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P.H. Wolf – 3250717

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# Explaining the Absence of American Environmental Leadership

The Influence of Populist Rhetoric and the Politics of Anti-statism on  
United States Climate Change Policy

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## Introduction

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On January 21st, 2013, President Barack Obama gave his second inauguration speech on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. America's 44<sup>th</sup> president stood before the most powerful politicians, businessmen and celebrities of the nation, and while facing the Americans assembled on the fields before him, he laid before them the challenges and issues he intended to address in his second term. Amongst prominent dilemmas such as the budget deficit, gun violence and the polarization in American politics, Obama spoke of another problem: climate change. He explicitly attempted to appeal to Americans' sense of civic duty, as he stated:

We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves, but to all posterity. We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires and crippling drought and more powerful storms.<sup>1</sup>

He validated his call for the recognition and tackling of the problems of climate change by pointing at the future economic possibilities of alternative energy sources. Most importantly, he argued the following: "America cannot resist this transition, we must lead it."<sup>2</sup>

It appears however, that America has not led, is not leading, and it is probable that the nation will not lead the implementation of climate change policies in the future. Over the past hundred years, the United States has been championing and trendsetting in all aspects of global society. In politics by spreading their ideal of democracy and freedom, in technology with Ford's conveyor belt and Apple's MacBooks, and in culture with Hollywood films and universal brands such as Coca-Cola. Yet, the greatest nation on earth is, indeed, no world leader in addressing this issue. As they have always demanded and assumed this role, it is striking and problematic that in this case that they do not. Especially because only few nations are capable or willing to lead the way against the causes and effects of climate change, and consequently, little is done on a global scale.

In a ranking which compares the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> of nation-states with individual American states in 1999 and 2000, the United States as a whole doubled the emission of number two China, while the state of Texas ranked at number seven with only slightly more than ten percent of the total

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<sup>1</sup> "Inaugural Address by President Barack Obama," The White House: President Barack Obama, accessed May 13, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama>.

<sup>2</sup> "Inaugural Address by President Barack Obama."

emission of the United States. In between Texas and number fourteen California, nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Saudi Arabia were listed.<sup>3</sup> As Americans are responsible for a quarter of the total global emissions that have caused global warming and single states are polluting more than large nation-states, some form of responsibility towards mitigating these emissions can be expected. Yet, the United States remains passive. Worldwide initiatives have not achieved their potential success because the United States withheld support to a number of them. Former President George W. Bush implemented environmental regulation which diminished obligations for the nation and for its big businesses. As a result, the extent of the United States' climate change policies did not approach the extent of the measures of the Kyoto protocol. America's lack of leadership in this particular initiative played an important role in its limited success. Most recently, president Obama has not been able to actively proceed on his intention to address climate change, because of popular resistance and objections to government interference. And meanwhile, yet another extreme hurricane season has been announced, as emission rates are still rising and have reached a symbolic barrier.

The United States is not challenging this worldwide problem, the question comes to mind, why are they not leading the world in this particular event, although they have done this in many other cases? What makes climate change a different issue? Why is the approach of the United States different, less comprehensive than the global approach? China is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gasses on the planet and the nation stated in 2012 in a action plan that it aimed to diminish emissions because it recognized "the importance of climate change and integrates measures for addressing it into the country's mid-term and long-term plans for economic and social development".<sup>4</sup> What is the reason that the United States has not created similar strategies? Why is the United States not a leader in addressing the causes of the problems that climate change is throwing at them and at the world?

The goal of this thesis is to provide an answer to these questions; it aims to find an explanation for the fact that the United States is not managing the international implementation of climate change policies. This thesis will examine this by looking at characteristic traits of American democracy. The main aim of this research is to clarify the extent in which characteristic traits of American democracy have influenced climate change policies in the United States.

The influence of these characteristic traits of modern American democracy on climate

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas D. Peterson and Adam Z. Rose, "Reducing conflicts between climate policy and energy policy in the US: The important role of the states," *Energy Policy* 34 (2006): 619-631.

<sup>4</sup> "China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change (2012)," The National Development and Reform Commission: The People's Republic of China, accessed June 24, 2013, <http://www.ccchina.gov.cn/WebSite/CCChina/UpFile/File1324.pdf>.

change policymaking will be demonstrated through extensive discussions of two of these traits. By discussing populist rhetoric and the ideology of anti-statism the extent of influence of American characteristics on environmental regulation in the United States will be analyzed. The analysis of these traits will focus on their influence in the twenty-first century, as it contains among others the environmental politics of two presidencies and the rejection of active participation on the Kyoto protocol, while it excludes excessive discussion on the reactions on the protocol and further discussion of presidential environmental politics. Most importantly, this thesis studies a period in which climate change has been a prominent and polarizing subject. As a result, this study does not demonstrate the origins of the absence of environmental regulation, rather, it will reveal why such regulation has not been implemented in a period of time in which the scientific consensus has become growingly convincing.

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate how the functioning of typical American traits prevented the adoption of laws and regulations addressing climate change between 2000 and 2013. In order to do this, these two basic themes are each divided into subthemes. This approach has been chosen in order to let the symptoms, consequences and features of populist rhetoric and anti-statism demonstrate a number of elements that have influenced climate change policy in this period. For instance, the American media are used by interest groups to spread doubt on the science of climate change which can subsequently influence the implementation of policies addressing greenhouse gas emissions. The subthemes or forms of populist rhetoric that will be discussed are the influence of the way the media reports about climate change and its impact on public opinion and politicians, and the generating of public support for personal or ideological interest by conservative think tanks. For the theme of anti-statism, the subtheme that will be discussed is the dominant political ideal of *laissez-faire*. The effect of George W. Bush's climate change policies and the conservative stance towards the issue will be discussed as case studies.

As these themes and subthemes are discussed in the context of climate change, this thesis takes the form of a number of small case-studies. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how the functioning of these specific cases, these traits and sub-traits of American democracy have influenced climate change policy. This thesis assumes that both populist rhetoric and anti-statism are concepts that are typical of the United States and the functioning of its democracy. This does, however not mean that the practice of the language and rhetoric of populism is unique, nor does it support that such forms of rhetoric are utilized solely in America and not outside its borders, while it also does not mean that the ideal of anti-statism occurs exclusively in the United States. However, they are basic traits of American democracy and can therefore help to explain why America is not a

global leader in addressing climate change. In order to do this, it is imperative to further explain what should be understood by both terms.

In classic populism, the focus lies more on the ideal of politicians representing the interests of the people and in a more specific and realistic context, how politicians claim to work for the best interest of the people. It also differs from the role of the people within the American ideal of anti-statism, which will be defined hereafter, as it does not focus on what Seymour Martin Lipset has called: “the most antistatist liberal population among the democratic nations.”<sup>5</sup> Lipset was an influential authority on political sociology and a senior fellow at Stanford University and in his highly esteemed, but not uncontested *American Exceptionalism*, he argues that the United States and the ideologies such as liberty and freedom that make up Americans are unique in the world. Even though most nations might be called unique in their own right as long as a researcher takes the time to adequately study such a nation, this ‘exceptional’ status of the United States helps to explain why the nation undergoes different developments and in this thesis it will be demonstrated how typical American traits and ideologies have caused a different approach to climate change policy in comparison to the rest of the world. One of these will be populism, which will be dubbed more specifically as ‘populist rhetoric’.

In this thesis, populist rhetoric centers around the techniques with which the American people are influenced on their thinking about prevalent issues, such as climate change. The term ‘rhetoric’ is added to populism because it describes how anti-environmentalists apply forms of language and expressions which are aimed at persuading politicians and the American public for their own interest. Populist rhetoric does not revolve around a political leader, political party or around ideology-driven groups. Cochran et al. have described populism in their introducing handbook *American Public Policy* as something which “perceives that the interests of these common people are opposed by conspirational elites such as bankers, big businesses, bureaucrats and politicians.” Although the chapter on anti-statism does focus on the manner in which the elites intend to defend their interests, the chapter on populist rhetoric and the term itself will not focus the people that defend their interests, rather it focuses on the methods and forms of expression they use to gain support for their point of view.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis concentrates on the rhetoric these groups apply to create a broader constituency. This thesis will reveal that interest groups such as anti-environmental big business-lobbies apply the same methods of rhetoric and persuasion that political movements and other interest groups have

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<sup>5</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Clarke E. Cochran, *American Public Policy: An Introduction* (Boston, Massachusetts: Wadsworth, 2012), 478-479.



used when they argued to work for the interests of common people. British political theorist Margaret Canovan described this form of populism as: “the mobilization of interests and opinions that were perceived by their adherents as being neglected by those in power despite being the concerns of the mainstream”. In this study, the populist rhetoric that has been originally applied by those claiming to speak for the people will be investigated as this form of rhetoric has been adopted by climate skeptics.<sup>7</sup>

With ‘populist rhetoric’ this thesis understands what mostly resembles “the language of populism”, as is described and discussed by Michael Kazin in his book *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*. This book discusses “the persistence of one vital way in which Americans have argued about politics”. Kazin defines populism as: “a language whose speakers conceive of ordinary people as a noble assemblage not bounded narrowly by class, view their elite opponents as self-serving and undemocratic, and seek to mobilize the former against the latter.” The focus in this research lies primarily on the last part of this definition, where groups polarize for their own gain and not for the people they falsely assert to speak for, or as Kazin stated it: “it is language used by those who *claim* [italics added] to speak for the vast majority of Americans who work hard and love their country.” Political scientist Paul Taggart wrote one of the other few books focusing on populism specifically. In *Populism*, he demonstrated how individuals and groups can influence policymaking: “Using the mass media and access to wealth, single individuals can construct parties with relative ease and with remarkable speed and effectiveness”.<sup>8</sup> Populist rhetoric aims to alter public- and political opinion for their own best interest by conveying their message through the media and by mobilizing financial resources to persuade these groups.

Following these definitions, populist rhetoric will be defined as the generating of public support by the media, politicians, political movements and interest groups, through for instance the media, political rhetoric or the undermining of science, in order to influence public opinion and voting behavior for reasons of self-interest.

The influence of this tradition in for example American democracy helped the oil producing Koch brothers to finance the Tea Party. This political interest group promotes small government, which implies among others little emission taxes and environmental regulations. Thus, the Koch brothers indirectly tried to influence policymaking for their own financial benefit, as regulations and taxes cause higher costs for businesses and factories. The level of influence on politics in the United States is unique because of the great extent in which individuals, interest groups and lobby groups

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<sup>7</sup> Margaret Canovan, “Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy,” *Political Studies* 47 (1999): 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1; Paul Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 117.

can influence local-, state-, and government-level decisions, through both the executive and legislative process. Populist rhetoric is constantly and extensively applied by interest groups in the United States to convince others of the importance of a certain standpoint. Therefore, it is a typical aspect of American democracy and it is interconnecting and interacting with the second characteristic of American democracy discussed in this thesis.<sup>9</sup>

The traditional ideology of anti-statism in both American politics and American society can be traced to the Founding Fathers, although it have not merely been George Washington and Benjamin Franklin who emphasized this typical American idea of self-reliance. In his book *Walden*, nineteenth-century author Henry David Thoreau most famously expressed the respect for an American that can rely on himself to survive and he showed his disdain for dependence, as he recounted and glorified how he set up a self-sufficient live near Walden Pond. In 1849, Thoreau had already published *Civil Disobedience*, an essay on the subject of anti-statism. In this he famously promoted this idea, which had been originally formulated by another Founding father, Thomas Jefferson: "That government is best which governs least [...] That government is best which governs not at all." So, an essential American principle is that the federal government should interfere as little as possible. In his handbook *American Politics and society*, David McKay argues that there exists an "ideological consensus" within American ideals on the importance of "individual rather than collective action."<sup>10</sup>

Anti-statism is a term that will be utilized because it surpasses the problems that the more general, and more confusing term, American liberalism would create. This thesis focuses among others on the ideals of individual freedom and liberty which are most strongly defended by conservative Republicans. Although liberal democrats certainly do not oppose these ideals, the term American liberalism could easily become confused with liberal party politics, in which the 'liberals' constitute the leftists, democrats and in some contexts even socialists. Political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset explains the possible confusion properly as he puts it in a transatlantic comparison: "What Europeans have called 'liberalism,' Americans refer to as 'conservatism'." In an American-centered context, Lipset argued more specifically: "this is an anti-statist country. It is a country that is suspicious of the state."<sup>11</sup>

In this thesis, anti-statism is not a political color. Anti-statism is a nationwide held set of ideologies, which are encapsulated by the settled principle of a small government. After the French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville travelled around the United States, he published *De la*

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<sup>9</sup> Jane Mayer, "Covert Operations: The Billionaire Brothers who are waging a war against Obama," *New Yorker*, August 30, 2010, accessed November 5, 2012, [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa\\_fact\\_mayer?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa_fact_mayer?currentPage=all).

<sup>10</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 275; David McKay, *American Politics and Society* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 11, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 35-36; Seymour Martin Lipset and Aaron L. Friedberg, "The American Anti-Statist Tradition," *Cato Policy Report* 22 (2000): 7-8.

*démocratie en Amérique* or *Democracy in America* in 1835 in which he discussed how American democracy worked. De Tocqueville noticed the limited role of the government, he stated: “Nothing is more striking to the European traveler in the United States than the absence of what we term the government”. As a strong proponent of liberty he highly esteemed the prominence of a small government and freedom in the United States. This respect originates from the same principle on which Americans base their anti-statism, as it opposes big government because it makes the individual vulnerable and constrained. De Tocqueville described the consequences of an unlimited government:

Amongst the greater part of the nations, the government, whatever may be its origins, its constitution, or its name, has become almost omnipotent, and private persons are falling, more and more, into the lowest stage of weakness and dependence.<sup>12</sup>

De Tocqueville accurately identified anti-statism as the core of America’s fundamental beliefs. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the practice and application of the ideology is one of the most prevalent political discussions throughout the existence of the United States. J. David Greenstone was a specialist in American government and political theory at Chicago University and he argued in his *The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism*: “at its core American political culture is pervasively liberal – but not consensually so; that although American liberalism excludes nonliberal alternatives is nevertheless, it fundamentally divided, philosophically as well as politically.”<sup>13</sup>

A consensus on anti-statism could be argued to exist, but the interpretation and application of the ideology has often been subject to public and political discussion. This thesis understands anti-statism as a set of beliefs which are in turn, according to Aaron L. Friedberg, a number of “similar attitudes and values held by the mass of the population”, and are an essential element of general American ideology. Friedberg is a politics and foreign affairs specialist who has defined anti-statism in his *In the Shadow of the Garrison State* as: “the body of ideas and arguments used by those who have opposed efforts to increase the size and strength of the executive branch of the federal government.”<sup>14</sup>

In this thesis the choice has been made to focus more specifically on the content and implications of these ideas and arguments. Because of this, the set of beliefs which make up the tradition of anti-statism will therefore be defined as the traditional and doctrinal emphasis in

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<sup>12</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (London: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> J. David Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 7.

