# The Paris Agreement: A Multiple Streams Approach
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A Multiple Streams Approach

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ABSTRACT

The Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement was perceived as a blow for the environmental movement. The decision to withdraw was justified by the Trump administration on the premise that it would protect US jobs and its economy. In the span of eight years the US went from extensively regulating the fossil-fuel industry to deregulating and withdrawing from the most comprehensive international climate agreement. This drastic policy change will be explored in this thesis. More specifically, the factors that contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration. By using Kingdon's (1995) Multiple Streams Framework, it will explore how the problem, political and policy stream contributed to this decision to withdraw. Furthermore, the role of the politicisation of the policy advisory systems will be explored in the policy stream. Every stream has different indicators/concepts which will be analysed. In doing so, it will strive to explore which factors did contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

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# 1. Introduction

One of the first executive orders President Biden signed was to re-enter the United States in the Paris climate agreement. A year after Trump formally withdrew from the agreement, the US is now set to re-join. Whilst the agreement was signed by 196 countries after a lengthy bargaining process, the Trump administration decided to withdraw from the agreement in 2017 (McGrath, 2020). 95 % of the world's environmental scientists agree that man-made climate change is real. (UNFCC, 2021). There is a consensus among climate scientists that man-made climate change is real and could have ramifications for people and the environment. However, as the case of the United States (US) shows, this is not a significant factor when deciding to implement climate change reforms and combat man-made climate change. Climate change sceptics thus prevailed in 2017 when the US decided to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

The Paris agreements objective was to keep the global temperature below the 2 degree Celsius threshold (UNFCC, 2021). Each signatory country could set its own goals and strategies (i.e. subsidizing renewables or regulating fossil fuel industries). The agreement was hailed as a historic landmark against climate change due to the number of signatory countries. These included the biggest polluters (i.e. China, India, EU and the US) to commit to fighting climate change (UNFCC, 2021). Moreover, the agreement did not have any enforcement mechanisms besides "naming and shaming". Thus, the Paris agreement did not state how countries should combat climate change, what their goals should be, is non-binding and did not have any significant enforcement mechanisms. However, the Trump administration still decided to withdraw from the agreement. In his speech on June 1st 2017, Trump gave several reasons why his administration decided to withdraw. One reason was that it would have a severe economic impact to the US economy as it would lose the US around $ 3 trillion in lost GDP by 2040 (Trump, 2017).  He stated that the US would be at an "economic disadvantage" and that even when carbon emissions would be eliminated in the US it would still have no significant impact on global temperatures (Trump, 2017). Furthermore, he mentioned that the Paris agreement states that India and China could build coal plants while the US was banned from building coal plants. This is false as the signatory countries could set their own strategies for combatting climate change (IPCC, 2021: Trump, 2017). Moreover, in the wake of Trump's decision to

withdraw from the agreement, many high profile businesses (e.g. Apple, Microsoft and Facebook) stated that the Paris agreement would generate economic growth and create jobs in the US (Landler, Plumer & Qiu, 2017). Aside from domestic pressure to not withdraw there was also international pressure. World leaders (Macron, Merkel and May) pleaded to Trump to reconsider his decision (Smale, 2017). However, these pleas did not affect his decision. Trump cited several reasons for withdrawing from the Paris agreement but his description of the agreement could be considered deceptive. For instance, in his speech, he stated that the agreement sees the US obligate billions of dollars to the Green Climate Fund. However, as mentioned prior, there are no enforcement mechanisms and countries cannot be penalised for not reaching their goals (Trump, 2017: UNFCC 2021).

The question thus arises which factors were pivotal in his decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. Kaufmann (2017) argued that the reason for the withdrawal from the agreement was alleged, domestic factors (Kaufmann, 2017). Mainly, climate change sceptic think tanks/policy advisors (e.g. CATO Institute, Heartland Institute, Heritage Foundation). These think tanks provided a plethora of politicised "science" in which they denounce the effects of manmade climate change (Kaufmann, 2017: Schmidt-Petri, 2019). They argued that the Paris agreement was not domestically acceptable, due to the high economic costs and little to no benefits (Dayaratna, Loris & Kreutzer, 2016). The consequence of the politicised "science" produced by non-state actors on climate change is that it has become a deeply polarising issue in the US (Kaufman, 2017: McGrath, 2020: Fisher, Waggle & Leifield, 2013: Hermwille & Sanderink, 2019). Climate change went from being a bipartisan issue to a partisan issue in the span of two decades (Hermwille & Sanderink, 2019). This might be due to the influence of non-state actors in US policymaking (Hermwille & Sanderink. These non-state actors (e.g. think tanks/policy advisors) the Trump administration relied on were owned or funded by the fossil-fuel industry (Kaufman, 2017: Hall, 2015). For example, the Heritage Foundation is owned by Koch Industries. Koch Industries is a pivotal domestic US actor in the fossil-fuel industry and is leading the climate change scepticism movement in the US (Kaufman, 2017: Hall, 2015).

Ironically, the fossil-fuel industry was the one that found evidence for man-made climate change (Hall, 2015: Supran & Oreskes, 2017). Exxon Mobil presented in 1977 a report in which their head researcher, James Black, stated that the use of fossil fuels was contributing to man-made climate change (Hall, 2015: Supran & Oreskes, 2017). In the

subsequent ten years, Exxon Mobil researched the validity of this claim and concluded that the greenhouse effects produced by the fossil-fuel industry were contributing to global warming/climate change (Supran & Oreskes, 2017: Exxon Mobil, 1983). Despite this knowledge, Exxon Mobil adopted a policy in which they were sceptical of climate change and created doubt through a campaign of misinformation regarding the intensity of climate change (Supran & Oreskes, 2017: Hall, 2015). They funded sceptic climate change think tanks and politicians to halt federal regulations on their industry (Hall, 2015). These politicians are mostly Republicans (Fisher et al., 2013: Freeze, 2020). What is also fascinating is that the Republican party were once the party that ran on an environmental agenda in 1968. Richard Nixon then established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 50 years later, the Republican party is home to the most prominent climate change sceptics in the US and a Republican president who frequently called climate change a hoax (Davenport & Lipton, 2017).

