (p.9). Hart (1992) describes (3) Tokenism as how children or youths sometimes are used on conference panels, without substantive preparation or consultation with their peers. Young people are asked about their opinion but have no or only little choice about the way they express these views (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker, 2010). Similar, Arnstein (1969) describes the lowest rungs of (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy as non-existent citizen participation. Contrary, citizen participation is rather seen as a public relations tool for powerholders to educate citizens or to align their values with the larger society (ibid.).

2.5.2.2. Degrees of Participation

Degrees of participation are characterised by Hart as followed: The rung (4) Assigned but Informed involves adults assigning youths to a project which intentions and the reasons are understood by youths. The rung (5) Consulted and Informed involves young people being consulted by adults and youth’s opinions are treated seriously. Similar, according to Arnstein the following rungs of (3) Informing (4) Consultation and (5) Placation allow some degree of participation. On these rungs, the voices of citizens are heard, but due to the lack of power, not seriously considered by the powerful. Therefore, these rungs still involve a degree of tokenism (Arnstein, 1969).

Hart identifies rung (6) Adult initiated, shared decisions with children as true participation, as although initiated by adults, decision-making is shared with young people. Similarly, Arnstein defines rung (6) Partnership as a redistribution of power ‘through negotiations between citizens and powerholders’, enabling citizens to negotiate trade-offs (p.221).

Finally, the highest rungs of participation are characterised by Hart as (7) Child Initiated and Directed and (8) Child Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults. Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project will be carried out. Adults have a supportive function or may be invited to join in the decision-making. Comparably, Arnstein characterises the highest rungs of the ladder as (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control where citizens are obtaining the majority or full managerial power in the decision-making processes.

2.5.3. Optimal Participation Level for Meaningful Involvement

By evaluating the linear typologies of Arnstein and Hart, it is to be questioned if the ultimate and highest levels of participation Citizen Control and Child initiated, shared decisions with adults are necessarily also the most meaningful ways of youth involvement (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker, 2010). Adults have greater access to institutional resources and more experience (ibid.). Therefore it is arguable if a solely youth initiated decision-making would lead to meaningful involvement as ‘youth may lack the skills, expertise, and connections to social capital that may be required to successfully conduct research or an activity, which can lead to frustration and unintended disempowering outcomes’ (p.103). Further, the level of personal experience in the decision-making process influences the perception of meaningful involvement by youth (Kara, 2013). Consequently, these personal experiences do not necessarily need to correspond with the highest rung of the participation ladder. Moreover, young people are also not the only interest group seeking meaningful involvement in political decision-making. Hence, a youth initiated and controlled decision-making seems unrealistic, especially in the context of the international negotiations on climate change. Consequently, identifying the youth-driven model at the top of the ladder as the highest form of meaningful involvement ‘might not always be appropriate, practical, or even plausible’ (Villa-Torres and Svanemyr, 2015, p.553). Therefore, Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010) suggest that a shared power of youth-adult participation provides optimal levels of youth empowerment and positive youth development. This definition of optimal youth-adult power distribution is in line with attribute (2) for meaningful involvement identified by UNDP (2014) above.
Further, the concept of shared youth-adult power can also be identified in the *Ladder of Youth Participation* at rung (6) *Adult initiated, shared decisions with children* in Hart’s framework or (6) *Partnership* by Arnstein. Therefore, in the context of this case study, as shared youth-adult power relationship in participation is regarded as the optimal participation level for meaningful youth involvement.

### 2.5.4. Utilisation of the Framework

In this study, the *‘Ladder of Youth Participation’* is used as a reference or baseline for evaluating meaningful youth involvement at COP22. Regardless of the path to meaningful involvement chosen, the overreaching participation goal of young people at the conference venue is to have a greater influence and power in the political decision-making, to ultimately affect political change (Jamison, 2010; Nulman, 2016; Narksompong and Limjirakan, 2015). The *‘ladder’* frameworks of Arnstein and Hart focus on these power relations between youths and powerholders, identifying an interdependence of youth power and meaningful involvement. Consequently, increasing levels of youth power are directly interlinked with increasing levels of quality of participation and meaningful involvement. Thus, meaningful involvement can be achieved through the redistribution of power from the powerholders to young people. Summing up, the *‘Ladder of Youth Participation’* indicates a pathway to meaningful involvement ranging from low levels of participation and power to high levels of citizen participation and power at the highest rung. Both, proponents of deliberative proceedings, as well as advocates for agonistic approaches, recognise those challenges of power relations influencing democratic proceedings. Whereas deliberative approaches to meaningful involvement aim to bracket the influence of power through debating and exchanging arguments, pluralistic agonists see the means of confrontation as the ultimate solution reacting to unequal power relations and hegemony. These characteristics are certainly projected in the context of the international climate change negotiations.

Therefore, the benefit of using Hart’s *‘Ladder of Youth Participation’* as a qualifier and heuristic for meaningful involvement is that it provides a frame of reference against which to measure the evidence of meaningful youth involvement throughout the participation paths in the decision-making process at COP22. Consequently, the *‘Ladder of Youth Participation’* provides classification and constituting criteria to aid the assessment of the status of youth participation. It will be applied in the final discussion.
3. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter presents the theoretical frameworks used in the course of this study. In modernity, communication and democracy scholars have identified several approaches to meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. In this section, I contextualise the research through the examination of the two arguably most conflicting political theories for meaningful involvement: deliberative democracy, and agonistic pluralism.

3.1. Characterising Deliberative Democracy

The concept of deliberative democracy derives out of the historical background of the political and societal structures of the last centuries. In the early modern period, deliberation was referred to a political discussion with a small and exclusive group of political leaders (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). ‘By the eighteenth century, deliberation was part of a defence of political representation that pointedly resisted appeals to popular opinion’ (p. 8). Dryzek (2002b) derives the roots of the deliberative turn in democratic theory in liberalism and critical theory. In reaction to the former feudal powers and forms of governance such as the ‘church, the prince and the nobility’ the liberal bourgeois public developed in the eighteenth century (Habermas, 2009, p. 47). In this context, the public sphere arose as a critical arena for emancipation from these previous coercive forces based on principles of free speech, reason and formulation of opinion (Habermas, 1962; Duelund, 2010). Until the early twentieth century, liberals largely regarded democracy with concern in fearing that unrestrained masses would show little respect for liberal rights and constitutional rules. In Europe, Marx and Engels presented a more radical picture of what was necessary to achieve true democracy, arguing for the overthrow of a society built on 18th-century liberal principles that seemed to foster social and economic inequalities’ (Meagher, 2010). Thus, in the final decade of the second millennium, the theory of democracy took a strong deliberative turn (Dryzek, 2002a). Evolving in response to the weaknesses of liberal democratic theory, deliberative democratic theory offers a critical perspective on institutions of contemporary liberal democratic states (Smith, 2003).

The major contemporary theorists, Jürgen Habermas, revived the idea of deliberation in our time giving it a more democratic foundation based on popular sovereignty (Holub, 1991). Habermas continued to develop his theory out of the Marxian tradition and defending a procedural interpretation of democracy combining elements of liberalism and republicanism focussing on public use of reason that is not state-centred (Habermas, 1994). Under the principles of equality and accessibility, Habermas’ idea of the public sphere is a mediating arena between private interests and public power. In this arena, a discursive interaction amongst private persons about matters of public concern is enacted through discourse without being determined or controlled by institutional power relations (Fraser, 1990; Holub, 1991). The central principle of deliberative democracy is the need to justify decisions made by citizens and their representatives (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). Hence, the legitimacy of deliberative democracy is ultimately subject to rational, unconstrained dialogue involving a plurality of agents, in a process that should be accessible to all citizens who are prepared and capable of autonomous choices (Mansbridge et al., 2012). Martin (2008b) describes the discursive form of dialogue in the context of deliberative democracy as civility, expressed through the use of moderate, respectful language, politeness and alignment to cultural and situational norms. Further, decisions that have been rationally justified must be honoured by citizens as they are binding for some period of time (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). In politics, most decisions made are not consensual. Therefore, deliberative democracy involves a dynamic process of continuous dialogue in which citizens can criticise previous decisions and citizens who disagreed with a decision in the first place are more likely to accept it if they see a chance to modify the decision in the future (ibid.).
3.1.1. Deliberative Path to Meaningful Involvement

The following section expounds how I characterise the deliberative path to meaningful involvement in this study. First, the positive qualities and appearance of deliberative democracy towards meaningful involvement in decision-making are pointed out. Second, this is followed by an examination of the influence of power on deliberative proceedings.

Building on Habermas framework, the deliberative path to meaningful involvement is characterised by a calmer and more consensus-driven decision-making. Scholars such as Dryzek (2005) favour deliberative proceedings for building bridges between citizens and decision-makers. Thus, deliberative proceedings and non-confrontational communication are valuable tools to strengthen relationships of opponents and subsequent cooperative behaviour in political discourses (Dryzek, 2005). Dodge (2009) examines how and through which paths civil society organisations transmit their policy ideas to decision makers, navigating through barriers of power relations in the deliberative system. Following, Dodge (2009, p.225) expounds, that deliberative democracy takes place in a range of public spheres that reach beyond 'the forum', the space of actual political decision-making and face-to-face deliberation. Although civil society actors participate in arenas of binding decision-making, such as governmental forums to transmit their policy ideas, the development of policy ideas, as well as a range of other deliberative activities, takes place through broad public discourse in the public sphere (Cohen and Arato, 1992).

Deliberative democracy aims to bracket the influence of power differentials in political outcomes through debating and exchanging arguments instead of applying threat or force to reach political agreements (Young, 2003). Thus, under ideal conditions of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness and publicity, deliberative democracy produces the most just policies (Young, 2002b). However, scholars often observe that in the real world democratic policy discussions do not occur under conditions free of unequal power relations, coercion and marginalisation (ibid.). In fact, over the twenties century the prevalence of particular interests embodied by centres of economic power, 'has touched a point of culmination with the contemporary arrogance of neoliberal strategies adopted by ruling classes all over the world' (Stamatis, 2001, p. 391). Therefore, critics of deliberative democracy argue that structural inequalities and entrenched relations of power influence the meaning and efficiency of deliberative democracy (Young, 1990; Sanders, 1997; Kadlec and Friedman, 2007). Opposing the Habermasian understanding of democratic discourse where everyone has equal opportunities for participation, Young (1990) and Simmons (2007) argue that the social context of situations or privileges granted to certain groups, often result in unequal power relations that affect the opportunity and level of citizen participation. However, Simmons (2007, p.7) continues that ‘all participation is not equal - encouraging citizens to contribute knowledge about how a policy will affect their community at the onset of a decision-making process is quite different from allowing citizens to respond to policies already determined’. Democratic participation, the 'kind of participation required for just policies’ can only occur when access and the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process is guaranteed to all affected parties (Young, 1990, p.91).

In this context, Fung (2005, p.11) identified 'deliberative' democrats who use force instead of discourse as justification to establish fairer and more inclusive deliberation as ‘deliberative activist’. 'Sometimes, forces more compelling than the better argument are necessary to establish fair and inclusive deliberation or the conditions that support such deliberation’ (Fung, 2005, p.11). Fung (2005) argues that deliberative activism offers an opportunity to practise deliberative democracy under circumstances of inequality and great hostility to reach more just and fair outcomes. However, the deliberative activist should deny the use of non-deliberative political methods until all 'reasonable efforts to persuade and institute fair, open, and inclusive deliberations fail’ (p.13).
3.2. Characterising Agonistic Pluralism

Counterpoising deliberative democracy aiming at rational consensus, Chantal Mouffe (2000) proposes the model of agonistic pluralism against many of the shortcomings identified in deliberative democracy. An agonistic democracy approach stresses the possible positive aspects of disruption using public spaces to openly address particular types of hegemonic political conflicts (ibid.). In deliberate democracy parties to political conflict ought to deliberate with each other and agreements that are policy satisfactory to all are reached through reasonable argument. Contrary, pluralistic agonists are reserved towards deliberation because from their point of view structural inequalities influence procedures and outcomes in democratic processes in favour of more powerful agents and thus reproduce injustice. (Young, 2003). Therefore, Mouffe (2000) addresses criticism to the concept of deliberative democracy for postulating that public spaces are characterised by rational consensus, without power relations and antagonism and thus for denying the crucial role of the conflictual dimension in the formation of collective identities. Hence, the agonistic view on democracy ‘acknowledges the real nature of its frontiers and recognises the forms of exclusion that they embody, instead of trying to disguise them under the veil of rationality or morality’ (Mouffe, 1999). The agonistic view on deliberation is a form of communication ‘stuck in neutral that does not recognise difference, partial in practice to well-educated white males’ (Dryzek, 2005, p.220). Hence, from the agonistic view deliberative democracy and its rational view on dialogue and the pursuit of consensus cannot handle polarising issues and profound differences that are accompanied by passion, because it is too restrained in the forms of communication it allows (ibid.). Certainly, one can project this description to the multifaceted challenges imposed by climate change and its globally polarised political negotiations. In Mouffe’s theory, ‘the agonistic struggle concerns the manner in which different demands can find political expression. When the system is blocked, (…) then those things manifest themselves in very many different ways’ (Hansen and Sonnichsen, 2014, p.268).

According to Mouffe (1999), it is important to distinguish between antagonism and agonism. ‘Antagonism refers to a type of conflict where there was no possibility of rational solution’ (Hansen and Sonnichsen, 2014, p. 267). Antagonism entails an ineradicable conflict between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that cannot be overcome (Erman, 2009). Contrary to antagonism portraying disagreeing parties in political relations as enemies, in agonism people who disagree are seen as adversaries (Hansen and Sonnichsen, 2014). Thus, from the agonistic perspective, even if disagreement amongst adversaries is inevitable and no rational solution can be found, there is a common symbolic space where conflictual consensus exists, and the legitimacy of the opponent’s claims is accepted (ibid.). Hence, conflictual consensus in that sense is based on a general conformity to a set of ethical and political principles but includes a disagreement amongst the opponents about the interpretation of those principles. This real confrontation takes place following certain procedural guidelines that are accepted by the conflict parties (ibid.).

3.2.1. Disruptive-Activism Path to Meaningful Involvement

The following section describes the characteristics of the disruptive path to meaningful involvement used in the context of this study. First, I describe the concept of agonistic pluralism in the context of activism. Second, the advantages of activism overcoming the disadvantage of deliberation are described. Finally, possible deliberative impacts of disruptive proceeding are laid out based on Smith (2015).

Building on Mouffe’s framework of agonistic pluralism, the disruptive-activism path to meaningful involvement is characterised in the following terms. Mouffe sees an interwoven relationship between politics and art by arguing that ‘there is an aesthetic dimension in the political and there is a political dimension in art’ (Mouffe, 2007,p.4). Social movement activists aim to fundamentally challenge the moral order of their societies which consequently triggers conflicts with existing social norms (Jacobsson and Lindblom, 2013). Activism has the means to question the dominant hegemony in democratic politics (ibid.). Therefore, according to the agonistic approach critical art is art that stimulates dissensus, uncovering what the prevailing consensus tends to disregard (Mouffe, 2007). Hence, whereas discursive and calmer proceedings can be easily ignored more disruptive practices attract media attention (Martin, 2008b). It is constituted by a manifold of ‘artistic practices aiming at
"giving a voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony" (Mouffe, 2007, p.4-5).