<sup>14</sup> McKay, *American Politics and Society*, 7; Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press: 2000), 11.

American politics and society on individual freedom, self-reliance, laissez-faire, and a limited-interfering government. The term constitutes conditions that make implementing climate change policies troublesome, which the Tea Party has tried to support. The example of the interdependence of the Koch brothers and the Tea Party is an example of how the characteristic American democratic traditions of populist rhetoric and the ideology of anti-statism can influence the politics of climate change in the United States.

Before starting on a discussion on the influence of populist rhetoric and anti-statism, the first chapter of this thesis will provide a broad examination of the concepts of climate change and more specifically, the concept of climate change in the United States. What is climate change? What are its causes and effects? What is the extent of scientific disagreement on the issue? A discussion of the history of climate change politics and climate thinking in America will then be provided. And most importantly, the chapter will demonstrate that a relatively limited number of laws and regulations on climate change are adopted in the United States. The question is then brought up again, why is the United States not leading the implementation of climate change policy? What is problematic about climate change policy in the United States?

Chapter two will then start to explain this, by demonstrating the influence of characteristic American traits on the implementation of climate change policy. In this chapter, the aim is to demonstrate the extent in which populist rhetoric in the United States has influenced environmental policymaking. The elements which will be discussed are the influence of the media and the acquiring of public support for interest. These are typical for American-style democracy, and the same goes for the element of the latter chapter, which will focus on the influence of the ideology of laissez-faire. The goal of this chapter is to reveal the length in which anti-statism in the United States has influenced the implementation of climate change laws and regulations.

## 1. The lack of Environmental Regulation

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The twenty-first century has challenged the United States with an extensive number of hurricanes, droughts and blizzards. The consequences of these hurricanes are often the most catastrophic and impressive. In 2005, hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans and the lives of many citizens, while the aftermath left the survivors in a state of prehistoric anarchy. Hurricane Sandy threatened one of America's most densely populated and most essential financial districts in 2012, whereupon it shut down the capital of the United States for a number of days. The north east was subsequently battered with a severe blizzard, which has become a yearly occurrence. Other areas of the United States such as Utah, Colorado and Kansas are often faced with enormous droughts, of which 2012 was the last year peak.<sup>15</sup>

A growing number of natural disasters occur with greater intensity in the United States. When adding that a vast amount of scientific evidence states that the climate and the weather are changing, a causal connection can be discerned. However, America's most devastating blizzard took place in 1888, while the greatest drought in the United States was the 'Dust Bowl' of 1934 that took place during the Great Depression. Is the changing climate nothing new, then? The consensus on this apparent contradiction is that climate change manifests itself not as a matter of course through natural disasters, but mainly through a growing trend of changing weather patterns which causes among others growing climate instability, blizzards and droughts.<sup>16</sup>

Pointing at earlier, incidental, occurrences of natural disasters is one form of populist rhetoric climate skeptics apply to deny the fact that the climate is changing. It is a typical American form of rhetoric which undermines the scientific consensus on climate change, and thus hampers the implementation of climate policymaking in the United States. Numbers of global, national, local and private initiatives have sprung up around the world to address the effects of this changing. Yet, in the United States the implementation of laws and regulations tackling the issue have hardly been realized. Why is that? Why is America not leading? In order to examine this, it is imperative to demonstrate first what America has done, or what it has not done. This chapter aims to do so. First, it will discuss what climate change is and does; what causes climate change? And, what are the

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<sup>15</sup> Nikhil Kumar, "White-out! Blizzards hit north-east US," *The Independent*, February 10, 2013, accessed May 29, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/whiteout-blizzards-hit-northeast-us-8488401.html>; Brad Plumer, "How droughts will reshape the United States," *The Washington Post*, July 17, 2012, accessed May 29, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/07/17/how-droughts-will-reshape-the-united-states/>.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas R. Karl, Jerry M. Melillo and Thomas C. Peterson, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the U.S.: A State of Knowledge Report from the U.S. Global Change Research Program* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 27.

consequences of climate change? Then, the politics of climate change in the United States will be discussed. From this, a contrast will become apparent, which illustrates the outset of this thesis, by demonstrating what the United States have and have not done about climate change, about its causes and about its effects. By demonstrating more specifically and elaborately the reason for this research, this contrast will raise the question why the United States trailed in the global attempts to address climate change, why are they different? The subsequent chapters will then use populist rhetoric and the ideology of anti-statism to explain this.

## **Climate change**

The science of climate change is immense in both scope and complexity. According to Spencer Weart in his *The Discovery of Global Warming*, climate scientists set aside “climate change as a puzzle too difficult for anyone to solve with the tools at hand,” before the Second World War. Afterwards, it was MIT-scientist Charles David Keeling who, with the proper tools and funds at hand, set up research facilities on Antarctica and Mauna Loa, Hawaii. From this research the Keeling Curve was produced. This swiftly ascending line demonstrated the problematic growing of carbon dioxide emission.<sup>17</sup> The measures started at emission rates of 316 parts of CO<sub>2</sub> per million in the atmosphere, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and the emission rates first peaked over the symbolic line of 400 parts per million.<sup>18</sup>

Since this debut of undeniable evidence of a changing climate, many scientific studies; scientific institutions; government funded studies; corporate funded inquiries; university based studies; private initiatives; ideology-based initiatives; and also, a number of political and scientific conferences have been created which have all addressed climate change. The reasons for the examination of this process are varied, which also explains why groups perceive climate change differently. In order to set up a definition of climate change that is applicable to this thesis, it is useful to look at how three trustworthy institutions define climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the United Nations Environmental Program and the World Meteorological Organization; it is a research institution which evaluates and combines worldwide research on the climate, producing four Assessment Reports in 1990, 1995, 2001 and in 2007. In this last report, the IPCC acknowledges the existence of climate change, while it refrains from directly pointing at human influence for its cause:

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<sup>17</sup> Spencer R. Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 18, 34-37.

<sup>18</sup> Jason Samenow, “Atmospheric carbon dioxide reaches 400 parts per million concentration milestone,” *The Washington Post*, May 10, 2013, accessed May 16, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/wp/2013/05/10/atmospheric-carbon-dioxide-concentration-400-parts-per-million/>.

Climate change in IPCC usage refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (..) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. It refers to any change in the climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.<sup>19</sup>

The IPCC is subject to another environmental institution of the United Nations; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which organizes nations into negotiations through the Conference of Parties (CoP) and by procuring the Kyoto protocol, and by organizing climate change conferences in for instance Doha in 2012. The UNFCCC perceives climate change as real and caused by human intervention, as they define it as:

A change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.<sup>20</sup>

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA is equally certain that “Climate Change is happening”. Nowhere, however, does it mention human responsibility, as it defines climate change as:

Climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time. In other words, climate change includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among other effects, that occur over several decades or longer.<sup>21</sup>

Starting from these three definitions, this thesis defines climate change as the long term quantifiable process which is directly and indirectly caused by humankind, and results in the possibly detrimental changing of our planet’s environment. This definition also acknowledges the reality of the existence of climate change straightforwardly. It chooses to point at human influence as the main cause, although it recognizes that some environmental variability is natural, because the majority of factors changing the climate are effects of human behavior. It furthermore perceives the effects of human actions as a probable problem since established science largely agrees that this will be the case. Climate change remains an abstract term, even the definitions do not point at specific causes and

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<sup>19</sup> R.K. Pachauri and A. Reisinger, eds., *Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC: Geneva, 2007), 30.

<sup>20</sup> “Fact Sheet: Climate Change Science – The status of climate change science today,” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed May 16, 2013, [http://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/press\\_factsh\\_science.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/press_factsh_science.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> “Climate Change: Basic Information,” United States Environmental Protection Agency, accessed May 17, 2013, <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/>.

effects of the process. In order to understand what climate change actually means, this thesis will now continue with a short overview of the causes and effects of climate change.

### *The causes and effects of climate change*

It is important to make a clear distinction between global warming and climate change. The former is an important element within the process of the latter. Global warming is the process in which the growing emission of greenhouse gasses such as CO<sub>2</sub> traps a growing amount of infrared radiation from the sun in the atmosphere, as a result of the growing emission of greenhouse gasses such as CO<sub>2</sub>, which thicken the atmosphere that traps the CO<sub>2</sub>. The consequence is that solar heat cannot escape into space. As a result it remains in the atmosphere, causing the heating of the planet.<sup>22</sup>

Global warming has many directly attributable consequences. The melting of polar icecaps and glaciers results in rising sea levels and the shrinking of fresh water supplies. Rising sea levels endanger low-level coastal regions and thus economic centers such as the Netherlands, New York, Singapore and the state of California. It also creates growing natural instability, significantly changing human lives, such as Nepalese villages being washed away by large quantities of melted permafrost. The warming of the planet also induced severe droughts, extreme heat waves and it has been stated by the IPCC that it is safe to say that the past fifty years have been the hottest of the past 1300 years. Moreover, there have been a growing number of tropical storms as a result of the heating of the oceans. Droughts and rises in average temperatures have furthermore created crop failure and water shortages that have resulted in diminishing food supplies. On top of this, greenhouse gasses have a direct influence on human health as well; air pollution in the form of smog does not only obscure the view in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Mexico City. Citizens exposed to these toxics risk to be contaminated by health issues such as cancer, skin rash, kidney/liver damage, birth defects and miscarriages.<sup>23</sup>

The causes and effects of climate change do not stand alone. These processes are incredibly complicated. Many other causes of human action besides global warming affect the earth's climate, such as the growing population of the earth, which demands more food, more water and more

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<sup>22</sup> *An Inconvenient Truth*, DVD, directed by Davis Guggenheim (2006; Los Angeles, California: Paramount, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Pachauri and Reisinger, eds., *Fourth Assessment Report*, 30-33, 36-41, 44-53; Jeff Masters, "Causes of the Russian Heat Wave and Pakistani Floods," in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 89-92; Roger Revelle and Hans E. Suess, "Carbon Dioxide Exchange between Atmosphere and Ocean and the Question of an Increase of Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> during the Past Decades," in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 39-45; John Vidal, "Nepal's Farmers on the Front Line of Global Climate Change," in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 401-404; "Air Pollution and Health Risk," United States Environmental Protection Agency, accessed May 17, 2013, [http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/3\\_90\\_022.html](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/3_90_022.html).



energy supplies. This has resulted among others in the emptying of the seas of fish; the drying out of the Aral Sea in Central Asia; and the steep rise of fuel prices. Shortages create famine and lowering of standards of living, which in turn create conflicts.

The Malthusian Catastrophe is another possible outcome of the extensive use of the resources of the planet Earth. Thomas Malthus was an eighteenth and nineteenth century economist. In his 1798 book *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, he argued that the availability of food would become insufficient at a yet unknown point in time, as a result of population growth. According to Malthus, the result of this would be apocalyptic wars and struggles between the peoples of the world on the scarce amounts of food left in the world.<sup>24</sup> The Malthusian Catastrophe has been discussed extensively throughout the past two centuries, but the event itself has never actually clearly occurred in the extent that Malthus predicted it. Nonetheless, it can be argued that such events have occurred. The reasons might not have been specifically aimed at food, but they have been aimed at the struggles over earth's resources. The first and second Gulf Wars were fought to secure the open access to Arabian oil for the United States, and thus to secure their availability of energy sources. A different result of the war might not have been catastrophic, but it shows the length peoples and nations will go to protect their well-being. Perceiving the possible ruinous consequences of climate change itself, makes the possibility of a Malthusian catastrophe as a result of climate change more likely. Despite such a possibility, the United States have hardly addressed climate change as such a threatening dilemma.

Climate change is about everything that alters the environment from the way it was before. Apparent smaller instances with less catastrophic consequences are therefore also a part of the process as they decrease the quality of living. Deforestation worsens the air quality and lessens the esthetic quality of the earth, which is the same effect that light pollution has. Pollution occurs not only in the air, but also on land and in the seas, endangering the future health of many animals and species. The earth's flora and fauna experiences much difficulties as a result of humankind's demand as well. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has created a red list in 2004 in which they state that 15.589 animal species on the world are threatened by extinction, while 784 species have already become extinct. Some argue that humans and their environment will be able to recuperate from the effects of climate change the earth is facing at the moment. Yet, extinct species cannot be brought back, and the IPCC Assessment Report of 2007 warns: "Unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be *likely* to exceed the capacity of natural, managed human systems

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<sup>24</sup> Chris Buskes, *Evolutionair denken: De invloed van Darwin op ons wereldbeeld* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Nieuwezijds, 2009), 28; Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population: An Essay on the Principle of Population, as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society; with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and Other Writers* (St. Paul's Church-Yard: J. Johnson, 1798).

to adapt.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, an increasing number of scientists are expecting that climate change will not remain close to a linear and gradual development. An enormous concentration of methane gas, which is twenty times as detrimental as a greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>, under the melting Siberian permafrost, Arctic ice melting into the sea and disappearing Brazilian rainforest could bring about abrupt, catastrophic changes to the earth’ environment.<sup>26</sup>

### *Climate change in science*

A science layman ingesting all the research on the causes and effects of climate change, all that is proven and all that is expected to happen; might be easily confused about the reserved manner in which scientists demonstrate their findings. Especially when looking at the likely consequences, the lack of action appears illogic. As the subsequent chapters will discuss groups of people who make an art of being subjective, it is useful to understand why scientists, those with the proper tools to know, are sticking so close to objectivity.

The consensus on scientific theory about truth states that the outcome of scientific research is only factual until it is disproven. Thus, science refrains itself from ever permanently validating scientific prove. Theoretically, gravity is but reality as long as the opposite is not proven. Because of this, many climatologists and environmental scientists may withhold presenting their research results as final truth. For this reason, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change includes some form of clause in their Assessment Reports pointing at the possible uncertainty of their results. In the 2007 report they even added a prominently placed ‘Treatment of uncertainty’ in which they explain their rating system towards the level of certainty on statements and facts, which “depend on both the nature of the information available and the author’s expert judgment of the correctness and completeness of current scientific understanding.”<sup>27</sup>

By adding these kinds of announcements they strip a lot of persuasion from their findings. Discussions between climate change scientists and their adversaries are equal to a discussion between a moderate and a fundamentalist in the intensity of the argument; the latter can defend his point of view more forcefully. Meanwhile, the climatologist presents his findings accompanied with his doubts and possible mistakes. As Naomi Oreskes states about the way IPCC and other environmental scientific institutions present their research results:”Such statements suggest that there might be substantive disagreement in the scientific community about the reality of

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan E.M. Baillie et al., *A Global Species Assessment* (Cambridge: International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, 2004), accessed May 20, 2013, <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/html/Red%20List%202004/completed/cover.html>; Pachauri and Reisinger, eds., *Fourth Assessment Report*, 73.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathon Porrit, *Capitalism: as if the World Matters* (London: Earthscan Ltd, 2007), 20.