Busch and Judick (2021) argue that the goal of these climate sceptic think tanks is not to persuade scientists that man-made climate change is a hoax but to persuade politicians and the public that it is. Whilst these think tanks (i.e. policy advisory systems) influence is debatable, recent studies have shown they are increasing (Craft & Howlett, 2013: Busch & Judick, 2021: Freeze, 2020: Schmidt-Petri, 2017: Roper, Ganesh & Zorn, 2016). One influential climate change sceptic think tank is the Heritage Foundation (Busch & Judick, 2021). The Heritage Foundation has been rejecting man-made climate change since the signing of the Kyoto Protocol in 1998 (Roper et al., 2016). In their report "Consequences of Paris Protocol: Devastating Economic Costs, Essentially Zero Environmental Benefits" which was published in 2016, had similarities with Trump's speech where he announced that the US would leave the agreement (Dayaratna et al., 2016: Trump, 2017). Meaning that there is some evidence that the Heritage Foundation influenced Trumps decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The question that arises is why and how did the Heritage Foundation become such a prominent actor in US policymaking. Furthermore, the Trump administration showcased that they rejected the scientific consensus regarding man-made climate change. However, they did accept the Heritage Foundation's "scientific" report. The question is why? Which other factors contributed to the decision to withdraw? To answer this, this thesis will conduct an exploratory case study and explore the possible factors that led to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

## 1.1 Relevance

This section will discuss the academic and societal relevance of this exploratory case study. Studies on the influence of think tanks on climate change policies in the US is relatively new. This might be due to the difficulties in measuring the influence of think tanks on policies (Craft & Howlett, 2013). Moreover, the climate change debate has become polarized and politicised in recent decades (Fisher et al., 2013: Hermwille & Sanderink, 2019: Schmidt-Petri, 2017). Whilst the former Republican president Bush Jr. acknowledged man-made climate change, the recent Grand Old Party (GOP) leaders are sceptical. This shift in the GOP stances on climate change and the occurred policy changes are relatively underexplored in the scientific literature. Furthermore, the role of think tanks (especially the Heritage Foundation) in US environmental policies has also been underexplored. Therefore, the academic relevance is that it is a relatively new phenomenon and underexplored in scholarly literature.

The societal relevance of this exploratory case study is that the influence of think tanks on governmental policies are not transparent to the public. Furthermore, the increased politicised science from seemingly legitimate institutions has increased in the last decades (Schmidt-Petri, 2019). The role of the new and old media when it comes to promoting politicised science has also increased (Hermwille & Sanderink, 2019: Busch & Judick, 2021). The policy decisions administrations make regarding climate change affect every citizen on earth. If they truly are based on politicized science, this case study is relevant for society.

Think tanks are considered necessary when it comes to advising policymakers due to the increased complexity of policymaking (Craft & Howlett, 2013: Busch & Judick, 2021: Papadopoulos, 2010). However, the downside of using these non-state actors (i.e. think tanks) is that they are not accountable whilst their advice could have detrimental effects on society. These non-state actors could be described as hidden participants in the agenda-setting and decision-making phase of policy. By exploring their relationship with policymakers, this thesis could shed a light on the policy-politico dynamics of decision-making. Therefore, this exploratory case studies societal relevance regards the transparency and accountability of think tanks and the possible effects politicised science could have on decision-making.

## 1.2 Research question

The goal of this thesis is to explore which factors contributed to the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement. By exploring the possible factors that led to the decision to 1withdraw, this thesis could provide valuable insights into the policy and political dynamics of decision-making. In addition, the role of politicised science in environmental policies will also be examined. The research question is:

*Which factors led to the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement?*

In 2008, the notion of man-made climate change was a bipartisan issue. 8 years later a Republican president and the GOP do not recognize this notion. Furthermore, they deregulated the fossil-fuel industry and withdrew from the most comprehensive climate treaty ever made (Republican Party Platform, 2016: Davenport & Friedman, 2017). This relatively sudden change in policies that occurred in the US render this study fit for using Kingdon's (1984) Multiple Streams Framework (MSF). Kingdon's (1984) argues that policy changes occur not only due to the participants involved but also the context. The acknowledgement of several actors who play a role in the policy dynamics makes the MSF a viable theory to use (Howlett, McConnel, Anthony, 2015).

The MSF provides possible factors which could be present in each stream. The MSF is considered to be a universally adaptable theory with clearly described concepts (Zahariadis, 2016: Cairney & Jones, 2015). The relationship between these concepts is clearly described which is beneficial for the conceptualization. Subsequently, this aids this thesis to adequately operationalize the concepts as independent variables (the factors: problem, political and policy stream) which in turn, helps identify the causality with the dependent variable (the withdrawal from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration). Each stream will have distinct theoretical expectations which will be provided in chapter two. Furthermore, the MSF recognizes the influences of non-state actors on governmental policies. Non-state actors in the form of policy advisory systems (i.e. think tanks), could have motives that are in line with their corporate donors (Craft & Howlett, 2013). By examining the relationship between the think tank, the corporate donors and the policy-makers, this study can help identify if the politicisation of policy advisory systems occurred. Subsequently, if these policy advisory systems then provided

politicised science to justify their stance. Further justification of using Kingdon's framework will be provided in chapter two (theoretical framework) of this thesis.

To create an integrative framework that can answer the research question, this thesis will provide context to the issue of climate change in the US. This will be done by looking at how the actors involved viewed environmental regulations put forth by the Obama administration and how they viewed the Paris agreement. By analysing these views, the partisan and economic motives of the actors involved could be identified. Subsequently, this will contribute to finding evidence for the politicisation of policy advisory systems and if the withdrawal was justified by using politicised science.

The integrative framework based on MSF will strive to answer the following sub-questions:

- To what extent did the media contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?
- To what extent did the governmental turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?
- What policy alternatives were provided by the policy community on the issue?
- Were there partisan and/or economic motives for the actors involved that lead to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?