According to Ganesh and Zoller (2012) activism is often seen as contrary to collaboration-oriented dialogue and equated with aggressive and violent protest behaviour, thus being incapable of a collaborative dialogue. Instead of privileging this consensus-orientated view on dialogue Ganesh and Zoller (2012, p.86.) argue that an agonistic perspective on dialogue is ‘most helpful for theorising activism as a significant source of social change’. However, the deliberative standpoint discards activism for being unreasonable due to its reliance on disruptive and emotional appeals to create attention and communicate specific ideas to a wider public, instead of engaging in reasonable political argumentation (Young, 2003). Sanders (1997, p.14) however, argues that democratic discussion that is ‘rational, moderate, and not selfish implicitly excludes public talk that is impassioned, extreme and the product of particular interest’. Therefore, from an activist point of view, engaging in such oppositional activities such as direct actions or large and loud demonstrations is considered as more efficient to promote justice than taking the effort to find an agreement with the supporters or beneficiaries of the existing power structures (Young, 2003). Considering more extreme forms of activism including violence, Martin, (2008b) and Smith & Brassett (2013) argue that those forms of disruption are not necessary more effective. In fact, more drastic, confrontational and violent measures can even lead to counterproductive effects and hinder to reach the activist’s goals, because the use of ‘violence reduces the moral advantage of the attacker, which is why terrorism alienates observers’ (Martin, 2008b, p.30).

Often the entrance to deliberative settings is rather tightly controlled, which causes that the interest of many affected by the decision does receive no voice or representation (ibid.). Indeed, Martin (2008a) observes that channels for official deliberation may be suffering from the following built-in disadvantages for citizens:

1. Slowness of the process that leads to fading urgency of issues
2. Procedural focus on technicalities instead of issues of public interest
3. Extensive time and money investments needed for participation
4. Channels convey impression of dispensable justice but have the tendency to favour sides with higher money and power influence

In this case, protests escape the confines of official channels by drawing attention to ‘important information, contesting disrespectful narratives or policies, or correcting inequalities or exclusions that distort public debate and collective decisions’ (Smith, 2015, p.2). ‘Often activists make public noise outside when deliberation is supposedly taking place on the inside’ using ‘the power of shame and exposure to pressure deliberators to widen their agenda and include attention to more interests’ (Young, 2003, pp.105-108). These are reasons why according to Jacobsson and Lindblom (2013) emotion work carried out by activists plays an essential role in the success of meaningful involvement generally and social movements particularly.

Following, Smith (2015) argues that disruptive protests are usually non-deliberative, but they can have deliberative impacts depending on the context and state of the existing deliberative system. Hence, not all types of protests should be categorised as non-deliberative, as certain types of activism might have intended or unintended impacts of stimulating deliberation in the public sphere (ibid.). Under this assumption, he developed three categories of deliberative protest such as deliberative, partially-deliberative, or non-deliberative, depending on the degree to which they follow the conduct-related norms associated with deliberative action (ibid.). Deliberative disruption defines protests as ‘reflective, respectful, and dialogic contributions to public deliberation’ (p.5). In fact, Smith (2016, p.163) even argues that ‘certain forms of peaceful protest can be conducted in a way that approximates the features of deliberative action to a surprising degree’. Contrary, non-deliberative disruption includes protest that is ‘not carried out as a contribution to reflective, respectful or dialogic deliberation’ involving elements such as coercion or disrespectful rhetoric (Smith, 2015, p.6). Finally, partially-deliberative protest only embodies certain, but not all features of the deliberative conduct (ibid.). Further, he argues that depending on the context and the state of the deliberative system, disruptive protests can have different deliberating impacts (ibid.).
3.3. Utilisation of Deliberative and Agonistic Framework

The previous review of literature clearly stressed the divide and polarisation between proponents of the deliberative and the agonistic approach. In fact, the number of scholars focussing on the reconcilability of deliberative and agonistic forms of political citizen participation is limited. Therefore, this research aims to explore the commensurability of both theoretical approaches in a concrete and defined setting such as the international climate change negotiations COP22.

Building upon the different typologies of political participation and civic engagement such as Ekman and Amnå, (2012) presented in Chapter 2, the frameworks of deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism can be linked to the characteristics of each path of political participation identified above. In fact, with the help of these typologies, different strategies within the deliberative and agonistic path can be determined. Hence, based on this typology discursive and formal proceedings of political participation can be associated with characteristics of deliberative democracy, whereas informal or coercive forms of political participation such as different spectra of activism display characteristics of the agonistic pluralism framework.

The general mode of participation by the negotiating parties at the climate change conference follows a deliberative, consensus-based approach and one could assume that the technical complexities and multinational implications benefit from these deliberative proceedings. Nevertheless, civil society and especially youth participants choose disruptive, agonistic approaches at the conference venue and beyond to address the controversial and emotional topics discussed at the conference. In fact, youth participants at the climate negotiations have developed strategies to conflate both paths of involvement adjusted to their needs. Therefore, the application of these theoretical frameworks to the climate change context is compelling in the sense of outlining the different advantages and disadvantages of both frameworks in a practical context.
4. Case Description

The following chapter contains a description of the case considered in this study. First, an introduction to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and role of the civil society at the yearly Conference of the Parties is presented. Second, the role of the YOUNGO constituency is described followed by a typology of youth participation at COPs.

4.1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

To address global issues of climate change, international climate change policy began to be discussed in earnest at high-level meetings during the late 1980s (Nulman, 2016). However, it took until the Earth Summit in 1992 until countries signed up to the UNFCCC, only including a loose non-legally binding commitment for emission stabilisation at 1990 levels by 2000 (Caniglia, Brulle and Szasz, 2015). Although the commitments made at the Earth Summit were less than sufficient to reduce global emissions, the UNFCCC finally provided a framework for facilitating negotiations for stronger commitments in the future. Hence, to further negotiate country’s commitments, the UNFCCC hosts an annual Conference of the Parties (COP) since 1995. Already at COP3 in Kyoto stronger commitments were negotiated resulting in the Kyoto Protocol (Nulman, 2016). This protocol mainly grew out of a compromise between the US and the EU mainly focussing on emission reduction by developed countries (ibid.). In 2005, the Kyoto Protocol entered into force without the ratification of the US (ibid.). At COP15 in Copenhagen hopes for a new more ambitious agreement burst, when the conference failed to produce such an agreement (ibid.). Recently, the adoption of the Paris Agreement at COP21 in the year 2015 has been a significant political milestone on an international level. However, now it has to be seen whether the ambitions can be converted into concrete actions. Therefore, the overall theme of the COP22 in Marrakech in the year 2016 was to accelerate these climate actions to be able to adhere the 2°C or even the 1.5°C degree goal.

4.2. Civil Society and Civil Society Organisations at COP

Civil society plays a central role in enhancing trust, choice and virtues of democracy by promoting the emergence of public spheres which enable citizens to expose the injustice of uneven power relations in the state and economic power (Young, 2002a). ‘Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power’ (IPCC, 2007, p.713). Activities of self-organisation and involvement in civil society in political processes offer ways to overcome marginalisation and injustice by addressing social, economic and political inequalities that are unlikely to be addressed by legislators or policy makers (Young, 2002a).

The climate change movement presented through many civil society organisations worked on influencing the COPs from the beginning (Nulman, 2016). Also at COP22, numerous civil society organisations were present trying to push governments to take action in implementing the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2016a). Most of the civil society space at the conference is claimed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international NGO networks such as the Climate Action Network (CAN) or the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice (DCJ). All of these organisations are actively involved in attending sessions and exchanging views with state and nonstate actors since the early days of the convention (United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, 2003).

4.2.1. Restrictions and Negotiating Entry

NGOs are essential elements for shaping the societal and policy debate through awareness-raising, advocacy, promoting transparency and assistance in policy services (IPCC, 2007; United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, 2003). To acquire access to the conference venue, civil society organisations have to gain so-called observer accreditation. Compared to other meetings of UN agencies, accreditation especially for smaller, local NGOs is rather difficult to get, as the UNFCCC is a specialised area and the secretariat is focussed on the international character of the applications.
Besides the official accreditation barriers for gaining access to the negotiation space, the policy influence also depends on the experience and monetary resources of the NGOs. Therefore, the extent of policy influence by traditional well-resourced international operating groups like WWF or Greenpeace can certainly be measured as higher compared to relatively new established under-resourced groups, such as many newly formed youth groups (Newell, 2005). Especially Global South based groups are often under-represented in the negotiation space due to the lack of resources required to enter and meaningfully participate in these meetings (ibid.).

Nonstate actors are given the opportunity for one formal intervention at the opening and closing plenary session at each UNFCCC conference (Caniglia, Brulle and Szasz, 2015). Besides this intervention opportunity NGOs only have restricted influence through the informal path of political participation applying traditional lobbying, shame-and-blame strategies or watchdog roles (Newell, 2008). Nonetheless, the access of nonstate actors to the decision-making table is often restricted by governments, as those governments are accountable to the obligations made under the UNFCCC treaties (Caniglia, Brulle and Szasz, 2015). However, over the years NGOs developed a toolkit of strategies to influence the decision-making process, through longstanding informal relationships of trust with party- and non-party members (Caniglia, Brulle and Szasz, 2015). Especially, youth organisations struggle with their levels of conference experience, monetary resources and lack of long-term informal relationship to government parties.

4.3. Youth participation at UNFCCC

4.3.1. YOUNGO

Many times, youth has been a major catalyst for change within social movements around the world, mobilising for goals such as educational equity or environmental justice (McCants, 2007). Youth participation in the decision-making process can be a powerful accelerator of climate action and valuable source for experiences and leadership skills of young people in the future (Narksompong and Limjirakan, 2015).

YOUNGO is the UNFCCC observer constituency of youth non-governmental organisations. YOUNGO is one of nine constituencies officially recognised by the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2016a). In fact, it is one of the smaller constituencies only making up for 3.1 percent of all registered NGOs in 2016 as shown in figure 2 below (ibid).

**Fig. 2.** Constituency affiliation of admitted non-governmental organisations (UNFCCC, 2016).
Youth is defined as the period between childhood and adulthood (UNDESA, 2014). Whereas, most UN entities define youth as a segment of the population aged between 15 and 24 years of age many international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) determine the age of the youth group as ranging from 18 to 35 years (UNDP, 2014; McCants, 2007). Hence, the understanding of youth within YOUNGO is based on a looser age definition including all young people under the age of 30 years of age. Young people have been participating in the UNFCCC negotiations since COP5 in 1999. However, not until COP15/CMP5 youths have been granted with the official constituency status (UNFCCC, 2010). Since this point, YOUNGO is in close contact with the UNFCCC secretariat, working on enhancing effective youth participation in the process and ensuring that the procedural guidelines are met (UNFCCC, 2017). With the status of an official UNFCCC constituency YOUNGO has the opportunity to address the plenary officially, make submissions, attend workshops, meet officials of the convention, arrange side events, giving interviews, etc. (UNFCCC, 2017). The UNFCCC acknowledges that youth participation adds moral/equity-based values, as well as direct and indirect value to the outcome of the negotiations (UNFCCC, 2010). During the Young and Future Generations Day at COP22, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Patricia Espinosa said:

‘Young people want to be involved in the process, and we value that interest. It is central to all the questions we address here’ (UNFCCC, 2016b).

Following the deliberative path, youths are included in advocacy and lobbying activities making their voices heard through dialogue and communication with the decision makers such as delegations. Contrary the agonistic path can be characterised through direct protest and activism activities organised by youths, often in combination with creating media attention. Media attention, such as press conferences also seem to be used by deliberative proceedings. The fast development of social media offers an enormous opportunity for young people especially in developing countries to better engage in the decision-making process by spreading their ideas in forums more ‘dynamic and open to change’ (Das Gupta et al., 2014, p. 98). Overall, formal more deliberative approaches seem to receive higher recognition and acceptance by youth and politicians and, until recently, also by research (Maesele, 2015). Contrary, the execution of more disruptive approaches on the conference venue are a priori very limited by the UNFCCC secretariat. Despite the claim of Wang and Piazza (2016) arguing that activism in political settings is less likely to witness both violent and nonviolent disruptive tactics.

4.3. Typology of Youth Participation at COP

Young people follow diverse paths to meaningful involvement at COPs. Deliberative, as well as disruptive forms, can be identified as well has hybrid forms sharing both characteristics. Youth participation at the COPs generally can be mapped as formal and informal political participation as described by Ekman and Amnå (2012). Youth Participation centred around the UNFCCC Climate Change Conference takes place in three arenas: Blue Zone, Green Zone and outside the conference venue.

The Blue Zone is the area where the actual political negotiations take place. Therefore, the Blue Zone area is highly restricted to party and nonstate actors with official accreditation. All forms of youth participation can be identified in this main negotiation space. In this area, the UNFCCC secretariat has established strict rules that regulate nonstate actor participation and interventions at the negotiations and certainly limit the level of influence on meaningful involvement of youths and other nonstate actors.

The Green Zone is a space where civil society and other participants can undertake other climate change related activities. As most of the lobbying and advocacy activities take place in the Blue Zone hosting most of the party members, the Green Zone is a place of rather informal youth political participation, through media and communication activities and activism. Important to note is that also inside the Green Zone participants must obey certain rules establishes by the UNFCCC secretariat.

Outside the conference area, youths do not have a direct influence on the political decision-making process due to the physical separation to the conference venue. However, youths may undertake either
legal activism or acts of civil disobedience at these sites to raise public awareness and thus put pressure on the parties in the negotiation space. The following table 3 gives a typology framework about the activities, strategies and aims attributed to the different path of youth involvement at COP.

The table is orientated on the previous typology of youth engagement in Chapter 2, lending terms and structure from youth typologies of Ekman and Anná, (2012, p.296), Connelly et al. (2012,p.78) and Newell (2005, p.99-114). Complementing the deliberative and agonistic path of involvement an intermediate path has been identified, which describes the use of combined strategies from both the deliberative and agonistic path.

Deliberative strategies at the conference can be defined as official Youth Delegates, youths engaged in policy work, and lobbying. There is a procedural difference between official Youth Delegates nominated by the countries having Party Badges and youths involved in policy and lobbying proceedings obtaining an Observer Badge. Although all paths pursue deliberative strategies, Youth Delegates with Party Badges gain access to almost all areas of the conference venue, including negotiations that are only open for parties. Contrary, youths accredited with Observer Badges are mainly denied access to those closed negotiations, limiting the ability to allege lobbying and policy activities. Youths participating in formal political participation are considered as Inside-insider as described by Newell (2005, p.99-114). These forms of participation include official Youth Delegates, YOUNGO Plenary interventions and some forms of YOUNGO lobbying done by experienced youths as they have direct access to the delegations and the decision-making. Youth participation under the Inside-outsider approach according to Newell (2005, p.99-114) includes most of the YOUNGO constituency’s work, such as lobbying, working in policy working groups, organising press conferences or meeting with county delegations. Through discrete lobbying and influencing behind the scenes, the aim of these activities is to advocate for youth policy suggestions or demand more ambitious climate actions.