<sup>27</sup> Pachauri and Reisinger, eds., *Fourth Assessment Report*, 27.

anthropogenic climate change. This is not the case.” Indeed, there should be no misunderstanding. The reality of climate change is not a scientific discussion. From all the scientific data and studies, it can only be concluded that there is a scientific consensus that agrees that climate change is happening. The global scientific community backs up the conclusions of the IPCC reports and this is also done, more specifically, by each key scientific institution of the United States. Institutions like the American Meteorological Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Academy of Sciences, NASA, and the American Geophysical Union all agree with the IPCC or have published similar conclusions.<sup>28</sup> This thesis aims to keep an objective, opinion-free and non-biased outlook on the subjects discussed. However, it starts from the assumption based on the scientific consensus that climate change is real. Arguing that climate change is real is no bias. Despite the consensus, it remains under heavy public and political discussion in the United States, and this will be examined extensively in the coming chapters.

## **American Environmental History**

The American disagreement on climate change has not always been as clear cut as it has been in the twenty-first century. There have been many instances where political groups that now oppose climate change policy most fervently, were more easily receptive of laws that addressed the problem. The following will demonstrate the development of environmental consciousness and policymaking in the United States, in order to demonstrate the roots and current state of environmental culture and –politics in America.

In 1968, Apollo 8 circled the moon and when it appeared from behind its dark side its astronauts aboard saw planet Earth as no one had ever seen it before. The picture they took of it was dubbed ‘Earth Rise’ and it induced the realization among Americans that their planet was a special place for which they ought to take good care.<sup>29</sup> Although the scientific work of Roger Revelle and Charles Keeling had produced some worrisome evidence for the changing of the planet’s climate, this realization had only been marginal until then. Mainly, as climatologist Guy Callendar noticed, because people “did not think of it themselves.” The wake-up call of ‘Earth Rise’ would turn out to be one out of many. Scientists such as Revelle and politicians such as his student, future congressmen and future vice-president Al Gore have labored to make global warming and the emission of greenhouse gasses a political and public dominant topic. Despite their hard work and that of many others, environment consciousness has only seen a slow rise over the past decades, only to have

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<sup>28</sup> Naomi Oreskes, “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change,” in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 75

<sup>29</sup> Gerard de Groot, *The Dark Side of the Moon: The Magnificent Madness of the American Lunar Quest* (London: Vintage Books, 2008), 228-230.

arrived at a point where awareness may be widespread, but regulations are not.<sup>30</sup>

In this period, scientists and politicians worked to obtain funds to further their research, to obtain public attentiveness, as this in turn would create political support for their cause. Sometimes this cause was recognized, for instance when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was established to study the climate. In other instances they were turned down, which Keeling experienced when his funds were suspended in 1964 and again in 1979.<sup>31</sup>

However, the President's Scientific Advisory Committee had already published a report on caring for the climate in 1964. Climate change awareness came gradually but hesitantly. According to Spencer Weart, science editors of the popular media played an important role in this process, as they were the ones who had to pick up on research and conferences on climate change. This happened for example when *The New York Times* published a cover-article in 1977 which exclaimed: "Scientists Fear Heavy Use of Coal May Bring Adverse Shift in Climate."<sup>32</sup> Articles such as these induced discussion among the public and politicians, but also among businesses and factory owners. A year later, the first minor environmental law, the National Climate Act, was passed through Congress. Meanwhile the American public was becoming more aware of climate issues, through the alerts were made about deforestation in North America and the rest of the world, and through the warnings about the damaging effects of the CFC's which were spouted by spray cans.

As a result, industrialists lead the way for anti-environmentalism, as they "fought back with public relations campaigns that indignantly denied there was any risk whatsoever", and conservatives, who "tended to lump together all claims about impending ecological dooms as left-wing propaganda." In the early 1980s it was the newly elected President Ronald Reagan who removed the solar panels from the roof of the White House, while at the same time the first opinion poll on climate change revealed that up to one third of Americans had in some way heard about global warming, yet the majority was unaware or did for long not realize its possible consequences. Nonetheless, climate change consciousness became more widespread in the 1980s. This was mainly due to growing attention of the popular media, which also kept politicians awake, as they relied on them as a "prime detector of the public's fears." Alertness and initiatives on climate change remained mainly absent, as only relatively marginal funds were provided to scientific research. Scientists became restless and agitated from the lack of action.<sup>33</sup>

A breakthrough came in the "'greenhouse summer' of 1988." Three years earlier, British

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<sup>30</sup> Mike Hulme, *Why we Disagree about Climate Change: Understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53-56.

<sup>31</sup> Hulme, *Why we Disagree about Climate Change*, 56

<sup>32</sup> Spencer R. Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 90, 95, 102-103, 123.

<sup>33</sup> Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming*, 109-113, 123, 138-140

scientists discovered the so-called ‘hole in the ozone-layer’, while 1987 had turned out to be the hottest year in American history. This and a number of other events led NASA-scientist Jim Hansen to choose to speak before a heat-struck Senate hearing in the summer of 1988. The confluence of events, the heat and Hansen’s verdict stating that: “It is time to stop waffling so much and say that the evidence is pretty strong that the greenhouse effect is here”, led to the realization that this was an important topic. President George H.W. Bush anticipated a convenient theme to increase his constituency. In advance, he stated that people would be reminiscent of him as the “environmental president.” No such thing happened, as Bush hardly addressed the issue during his presidency.<sup>34</sup>

Ambivalence and hesitance still reigned over the topic of climate change. The first IPCC report of 1990 concluded that climate change was real and that it was likely that men were responsible. Private initiatives sprang up, while the media reported more pressingly about the issue. Serious political action could have come from the ‘Earth Summit’ in 1992. Despite vice-president Al Gore’s pleading with his superior to take decisive action, President Bill Clinton chose political certainty and did not choose for polarization and the possibility of not being re-elected. The 1995 IPCC report was more decisive about the reality of climate change. Nonetheless, America’s leadership position in the negotiations for setting up the Kyoto Protocol, which was originally an initiative of the UNFCCC to create global greenhouse gas emission restrictions, was shot down by the United States Senate as they unanimously voted ‘nay’ against the proposition as it was proposed.<sup>35</sup>

The absence of climate change policy can mainly be attributed to the lack of political awareness, the unpopularity of the subject of climate change and the powerful groups opposing environmental policies. As Spencer Weart concludes, politicians “would not go against short-term industrial interests unless public opinion drove them.” Politicians are dominantly led by concerns for their own political career. Because: “debates over global warming (..) did not mobilize the media for long periods”, public opinion was not concerned about it, whereby politicians were hardly eager to support the implementation of climate change laws and regulations. Since powerful industrialists opposed these as well: “politicians saw nothing to gain by stirring it up.” Thus, it have been characteristically American traits of democracy, such as the lack of popular support and the anti-statist fear for over-regulation, which denied the implementation of climate change policies. The influence of populist rhetoric and anti-statism on this will be examined more extensively in the coming chapters. The hesitant and ambivalent attitude continued at the start of the twenty-first century: “Even Gore mentioned global warming only briefly during his 2000 run for the presidency.”<sup>36</sup>

Despite this, George W. Bush won. In his first year as a president, his administration

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<sup>34</sup> Hulme, *Why we Disagree about Climate Change*, 63-67.

<sup>35</sup> Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming*, 150-151, 157-167

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, 175.

withdrew the United States from the Kyoto protocol, the largest global climate initiative now stood without support from the most powerful country in the world. Bush did not want to abide with restricting greenhouse gas emission rates and taxes. Apparently opposition within the United States was strong enough to refrain from cooperating on “an issue deserving of a collective global effort orchestrated by the United Nations.” Internationally the need for action became more widely recognized and commitments were made to limit emissions. These commitments were set-up during conventions which were instigated among other by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC initiated among others the convention in Kyoto from which the Kyoto protocol was produced, they also set up conventions in for instance Marrakesh in 2001 and in Copenhagen in 2009, and they made the international parties agree on the Bali Road Map in 2007. All of these conventions aimed to legally restrict the emission rates of countries across the world. However, the United States has regularly refrained from actively participating, while it also did not allow the international community to lay greenhouse gas emission restrictions upon them.

National initiatives from Republican politicians and the Pentagon urging for action on climate change, did not result into policymaking as well. In 2002, Bush devised an alternative to the Kyoto protocol, which resulted in to a plan in which the United States could emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than it was doing at the time. Moreover, the Bush administration also attempted to keep scientists from claiming that climate change was happening. NASA-scientist James Hansen, one of America’s active climate change-action proponents, claimed that NASA’s public affairs staff wanted to review his work, he objected: “They feel their job is to be this censor of information going out to the public.”<sup>37</sup>

When George W. Bush did enforce climate regulations with the ‘Clear Skies’ act, it in fact lessened the regulations in the longstanding ‘Clean Air Act’ which was implemented in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup> President Obama has expressed the intention to address the problems of climate change more forcefully. However, as a result of the growing polarization in America’s national politics, many of his initiatives have been rejected by the U.S. Congress. His 2009 bill intended to introduce a cap and trade system, in which a maximum national amount of greenhouse gas emissions was determined. Businesses could then trade the permits to emit a certain amount of greenhouse gasses. Yet, the U.S.

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<sup>37</sup> Harriet Bulkeley and Peter Newell, *Governing Climate Change* (London: Routledge, 2010), 17-25; “Background on the UNFCCC: The international response to climate change,” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed June 5, 2013, [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/items/6031.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php); “Summary of the Lieberman-McCain Climate Stewardship Act of 2003,” Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.c2es.org/federal/congress/108/summary-mccain-lieberman-climate-stewardship-act-2003>.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew C. Revkin, “Climate Expert Says NASA Tried to Silence Him,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 2006, accessed June 5, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/29/science/earth/29climate.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/29/science/earth/29climate.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0); Christopher Marquies, “Bush Energy Proposals Seeks to ‘Clear Skies’ by 2018,” *The New York Times*, July 29, 2002, accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/30/politics/30AIR.html>.

Senate turned it down. The UNFCCC Copenhagen conference in 2009 failed and Obama has been largely blamed for this. Journalist and anti-corporate activist Naomi Klein stated in *The Guardian* after the conference: “If Barack Obama had come to Copenhagen with a transformative and inspiring commitment to getting the US economy off fossil fuels, all the other major emitters would have stepped up.” This did not happen. The only terms agreed upon turned out to be invalid “as the process that produced it violated the protocols of universal consensus.” Obama has put quite some effort in trying to implement environmental laws and regulations, yet, besides some environmental taxation, he has not put the United States in the leadership position he wants his nation to be in.<sup>39</sup>

### **The state of climate change policy**

The United States is no environmental world leader. Considering the causes and effects of climate change one may wonder why the United States have not properly addressed the problem in a more vigorous manner. As Obama argued, the pursuit of sustainable development by America might be equally important and essential for the future of the United States, as the ideal of the pursuit of happiness is for the future of Americans. Not only is this all-American life goal in contrast with America’s energy dependence on Arab nations, a dependence which has caused many high cost conflicts and the loss American lives, it also contrasts the ideal of self-sufficiency. Co-dependence on foreign countries for oil supplies and the growth of international conflicts as a result of shortages of food, water and energy are increasingly argued to be a threat to American security and independence.<sup>40</sup> Despite this challenge to the ideal of self-reliance, the United States have not addressed climate change. The absence of environmental leadership is striking. Why have the United States not done more about climate change?

The fact that the United States is no world leader on the issue of climate change can be put in perspective by pointing at the many other nations and alliances that might be able to take in such a position. The truth is that the United States is not even contesting. The United States has hardly implemented any policies that constructively and structurally addressed the actions and processes that cause climate change, nor have they tackled the effects of climate change. A distinct reason for implementing these policies comes from the CO2 emission rates. In 1995; the United States polluted

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<sup>39</sup> Naomi Klein, “Copenhagen’s failure belongs to Obama,” *The Guardian*, December 21, 2009, accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cif-green/2009/dec/21/copenhagen-failure-obama-climate-change>; William Antholis and Strobe Talbott, *Fast Forward: Ethics and Politics in the Age of Global Warming* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 68; “United States: Making Progress Despite Policy Gridlock,” The Policy Climate Interactive, accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.thepolicyclimate.org/regions/us/subjects/policy>.

<sup>40</sup> John M. Broder, “Climate Change Seen as Threat to U.S. Security,” *The New York Times*, August 8, 2009, accessed May 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/09/science/earth/09climate.html?pagewanted=all>.

the highest amount of CO<sub>2</sub> with 5.260 thousands of tons per year, trailed by the European Union with 4.080 and China with 3.520. However, in 2011, the United States emitted the second highest amount of CO<sub>2</sub> with 5,420 thousands of tons per year, only being exceeded by China with 9,700,000. In contrast, China emits 7.2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, per person; while the United States almost doubles this with 17.2 tons per year, per person. The United States is the world's biggest emitter, yet, it does not take responsibility for this. What are the reasons that it does not create regulations that address the problem they are the most accountable for?<sup>41</sup>

The absence of policies that would lower emissions or create more opportunity for sustainable development becomes more notable when public opinion on government involvement on the issue is taken into account. An accumulation of Gallup polls taken between 2000 and 2013 on American opinion on the environment, demonstrated that the American people are not persuaded by the claims of climate change scientists. The trend of the polls shows ambivalence. It was the highest in 2001 with 63 percent of American worrying a fair or great deal about the effects of climate change, while 58 percent did so in 2013. A small majority of the American people realizes the possible problems climate change could present them with. Nonetheless, there has not been noteworthy public insistence to create environmental regulation. Despite this, environmental consciousness has become a popular mindset, leading to obscure initiatives such as “eco-friendly green burials”.<sup>42</sup>

Few comprehensive environmental regulations have been created. What can explain the contrast between America's overall global leadership position and America's reluctance to take in this position on this subject? Why is the United States' emission the highest in the world, while its regulations on these emissions are average? What can explain that the U.S. Government only limitedly addresses climate change, while more extensive measures might be expected, as a small majority of the people of this democratic nation are concerned about climate change? why does the United States not match this with equally extensive policies? These questions are based on specific instances which have created concern and wonder and they are the basic motivation for this thesis.