## 1.3 Structure

In the following chapter, this thesis will provide a literature review. This review will provide the theoretical backdrop of the MSF (2.1) and justify the choice for using the MSF for this study (2.2). Thereafter, the concepts of the MSF and the conceptualisation of these concepts will be provided (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 & 2.2.4). This literature review will lead to several theoretical expectations (2.3). Chapter 3 will present the research design of this exploratory case study. The choice for a case study will be discussed and justified (3.1). Thereafter, the operationalization of the concepts will be done (3.2). The data collection method of this study consists of document analysis and the data that is collected will be described (3.3). This chapter ends with a reflection on the research design and a description of the limitations and threats of this kind of study.

Chapter 4 will provide the analysis of this case study. It will analyse which factors could have contributed to the decision to withdraw. This will be done by examining each stream and the actors that could have played a role (4.1, 4.2, 4.3). The formulated expectations per stream will also be confirmed or rejected in this analysis. Chapter 5 will end with a conclusion and the encountered limitations. It will end with a discussion on the study and provide recommendations for future studies.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

When discussing agenda-setting and decision-making processes, the seminal work of Kingdon (1984) regarding the Multiple-Streams Framework (MSF) is vital in understanding how policy changes can occur. Kingdon's MSF analyses agenda-setting in the US political system, making it an adequate analytical tool for the subject of this paper. Whilst this framework was initially developed for the US health and transport sector, its application has been widened to other sectors in the US (Rawat & Morris, 2016). MSF is now considered to be an adequate analytical tool that explains agenda-setting, decision-making and policy changes in public policy (Howlett, McConnel, Anthony, 2015). It is not only applicable in the US but has crossed borders to other political systems (Cairney & Jones, 2016). 37 years after its development, the MSF has shown that it is still significant. This might be due to its universal adaptability to other policy areas or its general features. In this section, the theoretical backdrop of this study will be discussed in 2.1. In paragraph 2.2, it will discuss the MSF its utility and justify its use in this study. The subsections of paragraph 2.2 will specify the concepts of the MSF. The last paragraph will generate the theoretical expectations that stem from the theoretical framework.

### 2.1 Introduction

The theoretical backdrop should also be discussed to further comprehend the significance of the MSF. There are several traditional decision theory models. Rational choice is an example of these models. The traditional theories suggest that the actors involved tend to reduce costs, maximize benefits and are risk aversive (Brulé, Mintz & DeRouen, 2014). The traditional decision theories argue that the decision-making process comprises several logical steps (Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000). They mostly include a cost-benefit analysis in which decision-makers can weigh out several options. The traditional decision-making process begins with identifying a problem and an objective. Thereafter, alternatives to the problem will be identified. The decision-makers will have several options/alternatives. These options are assigned certain values by the decision-makers. By doing so, decision-makers can identify the outcomes by determining the relative values and the probabilities that will result from each course of action (Brulé, Mintz & DeRouen, 2014). The rational steps taken by the actors involved will conclude in a rational choice. However, as Kørnøv and Thissen (2000, p. 192) state "A rational procedure will not automatically lead to a rational choice". Whilst these traditional theories seem logical in theory, they are inadequate in practice (Kingdon, 1995:

Cohen, March & Olson, 1972: Zahariadis, 2016: Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000: Stone, 2011). One main criticism of the traditional decision theories is that it does not reflect real-life decision-making processes, as these are more similar to organized anarchy (Cohen et al., 1972). Furthermore, policymaking can be viewed as irrational (Stone, 2011).

One application of rational choice theory is the tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1968). In the tragedy of the commons, common-pool resources are depleted by self-serving actors (Hardin, 1968: Ostrom, 1999). This rational choice model could explain the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement by suggesting that the US was a rational actor whose choice to withdraw from the agreement suited their interests. Rational actors (i.e. the US) withdraw from an agreement that ties their fossil-fuel industry and reduces their economic gains. Whilst acting in their interests seems rational, the outcome of this action results in the depletion of common resources which makes everyone worse off in the long run (Hardin, 1968: Ostrom, 1999). Rational choice theory, more specifically the tragedy of the commons, can explain the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, however, it does not explain why climate change policies in the US change. The Obama administration made several attempts to regulate the fossil-fuel industry and pursue alternate energy resources (Tollefson, 2015). However, when the Trump administration took office they reversed these attempts. In the span of eight years, the US and their climate change policies changed drastically. Suggesting that their climate change policies are not rational.

Rational choice models are limited in their framework as they mostly focus on states as their primary actors and are considered one-dimensional approaches (Brulé et al., 2014: Cohen et al., 1972). Whilst states are primary actors in policy changes, they are not the only pivotal actors in the policy dynamics. Interest groups, think tanks and other non-state actors also play significant parts in the policy processes (Zahariadis, 2016). Furthermore rational evaluations of policies are unlikely due to the ambiguous nature of policy (Stone, 2011). According to Stone, (2011), traditional policy theories use market settings (e.g. cost-benefit analysis) to see how the policy would work. She argues that policy should be viewed through the lens of the people (i.e. polis) instead of the market. Therefore, the rational choice theories will not be applied in the remainder of this study as they are mostly one-dimensional in nature and are not reflecting real-life policy processes (Cohen et al., 1972: Zahariadis, 2016: Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000).

Rational choice theories suggest that policymakers have full information and act accordingly. Rational choice considers the states as a unified actor who acts on behalf of the state's interests and has the tools to process all the information. However, it does not consider the cognitive and bureaucratic limitations of the actors involved. They can also be guided by self-interesting motives and therefore oppose the most rational course (Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000). Policymakers encounter cognitive, biological and bureaucratic limitations in their decision-making (Jones, 2003). Bounded rationality first developed by Simon (1957) suggests that policymakers cannot make truly informed decisions due to the aforementioned limitations (Jones, 2003). Bounded rationality acknowledges the role of ambiguity and that these processes are messy and unpredictably (Jones, 2003: Cohen et al., 1972: Kingdon, 1995). Therefore, the policymaking processes are not rational but more similar to organized anarchy (Jones, 2003: Cohen et al., 1972).