Youths following the agonistic path are involved in legal highly restricted actions at the conference venue as well as in media and social media outreach activities. Youths engaging in the agonistic path are usually accredited with observer status. Coming back to Newell's framework (2005, p.99-114) these forms are referred to as Outside-outsider approach, as they are questioning the framing of the current negotiations. Finally, the intermediate path displays efforts of youths participating in various activities ranging from informal political participation to legal activism.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATH</th>
<th>Political Participation (Formal Path)</th>
<th>Activism (Informal Path)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERMEDIATE PATH</td>
<td>Navigation between both extremes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION CLASSIFICATION</td>
<td>Inside-insider</td>
<td>Inside-outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>• Official Youth Delegate</td>
<td>• YOUNGO lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Plenary intervention</td>
<td>• YOUNGO Policy working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some forms of YOUNGO lobbying</td>
<td>• YOUNGO Press conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth meetings with country delegations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Media outreach (Social Media, Blog)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>• Access to delegations</td>
<td>• Informal contact and influence through discreet lobbying behind the scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal diplomatic Lobbying</td>
<td>• Use of media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support to like-minded delegations</td>
<td>• More confrontational lobbying styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>• Advance climate change action within existing frameworks</td>
<td>• Advance more drastic climate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to decision-making</td>
<td>• Fundamentally questioning how issues are currently addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Direct influence on negotiations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Typology of political youth engagement at COP22.
5. Methods

This chapter represents the methodology used for the study. The primary method chosen for this research is a case study design, where empirical data was collected through participant observation, informal- and semi-structured interviews. The following sections will present a detailed description of the research design, data collection and analysis including the limitations imposed by the methodology chosen. Further, an elaboration on the role of the theoretical framework applied to this study will be given as, well as a glossary of the key terms and abbreviations, which can be found at the beginning of the paper.

5.1. Research Design

This research is inherently qualitative since the study aims to give insights into the interrelations of different paths to meaningful youth involvement in decision-making processes. In qualitative research descriptive data of people’s own written or spoken words and observable behaviour is collected in natural settings, aiming to understand people in their frames of experiencing reality (DeVault et al., 2016; Creswell, 2013).

A single instrumental case study approach has been chosen. In this method, the researcher focuses on one issue and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this topic (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, the study examines meaningful youth involvement in the case of the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference, COP22. According to Creswell (2013), the case study approach explores a bounded system over time. This process is done through comprehensive, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information and producing a case description and case-based themes. Thus, in this study, empirical data collected through informal and in-depth interviews as well as participant observations was used to portray a case description and to originate occurring themes. The major advantage of the case approach is that it reveals how a multiplicity of factors have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of the research and that might not be known in advance (Thomas, 2003). Further, case research can help to derive richer more contextualised and authentic interpretation of the studied phenomenon (Bhattacherjee, 2012). However, limitations to this approach involve missing experimental control and the fact that only at a considerable risk of error, generalisation or principles can be drawn from one case to the other (Thomas, 2003; Bhattacherjee, 2012).

5.2. Data Collection

A case study design can include several methods of data collection. Hence, the data collected derived from participant observations in and outside the conference venue during the first week at COP22, as well as from informal and in-depth interviews conducted during COP22 and months after the event.

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of a certain phenomenon to identify its socially constructed meanings and the context in which the phenomenon occurs (Hennink et al., 2011). ‘This requires the researcher to be in the research field, to establish continuing, fruitful relationships with respondents and through theoretical contemplation to address the research problem in depth’ (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006, p.483). If participants are selected according to particular characteristics that contribute to the deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon, only a small number of participants is required, in order to be able to explore the issues in depth (Hennink et al., 2011). Ultimately, the number of study participants is determined by information saturation (ibid.). Thus, to identify enough participants, the two main selection criteria have been gender and country origin. Therefore, the research sought to conduct 30 in-depth interviews where 50 percent of the interviewees should be originated from the Global South and 50 percent from the Global North. Additionally, a balance of age, experience and type of involvement at the conference amongst the interviewees should be reached. Thus, the saturation of information could be determined at a final number of 30 participants.

Consequently, most of the interview partners have been selected and contacted already at COP22 through heterogeneous sampling. Hence, most of the participants were contacted during the daily morning briefings of YOUNGO, in YOUNGO working group meetings, during youth press
conferences, actions and the Young and Future Generations Day. Other participants have been contacted three months after the conference through snowball sampling. *Heterogeneous sampling* is a strategy of purposeful sampling aiming to capture and describe the central themes that cross a large amount of variation (Patton, 2002). Applying heterogeneous sampling to small scale samples has the advantage that any common patterns that emerge out of great variation derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity, like ‘a theme song emerged from, all the scattered noise’ (Patton, 2002, p. 235). Thus, those emerging patterns are particularly interesting and valuable to capture the core experience and central, shared dimension of a phenomenon (ibid.). Therefore, the aim of applying this sampling method to this case was that it offered the possibility to capture emerging themes out of heterogeneous dimensions such as representing a balance in gender, global origin, the level of experience at the conference, type of political involvement or activism during the negotiations.

*Snowball sampling* is a method of participant recruitment particular appropriate to identify participants with specific characteristics or rare experience, who may be difficult to find through other sampling methods (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Thus, applying the snowball method, I used the network of interviewees to get in contact with new potential interviewees from geographical regions, which had not been represented in my participant selection yet. Accordingly, for this study, the concern that the snowball technique potentially limits the diversity of informants as stated in DeVault et al. (2016) can be refuted.

Table 4 and table 5 give an overview of the participant classification of the unstructured pilot interviews and the in-depth interviews. Both tables are structured according to characteristics such as global origin and gender. The column *Type of Involvement* indicates different involvement characteristics ranging from formal participation in the process such as *Youth Delegate* to informal types of participation such as *Activism*. The column *Conference Experience* shows the number of COPs visited in the past. Participants with *low* experience only visited the conference once. Participants with *medium* levels of experience had up to three years of COP experience. *High* levels of experience indicate more than three years of experience at the conference.

Table 4. Classification of pilot interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Global Origin</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Conference Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Youth Delegate</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Diverse - Mainly Lobbying, Media</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Youth Delegate</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Diverse - Mainly Lobbying</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Global North</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Global North</td>
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Table 5. Classification of in-depth interviews.
5.2.1. Interview Design

To gather views from different actors on the topics of concern, the main data collection method used was semi-structured, in-depth interviews with youth participants. According to DeVault et al. (2016) in-depth qualitative interviewing include face-to-face encounters between researcher and informants with the objective to understand the informant’s lived experience of a situation and the meaning of that experience expressed in their own words. Further, this very personal interview technique models a conversation between equals, rather than a formal questions-and-answer exchange (ibid.). Certainly, it needs to be mentioned that I can be counted to the sample that I am studying. Having attended the conference myself and belonging to the same age range as my interviewees served as trust building foundation during the interviewing process which eventuated in very open and honest conversations. However, this interpersonal connection is inevitably biased, which needs to be recognised and controlled by the interviewer. Therefore, most of the youths interviewed have been unknown to the researcher before the study.

The interviewing process took place approximately three months after the initial conference in Marrakech. At this point, the interviewees were scattered across the globe. Figure 3 gives an overview of the country of origin of each study participant. Due to the spatial distance, interviews were conducted via internet based communication applications and video calling such as Skype. The advantages of this method were that participants from all over the world could be included in the study and that the interviews could take place at any time convenient to the participants. However, conducting the interviews three months after the conference instead of directly at the conference bears the risk of recall bias (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Interviewees reflect and recall behaviour, experience and motivations differently in their memory and certain immediate emotions might not be retrievable anymore (ibid.). The average interview took between 1 to 1.5 hours. Interviewees were asked for permission to record the call prior to the interview, and all interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed in English. The interview guide included open-ended questions using a mixture of the converging-question and the response-guided question approach. The converging-question strategy is designed to start with broad, open-ended questions to learn what is most relevant to the respondent in relation to the topic, followed by more sharply pointed questions (DeVault, Bogdan and Taylor, 2016). Consequently, the interview guide started with broad introductory questions about the personal background and the motivation for participation at the conference, followed by more precise questions about the type of participation, the personal definition of meaningful involvement and reflections about youth participation in general. Additionally, the response-guided strategy was applied in which ‘the interviewer begins with a prepared question and then spontaneously creates follow-up queries..."
that are logical extensions of the answer the interviews has given to answer the opening question’ (DeVault et al., 2016, p. 104). This strategy was especially helpful to adapt the predefined questions spontaneously to new emerging themes that were relevant to the research. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2.2. Observation Design

Moreover, I collected field-based data from participant observations under real-world conditions during the first week of the conference. Whereas the situations for the in-depth interviews are specifically arranged for the research and the researcher has to rely on the verbal accounts of how people act and what they feel, the advantage of participant observations is, that data is collected directly in natural field situations (DeVault, Bogdan and Taylor, 2016). Direct observations serve the purpose of increased understanding of the context in which people interact and allow an inquirer to be open, discovery oriented, and inductive, which is essential to a holistic perspective (Patton, 2002). ‘No other method can provide the depth of understanding that comes from direct observing people and listening to what they have to say at the scene’ (DeVault et al., 2016, p. 104). As I have been part of the conference as a youth participant myself, the role of the observer in this study is a participant observer, combining my own experience in the setting and well as collecting field notes data from own eye-witnessed observation and talking to participants (Patton, 2002). As part of the observation process, three informal and unstructured pilot interviews were conducted already during the conference COP22. According to Patton (2002), unstructured interviews are a natural extension of participant observation because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork. The first pilot interviews increased the understanding of the research context and served to test and adapt the interview guide for the main interviewing process.

5.3. Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis converts data into findings, but for this transformation process more than just one formula exists (Patton, 2002). Material collected through qualitative research is invariably unstructured and unwieldy, and it is the task of the analyst to detect, define, categorise, theorise, explain, explore and map the collected data (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). Therefore, to start with, interview transcriptions and observations were compiled and organised in a formal database using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. For analysing the data from the conducted interviews, I applied a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method, which facilitates the identification and analysis of patterns and themes across the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). ‘A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Following, during the disassembling procedure data is broken down into smaller fragments to identify possible, in the reassembling process emerging patterns and themes (Yin, 2011). Finally, the interpretation of qualitative data involves a process of abstraction beyond the codes and themes (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, new narratives will be created through the analysis of the reassembled material. In this study I have followed the six phases thematic analysis process introduced by (Braun and Clarke, 2006):

Familiarisation with the data

In this first phase, the relevant data set for this research has been generated through the transcriptions of 30 in-depth and three informal interviews, using the online available Express Scribe Transcription Software. Due to the large amount of collected data through the semi-structured interviews, in some interviews only data relevant to the research topic has been included in the transcriptions. Occasionally, unstable internet reception and the fact that not every respondent’s first language is English were factors that caused inaudibility of data recorded. Further, although the language barrier must be accounted as a limitation to this method, most participants were used to speak about this context in English, due to their experience in the conference. The transcription process followed an intimate familiarisation with the content.
Coding
In this phase, initial codes were generated from the data, which identify key features of the data and were considered meaningful to answer the research questions. Afterwards, all codes were collated with the relevant data extracts.

Searching for themes
Further, coding and collated data were examined to identify significant broader patterns or potential themes. Themes were identified both through inductive and deductive ways while searching for emerging patterns in the raw data on the one hand, but also considering references to the theoretical frameworks of deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism on the other hand.

Reviewing themes
In this phase, the previously defined themes were evaluated against the dataset to examine to which level the defined themes answer the research question. In this step, a thematic map supported the identification of the themes, the connections amongst them and the overall story that they tell about the data.

Defining and naming themes
At this point, themes were further specified and defined by determining the scope and focus of each theme. Further, an informative name was given to each theme.

Writing up
Finally, in this last phase, the context, the analytical narrative and the data extracts were related back to the theoretical frameworks and the research questions.

5.4. Role of Theory
Qualitative research covers contextual conditions which influence human events it desires to explain these events through existing concepts (Yin, 2011). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research starts with assumptions and the use of theoretical frameworks that inform the study of the research problems. Thus, for contextualisation, the findings in this study are discussed in light of the theoretical frameworks of deliberative democracy vs. agonistic pluralism.

5.5. Limitations
The main focus of this research was to map the two arguably most conflicting paths to meaningful involvement: deliberative and agonistic proceedings inside the negotiation space at COP22. Therefore, due to the scope of my master thesis, I am not able to thoroughly incorporate activism and youth engagement outside the COP arena into my research. Since the time frame for the field research was limited to the first week of the two-week conference, it can be assumed that this had an influence on the selection of participants and data gathered through observations. Certainly, this is a limitation to this method. Despite the effort of selecting a balanced, non-biased participant group, it was challenging to identify sufficient young people from Global South countries at the conference, who were willing to participate in the research. Therefore, a fully balanced participant sampling based on continent/region, gender, age and experiences was only partially accomplished, which might affect the outcomes of the study. Further, as this study specifically focussed on youths being active in the Blue and Green Zone of the UNFCCC conference, more radical youths that are not willing to talk to politicians have not been considered in this study.

Moreover, it would have been interesting to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations of youths to engage with one or the other path. Further, demographic factors, such as age, gender, or country of origin could not be included in the analysis and evaluation. Especially the difference in involvement strategies between youths from the Global North and Global South have been raised to the surface within my study and would be therefore interesting to explore in future research.
6. Results and Analysis

This paper has established the need for closer analysis of different paths of youth participation in the UNFCCC and has identified gaps in the literature about the reconcilability, commensurability and effectiveness of the dialogic, deliberative path and the disruptive, agonistic path of youth engagement at COPs. The first section of the following chapter starts with a presentation of the enculturation process of young people at COP. After that, different participation paths utilised by youths are described. These include first deliberative proceedings such as inclusion as Youth Delegates as well as lobbying and policy engagement. Second, agonistic proceedings are described including inside and outside activism. Third, the intermediate path, including media engagement and cumulative strategies, is pointed out. In this context, different approaches, connections and reasons are presented why young people choose to participate in certain paths aiming to reach meaningful involvement. The second section of this chapter outlines an empirical definition of meaningful youth involvement at COP22. The presented results are sourced from consolidated data gathered through participant observation, pilot- and in-depth interviews.

6.1. Motivation for Involvement

Before elaborating on the different paths of involvement chosen by youths at COP22, it is important to understand the motivations of youths for being involved in climate change decision-making. Interview participants have been asked to state their motivations for involvement and attendance at the conference. The overall narrative to this question is centred around the responsibility and willingness of the young generation to actively influence the decision-making process today to ‘shape the future’ (P14, Global North, Diverse; P5, Global North, Policy).

‘This is over said, but this is the right thing to say, and it is the overall narrative, definitely because we are the future (…). We are in the middle of our lives, and we are getting into our future, so we want to secure the future for us’ (P28, Global South, Activism).

P13 (Global North, Policy) emphasises that youths are more ‘visionary’, which P7 (Global South, Activism) sees as a reason why young people’s voices have the ‘highest ambitions’ and demands for ‘radical change’. P9 (Global North, Policy) points out that young people at the conference have more ‘capacity’ and ‘passion’ to implement change, as they choose to attend the conference voluntarily. Generally, motivations of youths might vary from a desire to actively participate in the decision-making process to the intention of forming global connections and capacity building. Especially for many youths from the Global South attending the conferences is about raising ‘international attention’ within the global community and to ‘increase the environmental awareness’ in their countries of origin (P27, Global South, Media). For some, attending the conference is yet about raising awareness that the climate problem is a matter of existence for their nations (P27, Global South, Media; P25, Global South, Diverse). This issue is also stated by P28 (Global South, Activism):

‘To make sure that everyone knows what the Marshall Islands and the other small Pacific Islands are. The message that I released was that we exist and that climate change is erasing the fact that we are an existing Nation.’