The answer to all these specific questions will be found in the following chapters of this thesis as they will demonstrate in a general sense why the United States only have limited climate change policies. This will be done by first discussing the role of populist rhetoric, by demonstrating how policymakers and public opinion are influenced by the techniques for generating support as applied by big businesses and media reporting. In the subsequent chapter, the influence of the ideology of

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<sup>41</sup> “CO<sub>2</sub> time series 1990-2011 per region/country,” Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR), accessed May 13, 2013, <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2ts1990-2011>; Lydia Saad, “Americans' Concerns About Global Warming on the Rise,” *Gallup*, April 8, 2013, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161645/americans-concerns-global-warming-rise.aspx>.



anti-statism on climate change policymaking will be discussed by looking at the ideology of laissez-faire.

## 2. Populist Rhetoric

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The title of the first chapter in one of the most popular books of famous climate change-denier Christopher Horner reads: “Green is the new Red: The Anti-American, Anti-Capitalist, and Anti-Human Agenda of Today’s Environmentalists.” Horner’s *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism* has been hailed and recommended by U.S. senator James Inhofe, one of America’s most fervent anti-environmentalists, who also said about the book: it “reveals the inconvenient truths raised by the skeptics and exposes the convenient lies used by warmoholics.” In Horner’s *Guide*, one can also read about “Global Warming 101: not Manmade, Catastrophic, nor Global”; while the reader of this book can also be enlightened about raging fees of climate change policies in “The Cost of the Alarmist Agenda: More Government, Higher Prices.”<sup>43</sup>

Christopher Horner’s book aims to counter all sorts of accusations and emergency warnings about the changing climate, while senator Inhofe also applauded it for being a handbook for those searching to deny the existence of climate change. His *Guide* is an example of a subgenre in which all books have this goal. Climate change denial books are one example of populist rhetoric and languages which this thesis argues have influenced climate change policies in the United States, and in this chapter Horner’s and other climate change denial books will be discussed extensively. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the extent of influence populist rhetoric and language have on the establishment of climate change policies. An analysis of these populist forms of rhetoric will demonstrate among others the way people’s knowledge and opinions become diffused and create uncertainty about the claims of climate change scientists. Kellstedt, Zahran and Vedlitz stated in “Personal Efficacy”, an article on the measure in which the public is informed about climate change, that “On the ecological risk of climate change, researchers find that public literacy is relatively low.”<sup>44</sup> How has populist rhetoric influenced what the American people know about climate change? By investigating two different forms of populist rhetoric, this chapter aims to explore how they tried to influence environmental politics in America: to what extent has populist rhetoric influenced climate change policies in the United States.

This thesis starts from the assertion that populist rhetoric is an essential characteristic of the United States. Therefore the assumption is that the two forms of populist rhetoric examined in this thesis and the specific employments in the context of the United States, are both typical for American democracy as well. The two forms of rhetoric that will be examined are the influence of

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<sup>43</sup> Christopher C. Horner, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2007), 3, 65, 141, 245.

<sup>44</sup> Paul M. Kellstedt, Sammy Zahran and Arnold Vedlitz, “Personal Efficacy, the Information Environment and Attitudes Toward Global Warming and Climate Change in the United States” *Risk Analysis* 28 (2008): 114.

the way the media has reported and transcribed information on climate change to the public and politicians; and the creation of support for personal or ideological interest, as is for instance done by conservative think tanks that spread doubt about the science behind climate change.

## The media

The extent and the form in which the media interprets and translates news events to the public and politicians has a considerable influence on their knowledge and opinions on issues such as climate change. Because of this, the reporting of conservative news media, who are in general opposed to environmental regulation, has a significant sway over the measure in which their viewers perceive climate change as a threat. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press investigated the viewing habits of Americans in the past two decades. They found that in 2012, *Fox News* had twenty-one percent of Americans watching their news coverage, while this number dipped and peaked at respectively seventeen and twenty-five percent of Americans in the twenty-first century. In the same year *The Huffington Post* reported that a nationwide research by a New Jersey university, concluded that *Fox News*-viewers were informed the worst of all Americans. From this it could be argued that at least one out of five Americans gets information about climate change that creates uncertainty on climate change. As a result, *Fox News* creates considerable doubt among the American people on climate change, a subject on which there is a scientific consensus. However, there is no public consensus. The subsequent discussion aims to demonstrate the role of the way the media have reported about climate change in the absence of this public consensus, and as a result, its influence on climate change policymaking in the United States.<sup>45</sup>

In general, the media have an important sway over the distribution of information. Only a very marginal number can directly perceive news events without needing the press as a mediator, while an equally marginal amount of people are able to adequately form their own opinion through news reports and their own research. It is important to note that that the aspired outset of all the media in a free and democratic society such as the United States often differ quite strongly. In *American Public Opinion*, Robert Erikson and Kent Tedin provide insight into the origins, development and functioning of public opinion in the United States. In their chapter on the influence of the news media on public opinion in the United States, they describe “the motives and incentives” of the American media as a wide-ranging number of ideological aims in the execution of the journalist

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<sup>45</sup> “In Changing News Landscape, Even Television is Vulnerable: Trends in News Consumption: 1991-2012,” Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, accessed May 28, 2013, <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/2012%20News%20Consumption%20Report.pdf>; No Author, “Study Finds Fox News Viewers Least Informed Of All Viewers,” *The Huffington Post*, May 23, 2012, accessed May 28, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/23/fox-news-less-informed-new-study\\_n\\_1538914.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/23/fox-news-less-informed-new-study_n_1538914.html).

profession, reaching “from a commitment to report the news thoroughly and objectively, to packaging the news for profit like any other commercial product, to using corporate power over the media to preserve the economic and political status quo.”<sup>46</sup>

Because of this, not all media are capable or willing to report news events and social issues in a way that keeps it exempt from ‘colored’ views. Public opinion is highly influenced and to a certain extent determined by media, because current events are not displayed as they have actually happened, but they are portrayed through an ideologically and politically colored viewing glass, through which such media enforce their opinions upon their readers and viewers. The free spread of news and information in American democracy has caused ideologically-incented media to spread across America, which in turn enables Americans to “ideologically customize their sources.” This causes Democrats to tune into CNN or CBS, while Republicans are most likely to tune into *Fox News*. This ideologically incented network choice is influenced by already existing ideals, which subsequently become more strong and certain; as they are elaborated on and confirmed, while the alternative view is discarded and underexposed.

Knowledge about the causes and effects of climate change can therefore be influenced, altered and reformed, because of the individual viewer’s choice for a one-sided view of a television network or newspaper. *Fox News* and local news media in conservative states or counties will report on the issue with regard to their own ideological outset and the outset of the viewers who tuned in or bought that specific newspaper because it reflects the opinion they share and want to be informed about. The interaction between what the viewers choose to watch and what the television network chooses to broadcast can strengthen each other and can as a result create greater unawareness of climate change. An important cause of this is that conservatives and Republicans are almost ‘traditionally’ opposed to the implications of climate change. The implementation of such laws and regulations can create government-interference which might interfere with free trade and merchandising, while it also goes against the American ideal of individual responsibility, which will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

Since half of the American constituency votes Republican and because the American media are part of a market of supply and demand, the media will be inclined to reflect views opposing climate change. However, the media are not only directing public opinion, it is also directed by what its viewers want. The interaction determines which information is provided to the public; not the individual public’s preference or the individual network choice. So, there appears to be a circular motion, conservatives are enforced in their political and social views as a result of the reporting of conservative media, while these conservative media report more conservatively on these political

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<sup>46</sup> Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 228.

and social issues as a result of their viewers being largely conservative. Both enforce each other's views, which results in a considerable amount of the United States public receiving information on climate change that does not reflect the scientific consensus.<sup>47</sup> Before turning to the way the media have addressed climate change, it is first important to make a connection; how can the provision of too little attention and too little information result in the absence of climate change policies in the United States? The ideal in a democracy is that the politicians represent the people, their will and their interests. Because of the media's role in the interaction and the way it therefore influences public opinion, and because politicians bend their will in some measure according to the will of the people, since that is how a democracy should work, the media have a significant degree of influence on politics.

Although politicians are influenced by much more than just public opinion, the media certainly influences political action. Erikson and Tedin found that this is especially true in the case of prominent topics in American politics. Since climate change and global warming have been prevalent subjects in American politics during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, it can safely be argued that the way people think about climate change has for example influenced the way congressmen have voted on climate change laws and regulations. Especially when taking into consideration the conclusion of Erikson and Tedin that "it would seem that the ideological tone of national policy draws its momentum from slight shifts in ideological taste on the part of the U.S. public".<sup>48</sup> Thus, the reporting of the media as a form of populist language influences the implementation of policies on climate change, because the interaction between viewer preferences and the networks' choice of broadcast eventually alters the way people think about climate change. Moreover, the media's representation of news events has a considerable formatting influence on public opinion, which in turn has a smaller degree of effect on the way politicians vote and decide on climate change.

### *Media coverage of climate change*

"The Heat is On: The Case of Global Warming" was a 2005 *Fox News* channel documentary which did not question the science that backs up the concept of climate change. *Fox News'* program director explained later that because climate change was one of the ten most dominant news issues at that time, the network had chosen to make a special about the theme. This means that if Erikson and Tedin were right about the correlation between prominent news issues and public opinion, *Fox News* has added to the awareness on climate change. It has turned out to be a single occurrence. Media

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<sup>47</sup> Erikson and Tedin, *American Public Opinion*, 235.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, 328-329.

watchdog Media Matters published a timeline on *Fox News'* influence on the debate doubting climate change. It reveals among others that after the 2005 documentary there have been interest groups who were supported by oil giant ExxonMobil, which voiced strong criticism on the news channel. Subsequently, one might state that *Fox News* did its journalist duty, as it aired a documentary highlighting the other side of the climate change story. This opposite view was discussed by the few Americans scientists who doubted climate change, and it was a matter-of-course that U.S. senator James Inhofe had his say.<sup>49</sup> The two-sided account of the issue, did however not last any longer. As *Fox News* continued thereupon with such reports doubting climate change, it started to actively undermine calls to action of what they call 'climate change alarmists', most notably the notions and implications of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*.

It has already become clear that the media can influence what is preponderant in the mind of American individuals and what is dominant in public opinion. The question now is how the reporting by the media has influenced American public opinion on climate change? How has doubt been spread about the scientific consensus? *Fox News* is the most obvious example at hand as they have challenged the claims of climate change science extensively. Therefore, the chapter will first continue by further investigating the role of *Fox News*.

An often adopted method of creating doubt is pointing at cold summers and extremely freezing winters. *Fox News* has been forerunners in doing this. The fact that climate change concerns a trend and not a season-to-season linear rising of global temperatures is known to few and *Fox* has championed itself in addressing the public's experience of blizzards; claiming that a single directly perceivable experience of extreme cold, means that the planet is not warming. Research of Media Matters has revealed that *Fox News* has cast doubt upon the truth of climate change by addressing the cold winter, in every year at least once between 2007 and 2012. The 'irony' of climate change conventions during snow storms has been laid out extensively by *Fox News*. Multiple scientific studies have found that the media can influence public opinion and the continuous repetition of these ironic events by *Fox News* can take a firm hold in the mind of the public. However, the media can take on another role; as its investigations can bring problems, issues and future plans for legislations to the attention of the public and politicians. *Fox News* has proven to be such a watchdog for conservative ideals. The *New Yorker* revealed in 2010 that a year earlier, Senator Lindsey Graham had warned senators John Kerry and Joe Lieberman to hurry up with their climate change bill "before *Fox News* got wind of the fact that this was a serious process." He supposedly said in a meeting with them: "The second they focus on us [...] it's gonna become just a disaster for me on the airwaves."

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<sup>49</sup> Jill Fitzsimmons, Max Greenberg and Shauna Teel, "Timeline: Fox News' Role In The "Climate Of Doubt," *Media Matters for America*, October 24, 2012, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://mediamatters.org/research/2012/10/24/timeline-fox-news-role-in-the-climate-of-doubt/190906>.

From this it can be concluded that *Fox News* is able to significantly impede the implementation of policy on climate change. Especially Graham's fear for going on air to discuss and defend the bill Lieberman and Kerry prepared, demonstrates how *Fox News* apparently can apparently bring climate issues to the table of public discussion in a way that can seriously hamper or prevent the materialization of policymaking.<sup>50</sup>

*Fox News* has initialized a number of other publicly and popularly recognizable and understandable issues, most famously the 'Climategate' scandal. During Climategate, the news channel adopted blogs of climate skeptics who claimed to have found prove in stolen emails of climate scientists, that climate change was all but a hoax, a 'conspiracy'. Climategate caused great uproar; however, it did not cause the probably intended public paradigm-changing on climate change. *Fox News* journalists were encouraged by editors to question the truth behind scientific evidence on climate change, subsequent to the start of 'Climategate'. Stuart Varney acted on this, when he said in *Your World with Neil Cavuto*: "scientists are fudging data to make their case for global warming." James Inhofe made an appearance and *Fox News* anchors' language covered up that the emails were hacked. Amidst these accusations and cover-ups, *Fox & Friends'* Steve Doocy spoke words which clearly summarized what *Fox News* does: "[T]hat's one of the charms of the Fox News Channel. I mean, that, you know, we talk about a lot of stuff that you simply do not hear anywhere else."<sup>51</sup>

Although *Fox News'* coverage of climate change is highly questionable and controversial, they are indeed one out of few who have portrayed both sides of this story. Obviously, this does not make for better reporting. More than that, it is an indication of Fox's apparent unwillingness to follow the growing public and scientific consensus on the changing climate. This indication is enforced by a research by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), which actually shows how *Fox* underreports the side of the story that is reported broadly by other news media. UCS is an initiative to create lasting solutions to climate change, and they found that 93 percent of *Fox News'* climate change coverage was "misleading." In order to add to the arguments made about *Fox News'* reporting on climate change, this research demonstrates again that their coverage has strongly influenced a significant part of the population. As stated earlier, about one out of five Americans watch *Fox News* regularly,

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<sup>50</sup> Jocelyn Fong, "New Yorker: Graham feared Fox News backlash against climate bill negotiations," *Media Matters for America*, October 3, 2010, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2010/10/03/new-yorker-graham-feared-fox-news-backlash-agai/171444>; Ryan Lizza, "As the World Burns: How the Senate and the White House missed their best chance to deal with Climate Change," *The New Yorker*, October 11, 2010, accessed May 30, 2013, [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/11/101011fa\\_fact\\_lizza?printable=true#ixzz11K5nMoZ9](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/11/101011fa_fact_lizza?printable=true#ixzz11K5nMoZ9).