## 2.2 MSF and its Utility

Kingdon's MSF (1995) was influenced by the multi-dimensional "garbage can model" of Cohen et al., (1972). In their "garbage can model" Cohen et al., (1972) argue that the streams of problems, solutions and participants exist separately and are evolving in different paces at the same time. They may be coupled together at a certain decision-making moment/opportunity, but this will not be as rational or organized as traditional decision-making theories might argue (Cohen et al., 1972). This process will be more similar to an organized anarchy (Cohen et al., 1972). This multi-dimensional approach to policy processes and its acknowledgement of several non-state actors, networks and institutions makes it a more suitable approach in this studies case. The MSF views the policymaking process as a complex and unpredictable process, making it not a rational theory (Zahariadis, 2016: Kingdon, 1995). The acknowledgement of many participants in the policymaking process is a justifiable reason for using the MSF in this study. Kingdon (1995) also acknowledges the important role of context. Kingdon (1995) argues that external factors (i.e. focussing events or swings in the national mood) can contribute to the agenda-setting and decision-making stages in the policy process. These external factors can influence how policymakers view certain policy ideas. Ideas or policy alternatives are made by the policy communities and evolve along the way. Furthermore, the MSF is an adaptable theory that can be applied to several policy settings. The universal concepts of MSF can be conceptualized in a manner that enables an adequate operationalization of these concepts.

Kingdon (1995) argues that agenda-setting and decision-making processes are not rational or organized. Policy changes occur not only due to the participants involved but also the setting. Kingdon (1995) strives to understand how certain problems gain attention whilst others are neglected. Kingdon (1995) identifies several streams which occur simultaneously and mostly independent from each other in the agenda-setting and decision-making process. These streams are the problem, policy and political streams. These independent streams flow separate from each other until policy entrepreneurs find a window of opportunity in which they couple these streams (Kingdon, 1995). The policy entrepreneurs and the window of opportunity are other core elements in MSF besides the three streams. Each core element of the MSF has different indicators and parameters that compose the elements. When certain parameters are met, they are ready to be coupled to the window of opportunity. These concepts will all be dissected in the remainder of the section. The remainder of this section will use Kingdons (1995) terminology and conceptualize the elements in the MSF. It will start with the window of opportunity. As will be explained later, the window of opportunity emerges from the three distinct streams (i.e. problem, political and policy).

## 2.2.1 Window of opportunity

The window of opportunity is described in the MSF as a critical short moment in time where an opportunity arises for policy entrepreneurs (see paragraph 2.2.4) to push their alternatives or gain attention for certain problems (Kingdon, 1995). Every stream has a certain window where the problem, political or policy windows can open by a series of events. For instance, if there were an extreme flooding incident in New Orleans, the problem window would be pressured to open. Or a political window can open when there is a great turnover in government. These instances can be policy change moments. For instance, when the Democrats lost the election in 2016, there was a major overhaul in the legislative and executive branch. The Obama administration was adamant in regulating the fossil-fuel industry to stop $CO_2$ emissions (Tollefson, 2015). Combatting climate change was a top priority of the Obama administration and they proposed a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2013 which strived to regulate the fossil-fuel industries $CO_2$ emissions, pursued alternative fuel resources, preserved forests and intensified research on climate change (Davenport, 2013). The CAP also looked at how to address climate change internationally and supported the conservation of common-pool resources (Davenport, 2013). With the election of Donald Trump in 2016, a new climate strategy was adopted. The new administration cancelled the

Climate Action Plan and appointed climate change denialists (i.e. Scott Pruitt) as the head of the EPA (Holden, 2017). The cancellation of the Climate Action Plan meant that there were significant policy changes in the environmental policies which will be further discussed in the analysis. These examples are meant to showcase that with the turnover in the executive and legislative branch, significant policy changes took place in the US after 2016. Windows of opportunity are therefore considered to be somewhat predictable (during elections) or unpredictable in times of sudden crises (Knaggard, 2015: Kingdon, 1995). It is the policy entrepreneurs job to recognize a window of opportunity and present viable alternatives to policymakers in this short window (Knaggard, 2015: Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2015). Due to the significance of an election, this thesis will argue that the window of opportunity was the election of D. Trump in 2016.

## 2.2.2 Problem Stream

The problem stream is where the perceptions of problems are defined. Problems are conditions and issues that matter to the public (Howlet et al., 2015). These problems deviate from an ideal standard and governments should therefore act to resolve these issues such as climate change. However, many problems deviate from an ideal standard. Kingdon (1995) describes a process in which the problems can become more prominent and coupled with the other streams. These parameters are indicators, focusing events and feedback. The purpose of these parameters is to attract attention from policymakers. The first parameter is indicators. Indicators are used in a specific area to heighten attention to a specific problem. For instance, environmental indicators, such as the number of wildfires in California in a certain year or the number of environmental regulations made which cripple the fossil-fuel industry. Indicators can thus determine the presence of a problem and its weight.

The second parameter in the problem stream is focusing events. Birkland (1998) argues that a focusing event is a harmful or potentially harmful event. Focusing events harm certain communities and can mobilize interest groups (Birkland, 1998). These interest groups (e.g. the media, policy entrepreneurs or the public) strive to increase the attention towards certain problems and advocate for policy change. These groups can argue that the current policies are considered to be policy failures and should therefore be changed (Birkland, 1998: Pralle, 2009). Focusing events are thus considered to be (sudden) crises that place pressure on policymakers to act and resolve the issue (Howlet et al., 2015: Kingdon, 1995: Birkland, 1998). An example could be the recent snowstorm in Texas which crippled the state and

showed policy failures regarding the power grid in Texas. Another example could be the Climate Action Plan of the Obama administration. When Obama announced the Climate Action Plan, Republicans and the fossil-fuel industry lobby, mobilized their communities to oppose the Plan. They argued that the Climate Action Plan would be a policy failure and would unnecessarily harm the US economy (Dayaratna et al., 2016: Tollefson, 2015). Furthermore, they stated that the proposed regulations in the plan would cost billions of dollars with almost no benefits in return (Dayaratna et al., 2016: Russel, 2015).

The last parameter in the problem stream is feedback. There may be feedback within existing programs and policies that may direct the attention towards certain conditions and issues. For instance, the previously mentioned Climate Action Plan of the Obama administration had a 2-year evaluation program (Davenport, 2013: Tollefson, 2015). These can come in the form of evaluations by policymakers and bureaucrats or feedback received by the public (Pralle, 2009). Furthermore, unintentional results of policies can also come to light via feedback. For instance, the EU subsidized bio-fuels (e.g. palm oil) as they considered them to be an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuels (Tullis, 2019: Keating, 2019). However, as it turned out these bio-fuels were not environmentally friendly as they replaced the problem elsewhere, being Indonesia and Malaysia. Meaning, that the feedback received by the EU led to a stop in subsidies in bio-fuels as this undermined the goal of the programme which was stopping climate change (Lustgarten, 2018).