Summing up, one of the pilot interview participants I3 (Global North, Activism), who defines himself as a ‘secret activist’ (a person he describes as someone taking a spiritual perspective on the conference) stresses his motivation for joining as followed:

‘We are a generation of change. Here at COP I see that we are intergenerational change, the older generation might not have done the best, and they brought us to this point, and that was history, that was supposed to be like that, and it happened. I am not here to blame anyone. That is why I see that we have to work as a generation of change. We have to use the wisdom of the older generation and energy and creativity of the young generations.’
6.2. Enculturation

I identify enculturation in the context of the COPs as the acquisition of and customization to rules, norms and procedures of the negotiation space (Scott, 2015). The following section describes the relationship between the degree of enculturation and chosen participation strategy and how the level of enculturation affects the decision to choose an involvement path. First, it is outlined how the transition of youth participation from predominantly passive and observing roles changes with increasing enculturation and knowledge to more active engagement strategies. Second, I present the aspect of knowledge and its relation to the choice of participation approach.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 strict rules and procedural guidelines restrict the free navigation of youths at the venue. Thus, the process of enculturation and acquainting to these rules and norms plays a dominating role for youths entering the conference for the first time and affects their choice of participation strategy. Many young participants were ‘completely overwhelmed’ by the level of procedural and contextual complexity they faced when entering the conference venue and negotiation for the first time (P21, Global South, Diverse; P5, Global North, Policy). In fact, participants who are new to the conference might ‘need one COP to really understand how things are going. Only in the second year you then might be able to work on your own’ (P26, Global South, Diverse). This is also emphasised by P22, (Global South, Activism) who has been attending COPs for many years: ‘You need to go to the second one [COP] to have really good and effective participation where you feel empowered and ready to do stuff’. Further, the overwhelming experience leads to the fact that many youths are not following a specific strategy during their first attendance at COP. Instead, they rather take a passive role while acquiring knowledge about the process and procedures itself through observing and listening (P19, Global South, Diverse). Moreover, they follow different events aiming to get to know other participants and to explore their role and opportunities of engagement with the process (P9, Global North, Policy). The enculturation process also involves learning the technical and legal language used by the negotiators and experts at the conference which certainly displays a barrier of youth involvement (P28, Global South, Activism), as in:

‘The language of the UNFCCC is very difficult to understand. You have to learn, to take classes or to be very educated to be able to understand it’ (P20, Global South, Activism).

Additionally, not only the technical words and language but also the content knowledge about the issues discussed hinders youth engagement concerning certain strategies (P9, Global North, Policy). In this context, the Conference of the Youth (COY) which is a conference organised by youths for youths each year ultimately before the COP serves as a valuable tool for capacity building. Especially inexperienced youths who are new to the negotiation space engage in informal participation strategies, such as activism that seems to be a point of entry to youth participation (P4, Global North, Media). Engagement in activism does not necessarily premise in-depth knowledge about a topic, language used, or the procedural rules (P26, Global South, Diverse). This is because actions often require a larger group of participants to be visible in the negotiation space, which makes it easy for rather inexperienced youths to join and gradually acquire knowledge about the process or topic while participating. Thus, activism can be a tool for these youths who are new to the process to ramp up their involvement levels, as described by P9 (Global North, Policy) who started her involvement at COP in rather agonistic proceedings:

‘It was very hard to engage with the negotiators, but there was a lot of outside stuff going on, so I found myself at participating in the actions and various protests.’

It is observed that increasing knowledge about the process leads to more active and participatory involvement regardless the choice of participation strategy. Negotiators require young people to have a certain amount of knowledge and ‘expertise’ to be willing to involve youths in the decision-making process or within their delegations (P24, Global South, Diverse). Therefore, more sophisticated knowledge about the processes and language may lead to a higher tendency to engage in formal, deliberative proceeding as indicated by P9 (Global North, Policy),
At the first COP, I had a general, overall understanding and knowledge how everything works and what I was interested in and how that works. But I did not feel knowledgeable and that I deeply understood everything.

This was connected to feelings of incompetence and inadequacy on the part of youth participants, who reported unease around having to ‘talk in sessions or meet with people, because I just found that I did not have the background to have constructive conversations or even being able to offer something’ (P9, Global North, Policy). Consequently, legal and technical knowledge about the topics discussed on the negotiation table influences the type of participation chosen. Hence, youths with more technical expertise tend to participate in more deliberative approaches that involve close relationships and interactions with the negotiators in settings like lobbying for a specific youth policy suggestion, attending briefings with country delegations or participating in panel discussions with power holders.

I have roots in activism, but as I grew up, I somehow felt that in all these processes that policy is really important (P18, Global South, Diverse).

As the impact of youth at the conference increases with higher levels of experience and routine about the norms and rules of the processes and topics discussed, meaningful youth engagement requires continuity and long-term engagement of youths in the decision-making process (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate). P10 (Global North, Diverse) who has been attending COP for seven years elaborates further on this issue. She talks about the high fluctuation rates of youths at the negotiations, which is caused by the fact that many young people ‘only go once or twice to the negotiations’ and do not attend the conference on a yearly basis or over a longer period of years. ‘It is hard to get continuity in the process’ and to the organisation of YOUNGO (ibid.). Therefore, this reduces the effectiveness of YOUNGO, as much time needs to be spent on capacity building of new and inexperienced youths. Whereas people in other constituencies who have participated for ‘years and know each other and how to work with each other, young people need to renew their relationships every year’, because of these low return rates of youths to the conference (P10, Global North, Diverse). Rebuilding partnerships and acquiring knowledge takes a lot of time and energy which could be used to participate in the negotiation instead (P10, Global North, Diverse). The following figure 4 sums up the process of enculturation as described above.

Fig. 4. Process of Enculturation.
6.3. Path of Involvement

In this following section, I present the results related to the deliberative and agonistic path of involvement. First, a general description of the image of youth participation in media is given. Second, results corresponding to the deliberative path and its different approaches are outlined. Third, the agonistic path, followed by the presentation of a new intermediate involvement path is described. Finally, at the end of the section, I elaborate on the results relating to cumulative strategies and the interplay between different paths of involvement.

6.3.1. Outside View on Youth Participation

Youths at COP are often portrayed by media as ‘activists’, as ‘people who are not really organised who are violent, action-oriented, people who are just demonstrators and aggressive’ and not honestly being involved in the decision-making process (Diverse; P24, Global South). A young participant from Germany, who has been attending the conference for several years explains that youths are seen as ‘these exotic birds at the conference that have somehow managed to be there’ (P13, Global North, Lobbying). Media is mostly interested in sensational issues that draw attention, Young people carrying banners, screaming support this narrative (P15, Global North, Lobbying; P17, Global South, P5, Global North, Policy).

‘The main media narrative of youth participation is on the actions because these are the things that are most visible’ (P16, Global North, Diverse).

However, portraying youth as only ‘being of the protest, radical activist variety’ plays against young people ‘being intelligent and of having actually something to contribute’ (P16, Global North, Diverse). In fact, portraying youth participation exclusionary as ‘extreme’ and ‘radical’ leaves an image ‘that is incomplete’ and leads to a ‘rather weaker picture than it could’ (P 18, Global South, Policy). Having that focus on actions and protest leaves the impression of youth participation being all about emotions and acting irrationally and not about content and serious youth policy work (P5, Global North, Policy; P6, Global North, Youth Delegate). The previous is expressed by several respondents, such as in:

‘What I always find in media reports about youth is hope or anger or happiness, always emotions. But when they talk to adults, they talk about facts, like money about the issues that truly matter (...) That is the problem that youth has. We are not seen as serious actors’ (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate).

6.3.2. Deliberative Path

In the following abstract, I present the results related to the deliberative path, including youths engaged in policy work and lobbying, as well as Youth Delegates, who are accredited with a Party Badge. Many youths involved in deliberative strategies state that working within the system through policy suggestions is how youths can create the biggest change (P5, Global North, Policy; P18, Global South, Diverse).

6.3.2.1. Lobbying and Policy

Youths engaged in policy state that dialogue with the negotiators is an important tool to influence the decision-making process in favour of youth’s interests (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). Youth formulate policy suggestions and statements through YOUNGO working groups. Subsequently, these policy suggestions are then communicated and discussed with parties through lobbying activities (P13, Global North, Lobbying). To get the attention of the negotiators, P13 (Global North, Lobbying) and P18 (Global South, Diverse) emphasise that profound knowledge about the process and topics strengthens young people’s credibility and fosters the willingness of parties to listen to and discuss youth policy suggestion with young people. In the lobbying process, youths aim to win a so-called ‘party champion’ for their cause, which can be described as a party that is open to youth policy suggestions and willing to express these in their party statements in the closed negotiation arenas (P16, Global North, Diverse). In this way, young people try to convince more parties of their policy suggestion.
Level of Influence
Youth participation is often intuitively centred around issues related to education (P2, Global North, Media). At the same time, this focus on education is also criticised by youths themselves, who state that youth interests and participation are more than just educational issues (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate). Common lobbying areas followed by youths, concern topics such as Intergenerational Equity (INTEC), ACE (Action for Climate Empowerment) or the ‘1.5-degree campaign’ (P18, Global South, Diverse). Lobbying can be effective on ‘very small particular policy points’, that are not included in the predefined and official negotiation agendas of parties (P11, Global North, Media). A frequently mentioned example for such a specific lobbying point is a youth policy suggestion on Intergenerational Equity. ‘If you are lucky the negotiating team does not have a defined response to things like INTEC, and so they have room to move on (...). So, you can get policy movements on incredibly small things’ (P11, Global North, Media).

Working within the System
Regardless the path of involvement, many youths attribute a certain importance to deliberative proceedings through formal participation in the decision-making process. ‘In reality, it is going to be laws and the enforcement of laws that are going to actually protect the world’ (P8, Global North, Activism). Therefore, P13 (Global North, Lobbying) who has been part of a group of youths lobbying to include INTEC in the Paris Agreement emphasises that ‘to make a specific change, you need to have this policy influence’. Especially youths engaged in policy and lobbying value deliberative proceedings to have the greatest influence on the decision-making process and thus contribute most to meaningful youth involvement. In this context P16 (Global North, Diverse) who has been involved in YOUNGO for several years and is experienced in deliberative proceedings states:

‘There is a lot of us who actually want the very technical, policy, substantive engagement and that to us would be meaningful engagement.’

Further, P14 (Global North, Diverse) who has been active in protests, but also has been participating in policy working groups stresses the advantage of having an Observer Badge and simultaneously not being part ‘of any delegation’ for drafting youth policy suggestions. If youths are directly working for delegations they ‘are much more constrained in the things they can suggest’, which weakens the ability to aim for ‘higher claims’ (ibid.). Youths involved as Youth Delegates might be much more bound to the set positions of their delegations and thus out of diplomatic reasons not allowed to demand higher, more ambitious claims. Therefore, according to P14 (Global North, Diverse), it is ideal to combine ‘drafting and strategizing outside of the official process’ with having direct and private connections to important and influential people inside the official process.

Partnership
Many youths involved in lobbying and policy work believe that approaching negotiators through dialogue is ‘more effective’ than activism on the fences (P18, Global South, Policy). Hence, choosing calmer, more deliberative strategies and working within the system has the advantage that youths are seen ‘as allies not as people who are trying to disrupt the negotiations’ (P5, Global North, Policy). Therefore, many youths mention that talking to their countries delegation is important to build connections and to understand, how they reason their positions (P29, Global South, Diverse). In this way, deliberative proceeding through dialogue strengthen trust in youths and enable ‘long sustaining cooperation between delegations and young people’ (P3, Global North, Diverse).
6.3.2.2. Youth Delegate

Normally, all Youth Delegates are accredited with a ‘party accreditation’ which gives them direct access to almost all negotiations (P1, Global North, Youth Delegate). Youth Delegates indicate that one of the most positive aspects of their position as a Youth Delegate is that they are able to learn a lot about the decision-making process (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate). The influence of Youth Delegates heavily depends on the level of involvement within the official country delegation. Some countries have official Youth Delegate programs that include training and certain contact with the delegation during and before COP. Usually, these Youth Delegate programs only offer few places for youths on the official delegation. Other countries distribute a higher number of badges to youths but provide fewer involvement and capacity building opportunities for youths before and during COP (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). Sometimes these young people ‘have no interaction with the delegations of their countries although they had the pink badge. So, the countries just hand out the badges but do not seek to have contact to the Youth Delegates’ (P1, Global North, Youth Delegate). Many Youth Delegates are required to take notes and attend briefings with their delegation, where they are allowed to give inputs during the daily delegation meetings (P1, Global North, Youth Delegate). In most cases, youths do not have the authority to ‘make a proper position’, as they do not have ‘the authority’ (P29, Global South, Diverse). In this context P24 (Global South, Diverse) states:

‘I cannot speak for my country. I just attend and take notes. It is more like a mentorship and learning about the process and report.’

It is important for Youth Delegates to also get in contact and connect with other youths at the conference for capacity building and working together on youth projects and proposals (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). Thus, besides their official tasks related to their position, many Youth Delegates are able to attend other youth activities outside their roles, such as being part of YOUNGO working groups or other youth-related activities (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate; P1, Global North, Youth Delegate).

Seat at the Table

‘Youths represent youth better than any other groups can’ (P23, Global South, Diverse). Therefore, many participants indicate that youths can have one of the most significant impact on the decision-making process, when they are included in national delegations and have an actual seat at the negotiation table (P6, Swedish Youth Delegate; P23, Global South, Diverse). P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate) who is strongly advocating for an official Youth Delegate Program at the conference picks up on the topic as followed:

‘I prefer we come to COP with 20 young people in the delegation who participated in the negotiation, who bring the youth perspective, the position of young people to the discussion. Then we have 20,000 young people outside the negotiation room crying and making action but finally not have a real impact on the decision-making.’

Only very few young people have Party Badges, which allow entrance to negotiations closed for observers and ‘that basically hinders the participation in the negotiations’ (P18, Global South, Diverse). This argument is also stated by P23 (Global South, Diverse):

‘I think until youths get the chance to intervene in each and every decision-making process and express their views directly, I do not think that they can make their voices heard.’

Therefore, the ‘lack of direct involvement in the decision-making process and minimal involvement of youth in the national delegations is mentioned by many youths as a barrier to meaningful involvement (P23, Global South, Diverse). However, youths also experience disadvantages of being too close to negotiators as there might be a risk of being too much involved in the system to be able to openly criticise it (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate).

‘When you are in an official delegation you have a liberty of speech that is reduced compared to when you are a civil society actor’ (P2, Global North, Media).
This argument is also brought forward by delegations who argue that ‘the role of young people is to criticise the work of delegates and to have some up observing control functions so to speak. And this would not be possible if we [youths] were part of the official delegation so that we could not be critical anymore’ (P3, Global North, Diverse). Moreover, Youth Delegates face restrictions in their ability to engage in other types of participation. In fact, some Youth Delegates are even asked by their delegations not to participate in actions (P1, Global North, Youth Delegate). Other delegations have no objections for their Youth Delegates to take part in protests (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). P29 (Global South, Diverse) who has been a Youth Delegate for his country at previous COPs explains:

‘I attended the actions, but without a badge. That was really clearly; I cannot go with showing my pink badge in actions. But it is not prohibited to attend actions. I like actions.’

6.3.2.3. Critique of Deliberative Path

Physical Separation

Despite the general separation between the Green Zone and Blue Zone, the negotiation space in the Blue Zone is further separated between areas for observers and official parties (P21, Global South, Diverse).