<sup>51</sup> Ben Dimiero, "FOXLEAKS: Fox boss ordered staff to cast doubt on climate science," *Media Matters for America*, December 15, 2010, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2010/12/15/foxleaks-fox-boss-ordered-staff-to-cast-doubt-o/174317>.

which implies that they have been led to think that the reality of climate change is doubtful.<sup>52</sup>

The role of *Fox News* has been considerable in forming public opinion, the subsequent discussion will now put this in perspective and it will help to make clear what the influence of other media has been on the public opinion on climate change. Maxwell Boykoff is a leading scientist in the field of media-influence on climate change perceptions in American society. He concluded among others in his research “Lost in Translation? United States television news coverage of anthropogenic climate change” that such disfigurements in reports on climate change “can greatly impact how U.S. federal policy actors both perceive and approach actions and remedies.” This supports more firmly what Erikson and Tedin have already said in this thesis; that there is a causal connection between how the public perceives issues such as climate change as a result of the reports of the news media, and the way politicians vote and rule. Although Boykoff’s research partially falls outside this thesis’ research period, it is highly relevant that the study found that “through the end of the study period of 2004 there remained a significant difference between climate science and television press accounts.” It is not just *Fox News* whose reporting is different than the general accepted scientific consensus. Boykoff’s research found that *ABC*, *CNN*, *NBC* and *CBS* all failed to accurately reflect this consensus.<sup>53</sup>

Lauren Feldman et al. performed a similar research in 2011. In “Climate on Cable” they examined the coverage of *MSNBC*, *CNN* and *Fox News* on climate change. They found that *Fox News* created distinctively more attention to the issue than the other two, while *Fox*’s doubts on the issue were widely shared by their viewers. The researchers rightfully state that their conclusions contribute to a broad body of work that prove that cable television’s influence on public opinion and stance towards issues such as climate change is a continuously extending arm. Feldman et al. add to their conclusion that Republicans who are traditionally skeptic about climate change “are less skeptical when exposed to information on the reality and urgency of climate change.”<sup>54</sup> This is an essential point. It demonstrates the size of the blinders *Fox News* and other conservative media have put on its audiences. Their viewers are withheld from information which would in fact trouble them. Here, a connection can be exposed very clearly. Conservative media and particularly *Fox News* alter the manner in which a significant part of their viewers would think about climate change and tackle alternative opinions, because of the way viewer preferences and network’s ideological point of view interact. This can eventually strengthen the public’s idea that climate change is not real. Because of

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<sup>52</sup> Aaron Hertas and Dena Adler, *Is News Corp. Failing Science: Representations of Climate Science on Fox News Channel and in the Wall Street Journal Opinion pages* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2012), VII-VIII, 7-8, 13-14.

<sup>53</sup> Maxwell T. Boykoff, “Lost in translation? United States television news coverage of anthropogenic climate change, 1995-2004,” *Climate Change* 86 (2008): 8-9.

<sup>54</sup> Lauren Feldman et al., “Climate on Cable: The Nature and Impact of Global Warming Coverage on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC,” *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 17 (2012): 1, 21-22.



these blinders, the conservative television media change public opinion and therefore change the politics of climate change.

The televised media are an important source of information for Americans. Despite this and the advent of internet, there is still a percentage of 54.1 that regularly reads a newspaper. It is therefore useful to look into what they have publicized about climate change. In Liisa Antilla's article "Climate of Skepticism: US Newspaper coverage of the science of climate change", she states that newspapers have been influenced considerably in their reporting; articles with questionable resources were presented as "valid science"; more than once newspapers used climate skeptics, who are not inclined to provide an objective analysis, as primary resource; of these skeptics it was moreover known that they were in some way connected to oil companies such as ExxonMobil, which means that they will have been stimulated to downplay the extent of climate change as a significant problem. Antilla argues: "by enlisting the media", the oil companies, climate skeptics and others who may benefit from doubt about the issue of a changing climate: "continue their 'vey cynical and deeply interested campaign to discredit the science of climate change'."<sup>55</sup>

Although one might again argue that those newspapers have done their journalistic duty by highlighting both points of views, journalists should rather pay attention to reasonable voices, not to vague remarks. However, Joe Smith argued in *The Daily Globe* on role the media and public opinion in climate change, that such issues can be "too big for the media to handle." Journalists are not all-knowing and omnipotent. They will not always be capable of reasonably assessing the trustworthiness of a supposed scientific expert, or the validity of his words. Since journalists will aim to clearly set out what is being said about news topics, they are often inclined to use the two most opposing opinions expressed in the field. Thus, the merit of articles in newspapers on climate change is limited as their judgment of the issue is flawed, while they are being supported and encouraged to overemphasize the opinions of climate skeptics.<sup>56</sup>

It may have been because of this, that *The New York Times*, which is regarded as an authoritative newspaper around the world, gave room to such remarks when they quoted the climate change skeptic scientist John Christy: "We've had enough years of this human-induced forcing to get some boundaries on it, and it's just not going in the dramatic and catastrophic direction", he said. Other high-ranking newspapers such as *The Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post* have all been investigated by Antilla and have all adopted skeptics' words as true words, or have cited them as unquestionable scientists. Conservative think tanks have had a

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<sup>55</sup> Liisa Antilla, "Climate of skepticism: US newspaper coverage of the science of climate change," *Global Environmental Change* 15 (2005): 339, 344, 347-348, 350.

<sup>56</sup> Joe Smith, ed., *The Daily Globe: Environmental Change, the public and the media* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 2000), 56.

say in this and this will be discussed further on in this chapter.

As more than half of Americans read newspapers, these accounts of climate change have helped to create uncertainty about the scientific consensus on climate change. It is especially the presentation of the few scientists doubting climate change as experts, combined with the earlier acquired knowledge through which the media have a significant influence on the forming of public opinion, which has undermined this widely acknowledged synthesis that climate change is real and induced by mankind. Adding to this, Joe Smith argues in his book *The Daily Globe* on climate change and the role of the media in public perception, that: "A greater readiness by journalists to set events in context [...] might produce healthier reporting, deeper understanding and possibly even lead to better public policy." Yet, a changing journalistic approach towards climate change will not by itself change America's policymaking on the issue, because there are others influencing public opinion and politics. The efforts of those using populist rhetoric for their own or group interest will now be discussed.<sup>57</sup>

## **Generating support for interest**

Many scientists examining climate change on a political and social level argue that the lack of climate change policy, which actively and rigorously confronts the problems that climate change poses, is not a matter of scientific doubt or of an absent consensus about its causes. Rather, they argue that, as Joseph Romm Stated in his book on the politics of climate change: "[it] is a problem of politics and political will."<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the scientific discussion about whether the climate is actually changing has been long gone; the consensus is that it is happening. This does, however, not mean that there also exists a public consensus about climate change. The last *Gallup* poll examining American public opinion on climate change revealed a rising number of Americans worrying a fair amount to a great deal about the matter. The only trend discernible in the period between 2000 and 2013 is a trend of ambivalence. Overall, this period saw the number of American climate change worriers decline by five percent, from 63 percent in 2000 to 58 percent in April 2013.<sup>59</sup>

This chapter aims to find out what has caused this by looking at the way people are influenced by populist rhetoric. The preceding part of this chapter already demonstrated the influence of the media, and as a consequence, the influence of groups spreading doubt about climate change and the science behind climate change has already become apparent. This part will discuss

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, *The Daily Globe*, 63.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph J. Romm, *Hell and High Water: Global Warming - the Solution and the Politics- and what we should do* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 99.

<sup>59</sup> Lydia Saad, "Americans' Concerns About Global Warming on the Rise," *Gallup*, April 8, 2013, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161645/americans-concerns-global-warming-rise.aspx>.

these interest groups extensively by showing how a range of them appealed to, and tried to influence public opinion on the issue. It will discuss which groups avail from doubt on climate change, and more importantly, why they have done so. A number of groups will be discussed in order to demonstrate a range of interests that somehow thrive from skepticism on climate change. The question why some groups stimulate public sentiment for their own interests will also show how they do it. The discussion of the rhetoric of the media already demonstrated how climate change skeptics attempt to distort the idea that there exists a consensus, how they increase insecurity about the claims of climate change scientists and how they blur the severity of the problem. Interest groups employ populist forms of rhetoric to achieve similar effects. In proceeding, there will first be a relatively abstract discussion on how interest groups' attempts to pressure public opinion can bend climate change policy, upon which the campaigns of interest groups challenging the scientific consensus on climate change will be discussed.

### *Interest groups and United States climate change policy*

If scientists would not exist; weather patterns would still change; glaciers would still melt and droughts would still occur. Without them, no one would have noticed the patterns, no one would have noticed the rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and no one would have warned the public and politics. It can therefore be argued that the politics of climate change depends partially on climate science to be able to establish laws and regulations. The challenging of climate change is a political problem. Nonetheless, a significant cause of this problem derives from the way interest groups influence the measure in which people believe scientists and their studies. In his book *Why We Disagree about Climate Change*, Mike Hulme has provided a number of different ways to answer the titular question. In his chapter on the way science performs, his main statement is: "one of the reasons we disagree about climate change is because science is not doing the job we expect or want it to do."<sup>60</sup> Scientists realize they cannot know everything, nor can they set out generalized and universal truths. Skeptics of interest groups know this, and they know how to misuse the limitations of climate change science. They know that if one glacier grows instead of melts, scientists will doubt or refute hypotheses on rising temperatures, as a result of the theory of falsification laid upon them by scientific theorist Karl Popper. Because this one growing glacier shows that one instance differs from the general scientific climate theory that the earth is warming, the notion that glaciers are diminishing is untrue. Popper argued that if there is evidence that is not in accordance with the theory, the theory is false. Interest groups are aware that what is scientifically argued never surpasses the nominator 'fact', a limitation that is paradoxically set upon scientists by themselves.

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<sup>60</sup> Hulme, *Why we Disagree about Climate Change*, 74.

Because science recognizes its own confinements, it leaves open a significant number of holes in its defense for skeptics to charge into and undermine its scientific claims. On top of the realization by scientists that their work will never be complete or final fact, Hulme rightfully argues: "Science thrives on disagreement." Scientists always question themselves and each other, their ideology is objectivity and truth, and therefore they will not withhold publishing research which falsifies consensual climate change science. Thus, it are not only those benefiting from doubt on science about the changing climate, but it are also those scientists, from who it could be expected to argue in favor of climate change, that sometimes counter it. Given that political action addressing climate change strongly depends on the scientific consensus to be able to thrive, this explains partially why the United States has not adopted widespread climate change policies. The consensus is not persuasive enough, and has been challenged successfully enough, to be able to initialize enough political will to implement laws and regulations.

Interest groups employ a number of means to obtain their goal. Erikson and Tedin distinguish five different forms of "impacts" public opinion can have on policy. Three of them are directly or indirectly employed by interest groups. Policy is directly influenced by what they named the "interest groups model", which brings "the preferences of the group to which they belong to bear on officials." They called the two indirect policymaking techniques the "role-playing model" and the "sharing model." The two latter models are indirect because interest groups control public sentiments in some way, through which policymakers are then affected. The role-playing model is at play when "policymakers try to follow public opinion and perceive that opinion accurately." The sharing model occurs when political linkage is provided "because leaders and followers share many political beliefs."<sup>61</sup> The indirect models might suggest that public opinions' authority over policymakers' political agenda is highly determining. However, as has already been argued when discussing media influence; such stipulation is limited to the major topics in American politics and society and policymakers in general only follow trends in Americans' ideological taste. Interest groups attempt to change public sentiments through a number of means, through populist rhetoric such as climate change denial books. The indirect models will be treated further in this chapter, as they will help to demonstrate how climate change policies have been influenced by public opinion, which is in turn manipulated by the populist rhetoric discussed in this chapter.

However, it is essential to take a closer look at the interest group model. The United States have a tradition of high civic participation and responsibility in and towards society. According to David McKay, 79 percent of Americans take part in associations that aim to change or improve their society. Only fourteen percent of these Americans are members of a political organization. Yet, all of

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<sup>61</sup> Erikson and Tedin, *American Public Opinion*, 325-329.

“these organizations do have a political dimension”; all participate in some way in the practice of lobbying. Only a few academic works primarily address lobbying, since lobby groups often keep their curtains closed to outsiders. Nonetheless, Anthony Nownes produced a monograph on the subject. Despite its lack of a proper discussion on for example the ethics of the practice of lobbying, it provides an overview of the means and extent of lobbying in the United States. Nownes defines lobbying as: “an effort designed to affect what government does.” More specifically, he defines ‘organized interest’, which is nearly a synonym of interest groups, as: “an organization that engages in political activity – that is, activity designed to affect what the government does.”<sup>62</sup>

The definition of the interest group model by Erikson and Tedin suggests a soft approach of the lobbying that interest groups are involved in. However, most lobbies take on a harder approach. Interest groups do not merely represent ideological stimulated groups; they protect and serve for what is important to themselves and their constituency. Corporate and business lobbies protect the, mostly financial, interests of for example oil farmers and factory owners. McKay finds that big businesses have a significant control over local- and state politics, and it is for example “General Motors, the country’s largest vehicle manufacturer [who] is a political force to be reckoned with.”<sup>63</sup>

Now, how do big businesses press their group interest to the front row of attention? Nownes presents a great number of techniques applied by lobbyists to influence legislators and executives. In the context of climate skepticism, there are three aspects of lobbying in America presented by Nownes which provide advantages to the anti-environmental interest groups. First, interest groups with the most financial means are the most influential and dominant, since they can employ the most lobbyists to talk to legislators and executives. It is because of this that big business such as oil firms have a big sway over the government. Second, lobbyists do not always succeed, but their chances increase when they only aim to keep in place the status quo. For anti-environmentalism lobbies this provides an advantage, since they do not want things to change, they only have to fend off propositions and actions of environmental lobbyists. And thirdly, lobbyists can more easily reach their goal when these are backed up by a broad constituency. As only a small majority of American believe that climate change is a threat, anti-environmentalists do not have a very hard job defending their goals.<sup>64</sup>

The above has suggested in an abstract manner how organizations can have a form of control over policymaking, and aided by Nownes, a number of suggestions have been made on the reasons why climate skeptic lobbies are advantaged over those they oppose. Anti-environmental

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<sup>62</sup> Anthony J. Nownes, *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get it)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5-7.