Kingdon (1995) argues that the significance of a problem depends on policymakers perception and definition of these problems. Perception is key in understanding the problem stream. The parameters above are prone to perception, making them not objective problems (Pralle, 2009). Pralle (2009) argues that the debate is not about the problem, but if it is the government's responsibility to act on the problem. The framing of a problem can depend on an actors ideology (Pralle, 2009: Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). If it is framed as a problem, actors can increase attention and mobilise their group to persuade policymakers to take (their preferred) actions. However, actors can also decide to decrease attention or shift the attention towards another problem (e.g. shifting the debate from environmental to economical).

According to Knaggard (2015), The problem stream has been underexposed in Kingdon's MSF. Knaggard (2015) argues that the role of the media and how they frame problems are underdeveloped in the framework. Furthermore, the media landscape has drastically changed since the creation of the MSF in 1984. Especially the role of television and the establishment

of a 24/7 news cycle. The media is a pivotal actor in the agenda-setting stage of policy (Knaggard, 2015: Wolfe, Jones & Baumgartner, 2013). Knaggard (2015) also introduces the "problem broker" (p. 452). The problem broker in the problem stream frames public problems that suit the policy makers. She calls it a strategic act as: "framing a condition as a public problem is done with the purpose of making policy makers accept it and, in the end, do something about it" (Knaggard, 2015, p. 452). This study will argue that the media (i.e. Fox News) plays this role for the Republican Party (i.e. the policymakers). Feldman, Maibach, Roser-Renouf and Leisorowitz (2012) researched the portrayal of climate change in US media outlets (Fox News, MSNBC and CNN). They stated that the programs on Fox News vigorously denied man-made climate change and disputed the scientific consensus on climate change. Furthermore, Hmielowski, Feldman, Myers, Leiserowitz and Maibach (2014) argue that the citizens that watch Fox News, tend to distrust scientist and the scientific consensus on man-made climate change. Therefore, this thesis will pay more attention to how Fox News portrays the problem and argue that they play a significant part in framing problems in the stream.

Ideally, the two political parties in the US fight for the attention of the media outlets. The journalists at the media outlets sort through what they believe is important and what is partisan. This phenomenon is called gatekeeping and is a fundamental role of the media outlets (Schwalbe, Silcock & Candello, 2015). However, in the US, Fox News plays a different role (McManus, 2017: Dempsey, Cramer, Friedland, Wagner & Shah, 2021). Fox News was founded by a Republican political operative, Roger Ailes (McManus, 2017: Rucker, 2017). Ailes wanted to launch a Republican News network and in the process " avoid the censorship, the priorities and the prejudices of network news selectors" (Ailes, 1968, p. 2.). Decades later, Fox News has established itself as a conservative news outlet (Mcmanus, 2017: Rucker, 2017). Meaning that Fox News is a conservative Republican media outlet that frames problems in a manner that suits the Republican Party and avoids the gatekeeper role of other media outlets (Ailes, 1968). In a recent study conducted by PewResearchCenter (2020), Fox News was the primary source for political news for Republican-leaning voters. 93% of adult Republican-leaning voters stated that they get their political news from Fox News (Grieco, 2020). Gramlich's (2020) research on Fox News concluded that Democrats tend to get their political news from a variety of media outlets whilst Republicans and Republican-leaning voters overwhelmingly get their political news from Fox News. Furthermore, Dempsey et al., (2021) argue that the Trump administration gave Fox News priority in their

White House briefings. Moreover, Trump regularly tweeted and stated that Fox News is the real news and that mainstream media (e.g. CNN and MSNBC) are "Fake news" (Trump, 2016). Trump was also a regular guest on Fox & Friends and stated that he watched it "every morning". The relationship between the Trump administration will be further analysed in chapter 4. The crux of the matter is that there likely is a relationship between Fox News and the Republican Party, more specifically the Trump administration (Dempsey et al., 2021: Rucker, 2017). Therefore, this study will focus on the problem definition of Fox News and analyse how this could have played a role in the agenda-setting and decision-making phase.

The framing of a problem has been studied by Stone (2011). How a problem is tactically framed by actors involved matters as they can use symbols to have an emotional impact (Stone, 2011). Due to the extensive coverage of media outlets with regards to climate change policies in the US, the social construction of the problem becomes significant in the MSF. Therefore, this thesis will broaden the problem stream by using Stone's (2011) social construction of problems with a particular focus on symbols. Symbols are broadly defined by Stone (2011) as it also depends on how actors interpret them. Symbols are fundamental parts of discourse and are means of influence and control (Stone, 2011). The use of symbols is important in the media as it can frame a problem in a manner that suits political operatives (e.g. Roger Ailes). For instance, when the Obama administration proposed the climate action plan, Fox News posted several articles in which they used extensive metaphors and symbols such as "Obama's climate change plan masks hidden agenda" (Morici, 2013), "The inconvenient truth about climate change and Obama's policies" (Morici, 2014) or "Obama uses executive order in sweeping takeover of nation's climate change policies" (Chiaramonte, 2013). According to Stone (2011) symbols are used to tell a story and metaphors are used to strategically represent a problem. She distinguishes three tools of symbolic representation being, narrative stories, metaphors and synecdoche (Stone, 2011). This thesis will analyse the symbolic representation of a problem using the tools above. Because, political actors can use symbols to highlight their narrative and persuade people to join their side (Stone, 2011). Furthermore, policy entrepreneurs can use these symbolic literary devices to pursue their own policy alternative (Zahariadis, 2003: Zahariadis, 2016b: Stone, 2011).