‘I do acknowledge that you need to have some kind of management in terms of who goes where at a conference but I guess it also kind of hinders meaningful involvement (…). It creates a barrier in terms of where people are located, and how they think their voice is heard’ (P17, Global South, Diverse).

P11 (Global North, Media) reflects on the development of increasing physical separation between negotiators and civil society throughout the years of attending COPs. At his first COP, a couple of years ago youths could ‘walk up to the front during the breaks and just talk to the negotiators from our country’ in the plenary room. Contrary, at recent COPs youths were not ‘allowed to sit behind a desk that belongs to youth, except when they were delivering an intervention’.

Bureaucratic Barriers

Many youths level criticism against the bureaucratic obstacles that make the deliberative approach unavailable. P11 (Global North, Media) criticises that the ‘entire structure of the COP’ is a barrier to youth participation and deliberative proceedings in particular. The accreditation process holds a barrier in itself as the accreditation to enter the conference venue can only be given by an organisation (P24, Global South, Diverse; P3, Global North, Diverse; P13, Global North, Lobbying). Also, the registration process for new youth organisations is complicated and takes time (P11, Global North, Media). This barrier leads to that fact that not every young person that is interested in being involved is able to enter the Blue Zone. This is expressed by several respondents, such as in:

‘You have young people that have something to say and want to get involved in the Blue Zone which seems more official and more important and more central to the negotiations, but you do not have access to that’ (P17, Global South, Diverse).

Funding constitutes a barrier to deliberative proceedings as travelling to the conference is expensive, and not everyone can fund their own journey and activities of taking part in the negotiations (P29, Global South, Diverse, P19, Global South, Diverse). ‘There are no funding possibilities available for the process. So, you have to find funds yourself or pay for it from your own pocket’ (P11, Global North, Media). Especially for youths from the Global South, who often must travel greater distances and may have less funding available, affordability of participation ‘plays significant barrier to participation in the conference’ (P17, Global South, Diverse). Side effects of this issue are the corresponding bureaucratic barriers of visa applications and application for a conference badge that are linked to funding.

Further, also organisational barriers to deliberative proceedings have been identified by youths. The UNFCCC secretariat is attempted to promote youth engagement at the conference. However, many youths state that efforts of the secretariat to include youths is not more than an obligatory agenda point
for the secretariat with a ‘box that they need to tick’ (P16, Global North, Diverse). Due to missing organisational resources within the constituency like time, financial support and manpower, P10 (Global North, Diverse) stresses that: ‘Young people do not volunteer enough and do not have the capacity enough to use the opportunities enough that the secretariat would like to give us’ such as attendance of executive meetings (P16, Global North, Diverse).

Procedural Rules
The negotiation process is designed for parties ‘only’ (P13, Global North, Lobbying). Thus, youth is not allowed to intervene directly in the negotiations, except on special intervention opportunities for civil society or in events particularly a priori designed for interactions between parties and civil society. P29 (Global South, Diverse) expresses in this context:

‘There is a fine line between holding everything in order in the negotiations and to not allow people to talk free enough. It is debatable if these rules help to make us moving forward or shutting down our mouth and voices?’

P11 (Global North, Media) calls this process as ‘deliberately alienating civil society’. Also, many other youths state that these procedural rules restrict youth participation, as young people only have little opportunities to officially deliver statements and directly influence the negotiating parties. This issue is expressed by many youths, such as by P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate):

‘Young people are almost out [of the decision-making process], and you see that when everything is adopted, and the session is almost closed they will give the voice to each actor of civil society like the youth, the women the indigenous constituency.’

Further, many youths criticise the strict rules that prohibit other forms of engagement such as protests which bear the risk of being abandoned from COP (P27, Global South, Media, P28, Global South, Activism; P5, Global North, Policy). P9 (Global North, Policy) stresses that these restrictions function like ‘barriers’ for youth participation ‘that restrict people from going to meetings, that restrict people from doing anything that might be seen as too radical’.

Knowledge Barrier
Missing or insufficient knowledge and education about the process, the content of the negotiations and language used, prevents meaningful youth engagement. P9 (Global North, Policy) states that it is a ‘complete barrier to participate and feel included in these spaces if you do not have really intense background knowledge’. The ‘acronyms and very technical language’, but also English as a foreign language imply barriers for many youths (P22, Global South, Activism). Thus, without extensive preparation time, resources and experience it is ‘hard to understand what is happening’ and to grasp the ‘complexity’ (P4, Global North, Media). In fact, knowledge is particularly needed for deliberative approaches that seek direct dialogue with negotiators. This is because approaching negotiators without a degree of preparedness can lead to resentment of negotiators about the knowledgeability of youths and a general mistrust of youth’s credibility and capability. ‘That also hinders maybe youths who actually have the knowledge to be heard’ (P21, Global South, Diverse). Further, the lack of trust in the confidentiality of youths causes parties to hesitate giving youths ‘access to sensitive kind of information’ as they are afraid that young people could ‘say something that creates a diplomatic problem in one of the session’ (P16, Global North, Diverse). Thus, the lack of trust in youths to be capable of navigating in the process leads to youths not being involved in or informed of critical confidential decision-making processes.

Taken seriously
Many deliberative inclined youths indicate that compared to previous years, young people have gained more opportunities to raise their voice (P23, Global South, Diverse; P10, Global North, Diverse). Youths state that generally, negotiators are willing to listen to young people if youths are able to contribute with ‘valuable feedback’ and content knowledge (P13, Global North, Lobby; P10, Global North, Diverse). However, although young people feel partially listened to, many youths criticise that young people are often not taken serious enough by the negotiators.
'Here you asked about if young people are taken seriously. Well often times no, but if they have the party badge, often times automatically they are taken much more seriously’ (P16, Global North, Diverse).

Also, Youth Delegates confirm this impression and emphasise that they feel being treated more seriously by their delegations compared to other youths without Party Badge (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). P16 (Global North, Diverse) elaborates that Youth Delegates are ‘often treated with more respect, by the other party delegates, because they have the party badge.’

Many youths describe young people’s participation as a rather obligatory involvement in the decision-making process, where youths ‘are involved because it is a basic, formal, legal requirement’ (P24, Global South, Diverse). Some youths even describe youth involvement with the term ‘youth washing’. This can be described as including young people as an ‘alibi’ and a photo opportunity for the official record of the UNFCCC, without being truly interested in youth’s positions (P5, Global North, Policy; P6, Global North, Youth Delegate; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate). Some youths reflect in a self-critical way about youth participation and attribute a certain responsibility to youth as ‘part of the problem’ why negotiators do not take young people seriously (P24, Global South, Diverse). Youths identify reasons for this as missing constructive ‘knowledge or understanding’ about the technical topics (P9, Global North, Policy).

6.3.3. Agonistic Path

In the following abstract, I present the results related to the agonistic path, including youths engaged in activism and demonstrations inside the conference venue and activism outside the conference.

6.3.3.1. Inside Activism

The agonistic path of involvement in the negotiations is characterised through artistic and creative protest and actions on ‘visible’ places in the conference area, that are approved by the UNFCCC secretariat beforehand (P3, Global North, Diverse; P9, Global North, Policy). Actions and protest inside the conference venue fulfil the function of awareness raising and appealing on emotional levels (P20, Global South, Activism). Participants distinguished two different types of activists inside COP: First, activists that see activism as a supportive function for policy and lobbying activities (P16, Global North, Diverse). Second, activists that want to address greater causes, such as ‘trying to challenge big points of principles or denounce the slowness of the process’ (P11, Global North, Media). P20, (Global South, Activism) who is an artist and wants to convey the message of climate change through music expresses:

‘I came with that intention to be radical. (...) There were not so many critical voices that were critical of the whole UN system, that is very excluding for people from the south. So, I saw a lot of youths that came to COP because they wanted to build a career in the UN and that made me really uncomfortable because I felt that the role of youth had to be connected to system change.’

Last resort vs. Necessity

Whereas some youths refer to activism as the ‘last resort’ that youths have to rely on, if direct interaction with delegations is not possible (P26, Global South, Diverse; P12, Global North, Diverse). Other youths see activism as ‘some sort of extra measure to show this is how young people feel about climate change’ (P17, Global South, Diverse). Deriving from the image of the outside world that young people are more radical in their participation strategies, P 28 (Global South, Activism) reflects that utilising actions is ‘not radical’ because climate change constitutes a ‘state of uncommon’. Therefore, youths must reach for ‘uncommon methods’ to convey the urgency of climate change to the negotiators (ibid.).

‘From my point of view, we are a generation that has to me more radical and try to challenge out imagination and try to conceptualise radical change’ (P20, Global South, Activism).
In the following, I summarise the overarching themes about the role of agonistic strategies at COP:

**Emotional Appeal**

Youth activism inside the Blue Zone is a valuable tool for highlighting grievances inside the negotiations, by presenting abstract issues through actions in a visual and open way to negotiators inside the conference. Many youths state that it is important to appeal to the negotiators on an emotional level. It is essential to remind them ‘what is at stake, as they often might be too much into the negotiations and the technical issues’ (P1, Global North, Youth Delegate) and they ‘sometimes forget why they do it, but it’s about our future and about the future of the planet’ (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate).

‘So, we were trying to highlight the fact that a lot of negotiations are about just business, but not a lot is about personal and empathetic views because they do not realise that everything they put on the table that they negotiate a people’s life’ (P28, Global South, Activism).

Further, youth actions also appeal to other conference participants besides the negotiation parties by bringing a ‘spiritual dimension’ to COP (P7, Global North, Activism). The aim is to stress that the negotiations are not about all hard facts, but to offer conference participants a platform to reflect on ‘different spiritual values that they think that intersect with climate change, so like mindfulness, courage, sorrow, intervening’ (P7, Global North, Activism). Also, I3 (Global North, Activism) supports this perspective and defines activists who appeal to the emotional-spiritual dimension as ‘secret activist’. I3 distinguishes this type of activism from a ‘normal activist’. ‘Secret activism’ takes the spiritual perspective into account on how we are doing this from a really deep place, understanding that we are all together in this process no matter if it is right or wrong, but we have to look into the bigger picture always, to a holistic understanding of life and understanding that is not about blaming, but about cooperation, it’s about love and trust, about holding the space together so we can create a dialogue and come to a better understanding of these issues and find solutions’ (I3, Global North, Activism).

**Moral Appeal**

Young people are among the groups of individuals that will be affected most by climate change. Consequently, youths have a ‘higher moral impact’ on the negotiations than most other groups (P12, Global North, Diverse). Due to this focus of youths on the vulnerable, young people appear more ‘human’ (P4, Global North, Media). As emphasised by P13 (Global North, Policy) youths can be more ‘radical’ in their demands, because they ‘have the moral upside’. Youths utilise this ‘role of victims of climate change’ to ‘put pressure on the policymakers’ (P12, Global North, Diverse).

**Pressure**

Actions serve as an instrument of building up pressure on the negotiating parties. However, many youths argue that pressure is not directly applied through actions because only a few negotiators see them. Thus, pressure is rather built up through media coverage and the resulting involvement of civil society (P1, Global North, Activism; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate). In this way, media is a valuable tool to channel messages of actions inside the negotiations to civil society outside the conference area (P3, Global North, Diverse).

‘For me, activism is much more effective than many other strategies, even lobbying because it calls the attention of media and these media messages and images always comes up to the negotiator's attention much more than if we did any other thing’ (P22, Global South, Activism).

**Empowerment and Energy**

P20 (Global South, Activism) describes participation in deliberative proceedings as: ‘I feel that all my energy is sealed in a very hostile and unfertile ground’. Contrary feelings are described by many youths engaged in actions and protest. They experience the agonistic path as a ‘source of energy’ (P3, Global North, Diverse, P25, Global South, Diverse; P2, Global North, Media) and ‘empowerment’
leading to meaningful involvement (P14, Global North, Diverse). This is articulated by many youths, such as in:

‘Connection, energy and empowerment and everything we feel doing in action and not while we are lobbying’ (P21, Global South, Activism).

Many protests and actions conducted at the conference are attended or even partly organised by youths. Youths are known to be more ‘energetic’ and quick in organising an action or demonstration compared to other constituencies (P23, Global South, Diverse). In this context P14 (Global North, Diverse) specifically mentioned one example where young people were particularly asked to participate in a ‘big demonstration and action’ to ‘push’ for a ‘policy piece’ drafted by a mixed age inter-constituency group. ‘People with a lot of experience thought it was very sensitive to have an action on the venue on the same day that they were proposing a piece of policy to the delegates. That tells me that actions have an influence. Otherwise, they would not have asked us to do that action’ (P14, Global North, Diverse).

Network Building

Actions serve as a networking and community building platform (P26, Global South, Diverse) spreading a ‘spirit of collaboration across the globe’ (P7, Global North, Activism). ‘Actions gather youths together, and it was a good hub and networking for building the single view from youth having a common interest. That is also a benefit from getting involved in the action’ (P23, Global South, Diverse). Further, many young activists inside the conference also recognise the importance of combining activism with other strategies in order to reach meaningful involvement. Thus, this can be done by combining different streams of people in pursuing the same cause by various means, ‘I think we need to combine all the strategies that we have, because it is a very easy and good place to lobby inside the conference and we really need to communicate what is happening there behind closed doors because it is a privilege to be inside’ (P21, Global South, Activism). In addition to that, some activists align themselves with the tenor of P20 (Global South, Activism), ‘You can complain about the UN forever, but it is the only mechanism that we have where nations meet and at least try to talk.’

6.3.3.2. Outside Activism

During the COPs, civil society outside conference venue, but also in other places around the world usually organise large-scale protest and demonstrations centred around the climate change negotiations, such as the climate march (P29, Global South, Diverse). Although these protests do not have direct access to the conference venue, many interview participants state the importance and influence of these protests to show the ‘negotiators that there is a huge audience outside’ (P13, Global North, Lobbying).

‘If youth groups outside the negotiations were not as strong I would not have such a strong voice on the inside. Those who listen to me in the negotiations, they know that I represent a very strong and voiceful group in Sweden, but if there was no strong civil society on the outside, there would be no way that they would take me seriously on the inside’ (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate).

Thus, youths engaging in activism outside the conference support the work of youths engaging inside the conference venue in a way that their actions serve as instruments of ‘pressure’ on the decision-makers (P5, Global North, Policy). Pressure on the inside is further also created through media coverage of these outside protests (P3, Global North, Diverse).

Outside activism can be ‘more radical’ and helps to build awareness in society (P29, Global South, Diverse). In fact, outside actions play a vital ‘role in involving more people, as it is easier for people to engage in because you do not have to go through a process of getting a badge’ (P4, Global North, Media).
6.3.3.3. Critique of Agonistic Path

Critique of the agonistic path is voiced by youths rather engaged in deliberative proceedings. These youths favour strategies of working ‘within the system’ to strive for change, rather than coming ‘as a disruptive force from the outside’ through activism (P5, Global North, Policy).

Non-use of Opportunities

Deliberative inclined youths criticise activists who are only ‘shouting and holding signs’ without substance and goal that they want to achieve, of ‘not making a good use of the privilege’ of being inside the conference space (P16, Global North, Diverse). In fact, according to them, it is important to conduct actions in a ‘respectful’ way towards the negotiating parties (P3, Global North, Diverse).

‘You have a responsibility if you are carrying such a badge, that you are allowed inside the climate negotiations, and you should make your voices heard and not being disrespectful’ (P3, Global North, Diverse).