<sup>63</sup> McKay, *American Politics and Society*, 295-298.

<sup>64</sup> Nownes, *Total Lobbying*, 197-205.

lobbies have a relatively large influence on the executives and legislators determining America's climate change policies, and the subsequent discussion will demonstrate how this advantage has been set to use, by considering the populist rhetoric that lobbies, anti-environmental groups, and individual climate skeptics have adopted to influence the politics of climate change.

### *Rhetoric of interest groups*

The adversaries of laws and regulations addressing climate change are often right-wing, conservative and Republican, and they often come from big businesses. Both groups use all sorts of techniques to spread doubt about the science behind climate change. Multiple studies have suggested that climate skeptics have utilized denial techniques that are similar to the techniques that have been utilized by the tobacco industry, in their struggle to prevent laws and regulations on smoking starting in the 1970s. *The Union of Concerned Scientists* (UCS) published a report in 2007 in which they argued that the oil firm ExxonMobil had done this. The UCS claims that ExxonMobil "has underwritten the most sophisticated and most successful disinformation campaign since the tobacco industry misled the public about the scientific evidence linking smoking to lung cancer and heart disease", and they did this by drawing upon "tactics and even some of the organizations and actors involved in the callous disinformation campaign the tobacco waged for 40 years."<sup>65</sup> The summary of the main findings of the UCS-report reads like an instruction manual for skeptics, and it appears ExxonMobil has read it carefully. Four of the five tricks UCS recaps are forms of populist rhetoric which they have applied to generate public support for their cause. All of them fit within Erikson and Tedin's interest group model, as they all aim to press the interest of factories and big businesses upon policymakers.

These forms of rhetoric are used to create doubt and are based upon the same notion from which the tobacco companies set out to deny the harmful consequences of smoking and second-hand smoking. They succeed because the studies and counter-studies of climate change are too difficult for most to comprehend. This is a basic trait of populism. Through its rhetoric, the populist devises for the public what they want and think because the public cannot have a proper conception of all political and social issues. By speaking to recognizable and touchable events, as *Fox News* did when they noted that there was a blizzard while the earth was supposedly warming, climate change skeptics become populists because they gain support by drawing on public sentiments. ExxonMobil's lobbyists have done this; they questioned climate change and a majority of the Americans has not been capable of refuting their denying claims.

Some of the four forms of populist rhetoric that ExxonMobil has utilized to alter the public

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<sup>65</sup> Seth Shulman et al., *Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air: How ExxonMobil uses Big Tobacco's Tactics to Manufacture Uncertainty on Climate Science* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2007), 1, 3.

opinion and knowledge about climate change are not unique, some have already been discussed in this thesis, while others have yet to surface in the coming pages. First, the experts newspapers interviewed were put forward by big businesses and ExxonMobil, which “promoted scientific spokespeople” who framed climate change science as an ongoing debate by false use of scientific research and by ‘cherry-picking’. They misused science’s ideal of objectivity by transforming notions on uncertainty into evidence for the claim that climate change is not real. For the same reason they put remarks by scientists out of context, making it seem as if many scientists doubted whether climate change was real. A result of this was among others that ExxonMobil’s professional skeptics “manufactured uncertainty”, a second means of manipulation. Later on, this thesis will discuss climate change denial books who, the same as this oil firm, specialized themselves in creating mistrust about generally accepted facts on climate change.

A ‘think tank’ may create the illusion of a group of intelligent people set together in order to better the nation. However, within the third form of manipulation employed by Exxon, the “strategy of information laundering”, it have been these think tanks which through this illusion have created the notion among the public that it were intelligent people doubting the science behind climate change. A false notion, as these think tanks were ideologically driven.

One example of such a think tank is the conservative kind which will be discussed after this. As argued earlier, climate change politics becomes hampered when the scientific basis is shaken. The last populist form of rhetoric discerned “attempted to shift the focus” of climate change politics, by creating confusion and doubt about the science on which the politics was established. ExxonMobil would not profit from a reputation of skepticism or from being known as a company that doubts science. The direct connection creates a negative connotation, which is bad for business. The logical suggestion that they might deny climate change because it would be bad for business, is also, bad for business. Obviously, ExxonMobil has realized this and the above mentioned means of creating doubt were not expressed only under the name ExxonMobil. They have funded middlemen, such as lobbyists and conservative think tanks, to question the science of climate change in the public arena for them.

The report of *The Union of Concerned Scientists* does not stand alone in its arguments and its conclusions. Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway investigated how populist rhetoric, as funded, instigated, and supported by big businesses, and executed by their lobby groups, have influenced the public perception of climate change. They found the same populist form of rhetoric applied by the scientists of big businesses in America. Their five year long research accumulated into *Merchants of Doubt*. It adds to the arguments on the way populist rhetoric has influenced the creation of climate change policies in the United States. Oreskes and Conway confirm the four points made in the report

of UCS, although they sometimes argue a bit differently and they also add a few arguments. For instance, they found that a “key strategy in the campaigns to market doubt was to create the appearance that the claims being promoted were scientific.” The claims of UCS were all interconnected and interdependent; this argument for example finds the middle between information laundering and the promotion of scientific spokespeople. Oreskes and Conway emphasize this point strongly. They also emphasize the role of the media on the public perception of climate change. According to them, the media should have adopted a more critical and more realistic approach.

In a research performed by Jules and Maxwell Boykoff on the way articles are “balanced” on representing all existing views, they found that only one third of the newspaper articles examined rendered the scientific consensus accurately. More than half of these articles gave the opposite views equal attention. The Boykoff brothers dubbed this inaccurate reflection of the scientific consensus on climate change: “informational bias”, a journalistic flaw in which “episodic framing” by reporters prevails over “thematic framing.” The latter framing represents scientific terms correctly, as it would perceive issues as long-term development making reports field experts, which is in contrast with the former in which the incidental reporter can only perceive things as a layman. Oreskes and Conway argue that this incidental reporting has a strong sway over the implementation of climate change policymaking. They find that the overrepresentation in the media of not peer-reviewed science, as a result of the populist rhetoric questioning the scientific consensus on climate change by big business-lobbies such as ExxonMobil, significantly altered the urge for presidential administrations such as the one of George W. Bush to address climate change problems. Their study concluded that it “helped make it easy for our government to do nothing about global warming.”<sup>66</sup> In the next chapter it will become clear why the Bush administrations did not want to address climate change.

### *Conservative think tanks*

The representation of big businesses’ capitalist interests by lobby groups has been frequently executed by conservative think tanks. The populist rhetoric they have applied to promote their interests have mainly created doubt about climate change will now be discussed. This will be mainly done by discussing the climate change denial books they have helped to bring to the printing press. The subsequent chapter will start with a short discussion on what has been said about conservative

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<sup>66</sup> Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010), 215, 240; Maxwell T. Boykoff and Jules M. Boykoff, “Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage,” *Geoforum* 38 (2007): 1190-1193.



think tanks in the context of climate change.

It is important to note, first that environmental skepticism, climate change denial and especially the institutionalized rhetoric of the former originate and predominantly manifest themselves in the United States. Moreover, since the disappearance of the Soviet Union as America's principal enemy and concern, the growing notion of a changing environment has become what Dunlap and McCright have called the new "bête noir" of conservative think tanks. Their primary enemy has since then been the science of climate change. A second important observation is that these think tanks try to uphold an ideal, unpartisan image that generates objective studies and reports which aim to better and benefit society. Even though this sounds as an acceptable definition of what a think tank does, it is not what conservative think tanks do. Primarily because they are not objective and help to promote specific interests.

Jacques et al. argue to define conservative think tanks as: "advocacy organizations that promote core conservative ideals such as 'free enterprise', 'private property rights', 'limited government' and 'national defense'", and as a result they "unabashedly promote conservative goals." The greatest general achievement of conservative think tanks is the way they created a reputation for themselves in American society, media and politics as a trustworthy and credible institution. They are a 'counter-intelligentsia' which has used populist rhetoric to spread doubt among the public about climate change. They pushed forward professed experts on environmental changes, who have been treated by politicians and the national media as such, which has given these representatives of conservative think tanks elaborate opportunities to "manufacture uncertainty." Again, the populist rhetoric these think tanks has applied are largely similar to what *The Union of Concerned Scientists*, and Oreskes and Conway have argued to be the rhetoric of the 'Merchants of Doubt'. They enabled the largely achieved goal of big businesses and conservative think tanks to undermine the science behind climate change: to question the legitimacy of the claims of climatologists; to set forward their alternative view of whether climate change is happening, and if so, to set forward an alternative view of what its causes and consequences are; and, to turn the scientific consensus into a public discussion.<sup>67</sup>

The discussion will now continue by discussing climate change denial books, an important populist expression to obtain the goals conservative think tanks, and therefore of big businesses. Through the subversion of climate change science, the building stones of possible climate change

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<sup>67</sup> Riley E. Dunlap and Peter J. Jacques, "Climate Change Denial Books and Conservative Think Tanks: Exploring the Connection," *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(2013): 6; Peter J. Jacques, Riley E. Dunlap and Mark Freeman, "The Organization of denial: Conservative think tanks and environmental skepticism," *Environmental Politics* 17 (2008):354-355, 360, 362, 364-365; Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, "Climate change denial: sources, actors and strategies," in *Routledge Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, ed. Constance Lever-Tracy (New York: Routledge, 2010), 241.

policies crumble. Climate change denial books play an important part in this crumbling. Between 2007 and 2010 63 books have been published that deny climate change, three times as many as there have been published between 2000 and 2006. The number of publications is growing and Jacques, Dunlap and Freeman argue that 93 percent of the books that have at any time been published on the subject, had a connection with conservative think tanks while only one of the 141 books they examined was not written by a conservative author. Conservatives and conservative think tanks are largely responsible for the publication of these books, and for what is claimed in these books. Some of their employees are for example the ones writing the climate change denial books.

Patrick Michaels is an environmental researcher at the public policy Research center the *Cato institute*, a relatively well-known conservative think tank which presents itself as an unpartisan and objective research center. Michaels has written four books on environmental skepticism. In *Meltdown: The predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians and the Media*, the self-proclaimed skeptic downplays the idea that global warming is a severe problem, as he states: “the earth’s climate continues to warm at the rate that began over a quarter-century ago [...] Big deal.” A wide range of such assertions are made throughout the book, he claims for instance that if “there were a trend toward accelerating warming, the data would trend upward. They don’t.” As has been discussed in the first chapter, the evidence of global warming is not based on an accelerating trend, but rather on a continuously heating of the earth over the past fifty years.<sup>68</sup> It is the accumulation of such contesting concepts of what is happening to the earth’s environment that chip away at the solid consensus. This widespread scientific agreement is firm, but its strength lessens each time these kinds of claims are made.

This chapter argued how the claims of scientific research, the validity of its methods and the trustworthiness of its researchers are difficult to properly asses by the vast majority of the American people. The vast majority of them are laymen and they are incapable of knowing what is right or what is wrong. Books are an object of authority and not everyone is able to critically asses its content and possibly refute its premise. Especially not, when the core message of the book argues what the reader agrees upon. Recall the previously cited *Gallup* poll which revealed that there is an ambivalent trend among Americans about climate change, wherein the most recent result showed that only a small majority of 58 percent stated that they were worried about climate change.<sup>69</sup> Admittedly, it is a black and white argument, but from this it can be argued that 42 percent would welcome the message of books such as *The Bottomless Well: The Twilight of Fuel, the Virtue of Waste, and Why We Will Never Run Out of Energy* by Peter Huber and Mark Mills.

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<sup>68</sup> Patrick J. Michaels, *Meltdown: The predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians and the Media* (Washington D.C.: Cato Institute, 2004), 102-105.

<sup>69</sup> Saad, “Americans' Concerns About Global Warming on the Rise.”

The central idea of such books is that climate change is an exaggerated, or even non-existent problem. In the same manner that the bulk of the Europeans and American liberals will probably believe what scientists are saying these conservatives accept Huber and Mills' message as the truth; despite the obvious lack of objectivity or impartiality. Huber is an important researcher at the *Manhattan Institute*, a libertarian think tank that aims to defend economic freedom, while Mills is a senior fellow at the same institute. Mills also is the CEO and founder of the Digital Power Group, a consultancy bureau that focuses on capitalist energy resourcing. Huber and Mills' books contest the idea that the earth's fossil resources are almost emptied out, by claiming that these resources will never dry up. They argue that the linear progress of men and their technology will provide solutions to the apparent drying up of the natural energy resources: "The logic of the fuel-retrieving machines has advanced much faster today than ever before." Huber and Mills think that satellites will locate unknown underground oil supplies and that advanced laser technology will descend deep to make the oil ascend for men's use. Under the auspices of conservative think tanks, these researchers argue: "the issue of exhaustion is resolved. Energy supplies are – for all practical purposes – infinite."<sup>70</sup> This publication has made the political culture in which free enterprise and economic freedom can thrive more acceptable, mainly by trying to downplay the notion that traditional energy resources are diminishing, thus disproving the necessity of a changing culture in the energy-economy. Their message aims to empower the capitalist structure upon which the fuel-economy is built. As a result, the pressure on American politics and the urge among the American public to address fuel shortages and to look at alternative energy resources wanes and decelerates.

In rounding the circle of this chapter, Christopher Horner's *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism* will now be discussed. Horner has produced a book that addresses a wide range of subjects. *The Politically Incorrect Guide* affirms the beliefs of many climate skeptics that climate change is an exaggerated problem. Meanwhile, its content and its rhetoric, as the chapter titles discussed at the beginning of this chapter show, help to demonstrate how strongly climate change is contested in the United States. The first chapter for example condemns the environmentalists for being anti-capitalist, anti-statist, and in effect, for being anti-American. Horner presents the "greens" as a group of enemies who try to take over the lives of Americans, who aim to control the production of the crops Americans eat and who want to control which cars Americans drive. Most of these notions are written in a way that directly addresses the reader personally. Repeatedly and in several contexts, Horner claims that the greens aim to authoritatively direct the American economy. By doing this, he in fact asserts that climate change proponents desire to challenge and change essential American ideals of personal freedom, market-freedom and individual

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<sup>70</sup> Peter W. Huber and Mark P. Mills, *The Bottomless Well: The Twilight of Fuel, the Virtue of Waste, and Why We Will Never Run Out of Energy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basic Books, 2005), 179-181.

responsibility. Connecting such a pagan practice with people that aim to protect the environment creates significant distrust about the latter among the personally addressed American public that came into contact with the premise of the book. Moreover, scientific claims about the changing of the climate become less trustworthy, while they also become less credible because they are now suspected of having a double agenda.