Narratives are stories that help define and contest policy choices (Stone, 2011). The narrative stories can be about change and/or stories about power (Stone, 2011). Stories about change

are divided into stories of decline and rising. Stories of decline are meant to warn the audience of an event and motivate them to seize control. Stories of decline usually set the stage for stories of power. Stories of power are divided into stories of helplessness and control (Stone, 2011). How narrative stories of change and power usually occur according to Stone (2011) is: "The situation is bad. We have always believed that the situation was out of our control, something we had to accept but could not influence. Now, however, let me show you that in fact, we can control things." (p. 166). When examining stories of power, conspiracy theories often take root (Stone, 2011). Because conspiracy theories often revolve around unexplained phenomena that people cannot grapple with. When things are difficult to understand, conspiracy theories help fill in the gap and create a power-driven story. In examining the media this thesis will strive to explore whether Fox News used these narrative stories to define and frame the problem.

Metaphors are the second symbolic literary devices that can strategically define and frame a problem. Metaphors are used to compare two different things and suggest that the solution for one could be the same as the other (Stone, 2011). Meaning that metaphors can imply a larger narrative story with a certain prescription for action. For instance, when Obama presented his Climate Action Plan, Fox News frequently stated that there was a "War On Coal" (Springer, 2013). Implying that regulations are the same thing as "war" is a textbook use of metaphors according to Stone (2011). The last symbolic literary device is the use of synecdoches. Stone (2011) argues that news reporters often use synecdoches. They frame an entire problem by looking at one part of the problem. For instance, when Representative Ocasio-Cortez presented the Green New Deal, she mentioned that she wanted to regulate the meat industry to combat climate change. Fox News took a part of the Green New Deal and framed it as a regulation that would take away the publics hamburgers (Fox News, 2019). This could be seen as a form of synecdoche, more specifically the "horror story" (Stone, 2011, p. 169). The horror story is described as "interest groups deliberately choose one egregious or outlandish incident to represent the universe of cases" (Stone, 2011, p. 169). According to Stone (2011), these horror stories are used to contest regulations and reforms. It is a powerful organisational tool that can make certain policy problems tangible for the public and help them rally behind a certain cause. In the example above, the hamburger story was meant to rally the public against the Green New Deal by taking a part of the deal and dramatizing it for personal reasons. These dramatizations are powerful strategies that could lead to a wrongful depiction of the social reality of the problem (Stone, 2011).

The use of symbolic literary devices is pivotal in understanding the problem stream, as the acknowledgement of a problem and its framing can have ramifications for how it is dealt with in the agenda-setting and decision-making process. The changing media landscape (e.g. 24/7 news coverages and constant "breaking news") seems to have some ramifications for the framing of problems in the problem stream. Therefore, this study will look at the use of symbolic literary devices by Fox News (due to their status as a biased media outlet) and how they frame the problem.

## 2.2.3 Political Stream

The second stream is home to visible participants such as Presidents, Senators, Representatives and political parties (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015: Herweg, HuB & Zohlnhöfer 2015). In this stream, the traditional governmental actors (elected or appointed) are bargaining and competing for power to develop policies. The parameters in the political stream are national mood, political pressure groups and governmental turnovers (Kingdon, 1995). The national mood is the notion that a large number of people want policy changes (Knaggard, 2015). The national mood is an abstract parameter as it is hard to obtain (Pralle, 2009: Knaggard, 2015: Zahariadis, 2016a). Obtaining the national mood could be done by conducting public polls, public gatherings, political and public correspondence, elections or how media outlets depict certain policy issues (Knaggard, 2015: Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015). Shephard, Ellersiek, Meuer, Rupietta, Mayne and Cairney (2021) suggest that policymakers should select an alternative dependent on their perception of the national mood. This could be problematic as the political actors can have biased information sources (Zahariadis, 2016). For instance, if one political actor only watches conservative media (e.g. Fox News) they could have a wrong depiction of the national mood. Zahariadis (2015) broadens the concept of the national mood. Political leaders and interest groups use public opinion but also strive to sway it in a particular direction (Zahariadis, 2015: Knaggard, 2015). They frame certain policy issues in line with their ideological interests making framing of a policy issue a significant factor (Knaggard, 2015: Zahariadis, 2015). Zahariadis (2015) states "leaders seek to influence a policy decision not only by taking advantage of the current national mood but also by framing the mood in a politically expedient way" (p. 468). The use of fear and emotions are considered to be a useful tool to sway the mood (Knaggard, 2015: Zahariadis, 2015). Therefore it should be noted that the national mood does not necessarily depict the stances of the majority of the public. However, due to the importance of the

national mood in the policymaking dynamics, these will be included. Especially before and during the presidential elections of 2016.

Political pressure groups are the second parameter in the political stream. As mentioned prior, the concept of political pressure groups in the political stream is home to the visible participants (e.g. political appointees & senators). They differ from the policy communities who are referred to as the hidden participants (Kingdon, 1995). Policymakers have limited knowledge and time to provide detailed policy solutions (Zahariadis, 2016a: Kingdon, 1995). Therefore, government officials/policymakers delegate these tasks to their departments' civil servants who ask advice from members of prominent political pressure groups (Zahariadis, 2016b: Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015). These could be the several factions of the Republican Party such as the conservative wing or traditionalists (Kukkonen, Tuomas & Broadbent, 2017). These political pressure groups, therefore, play a significant role in the political stream. The support or opposition from these pressure groups for certain policies is important for policymakers as this could shift the policies in a certain direction (Kukkonen et al., 2017). The feedback received by these groups can motivate policymakers to "turn a solution into policy" (Cairney & Jones, 2016, p. 40). Pressure groups are important actors in the political stream as they can help further comprehend public preferences. However, these groups can also push for their political agendas (Zahariadis, 2015: Pralle, 2009: Cairney & Jones, 2016). Pressure groups have their self-interested solutions which they perceive as feasible and desirable (Pralle, 2009). They can influence policymakers their perception of certain problems and push for what they find a desirable and feasible solution. They can raise or avert the attention on certain policy issues which could shape policymakers agendas and selection of alternatives (Pralle, 2009: Zahariadis, 2016a: Knaggard, 2015). The politicians in the political pressure groups are constantly bargaining to push their agenda's. By establishing a big political coalition (i.e. the conservative wing of the Republican Party), they can increase or decrease attention from certain policy proposals (Kingdon, 1995: Pralle, 2009: Knaggard, 2015).