Not Reaching Negotiators

Many youths criticise that disruptive proceedings do not change the party’s perceptions (P17, Global South, Diverse; P9, Global North, Policy). Often negotiators do not pay attention to protests or the actions do not physically reach the negotiators. In this context, P13 (Global North, Lobbying) states: ‘Since space, area and time assigned for actions are usually very limited, a lot of people will never see it, and therefore it might not have as much impact in the end’. Another imparts a division between ‘voice’ and ‘noise’, where the latter is associated with disruption:

‘So, making voice is not important, but what is important is that the voices are heard. So being heard is more important than making noise. So, include them in the national delegations is one way for youth to be heard more significantly’ (P23, Global South, Diverse).

Further, also P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate) questions the effectiveness of actions and protests to gain the attention of the negotiating parties, as often parties ‘are closed in their room focused on the document discussions’ while the demonstrations are happening outside the negotiation room. Conclusively, P29 (Global South, Diverse) stresses that: ‘Of course, it is important to criticise politics, but it is also important to hear and understand them.’

Barrier to youth-negotiator discourse

Further, P21 (Global South, Diverse) stresses that solely flowing approaches of disruption ‘can be perceived as aggressive’, which could have counteractive effects and limit the ability of youths to participate. Many youths engaged in deliberative approaches accuse actions that only ‘criticise’ the process without offering real suggestions, for ‘closing doors’ at the negotiation table for youths who want to engage in deliberate proceedings (P21, Global South, Diverse).

‘There is an awful lot of young people who just come to make noise. They only come to make actions; they are not doing actions that are part of a strategy to influence something specific (...). They just want to come, and they feel that they need to protest inside of the UN conference, and nobody actually listens to them. It turns parties off’ (P16, Global North, Diverse).

In this context, P1 (Global North, Youth Delegate) who has been in her position as a Youth Delegate in close contact with her countries delegation states that some people think that emotional and disruptive actions create an image of young people being ‘childish’. This consequently leads to youths not being taken seriously by negotiators.
6.3.4. Intermediate Path

Further, there seem to be many participants who are involved in more than one path of involvement. (P26, Global South, Diverse) In fact, common combinations are lobbying and policy work combined with media (P8, Global North, Activism), or activism coupled with media engagement in ‘in writing and tracking the negotiations’ (P23, Global South, Diverse; P4, Global North, Media). Also, Youth Delegates use communication strategies, especially through social media to ‘give feedback’ to the youths of their countries (P15, Global North, Youth Delegate). In all cases, communication is a common element of both the deliberative and the agonistic path to communicate youth issues related to each path to the public. There are some participants that have been navigating between all three paths:

‘We are doing some outreach and some activists stuff in between, like organising demonstrations but I mainly tried to influence through policy and lobbying certain people’ (P12, Global North, Diverse).

However, although the intersections between media with both the agonistic and deliberative path seem to be rather popular combination, fewer cross connections between the deliberative and the agonistic path itself could be observed and determined in the interviews. Thus, there seem to be fewer youths who are engaged in simultaneously on the extreme ends of each path like Youth Delegates engaging in actions that demand a system change or rather radical minded activists involved in policy work. P12 (Global North, Diverse) sees a reason for this weaker connection between deliberative and agonistic strategies in the risk of losing credibility:

‘Because when you get involved in politics, you sort of have to be on the straight and narrow and always say and do the right things. If you are high in politics and start doing some activism, everyone starts to question you and if you are an activist and want to get involved in politics a lot of people will screw up one eye about what you have done in the past’ (P12, Global North, Diverse).

In this way, it was suggested that the paths clearly diverged and that as an activist, one needed to affiliate oneself with one or the other to stay on track, command legitimacy and project continuity. However, there also youths who are engaged in lobbying and policy work but simultaneously participate in actions to support their peers or to create awareness for their policy work.

6.3.4.1. Media

Media is used by youth participants at COP as a communication tool to reach civil society outside the negotiations, to mobilise and for pressure building tactics. Youths engaged in media at COP use different communication mediums such as ‘photography, videography and writing for media’ including blogs or newspaper articles, giving interviews or organising press conferences at the conference venue (P11, Global North, Media). Youth press conferences at the negotiations are a tool to showcase to the outside world, what young people are working on the inside of the conference (P16, Global North, Diverse; P2, Global North, Media). Social media, writing blog posts and youth journalism websites such as ‘climatetracker.org’ play a ‘significant role in sharing information at COP’ about ‘what is happening inside but also including local views from the outside’ (P23, Global South, Diverse).

Youths who are working with media and communication track the activities of both the deliberative and agonistic proceedings. P11 (Global North, Media) stresses that without media coverage youth participation, whether policy suggestions or actions would never reach civil society outside of the conference, so doing activities such as actions or press conference ‘for media is crucial because that is how the story gets told’. Actions, in particular, are ‘a good source for social media and media in general’ as the press coverage helps to create pressure on the negotiating parties from the outside (P13, Global North, Lobbying).

‘Media is the third participant who is pushing all the parties’ (P5, Global North, 2017).
Communicating the information gathered inside the negotiations to the public and peers outside the conference circle contributes to greater understanding of the scope of the climate problem, by breaking down the content of the conference to an understandable level (P14, Global North, Diverse; P22, Global South, Activism).

6.3.4.2. Cumulative Strategies

Many interview participants stress the equal importance of every path of involvement to reach meaningful involvement (P29, Global South, Diverse; P12, Global North, Diverse). In fact, combining involvement tactics that serve different purposes lead to complementing effects and thus reach the negotiations on ‘all levels’ (P18, Global South, Policy). ‘It is like a puzzle, if you lose one piece, then you cannot see the full picture. Everything is interlinked’ (P5, Global North, Policy). Therefore, to present a complete picture with all aspects of youth participation at the conference, deliberative and agonistic proceeding are valuable:

‘I do believe that both ideas are very important because young people as much as they need to make their voice heard they also need to have the concreteness in their voice that they want to be heard and not just being a group of people doing actions, but a group of people doing actions with a very strong policy-based behind’ (P18, Global South, Policy).

Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between the formal, deliberative path of participation and the informal agonistic path, as well as an intermediate path to involvement with its corresponding participation strategies.

Fig. 5. Paths of youth involvement at COP.

Different involvement paths and strategies operate on different levels. Already the badge classification between Observer Badge and Party Badge determines the ability of youths to access certain proceedings physically and thus the degree of direct influence on the decision-making process (P12, Global North, Diverse). P24 (Global South, Diverse) stresses the importance of having both, youths involved at the observer level to criticise the formal proceedings and youths being included directly in the official appendage of each countries delegation as Youth Delegates:

‘People who are accredited as observers can actually oversee what is happening and if something is not going right, they act like the civil society component, that will organise actions and push for what needs to be done. But apart from that we also have to have the formal appendage that actually influences policy at COP’ (P24, Global South, Diverse).
Consequently, both paths complement each other inasmuch as agonistic disruptions are seen to ‘send a strong message and use the power of the crowd’, and many actions require ‘many people who speak up at the same time’ to build up pressure from multiple source points (P26, Global South, Diverse). However, the pressure of the action only lasts for a ‘really short moment’. Contrary, deliberative proceedings have a less visible impact in a specific moment but are more ‘engaging on the long run’ (P26, Global South, Diverse). Figure 6 illustrates in an abstract way the circles of influence of different participation strategies described by the participants. Deliberative strategies, such as Youth Delegates have the closest potential influence on the inner core of the decision-making process, taking in consideration that the Party Badge gives them direct access to almost all negotiations. Further, policy and lobbying approaches that search to influence the proceedings through dialogue are positioned closer to the inner core of the circle, as they potentially have a closer connection to the negotiators. Separated by a permeable line, the agonistic path forms the outer border of the inner negotiating circle. Separated through a tick and strictly controlled border, outside protests and demonstrations surround the negotiation circle. Media and communication are used as tools by all paths to communicate happenings and outcomes to civil society outside of the circle. Pressure on the inner core of the negotiating cycle is applied through all rings of the circle.

Fig. 6. Circle of Influence.

Summing up P15 (Global North, Youth Delegate) stresses the importance of finding a balance between the deliberative and agonistic path:

‘If you just protest and do actions, you will never sit at the table with the negotiators. And on the other hand, if you just do the talking and the lobbying, then they might do not talk to you serious as well and they think, “We just let them be involved in the process”.’

6.3.4.2.1. Three Pillar Approach

A tree pillar approach is mentioned by many youths as the main structure to organise different paths of participation within youth organisations inside the negotiation venue (P8, Global North, Activism; P13, Global North, Lobbying). At COP youth organisations often differentiate three different pillars of youth engagement (P16, Global North, Diverse; P22, Global South, Activism; P11, Global North, Media):

(1) Activism
(2) Media and Communications
(3) Policy and Lobbying
In order to be more effective in achieving the organisational goals defined for the conference, youths work on all three levels for creating complementing strategies and tactics (P7, Global North, Activism; P16, Global North, Diverse). Many times, the three-pillar approach is used to push specific lobby points and policy suggestions to the attention of negotiators. (P11, Global North, Media; P16, Global North, Diverse). Youths engaged in deliberative path see media and activism as supportive strategies to push for their policy suggestions ‘from different angles’ (P13, Global North, Lobbying) and to put ‘that extra pressure to act’ on the government (P22, Global South, Activism).

‘We cannot propose text directly. It has to come from a party. So, in our case, we were using actions to help get attention for our lobbying’ (P16, Global North, Diverse).

However, youths engaged in deliberative proceedings see higher value in approaches centred around the formulation of youth policy statements as these lead a ‘way for governments on what they should act on’ (P18, Global South, Policy). Figure 7 illustrates in a simplified picture the interaction of the three-pillar approach on a common example of advocacy work for a youth policy suggestion by creating awareness and putting pressure on the decision makers (P16, Global North, Diverse).

As shown in figure 7 the three pillars operating inside the negotiations have no direct access to the inner core of the negotiation space, as most of the youths participating in these pillars are accredited with an Observer Status. Thus, P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate) stresses the importance of Youth Delegates having official access and the opportunity to this inner core of decision-making. Certainly, also outside public pressure created through media and communication strategies inside the conference can influence the decision-making process.

Whereas figure 7 best describes the three-pillar approach working ‘within the system’ (P5, Global North, Policy), figure 8 illustrates in a simplified way the pressure and influence applied to the system from civil society and media outside the negotiations. This is done to address more general demands for broader change or challenge on big points of principles, such as the support of the ‘1.5 degrees campaign’. Compared to the process of advocating for very specific policy suggestions by youths, broader demands involve much more activities from media and civil society outside the negotiating space in addition to deliberative and agonistic approaches inside the negotiation space.

Fig. 7. Three pillar approach supporting youth policy suggestion.

OUTSIDE THE NEGOTIATING SPACE

INSIDE THE NEGOTIATING SPACE

Youth Delegate

Powerholders
(Parties and Negotiators)

Lobbying & Policy

Media & Communication Inside

Actions Inside

Youth Policy Suggestion

Public Pressure

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Fig. 8. Cumulative approaches for broader change.
6.4. Meaningful Involvement

To understand how youths, navigate between different paths of involvement at COP, it is important to identify parameters that measure meaningful involvement for young people inside the negotiation arena. Therefore, interview participants have been asked to define meaningful youth involvement at COPs. The following word frequency word cloud visualises the 100 most frequently used words in the participant’s definitions of meaningful youth involvement (Fig. 9). Consequently, the following section outlines, the criteria that are mentioned most frequently by participants in their definitions of meaningful youth involvement at COP:

![Word Cloud]

Fig. 9. 100 most frequently used words for definition of meaningful youth involvement.

Recognition as Equal and Serious Political Actors

Being ‘acknowledged’ and ‘recognised’ by the decision makers and being ‘taken seriously’ is one of the key components for reaching meaningful youth involvement at COP (P2, Global North, Media; P3, Global North, Diverse). Further, many youths express that a precondition for being taken seriously by the parties and other conference actors is that young people are seen as equal political actors, giving them equal chances of getting consideration in the decision-making process (P28, Global South, Activism). This is expressed by P10 (Global North, Diverse) as followed:

‘Meaningful engagement at COP is broader than just meaningful engagement within the negotiations. So being recognised by the other constituencies and other stakeholders present is a very important part and being engaged as equals (...). Youth having presents as an ally and a partner across the different constituencies.’

Certainly, being recognised as equal and serious actors also entails considering young people within all topics of the decision-making process. Some delegations tend to consider young people only in decisions directly related to ‘youth issues’ (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate). Therefore, P6 (Global North, Youth Delegate) states: ‘A goal for meaningful involvement is to see youth as an expert on every topic other than youth issues’. She continues, stating how,

‘I am supposed to bring the voice of children and youth to this room. Our job is to bring in the youth perspective, not to deal with only youth issues’ (P6, Global North, Youth Delegate).
Policy Influence

Further, many young participants mention policy influence as one of the main criteria to measure meaningful youth involvement. Policy influence can be reached through direct and ‘active’ participation at the decision-making table, or indirectly through lobbying (P5, Global North, Policy). In this context P24 (Global South, Diverse) defines meaningful involvement as the ability of youths to ‘influence policy, sit at the decision-making table and contribute to policies’. There are opportunities for youths to talk and meet with negotiators, but without policy influence, these activities do not automatically lead to meaningful involvement. Therefore, P15 (Global North, Youth Delegate) stresses that ‘it’s not just about talking and hearing their opinion, but really that it ends up somewhere in the decision-making process’. This is also confirmed by P20 (Global South, Youth Delegate) who stresses that the quality of participation and hence the policy influence is of higher importance than the number of youths involved in the process:

‘We measure the youth involvement to the COP according to how many young people are participating to the COP. That is wrong. When we talk about engagement, it is what they do and what impact it has that in the process. They can do many things, but if they do not have any impact directly on the process, then they are not engaged in the process.’

Access to the Decision-Making Table

As the decision-making process at COP is centred around the parties to the UNFCCC, youths do not have an official seat at the negotiation table. Thus, giving young people ‘access to these spaces and having a seat at the table’ are seen by many interview participants as a precondition to meaningful youth involvement (P9, Global North, Policy). ‘Meaningful involvement to me would be to be welcomed to the spaces and not be disregarded and not be scuffed up because maybe there was a mistake made. Just understand that while we do not have that much of experience as these people, we are trying, and we are interested and passionate’ (P9, Global North, Policy). Considering potential metrics for the relative meaningfulness of the involvement, another participant continues:

‘You would measure effective youth engagement by, how directly youth perspectives on the negotiations are able to be part of the process. Are there young people who are part of drafting the outcome text from a session for example? Have young people access to the rooms? Again, even if it is just the party badged Youth Delegates. For me, meaningful youth engagement means young people are in a position to be at the table equally’ (P16, Global North, Diverse).

P12 (Global North, Diverse) emphasises that physical access could be guaranteed through the inclusion of Youth Delegates in the official countries delegations. Further, a ‘fair’ and balanced representation and access of Global North and Global South youth representatives to the negotiations, is mentioned by the participants as a requirement for meaningful youth involvement. This should be done in a process ‘where young people speak, and they are heard, both from the extreme perspectives and from an argumentative, negotiations perspective’ (P17, Global South, Diverse).