Another theme that Horner tries to tackle throughout the book is the science behind climate change. As this thesis has now argued several times, the science needs to be unshaken, undoubted and undisputed to provide the politics of climate change the possibility to address the causes and effects of climate change. Horner confuses the reader as he questions the idea that global warming, as an important aspect of climate change, is manmade at all, by arguing for instance that the heating is due to the fact that a little ice age has just ended. He puts a seat for doubt in the brain of his public by challenging the alleged catastrophic consequences of global warming, by stating that plants, Russians and North-Dakotans would profit from higher temperatures in the same way “the residents of Greenland prospered during the Medieval Warm period”, upon which most of them left during the little ice age. In addition to this, he disputes the global aspect of global warming by adducing the suggestion that only the northern hemisphere is warming, while the southern part of the globe is not. One of Horner’s main arguments, thus, is: “we are very uncertain about the extent of the warming.” Such an argument is followed by a short enumeration of scientific methods which make these sound limited and flawed in general, and because of this the results of such scientific studies become questionable.<sup>71</sup>

In his *Guide*, Christopher Horner has adopted a number of forms of rhetoric to increase the indistinctness of climate change politics and climate change science. A couple of them have been discussed above and this helps to argue how the speaking to popular sentiments such as charging environmentalists with anti-Americanism, can influence climate change politics. The scientific consensus on the issue and the sincerity of its proponents are strongly challenged, which results in a weaker political base for the implementation of climate change laws and regulations.

## **Conclusion**

A number of ideological institutions such as conservative think tanks and television networks like Fox News have applied populist rhetoric in attempts to influence the opinion of their viewers on climate change. The most essential approach and application of populist rhetoric that has been utilized has been the spreading of doubt about the scientific consensus on the causes and effects of climate change. From this it can be suggested that this doubt-spreading rhetoric has had some influence on

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<sup>71</sup> Horner, *The Politically Incorrect Guide*, 64-65.

the implementation of climate change policies, since politicians cannot regulate or make laws when the intended groundwork of these policies appears to be unstable. Even though this groundwork is like armored concrete, climate change skeptics have succeeded in making even this concrete appear to be broken. The scientific consensus on climate change has not created a public consensus, nor has it created a political consensus, while both are crucial for constructing laws and regulations.

The 'role-playing model' of Erikson and Tedin has suggested that politicians follow public opinion. Since the biased representation of climate change science in the media and in climate change denial books has caused a lack of public consensus on the issue, only 58 percent of Americans think climate change is a real threat; American politicians have not felt a strong insistence from their constituency to act on the causes and effects of climate change. Erikson and Tedin's 'sharing-model' has the same effect, as it starts from the assumption that politicians and their followers, in this case conservatives and libertarians alike, share the same belief. Thus, what the public thinks, as a result of the extent and the way in which the media has reported, about climate change has an important sway over what is actually done about it, because they are influenced in their decisions by both public opinion and popular discussions in the media.

This sway over public opinion by the way the media reports has turned out to be more extensive than anticipated. *Fox News'* one-sided view has increased steeply, which has been a result of among others the interaction between viewer preferences and what and how television networks choose to broadcast. As a result, one fifth of the American people became unaware of climate change or they thought climate change was an exaggerated issue. Senator Graham's dread for Fox finding out about possible climate regulation also helps to demonstrate the extent of influence the news channel can have over public debate, and as a result, over policymaking. The newspaper coverage reaches half of the American people, and this also turned out to be more flawed than expected. The 'informational bias' as described by Boykoff and Boykoff, is a populist expression that has created an inaccurate notion among newspaper readers that a scientific discussion on climate change is still going on. The presentation of climate change skeptics as experts by high-quality newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* added to this false notion. It can be concluded that the media have procured uncertainty among the American people about the causes and effects of climate change. A causal connection can be made between the public perception of climate change as a result of the reporting by the media and climate change policymaking. The explanation for this can be found in the fact that a constituency that presumes this issue to be uncertain will not urge their representatives to address the issue, nor will the representatives feel inclined to do so.

The practice of stimulating and extending public sentiment for personal and corporate

interest probably has an even more extensive influence over public opinion than the media has; among others because they are the ones financing and directing climate change skeptics that conduct the denial of climate change in the media. The most influential groups that generate interest through populist rhetoric are big businesses such as ExxonMobil and the Koch brothers. This is based on Erikson and Tedin's 'interest groups model', which argues that these big businesses aim to influence politicians to appropriate policies to their needs and preferences. An important mean of doing this is by influencing public policy.

The main populist forms of rhetoric that have been applied by big businesses have challenged the scientific consensus on climate change as revealed by the UCS and Oreskes and Conway in *Merchants of Doubt*. They have 'manufactured uncertainty' by pushing climate skeptic scientists into public attention and by questioning the climate change consensus. They have moreover practiced a 'strategy of information laundering', in which they have funded conservative think tanks and others, who have spread the false perception among the American public that scientific experts are still doubting and considering whether climate change is real and whether it is manmade. Conservative think tanks and the climate change denial books they publish perceive the 'greens' that are the advocates of the science of climate change as the new red, communist enemy. Their efforts and claims to deny or trivialize the scientific consensus by applying populist rhetoric have proven to be quite successful.

Only half of the American people think climate change is a major hazard, and as a result, their representatives are not urged to press for more environmental policies, nor will they benefit from doing so during election-periods. Thus, climate change policy in the United States are absent partially because the media and big businesses have made a significant part of the American people believe that it was not necessary to implement them, which has resulted in a deficiency of the necessary political will to create such lasting policies.

### 3. Anti-Statism

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The United States is solely responsible for about a quarter of the total emission of greenhouse gasses into the earth's atmosphere. Because of their individual significant emissions, some states have taken relatively extensive measures to address their emission rates. One of the top proponents of climate change and global warming mitigation policies is Pennsylvania at number 23, which introduced its *Pennsylvania Climate Change Roadmap* in 2007. The state of Pennsylvania has for long been a precursor in green politics, and their *Roadmap* expressed the intention to reverse their growing greenhouse gas emissions and to implement climate regulations. In addition to that, Pennsylvania stated that they aimed to continue their position as an environmental-conscious forerunner, which they also expect to provide extensive economic advantages and growing employment. At the same time, the project plan has aimed at creating a cooperative culture with other states in achieving that goal.<sup>72</sup> California set-up a similar initiative and together the two states lead the environmental way in the United States.

Although these are laudable programs, it puts a noteworthy disadvantage upon big businesses whose productions are spread throughout multiple states in America. In every state their plants and factories have to adjust to different standards. In effect, this creates a major economic drawback upon American economy, as it would be less complicated for big businesses to comply with a single set of environmental regulations. Antholis and Talbott argue in *Fast Forward*, a discussion of the ethics of climate change, that this problem should be addressed because of this: "Economists tend to concur that the federal government must take the lead for climate policy to be effective and must do so in a way that cuts across all relevant sectors of the economy and society." The lack of comprehensive, nation-wide environmental laws and regulations affects not only the lives of many Americans and sea-level economic centers such as New York City, but it also impairs general economic progress; America's most sacred ideal. Why is the federal government not imposing national environmental regulation, even though it disadvantages progress and prosperity. What has caused the absence of these laws?<sup>73</sup>

This chapter argues that these perils for the United States are caused by the fact that climate change policymaking on a federal level experiences a significant influence of the American ideology of anti-statism. This ideology is defined as the traditional and doctrinal emphasis in American politics and society on individual freedom, self-reliance, laissez-faire, and a limited-interfering government.

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<sup>72</sup> Pennsylvania Environmental Council, *Pennsylvania Climate Change Roadmap* (Pennsylvania Environmental Council: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 2007), 1-2.

<sup>73</sup> Antholis and Talbott, *Fast Forward*, 38-41.

The United States' environmental policies remain limited among others because the Republican Party is according to Lipset: "the most ardently anti-statist major political party in the world". Lipset will have been inclined to argue such an exceptional status for the Republican Party in order to strengthen the arguments he makes in *American Exceptionalism*, nonetheless, the nation's politics have indeed experienced a substantial influence from anti-statist elements such as the ideology of laissez-faire. In addition to this, the ideology itself in the most general interpretation opposes government interference, and therefore it opposes laws, regulations and policies dealing with the problems climate change presents.<sup>74</sup>

The following chapter will further explore the extent in which anti-statism has influenced climate change policies in the United States, in the period between 2000 and 2013. The goal of this exploration is to demonstrate anti-statism has done this. In this chapter, the ideology of laissez-faire will be discussed. The discussion on laissez-faire will look at the limited role of government and the political advocates of this, as climate change policymaking has for example been influenced considerably by conservative Republicans and the presidential administrations of George W. Bush and their principle of a restricted government. This chapter will focus on the role of laissez-faire on conservative Republicans and as a result it will reveal chief motivations for an extensive number of Americans to oppose climate change policies from an ideological point of view.

## **Limited government**

George W. Bush appointed several leaders for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other government organizations who were in some way concerned with the environment. Most of them articulated the general opinion of the Bush administration that environmental protection should never stand in the way of economic growth. As Judith Layzer has argued, the first measures of Bush's initial EPA head Christine Todd Whitman illustrate this explicitly:

She relaxed enforcement of pollution control regulations, reducing inspections and promoting voluntary compliance and cooperation; as a result, there was an 80 percent drop in fines and environmental penalties collected during her seven-year reign. [...] Whitman also [...], eliminated more than one hundred water-quality-monitoring stations, [...] and signed an executive order rolling back most of the state regulations that were stricter than their federal counterparts.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 27-28.

<sup>75</sup> Judith A. Layzer, *Open for Business: Conservatives' Opposition to Environmental Regulation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012), 257-267.



Whitman's enactments are exemplary of the Bush administration's politics of laissez-faire which downplayed the consequences of climate change can pose to the United States. Introducing emission taxes, penalizing pollution and imposing environmental production methods all contrast the concept of the political ideology of laissez-faire. Bush's appointees have aimed to prevent or reverse such measures when they implied a certain extent of government control. Laissez-faire enables liberty, free-trade and individualism and this makes it an essential element of modern American democracy. In the United States these and other qualities such as self-reliance and self-government were and are important outlets for both the public and policymakers.

Freedom and liberty as central American ideals imply that its civilians should be free to determine and lead their own lives, and laissez-faire expresses this ideal comprehensively as it departs from the idea that the federal government should be passive. It should refrain as much as possible from creating extensive and widespread laws and regulations. As ideological laissez-faire assumes little interference from the federal government, it embodies the connotation of anti-statism. Laissez-faire has influenced the implementation of climate change policies extensively, as Republican politicians who believe most vigorously in this ideal have tried to avert such policies. The next section will discuss how laissez-faire as an essential element of anti-statism has had an important sway over governmental decisions on environmental (de-)regulation. This will be done by focusing on the reasons why conservative Republicans have been motivated by their political outlet of laissez-faire. The goal of this discussion is to reveal the measure in which the ideal of laissez-faire and the people who are led by this ideal, have decreased climate change ruling in the United States.

### *Withdrawing environmental regulation*

In the preceding discussion of this thesis a number of reasons have been demonstrated about how policymakers have been influenced in their decisions on environmental regulation. They have been affected by the sway of the media and climate change denial books over public opinion and their own opinion on climate change; while lobbying practices as portrayed earlier in this chapter aimed to prevent further regulation, as these could slow down progress and profit-making. The following discussion will reveal more motives for trying to prevent and avert climate change policies. This discussion of the role of laissez-faire in this development will shed light on the most prominent conservative Republican ideal influencing governmental restraint on climate change policymaking, and throughout, this discussion will demonstrate why the opposition of conservatives hinders further environmental regulation by the federal government.

Laissez-faire is a political ideology and an important reason for the lack of climate change policies in the United States can be found in the fact that that politicians actively advance this ideal

there. Conservatives, Republicans and libertarians alike oppose environmental regulation because they principally argue that government should abstain from interfering as much as possible. Some pursue this anti-statist form of politics as their basic political belief, while others go further to actively and drastically promote it. Libertarians are on the far, drastic side of this and proponents of small governments such as Grover Norquist tend to utter rather excessive and expressive statements. Norquist manner of arguing can be illustrated adequately by the following: "I don't want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub." Van Jones has quoted Norquist in his *The Green Collar Economy*, in which he argues that America has the capability to become the world leader in the struggle against climate change. One of the things withholding the United States from grasping this opportunity is the political will to shield the nation from government regulation in general, thus preventing climate regulation in particular.<sup>76</sup>

James Inhofe is a well-known anti-environmental proponent. During the Bush presidencies, Inhofe headed the U.S. Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works. In this function, the Republican was notorious and has been widely criticized for his controversial utterances, of which the most notorious instance is his lengthy speech for the U.S. Senate in 2003. Through all kinds of manners of argumentation Inhofe tried to undermine the science behind climate change, in the hope he might persuade those listening that climate change was a notion that was being upheld by environmentalists so they could stuff their pockets with money. Even though such ironic statements and other contradictions took up most of his speech, he also blamed the "extremists", as he called the proponents of climate change policies, for being motivated solely by "politics and power." According to Inhofe: "a 'pro-environment' philosophy can only mean top-down, command-and-control rules dictated by bureaucrats." The senator expresses repulsion from those aiming to further their control over everything that is happening in the United States. In fact, this is a speech filled with populist rhetoric. The focus in this argument should lay however, on the senator's repulsion. It expresses a prevalent sentiment among many anti-statist politicians opposing additional climate change regulation.<sup>77</sup>

Here lies another explanation for the successful efforts to keep America away from agreeing with the Kyoto protocol. Signing an international treaty means having to comply with rules laid upon them by other countries. This strongly contests the American idea of freedom on which the politics of laissez-faire is build. The undermining of core American ideals such as free trade, independence and

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<sup>76</sup> Van Jones with Ariane Conrad, "From *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems*," in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 215-217.

<sup>77</sup> James M. Inhofe, "The Science of Climate Change: Senate Floor Statement," in *The Global Warming Reader: A Century of Writing about Climate Change*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 165-168.

freedom are consequentially eroding laissez-faire as well. Allowing further environmental control by the federal government does not only endanger the Republicans' ideal of the play of politics, it also endangers how they perceive the United States, what it stands for and what it does. Thus, complying with regulations for what McCright and Dunlap have called "the pursuit of environmental protection" is problematic because it contrasts with the idea that Americans should be granted freedom and responsibility to determine their own lives.