The last parameter in the political stream is the governmental turnovers (Kingdon, 1995). As mentioned prior, the political stream houses the visible actors being: political appointees, congressmen, elected officials and political parties (Kingdon, 1995). Elected officials (e.g. the President in the US) gain much public attention. The impact they have on policy issues is significant. They can push for policy issues to become prominent in the agenda-setting phase

and choose alternative solutions (Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2015). Therefore, administrative and legislative turnovers have a significant impact on certain policy issues (Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2016: Pralle, 2009). Turnovers in key personnel can change policies as the new personnel has different priorities and preferences. Pralle (2009) states "electoral turnover often leads to rather dramatic agenda changes, as new administrations push their pet issues and raise the status of some problems and solutions" (p. 787). Kingdon (1995) argues that a change of government or change in the legislative branch may be enough to change policies. Therefore, the primary focus of the analysis will be on the governmental turnover with the addition of the national mood to have a more comprehensive analysis.

## 2.2.4 Policy Stream & Policy entrepreneurs

The last stream in Kingdon's (1995) MSF is the policy stream. In this stream, policy alternatives are developed in policy communities. Policy communities are a loose connection of people in interest groups, civil servants, consultants, academics and researchers who work together to develop alternatives to different policy problems that exist. Their activities consist of arguing and discussing what should be done about potential problems (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016). It is also called the solutions stream as this stream identifies solutions. What solutions are possible and feasible are discussed within this stream. The survival of a policy alternative depends on several parameters such as technical feasibility, value acceptability, public acceptance and financial viability (Kingdon, 1995). The technical feasibility of an alternative looks at how feasible the policy alternative is with regards to implementation. For example, an alternative for climate regulations on the fossil-fuel industry could be a meat ban however, this will not be feasible. Value acceptability regards how experts find the alternative to be compatible with their values. For instance, if an actor is conservative in nature, they would oppose big government subsidies in a particular policy area. The financial feasibility of a proposal considers the costs and the benefits of an alternative. An alternative should also consider the public opinion on the issue. If a policy alternative/proposal checks the mentioned parameters, it is ready for coupling with the window of opportunity.

Pralle (2009) argues that interest groups and policymakers in this stream are prone to persuasion by political actors. There are several policy "experts" in the policy stream. These

experts may be hegemonic in nature, meaning they perceive a problem based on their ideology (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015). These policy experts in the various policy communities (i.e. think tank employees) are defined by Kingdon (1995, p. 74) as the "hidden participants". Kingdon (1995) argues that the development of alternatives is mostly done by the hidden participants as these participants are considered to be experts in a particular policy field. These participants are part of a policy community that advises the political system. For example, the Heritage Foundation has been a conservative think tank that provides the Republican Party with policy alternatives since the 1990s (Davenport & Lipton, 2017). These policy advisory systems design alternatives for governments and are an integral part of modern-day policymaking (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015: Cairney & Jones, 2016). However, Craft and Howlett (2013) discuss two risks with using policy communities to develop alternatives being, externalization and politicization.

While the externalization of policy advisory systems is not a negative, it does make it prone to biased advice (Craft & Howlett, 2013). Due to the second concept being, the politicization of policy advisory systems. Policy advisors/the hidden participants could provide partisan results (Craft & Howlett, 2013). With the increased demand for policy advice and alternatives, comes an opening for corporate influence via (seemingly) legitimate institutions. An example could be that the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute are think tanks funded by Koch Industries (Roper et al., 2016: Davenport & Lipton, 2017: Brulle, 2014). Brulle argued that between 2003-2010, Koch industries donated 20 million dollars to these conservative think tanks (e.g. Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute). He also concluded that since 2008, the funding of these think tanks has become untraceable via public sources. However, the funding via the untraceable Donor Trust/Capital has risen exponentially after 2008. Suggesting that the fossil-fuel industry still funds these conservative think tanks (Brulle, 2014). These think tanks can provide and push for their agenda which is in line with their corporate donors. Meaning that the policy advisory systems could become prone to politicized science. Influential private companies can thus influence decision-makers (Craft & Howlett, 2013: Roper et al., 2016). The process of decision-making and agenda-setting is subjective in nature, however, the involvement of external groups in these processes is dependent on the strategic preferences of the involved actors (Stone, 2011: Craft & Howlett, 2013). The provided solutions in the policy stream by policy communities might be perceived as objective however, they are prone to politicized analyses (Pralle, 2009: Craft & Howlett, 2013). This notion is important to comprehend as it shows that policy communities could be driven by

self-interested motives. These hidden participants can influence policy processes and shape the visible actors (e.g. actors in the political stream) perception of certain problems. These hidden participants could be policy entrepreneurs who provide policymakers with ideological policy alternatives. For instance, Koch Industries funds the Republican party and the Heritage Foundation (Brulle, 2014).

The Heritage Foundation is a conservative think tank, whose reports downplays the effects of climate change or deny climate change (Davenport & Lipton, 2017: Roper et al., 2016). On their website, the Heritage Foundation states under notable achievements that "The Trump administration's embrace of 64% of Heritage policy prescriptions through its annual budget, regulatory guidance, or other actions." (Heritage Foundation Impact, 2021). Meaning they have a significant relationship with policymakers of the Trump administration. By having a connection to the policymakers (i.e. Republicans) they can push their perception on certain problems and influence policy processes. Employees of the Heritage Foundation can be considered hidden policy entrepreneurs who are part of a policy community funded by the fossil-fuel industry. Therefore, this thesis will analyse the connection between the Heritage Foundation and the Republican Party.

One key element in the MSF framework is the policy entrepreneur. Policy entrepreneurs could be part of the visible and hidden participants (e.g. government officials or think tank employees) discussed above. They have the devotion to advocate certain policies/solutions they deem fit for a problem. They play a pivotal role in the agenda-setting and decision-making processes (Kingdon, 1995). Furthermore, they are the ones who couple the three independent streams. To couple the streams Kingdon (1995) identifies certain traits a policy entrepreneur should have being: being persistent, have political networks and negotiation skills and are perceived to be experts in their field (Kingdon, 1995: Herweg, HuB & Zohlnhöfer 2015). The convergence of the streams is due to the role the policy entrepreneur plays (Zahariadis, 2016a). They advocate for policy alternatives, are intermediaries for policymakers and are pivotal in building a coalition (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Zahariadis, 2016b). The policy entrepreneurs recognize a window of opportunity and display skills to seize the opportunity to pursue their proposed alternative (Mintrom & Norman, 2009).