Bringing Youth Interests into the Negotiations

Many youths emphasise that bringing youth interests to the negotiations is central to meaningful involvement. In this context, P24 (Global South, Diverse) stresses that all participation approaches are essential to reach meaningful involvement. Moreover, it is crucial to give youths the chance to choose which path is most meaningful for them and thus through which path or paths they seek involvement in and communicate youth interest.

‘By meaningful youth engagement with the UNFCCC negotiations, I mean youths having an opportunity to lobby and influence process’. In particular, this means ‘through whatever tactics they chose, be that meetings or letters of protests or editorials or videos. But youths having really ways to actually influence parts of the negotiations’ (P10, Global North, Diverse).
In order to bring youths interest into the negotiations, youths indicate the importance of providing adequate time slots and spaces where young people can intervene and make their voice heard (P18, Global South, Policy).

**Influence beyond COP & Networking**

Many youths emphasise that meaningful involvement is boarder than just the meaningful participation aspect within the negotiations. P19 (Global South, Diverse) stresses that meaningful involvement would be to ‘actively’ include youths at ‘all levels’ whether in their communities, governments or within the climate negotiations to ‘get things moving in their relevant fields’.

‘It is important that youth is in all the political spaces so that they can gain and sort of legitimacy so that they can come back to their social circles and start influencing the social powers for transition into a sustainable social structure’ (P14, Global North, Diverse).

Finally, some youths define meaningful involvement at COP based on their ability to network and communicate youth interest to the broader public. P11 (Global North, Media) talks about the importance of the COP as an ‘incredible campaigns training ground’ and an ‘amazing networking opportunity between countries and generations’. Further, he continues that engagement beyond the negotiations with the international network of civil society and NGOs can lead to higher personal impacts, ‘Often you can get more impact through those connections and what happens outside of COP because of the connections you have made at COP’ (P11, Global North, Media). In this context, also P22 (Global South, Activism) defines meaningful involvement with the criteria of connectedness and meeting ‘people from all over the world’ which enhances the feeling of belonging to a larger group of individuals and that ‘the small voice that I have is actually bigger than I thought’.
7. Discussion

The following discussion of the study results proceeds in three stages. First, I elucidate the paths of meaningful involvement at COP in relation to the theoretical frameworks of deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism as well as key concepts raised in the literature review. Second, I sketch the value of cumulative strategies to reach meaningful youth involvement. Third, I discuss the empirical definition of meaningful involvement in relation to the definition given in the literature to explore new spectra of meaningful involvement.

7.1. Navigation between Deliberative and the Disruptive Path

The following section discusses the results regarding the research question: ‘In what ways do youths navigate between the deliberative and the disruptive path to civic political engagement at the UN Climate Change Negotiations COP22 in Marrakech?’ Deliberative proceedings and agonistic strategies are displayed as contradictory by different scholars in literature (Mouffe, 1999; Ganesh and Zoller, 2012; Maeseele, 2015). However, the results of this study stress the opposite and rather outline positive and synergetic effects of deliberative and agonistic proceedings to reach meaningful involvement. ‘It is like a puzzle, if you lose one piece, then you cannot see the full picture. Everything is interlinked’ (P5, Global North, Policy). In fact, this study could not observe or verify impenetrable borders and disunion as displayed by advocates of deliberative and agonistic schools, suggesting they may be more conceptual or, as in the case at COP, physically imparted through zoning.

Youths at COP22 chose various strategies both deliberative and agonistic nature to make their voices heard by decision makers. Nulman (2016) identified five mechanisms how social movements aim to influence climate change policies. All mechanisms, except the judicial mechanism, could be identified and have been adopted by youths at COP22 to put pressure on policymakers. More specifically, youths at COP22 followed Martins (2008b) ‘dual-track approach’ through simultaneous navigation between both paths, applying disruptive forms of participation outside the arenas of decision-making to attract attention, but, perhaps intuitively, following calmer civil styles of involvement on the inside of the decision-making arena.

The results also delineate that not every path is suitable and equally effective in every arena. Therefore, the level of influence and effectiveness of each path in the decision-making process varies within different arenas, their physical and democratic conditions as well as timing in the proceeding, the role and experience of individual persons, the media coverage at the time or the coordination with other youth groups beyond different paths. Deliberative proceedings, as well as legal agonistic practices obeying the rules of the arena, have higher chances to be effective within the Blue and Green Zone of the conference, than extreme forms of activism. Thus, illegal activism, like civil disobedience and violent disruption as identified by Ekman and Amnå (2012) has space to emerge outside of the official negotiation venue and contribute indirectly to pressure building inside the negotiations likewise expressed by Smith and Brassett (2013). However, the physical separation through different zones and entry restrictions create barriers for meaningful involvement and determine and circumscribe the arena of each path. Thus, segregation based on accreditation status, embodied by the color-coding of the badges, contributes to the level of influence and reachability that young people can have in different participation paths.

Habermas envisioned the public sphere as a mediating arena between private interests and public power enacted through discourse without power relations (Fraser, 1990; Holub, 1991). Driven by complex and conflicting multinational and multi-stakeholder interests, it is hard to imagine this idealistic picture of the public sphere in the UN climate change negotiations. As stressed by scholars favouring agonistic approaches, unequal power relations, coercion and marginalisation are common barriers for deliberation in real world democratic policy discussions (Young, 2002b). Similar barriers to meaningful involvement were identified by youths in this study, including P9 (Global North, Policy), P11 (Global North, Media) or P20 (Global South, Diverse). To be sure, deliberatively inclined youth derived compensation for the unequal power relations through technical and legal knowledge and through creating partnerships and good relations to negotiators. Those youths engaged in agonistic
approaches, by contrast, valued actions and the resulting public pressure created through media coverage as the most efficient way to deal with the power relations (P1, Global North, Activism; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate). In this way, the results point out that phenomenological understandings of power relations amongst youths influence the involvement path they go on to choose. For some youths who felt powerless, unheard and excluded from the decision-making process, the agonistic path can be a ‘last resort’ to make their voice heard by decision makers. To them, it was the emancipation from the sorts of deliberative fora that put preconditioned restraints on them to speak in a certain way and show deference to authority.

7.2 Agonistic Path to Meaningful Involvement

Agonistically inclined youths inside the conference had to adhere to the strict procedural rules and norms forced on them as a precondition of being allowed to attend the negotiations. Thus, youths described the agonistic approach inside the negotiations as simultaneously emancipating and restricting. On the one hand, many youths who were engaged in agonistic proceedings defined their participation in actions as emancipating and empowering while breaking free of the barriers that they experienced in deliberative proceedings. In this way, their activism was rather than rational, argumentative action, argumentation by other means: specifically, aesthetic-expressive (White and Farr, 2012). On the other hand, youths also criticised the restricting and frustrating character of agonistic proceedings as they, too, were subordinate to the procedural rules and norms in the negotiations. These prevented them from following more extreme strategies that they regarded as most effective to promote justice (Young, 2003). Hence, it was a tamed form of agonism that was permitted by organisers as the more disruptive outlet.

Dryzek et al. (2003) argue that the influence and success of social movements depend on its ability to gain entry to the core of the state and its decision-making. Social movements which are denied access to the state's core have ‘systematic limits’ to what they can achieve (p.2). As a result, activism may become more radical with lower justification thresholds to respond to ‘unjust’ practises (Martin, 2015; Theodossopoulos, 2014). Similarly, in this study, many activists negated the accusation of actions being ‘too radical’, as climate change constitutes a ‘state of uncommon’ which validates ‘uncommon methods’ (P 28, Global South, Activism). Likewise, Maeseele (2015, p.392.) criticised the ‘exclusionary mechanism’ within the UN climate change negotiations ‘for anyone questioning the (neoliberal) alliance between science and policy’. Violating and questioning the rules may lead to the exclusion of the individual's whole organisation. Hence, most youth engaged in legal activism inside the Blue and Green Zone accepted and adapted to these rules for fear of collective punishment. This was summed up as followed by P20 (Global South, Activism), who acknowledged the UN conference for being the ‘only mechanism that we have where nations meet and at least try to talk’.

Two forms of disruptive protests could be distinguished in this study: The ones engaging youths who ‘just come to make noise’ and criticise the process (P16, Global North, Diverse) and the ones that engaged youths willing to offer real alternatives and ‘concrete suggestions in terms of what young people want’ (P18, Global South, Policy). Smith (2016, p.156) categorises such disruptive acts according to two categories: ‘function-disabling’ like disruptions at COP just focussed on ‘making noise’ and ‘function-enabling’, like disruptions supporting concrete claims and suggestions.

Further, the results of the study stress, that actions inside the conference arena seemed to have less direct effects on negotiators because many delegates occupied in the decision-making rooms did not physically see these protests outside their rooms. According to Young (2003, pp.105-108) ‘often activists make public noise outside when deliberation is supposedly taking place on the inside’. In this context, agonistic inclined youths at the conference were criticised by their peers to be ‘crying and making action [outside the rooms of decision-making] but finally not having a real impact on the decision-making’, as stated by P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate) or even threatening the credibility of youths and the deliberative proceedings between young people and negotiators as indicated by P16 (Global North, Divers). This is reflected in social movement studies elsewhere, where Johansen and Martin (2008) for example note that participants in ‘inside’ channels for official deliberations
sometimes dismiss their too-radical peers for drawing negative attention to the cause and threatening solidarity. However, as stressed by Martin (2008b) and Johansen and Martin (2008) these actions also contribute to building up pressure through positive or sensational media coverage and the resulting involvement of civil society outside which was also confirmed by P1 (Global North, Activism) and P30 (Global South, Youth Delegate). Jacobsson and Lindblom (2013) attribute positive impacts of emotion work carried out by activists beyond its direct impact on decision-making. Similarly, in this study agonistic proceedings, on one hand, constituted to impacts such as emotional and moral appeal to negotiators as stated by P28 (Global South, Activism) and P12 (Global North, Diverse). On the other hand, agonistic proceedings also promoted network building and cohesion amongst youths participants (Johansen and Martin, 2008), as well as building bridges to other civil society groups within the social movement that valued the energetic support of youths for their own protests (P14, Global North, Diverse; P26, Global South, Diverse). They had clear, expressive purposes and inward directionality (Martin and Varney, 2003).

7.3. Deliberative Path to Meaningful Involvement

Scholars such as Dryzek (1995) & Niemeyer (2013) endorse deliberative proceeding for offering the best conditions to deal with high levels of complexity and uncertainty arising with global environmental and climate challenges. Similarly, also in this study many youths engaged in the deliberative path favoured strategies of working ‘within the system’ and striving for change, rather than coming ‘as a disruptive force from the outside’ through activism (P5, Global North, Policy). Deliberative activism has been termed institutionalisation of dissent by some, denoting the adaptation of ‘claims and tactics to ones that can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics’ (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998, p.21). Thus, similar to Dryzek (2005), who favours deliberative proceedings for building bridges between citizens and decision-makers, deliberative inclined youths regarded deliberative non-confrontational communication as ‘more effective’ than activism. Further, they also emphasised dialogic proceedings as valuable tools to strengthen relationships between youths and delegations and subsequent cooperative behaviour in political discourses (P18, Global South, Policy; P3, Global North, Diverse).

Some delegations see in youths a criticising function as specified by P3 (Global North Diverse), ‘the role of young people is to criticise the work of delegates and to have some observing control functions so to speak’. Therefore, this view on youths and their ability to contribute to the decision-making process certainly influences the arenas and paths in which they are most considered in by decision-makers. Consequently, young people engaged in deliberative proceedings and policy development aimed to address this common perception of youth through the acquisition of knowledge and development of real policy alternatives to be head to head with decision makers. In fact, Johansen and Martin (2008) stress that although offering alternatives is more demanding, than opposing, it is often more rewarding as those alternatives are valued as constructive feedback. This is in line with the experience of youths such as P13 (Global North, Lobbying) who experienced the willingness of negotiators to listen to youth if confronted with ‘valuable feedback’ and content knowledge. In this context enculturation and the acquisition of knowledge to be able to navigate on an ‘equal playing field with technical experts’ as stressed by Simmons (2007, p.6) were important factors influencing the navigation of youth at the conference. Particularity deliberative inclined youths expressed missing technical and legal knowledge as the main challenge to this approach, which corresponds to the barriers to meaningful youth involvement defined by UNDP (2014). This critique on their part is reflected in the literature’s assertion that deliberative proceedings are heavily oriented toward technicalities rather than social justice, and that one must become proficient in the former to realise the latter (Johansen & Martin 2008). This is further espoused in critical observations on the forced professionalisation and credentialization of activists to get on the same level as the elite (Nilsen, 2009), in this case, the adults. Thus, as stated by Bulling et al. (2013) youth influence in formal deliberative practices is vital for successful deliberative youth participation. ‘Without influence, the risk is that participation will be seen as tokenism’ (p.413). Deliberative approaches can bear a higher risk of tokenism because deliberative proceedings can be easily misused for ‘cosmetic’ purposes such as picture opportunities with youths to showcase organiser’s efforts to ‘include’ youths in the process.
Many young participants regarded this as ‘youth washing’ (P5, Global North, Policy; P6, Global North, Youth Delegate; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate).

There have been claims to extend youth engagement in deliberative proceedings, such as the call for more Youth Delegates in the delegations. In fact, according to Dryzek et al. (2003), it is crucial to the success of a social movement to which degree a connection and entry to the core of the state can be achieved. Thus, the Youth Delegate program could be seen as such an entry point for youths to this core, which Dryzek et al. refers to as a point where social movements often assimilate into ‘politics’ and lose their activism status. In more critical terms, such as those used by Marxist scholars, they may be described as having been co-opted by the political apparatus (Nilsen, 2009). However, as stated by some participants, the Youth Delegates program in many delegations is rather seen as a ‘mentorship’ for youths than as a true engagement opportunity (P24, Global South, Diverse). Therefore, it is arguable how much tokenism is involved in these types of mentorships, and certainly, this view is in direct contrast to the young people’s definition of meaningful involvement to be regarded as equal partners by decision-makers.

7.4. Deliberative Activism

There has been a tendency of youth for calling for more deliberative inclusion of youth particularly in form of more Youth Delegates. However, the prioritisation of formal deliberative approaches enacted through policy work, lobbying or Youth Delegates might bear the risk for youths of being too much linked in and comfortable within ‘the system’ to see and feel the need to challenge and criticise it as argued by Armstrong and Bernstein (2008). Consequently, a sole reliance on these strategies would expel these youths to qualify for being part of the social movement (ibid.). Building on this theory, two different orientations amongst youth engaged in the deliberative path can be distinguished: On one hand, the ones that Newell (2005) identifies as inside-insider, solely engaging in the deliberative path and attending the conference to ‘build a career in the UN’ as stated by P20 (Global North, Activism). These youths are not particularly interested in changing the system as outlined by Armstrong and Bernstein (2008). On the other hand, youths identified in Newells (2005) typology as inside-outsider, who operate in deliberative proceedings to achieve change through working within the system. In the interviews, many youths favouring formal dialogic strategies over informal coercive proceedings stressed the positive aspects of activism for building pressure and pushing for their policy suggestions (P13, Global North, Lobbying; P11, Global North, Media; P16, Global North, Diverse). Hence, it can be argued that these youths are a bit activist-minded, to begin with, and might have changed their strategy to mainly deliberative approaches throughout their COP engagement. This is in line with a regular trajectory of any social movements transition from more radical agonistic proceedings gradually towards a moderate inclusion into the circles of power as outlined by Dryzek et al. (2003).