In an assessment of American conservative opinions of environmental policies, McCright and Dunlap have argued that the traditional environmental politics of the government was generally accepted up to the 1970's. Earlier, both Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt had created policies which enabled Americans to live the typical and ideal American life. Most recently however, this has taken a turn for the worse in conservatives' eyes. McCright and Dunlap argue: "the possibility of large-scale social change resulting from efforts to ameliorate it are seen as far more threatening to American Industry, prosperity, lifestyles." American conservatives are now strongly rejecting environmental regulation, because it implies substantial actions by the federal government. Not all opponents convey their message as muscularly as Norquist and Inhofe have done. Nonetheless, the fear that federal laws tackling global warming will cause or add to a paradigm-shift turning it away from the ideal of laissez-faire is general among America's conservatives.<sup>78</sup>

The opposition of conservative Republicans against Democratic spearheads such as climate change has become an increasingly problematic development over the past decades. Decision making has been especially difficult in the U.S. Congress from the start of Barack Obama's first presidential administration, and more specifically after the Republicans' victory in the 2010 elections for Congress. Conservative Republicans in Congress have regularly turned down Obama's and Democratic attempts to create legislation. Moreover, in a political culture of polarization it is almost impossible to form pioneering legislation that thoroughly addresses the problems climate change poses to the United State, without a political culture of cooperation and compliance.

Geoffrey Kabaservice has provided a part of the explanation for the current political polarization in the United States. In *Rule and Ruin* he argued that the resulting marginalization of moderate Republicans and the marginalization of a political middle has made collaboration unattainable. Kabaservice stated that the diminishing moderates and the resulting growth of conservative Republicanism can be blamed for the current absence of a culture of deliberation which makes Washington's politicians "unable to make necessary reforms to meet the long-term challenges posed by energy dependence [and] environmental regulation". Such a political harmony is essential in order to create laws and regulations for issues such as civil rights or climate change; the

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<sup>78</sup> McCright and Dunlap, "Challenging Global Warming as a Social Problem," 504-505.

complications of these issues may pierce through every physical and mental element of American society and it is therefore that bipartisan collaboration and agreement is vital for creating legislation handling these problems.<sup>79</sup>

The greatest concern about this expanding development lies with the notion that the conservatives appear to act this way in order to deny Obama political successes; this denial does not always come forth from disagreement. It is probable that they oppose his way of governing and the liberal ideals he embodies, and it might be among others because of this that they run down his political plans; as a matter of principle. Conservatives vote against his proposals, because they do not want to cooperate with his ideological mindset as it opposes their ideal of a small government. In multiple occasions, this has threatened the economic health. And as a result it has threatened the social health of the entire nation when deadlines were not met for introducing monetary measures which could counter the current financial crisis.

Dunlap and McCright have argued the following in a different article, "A Widening Gap", on the polarization in American politics and its influence on environmental politics: "Nowhere is the partisan gap on environmental issues more apparent than on climate change." When considering what the preceding of this thesis has revealed, it could be stated that this disparity can be explained solely by Republicans' general exposure to conservative media and opinion by *Fox News*.

However, the conclusions of a research by Dunlap and McCright, in which they have analyzed and cross-referenced quantitative studies on the public's knowledge of climate change and polarization, demonstrated that there are multiple explanations for this. They found that a greater awareness often comes together with a high feeling of distance with the opposing political party. The growing polarization on climate change is therefore not only caused to a lack of climate consciousness. Rather, this illustrates how some Republicans that are aware of the dangers of climate change, have made a cognizant choice to create a political gridlock, strongly complicating the further implementation of climate change policies in the United States. On top of a general tendency of Republicans to hinder Obama's plans, they are also inclined to do this when they are well aware of the implications of their environmental choice to hinder Obama's politics of sustainable development, which means that their sabotage is not based on their better judgment. It is because of this, that reaching a political consensus on sustainable development has become difficult to attain.<sup>80</sup>

The different approaches of the President and the U.S. Congress towards climate change have been less far apart. The divergence was prevalent during the Bush days as well. In those days,

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<sup>79</sup> Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 398-402.

<sup>80</sup> Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, "A Widening Gap: Republican and Democratic Views on Climate Change," *Environment* 50 (2008): 26-35.

however, the approaches towards the environment were opposite to the way they are now. The President opposed and the U.S. Congress worked in favor of environmental regulation. The earlier discussed “Climate Stewardship Act of 2003” by Lieberman and McCain aimed to introduce a cap and trade system for greenhouse gas emissions, while Congress surpassed the Bush administration in the granting of support to technology innovation aimed at environmental issues. John Byrne found in “American policy conflict in the Greenhouse” on climate change policymaking that the administrations of President Bush saw to “reductions in science and international programs related to climate change”; it tried to censor NASA’s environmental expert James Hansen; while researchers investigating the Bush administration’s actions on environmental issues warned the administration against political involvement in science. John Byrne argued that Bush, Jr.’s government endeavors “have served to stall meaningful national policy on climate change.” In Byrne’s elaboration on why there is a stalemate in America’s environmental policymaking, he adds that America’s political system further impedes this. It does not allow room to break the gridlock of climate change policymaking, as a result of the general polarization in America’s national politics. Nownes stated that it is easier for lobbyists to avert the creation of laws and regulations, than it is for them to install new policies. In a comparable fashion, Byrne argued that it is also easier for politicians “to prevent legislative action than it is to pass new policies.”<sup>81</sup>

The political impossibility to introduce and maintain decent climate change policy can be attributable to George W. Bush and the polarization in the U.S. Congress. However, according to Seymour Martin Lipset, the polarization might be acquitted from this charge: “this is precisely what the Founders would have liked.”<sup>82</sup> Obviously, political indecisiveness is not what the Founding Fathers were seeking, yet, the controlling power of the U.S. Congress Lipset discusses has helped to produce a decent amount of indecisiveness in American federal politics. Nonetheless, Lipset’s arguments holds a measure of truth, as it demonstrates how the gridlock is a result of the Founding Fathers’ intention to let the three branches of government be able to check and control each other, thus aiming to prevent excessive power within any of them. Even though the Founders succeeded, they were not able to control the basis or the content upon which the U.S. Congress checks the president. An inevitable defect. Nonetheless, it has a considerable influence over environmental policymaking, since Congress’ groundings for denying Obama’s politics are questionable. Although this development has been especially striking during the Obama presidencies, it is not unique. Aaron L. Friedberg asserts that Republicans have regularly and forcefully resisted the attempts of

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<sup>81</sup> John Byrne et al., “American Policy Conflict in the Greenhouse: Divergent Trends in federal, regional, state, and local green energy and climate change policy,” *Energy Policy* 35 (2007): 4557-4558, 4566.

<sup>82</sup> Lipset and Friedberg, “The American Anti-Statist Tradition,” 7; Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*, 18-33.

Democratic presidents to give the federal government more responsibility, because “they believed them to be wrong and dangerous and because they hoped that resistance would yield electoral advantages.” With the ideal of laissez-faire in hand, proponents have been able to uphold anti-statism. The defense of this inherently American ideal has been influential in its politics alternating from a lesser to a larger extent. In contemporary policymaking anti-statism has been gaining popularity as it was executed actively during the eight years of George W. Bush’s rule. The political gridlock has and will continue to keep a considerable obstructing sway over environmental policymaking in the coming years, as long as U.S. Congress’ Republicans are able to turn down Obama’s environmental policies and are motivated to do this by the ideology of laissez-faire.

## **Conclusion**

The continuously growing void in the middle of America’s political landscape and the environmental hands-off approach of the Bush administrations have had a significant influence on the possibility to implement climate change policies in the United States. The actions within these developments have been considerably affected by the anti-statist ideal of a small and barely interfering government which has been principally executed by conservative Republicans and libertarians.

This chapter has aimed to demonstrate the extent of influence of the American ideal of anti-statism on the implementation of climate change policies in the period between 2000 and 2013. Despite the plausible advantageous effects of such policies for big businesses and the United States economy and its international trade position, both non-state actors and the federal government have actively and thoroughly countered further environmental regulation.

In the previous chapter it has become clear that business-lobbies have tried to influence decision making and politicians through think tanks and climate change denial books. This decision making was also influenced greatly by the political ideology of laissez-faire as it embodies the political outset of an extensive number of politicians. The administrations of George W. Bush have decreased the regulation of environmental issues, while the polarization in the U.S. Congress has disabled the possibility for Barack Obama’s administration to reconstruct and advance climate change policies. The necessary political will to bring about extensive environmental regulation has been absent in the twenty-first century and this has resulted from the widespread belief among conservative Republicans in a government which interferes as little as possible. The notion of freedom and self-reliance, which are elements of laissez-faire and anti-statism, conflict with the implementation of climate change policies. This explains why they oppose this implementation. This is one of the reasons why Bush withdrew American participation and ratification of the Kyoto protocol. It is because of this that conservative politicians labor to prevent such policies. This

structural problem results in the absence of a political culture of compliance and cooperation in which pioneering legislation can be formed. Environmental regulation is among others prevented because Republicans refrain to cooperate with Obama as a matter of principle. One of these principles is laissez-faire and through politicians' compliance with this viewpoint, the proponents of anti-statism considerably and extensively influenced the implementation of climate change policies in the United States in the twenty first century. In essence, these proponents mainly oppose the notion and implications of regulation, rather than an ideological opposition against the idea of climate change.

## Conclusion

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Throughout this thesis, the aim has been to explain why the United States has not taken on a global environmental leadership position in contesting the causes and effects of climate change. A part of this explanation has been provided by this thesis, as it has demonstrated the extent in which characteristic traits of American democracy have influenced climate change policies in the United States, in the period between 2000 and 2013. The traits that have been investigated are populist rhetoric and the political ideology of anti-statism and this thesis has revealed that both have influenced the forming and deforming of the present limited environmental regulation in some to a larger measure. This conclusion will start by shortly reviewing the main findings of the two investigative chapters. Subsequently, the main research question will be answered by analyzing these findings which will also provide a definitive and specific explanation for the reason of America's absent global environmental leadership.

The discussion in the chapter on populist rhetoric and its influence on environmental regulation has demonstrated that conservative media and big businesses have been successful in spreading doubt about the scientific consensus on the causes and effects of climate change, which has resulted in the absence of a public consensus and an American people at odds questioning whether climate change is a real threat that needs to be addressed. The discussed forms of populist rhetoric have effectually altered the public consensus on climate change and it has brought down the public insistence for environmental regulation. The general public opinion on climate change has been influenced by an number of forms of populist rhetoric which have been mainly set to use by big businesses such as ExxonMobil and conservative interest groups, by influencing the way media such as *Fox News* and newspapers report about the issue, and by funding conservative think tanks which publish climate change denial books such as Christopher Horner's *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism*. These forms of populist rhetoric have aimed to decrease the truth and trustworthiness of the science and scientists of climate change. Meanwhile, they increased the validity and importance of the claims made by their own researchers. However, the measure of influence of populist rhetoric must not be exaggerated. It has certainly contributed strongly to the creation of a culture of doubt on the issue, yet, the measure of the indirect influence over climate change policymaking is clearly lower than the measure of influence of the implications of the ideology of anti-statism on environmental regulation. Nonetheless, the intended result of has been attained by interest groups, because the public has become divided about the challenging nature of climate change as a result of their use populist rhetoric.

The main conclusion from the investigation of populist rhetoric is that it has created the



believe among a significant part of the public that climate change is not a real threat. The application of populist rhetoric by anti-environmentalists has made the scientific consensus less credible. A public consensus which perceives climate change as problematic is absent and this has helped to prevent further policymaking on the issue. Political will is essential for creating such policies and the lack of a public consensus and the consequential absence of public insistence and urgency has not procured such political motivation to address climate change. Thus, populist rhetoric has prevented climate change regulation by effectively doubting climate change which has divided public opinion in a way that decreased political pressure and willpower to address the problem.

The discussion in the chapter on anti-statism has also demonstrated that political will is essential for creating environmental regulation. Political disregard to the environment helps to explain the absence of global American environmental leadership. Both populist rhetoric and anti-statism have played a significant role in creating and maintaining this political disregard. However, the influence of the proponents of anti-statism definitely exceeds the measure of influence of populist rhetoric. International treaties such as the Kyoto protocol bring about effects that are un-American, such as dependence and obligations, which conflict with America's anti-statism, as they harm individual freedom, responsibility, free trade and self-reliance. Therefore, conservative Republicans have prevented and worked against the implementation of climate change policies mainly because they firmly believe in the political ideology of laissez-faire. An ideal that does not correspond with a government regulating the causes and effects of climate change. Republican politicians strongly believe in this hands-off approach and this has caused President Bush to deregulate and it has caused the U.S. Congress to prevent environmental regulation. Anti-environmentalists are often proponents of the political ideology of laissez-faire, because climate change regulation demands government interference. Because of this, laissez-faire is responsible for impeding the advent of the required general political will and political culture of cooperation and compliance in which pioneering environmental regulation can be implemented.

This thesis has demonstrated two reasons for the absence of climate change policies and the consequential absence of global environmental leadership by the United States. The discussions of populist rhetoric and anti-statism have revealed how both contributed to a political culture lacking the necessary willpower to start to successfully address this problem. The deficiency of environmental regulation can be explained by the interconnection of these two characteristics of the United States. The main reason for this is the fact that the executors of these traits of American democracy fuelled each other's attempts to achieve their common goal. Although these groups disagree in some extent on the problematic nature of climate change, their actions to attain this goal are mainly stimulated by their efforts to promote the political ideology of laissez-faire. Republicans

aimed to uphold laissez-faire and populist rhetoric has been their method of preventing further environmental regulation. It created a public and political culture in which the necessity of such policies appeared less urgent than what could be assumed from the scientific consensus. Republicans have directly prevented regulation by working to diminish or prevent domestic environmental regulation and by preventing participation in international environmental treaties.

In answering the main research question, this thesis can conclude by stating that the discussed characteristics of American democracy have been highly influential on the absence of environmental regulation as they created a political culture which essentially opposed the concept and implications of regulation itself more than it opposed the idea of addressing climate change. The groups that applied populist rhetoric in order to oppose regulation and in order to uphold anti-statism, have prevented the implementation of environmental legislation in the United States because they disagreed with the implications of the regulating principles of climate change policies. This relation between the characteristics of American democracy and the cooperation of its proponents are largely responsible for the current absence of American global environmental leadership.

America's global environmental leadership is and will be vital to avert disastrous effects for themselves and for the future health of the planet Earth. Without such leadership future profit, progress and prosperity might become tales of the past, rather than apparent natural development. This final notion provides an ominous expectation for the future. Without the application of populist rhetoric, and the promotion and protection of anti-statism the implementation of climate change policies might be easier attainable. Unfortunately, the inheritance of these characteristics reaches deep into American democracy and it is improbable that these will dwindle before long.

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