This perspective also be commensurate with the views of systemic deliberative democrats, among which Dryzek is counted, who argue that disruptive means are permitted insofar as they promote greater overall deliberation (Dryzek, 2010; Hájek, Dlouhá and Samec, 2014). Here, these actions are not looked upon favourably as emancipating ends-in-themselves, but as necessary tools to enhance deliberation in official channels. This is predicated on the sober realisation that rational discourse, on its own, may not always be sufficient (Martin & Varney, 2008).

Coming back to Armstrong and Bernsteins (2008) theory, these deliberatively inclined youths supporting agonistic proceedings qualify for belonging to the social movement. According to Fung (2005), these youths would identify as ‘deliberative activists’. In Fung’s definition, ‘deliberative activists’ are described as deliberative democrats who favour deliberative proceedings but consider using force instead of discourse as a last resort if deliberative efforts have failed to show impact. Thus, the aim of deliberative activism is to establish more inclusive processes and reach fairer outcomes (ibid.), similar to the goal of systematic deliberative democrats who cautiously endorse disruptive tactics. Examples of such acts of deliberative activism are actions that increase pressure on decision makers directly or through media channels and the following implied pressure from civil society outside of the negotiation space. In the same train of thought, also, Smith (2015) argues that disruptive protests can have directly deliberative impacts depending on the context and state of the existing
deliberative system: they can, for example, open up blockages or put some neglected items on the agenda that would not otherwise be raised. In this way, agonistic activism provides a conveyor belt that takes climate change topics from peripheries to the core, in the conveyor-like fashion that Habermas describes of anarchist publics in the public sphere. The theory, if true, serves to build bridges between agonistic and deliberative frameworks as it is argued that not all types of protests should be categorised as non-deliberative (ibid.). In fact, certain types of activism might even have intended or unintended impacts of stimulating deliberation in the public sphere (ibid.). Hence, such protests at the conference venue that support deliberative proceedings or that demand more inclusive processes of civil society and youths, classify as such acts of ‘deliberative disruption’. In this way, ‘deliberative disruption’ enhances the ‘epistemic-reflective’, inclusivity and representativeness of decision-making by drawing attention to neglected issues as stated by (Smith, 2016, p. 164).

Contrary, deliberative proceedings can also have a positive influence on the effectiveness of disruptive activism inside and particularly outside the decision-making arena. Through cooperation of youths between both paths, youths who engaged in agonistic proceedings were able to seek valuable ‘insider’ information about current status and grievances of the negotiations as argued by Armstrong and Bernstein (2008). Receiving this ‘insider’ information first hand through youths attending the conference, facilitated more radical activists outside the negotiations to address and specifically target their actions on these vulnerable points and failures of the decision-making process, which may increased the effectiveness of their actions (P22, Global South, Activism; P11, Global North, Media). In fact, one could argue, that youths participating in deliberative, calm proceedings pave the way and serve as an ‘alibi’ for disruptive activists to be ‘allowed’ inside the negotiation arena. Thus, increasing trust and closer relationships to negotiators achieved by youths, who sought close contact with actors ‘within the system’, contributed indirectly to extending the agonistic arena and circle of influence from the outside the negotiations to the inside of the actual decision-making process (P22, Global South, Activism). In this way, deliberative proceedings serve as an additional tool for disruptive proceedings to infiltrate in the system and bring up activists claims indirectly via lobbying and relationship building with decision makers in the negotiations, as stated by Johansen and Martin (2008). Moreover, COP brings a lot of international media attention and provide a stage for activists to spread and mobilise their message to civil society worldwide (P20, Global South, Activism; P11, Global North, Media; P14, Global North, Diverse).

Activist adjusting to the rules to the ‘system’ as well as the previously mentioned ‘deliberative activists’ both align to what Armstrong and Bernstein (2008) identified as being both insider and outsider and thus most suitable to evoke change. Therefore, those youths who utilise both paths for their purposes, have sufficient ‘feel for the game’ and knowledge needed to identify the vulnerabilities of the system but at the same time have the sufficient distance to challenge and criticise it (p.85). Thus, individuals who participate in this intermediate path and youth organisations utilising the three-pillar approach qualified for the insider-outsider typology and thus were most likely to challenge the system and implement change.

### 7.5. Spectra of Meaningful Involvement

The following section elaborates on the research question, ‘Are there other spectra of meaningful involvement pursued by youths, besides the two main paths at COP? If so, which?’ Therefore, the following section discusses and evaluates meaningful youth involvement at COP. First, the empirical definition of meaningful youth participation will be analysed in relation to common understandings of the term presented in the literature. Second, Hart’s ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’ is used for evaluation against which to measure the level of meaningful youth involvement at COP. Third, I explore other spectra of meaningful youth involvement in relation to the chosen participation path.

Comparing the definitions of meaningful involvement based on literature with the outcomes of the empirical definition by youths in this study similarities and differences can be distinguished. Cook (2008) also the UNDP (2014) refers to meaningful involvement as enabling youth power in decision-making and integrating them into all aspects of policy development through collaborative, consultative
or youth-led participation. Likewise, youths in this study stressed similar criteria such as the recognition as equal and serious political actors, policy influence and access to the negotiation table as nominators for achieving meaningful youth involvement. Additionally, to the points mentioned above, participants in this study named ‘having influence beyond COP’ as an important criterion to define meaningful involvement. P13 (Global North, Policy) stressed in this context, ‘What I always say is also try to push on the domestic level because once we are here at COP, we have a bit of play to adjust it, but the decisions are made at home. That is why it is always to put the pressure at home.’ Thus, this extends the definition of meaningful involvement outside the borders of COP stressing that youths need to be adequately included in national and regional decision-making processes.

7.5.1. Measuring Meaningful Youth Involvement at COP

The ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’ by Hart (1992) indicates different levels of power and inclusion of youths in adult decision-making processes. By measuring the results of this study against each rung on the participation ladder, different paths and strategies of involvement can be allocated to various levels of the ladder. The results of this study do not display any stages of sole non-participation that refer to the lowest rungs of the ladder. Thus, regardless the path, the overall participation can be best described as ranging from the third to the fifth rung of the ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’. At these stages, the youth voice is heard by the decision makers and young people are informed and occasionally consulted, but due to the lack of power not seriously considered in the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992). P2, (Global North, Media) emphasised the lack of inclusion in decision-making as followed, ‘We might have a foot in the door, we might have official statements during official sessions, but we feel like we are not listened to enough.’

However, some youths could be identified who were able to reach rung (5) Consulted and informed on Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation. Regardless of the participation path chosen, these youths reached rung (5) and showed characteristics such as high levels of conference experience and close relationships to certain delegates or delegations through trust and personal connections between youths and decision makers (P28, Global South, Activism; P22, Global South, Activism; P13, Global North, Lobbying; P18, Global South, Policy). However, referencing Arnstein’s framework also this rung of participation still bears a certain amount of tokenism. Contrary, some youths experienced youth involvement as tokenizing, utilising the term ‘youth washing’ (P5, Global North, Policy; P6, Global North, Youth Delegate; P30, Global South, Youth Delegate). These young people described that youths were used as ‘alibis’ or subject for photographs for the official record at certain formally organised events by the UNFCCC secretariat. Therefore, youth participation at those events can be only categorised on rung (3) of the ladder. Especially youths engaged in deliberative strategies or deliberative activism demanded a more inclusionary involvement of young people in the decision-making process that can be best described as shared power youth-adult participation corresponding to rung (6) of the ladder. The three-pillar approach, described by interviewees involves strategies of the deliberative as well as agonistic path, to create awareness and build up pressure on decision makers to support youth’s policy suggestions or claims. These combined strategies have a complementing character and lead to greater influence and higher levels of youth power, which can consequently result in higher participation levels on Hart’s ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’.

7.5.2. Different Spectra of Meaningful Involvement

Reflecting about the outside view of youth participation at COP, many young people indicated that youth participation is perceived as radical and disruptive by the outside world and media. This picture does not mirror the actual diverse paths of involvement chosen by youths at the conference. P26 (Global South, Diverse) stressed that youths bring ‘heterogeneity to decision-making’ and P6 (Global North, Youth Delegate) continues that, ‘We have to stop seeing youth as a homogeneous group with so many abilities and interest’. Consequently, the results of this study stress that a generalisation and a one fits all definition and evaluation of meaningful youth involvement does not meet the complexity of participation at COP. Besides the actual level of participation, the personal perception of meaningful involvement is also influenced by factors like the level of experience, as stated by Kara (2013). Hence, also other spectra than the redistribution of power relations focussed on in Hart’s framework need to be taken into consideration to define meaningful youth involvement at COP.
Whereas meaningful involvement for some and particularly youths engaged in deliberative proceedings can be best characterised in reference to a shared power youth-adult participation as described in Hart’s ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’, other youths who are preliminary engaged in activism may seek meaningful involvement through emotion work as described by Jacobsson and Lindblom (2013).

8. Conclusion

This research particularly aimed to explore and increase the understanding of interplays and intersections between different paths to meaningful youth involvement in political decision-making centred on climate change. To answer this, I focussed on a case study design of the annual international conference on climate change COP22 in Marrakech organised by the UNFCCC in November 2016. Youth at the conference utilised formal and informal approaches to political civic engagement described in political theory literature in the context of deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism. The literature often exhibits a divide across schools of thought in relation to this aspect stating the incompatibility of both paths in political proceedings and often giving higher value to dialogic and collaborative approaches. Contrary, the results of this study outlined the opposite as young people at COP22 utilised both, deliberative proceedings and disruptive, agonistic strategies of participation, stressing the positive synergistic effects for youth in petitioning for change deriving of each path to meaningful youth involvement at the conference. In fact, young people who simultaneously engaged in deliberative and agonistic proceedings have the required inside knowledge about the vulnerabilities of the system, but the necessary distance to criticise it and are therefore most successful in implementing change. Exemplary for this insider-outsider approach were deliberative disruptions organised by activists, or deliberative activists, that favoured deliberative proceedings, but did not back off utilising coercive forms or participation to establish fairer and more inclusive proceedings. Further, the results stressed, that youths adjust their type of involvement according to the scope and type of arena they are operating in. Thus, whereas deliberative approaches and legal moderate agonistic proceedings were most successfully applied inside the conference arena, extreme forms of disruption, such as civil disobedience had space to emerge outside the conference arena contributing indirectly to effects such as pressure building on the decision makers inside the conference arena. To this end, the research also indicated the reproduction of some division between the arenas: physical (in the form of color-coded zoning), administrative (in the form of credentials/access badges) and sometimes even social (as a few participants noting too-radical activists gave the movement a bad reputation). However, by and large, the division was a great deal more permeable in practice.

Further, the study aimed to stress that the perception of meaningful involvement and inclusion in the decision-making process is exposed to individual preferences, skills, knowledge and experience. Thus, meaningful involvement for deliberative inclined youths can be best described through a shared power youth-adult participation. Other youths following the agonistic path sought meaningful involvement through emotion work and empowerment expressed in direct actions and protest, also known as expressive-aesthetic action. Such moral appeal and urgency brought forward to the negotiations by youth can, therefore, contribute to more ambitious and fair outcomes and thus promote sustainable development. Youths may lack the same experience and legal and technical knowledge than adult negotiators, but they can contribute with other qualities that can also have a great contribution to the negotiating process. Youths valued solidarity building and networking and have the ability bring ‘feelings’ and ‘empathy’ to the negotiations (P28, Global South, Activism). This reflects the emerging trend of ‘borderless solidarity’ that characterises climate change activism (Chin and Mittelman, 1997).

The results of this research stressed the importance of including young people in decision-making processes that affect the future of our planet and the livelihoods of generations to come. Youths will be future leaders and the decision-makers of tomorrow. Therefore, it is vital to educate and involve youths meaningfully in these processes already today. Meaningful youth engagement is also an overarching component of several Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN and will be measured against these criteria at the assessment of the new Sustainable Development Agenda in 2030.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal information

- Name:
- Country of origin:
- Affiliation to an organisation:
- Age:
- In what area do you currently work/study?
- How many times have you attended COPs?

Motivation for participation

- Since when are you engaged with climate change issues?
- What made you engaged?
- Why did you decide to come to COP?
- What were your goals of participating at COP?

Type of participation

- How were you participating in the negotiations? (calmer way, being involved in discussions and dialogue with politicians or radical, disruptive way through actions)
- 1a. Why did you choose this type of participation (calm/radical) over the other participation options? Do you feel that you are able to influence the decision-making process with your type of participation?
- 1b. What do you think about other forms of participation (e.g. lobbying/press conferences/giving media interviews) that are contrary to the one the interviewee is following? Do you think they contribute to youth involvement in any way? If yes, How?
- Are all forms of involvement important? Moreover, in which ways do they contribute to the overall youth goal?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of your form of participation?

Meaningful involvement

- Why is it important to include youth in the decision-making process?
- What are the goals of young people at COP? Why do they want to be involved and what are their goals at the negotiations?
- Define meaningful involvement? Which criteria need to be fulfilled to achieve meaningful involvement?
- 1a. Do you feel that your opinion/position is valued/heard in the decision-making process?
1b. What challenges to meaningful involvement can you identify?  
Do you feel that politicians/decision makers take young people seriously? One youth mentioned the term youth washing that the attempts of the UNFCCC to include young people are not seriously and only to show goodwill?  
How would you like to be included? What could be improved in the future?

External Perception of youth participation

→ Take the perspective of media/an external person  
How does media report on youth participation? What is most efficient for getting coverage?  
1a. How do you think is your type of engagement (or youth engagement in general) portrait in the media?  
1b. How does media report about youth engagement and what does the rest of the world think about how youth is practising politics?  
How do you perceived by media when you do more radical (action based) participation vs. when you do calmer more democratic this type of participation? Has there been negative coverage for particular approaches?  
Compare yourself with others (other groups (constituencies at COP), In what way differs your strategy from others? → Are others more extreme? Why, How? Do you see a distinction in the way you do politics?  
How the rest of the world sees how youth practises politics? How the world value democratic approaches? Does the outside world(media) prefer one approach over the other? What is the best approach? Are you considered radical in your circles or compared to practices in other constituencies?

Alternative paths

Radicalization: Did youth become increasingly desperate, did they try the normal deliberative arenas and experienced that this does not work, thus to be forced to proceed the more disruptive approaches. Outline and analysis of involvement trajectory: to consider if participants became more radical?

→ Did you change your strategy at one point? Did you experience that the participation strategy did not work and started with something different?  
→ Can you experience a radicalisation of youth in general from deliberative approaches (complying with democratic rules and norms) to more radical once (such as protest) because the calm proceedings did not work?  
→ Outside of the COP context, would you consider yourself as bit activist-minded, to begin with, maybe somewhat more rebellious in nature?

COP in greater perspectives with other public spaces

The UN negotiations are very specific as participation (e.g. as an observer) requires very predefined and strict rules. Within the Negotiation Space, there is not much room to be extreme/ or to follow extreme participation.
Could you reflect: About this place the (UNFCCC negotiations) with its certain atmosphere and rules in relation to other arenas you have been to. (Arenas in the sense of other places where you were trying to be politically engaged and involved). Are there dos and don’ts for participation that might not be applicable on other sides? →Research assumption: certain arenas are better for certain types of participations?

Do you know other places where you have more space to be more extreme and follow the alternative more disruptive approaches? → And do you have participation experience in those other arenas?

**Future**

- Are we going in a certain direction?
- What do you see differently in the future?
- Do you see that you will do more of this kind of politics?
- What would be ideal?