Zahariadis (2016b) notes that one of the key traits of an entrepreneur is persistence. The coupling of the streams is a difficult endeavour that might require multiple attempts. Bringing the problems to the forefront and keeping the attention of policymakers needs persistence.

They should also provide feasible alternative policy proposals and have the political networks to promote their proposals (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Zahariadis, 2016b). Mintrom and Norman (2009) note that an important aspect of the work of a policy entrepreneur is the problem definition. They frame and define a problem in a certain manner. Thereafter they propose an alternative which they might frame as a crisis averting alternative (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Zahariadis, 2016b). The last step is to have the political connections to present their views to people in power (Mintrom & Norman, 2009). The defining and framing of the problem, the proposal of an alternative and the political connections are thus coupled by the policy entrepreneur. However, a policy entrepreneur must also have the ability to recognize that there is a window of opportunity and act when the time is right. In the case of the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the policy entrepreneurs that will be analysed are the employees of the Heritage Foundation. Therefore, the number of policy alternatives proposed by the Heritage Foundation will be analysed in the policy stream analysis.

## 2.3 Theoretical Expectations

In this section, the concepts of MSF will be explained in the context of the case study, the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement. The three streams provide three distinct theoretical expectations. Furthermore, the policy entrepreneur (e.g. Heritage Foundation) and their connection with the Republican Party should also be analysed as the framework showed that the Heritage Foundation could develop politicized policy alternatives. The operationalization of each stream and the relevant data collection will take place in the research design section.

*Expectation 1*: The framing by Fox News of climate change, Obama's environmental policies and the Paris agreement have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

*Expectation 2*: the shift in the national mood during 2013-2016 and the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the US elections in 2016 has contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

*Expectation 3*: The politicisation of policy advisory systems led to the use of politicised science which was used to justify the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

*Expectation 4*: The amount of policy alternatives proposed by the Heritage Foundation contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

*Expectation 5:* The policy entrepreneurs at the Heritage Foundation had the key traits to effectively influence the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

## 3. Research Design

This chapter will describe the methods used in this study. This chapter will present in paragraph 3.1what the case study is and justify why it chose for a case study. Furthermore, it will discuss the qualitative research design of this study and why this design fits best in this study. Paragraph 3.2 will discuss the data collection method (document analysis) and the types of data that were used in this study. Paragraph 3.3 will operationalize the concepts and present how the relevant documents were collected. Paragraph 3.4 will discuss the limitations of this study. This chapter will end with a summary of the research design.

### 3.1 Case Study

The unit of analysis in this research is the policy change in the US with the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. A case study is about examining a particular phenomenon within its context (Blater & Haverland, 2012). This research is a case study as it researches the policy change in one single entity, the US under the Trump administration. The justification of this case is that the US is the only country that formally withdrew from the Paris Agreement. Making a case study approach the only research approach for this study as there are no similar cases. The phenomenon that will be studied is the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and its context is the US The goal of this research is to explore which factors contributed to the decision. Making it an exploratory case study. It will identify the factors (variables) that contributed to this decision. Through extensive descriptions of the events that led to the withdrawal, this study provides insights into the policy change processes. Policy changes and the role each actor plays in the streams can further our understandings of how policy changes occur. This research is qualitative justified by the complexity of the case study. Several perspectives need to be explored and understood in order to comprehend the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, this research design examines the relationship between different entities (e.g. Fox News, Trump administration and the Heritage Foundation). These qualities render it fit for a qualitative research design.

### 3.2 Operationalization

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Kingdon's MSF is an adaptable framework making it an adequate theory to use as an analytical tool. Since the concepts of the MSF have

been conceptualized in the theoretical framework it is vital to operationalize them. This section will start by operationalizing each stream.

## 3.2.1 Problem Stream

The problem stream is operationalized by searching for symbols in media (i.e. Fox News). But first, this study will identify a potential focussing event. Climate change is perhaps the most obvious focussing event however, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, a focussing event for the Republican party could have been the creation of a Climate Action Plan by the Obama administration. The manner the media (i.e. Fox News) has framed climate change and climate change policies in the US is essential to comprehend in this study. The justification for focussing on Fox News is because the Trump administration frequently spoke about their fondness of the media outlet calling them "real reporters and real news" (Schafer, 2019, p. 3). The Trump administration called other media outlets (e.g. MSNBC, CNN, CBS) fake news and Trump himself frequently stated that he watches Fox News every day (Trump, 2018). Zahariadis (2016) argues that this could be problematic because policymakers (e.g. the Trump administration) get their news from biased information sources (Mayne & Cairney, 2021: Zahariadis, 2016).

Knaggard (2015) and Wolfe et al., (2013) showed that the use of emotions and fears in the media can frame a problem in a particular way that suits an actor (i.e. the policy entrepreneur). The problem framing in the problem stream has become increasingly important for the agenda-setting stage due to the changing media landscape  (Wolfe et al., 2013: Knaggard, 2015). Knaggard (2015) also introduced the "problem broker" which was conceptualized in the theoretical framework. The operationalization of this role will be done by specifically looking at Fox News.

The problem depiction and framing by Fox news will be analysed by examining if they used symbolic literary devices (Stone, 2011). Stone (2011) uses a social constructivist lens to examine public policies. Broadly speaking this means that creating truly objective policies is not possible as every choice is subject to values (Stone, 2011). Stone (2011) argues that symbols are powerful tools to tell stories. Furthermore, Zahariadis (2016b) points out that the use of symbols in the problem stream provoke emotional responses. This contributes to the making of narratives (Stone, 2011: Zahariadis, 2016b: Wolfe et al., 2013). Therefore, the possible use of symbolic literary devices by Fox News will be analysed. These are narrative

stories, metaphors and synecdoche (Stone, 2011). For instance, if Fox News uses a story of decline to warn their audiences and motivate them to seize back control from the Obama administration. Another example could be if Fox News runs a narrative in which they contest the science behind climate change and argue that man-made climate change could be exaggerated. Words could also be indicators of the use of literary devices. For instance, hoax or criminal. These types of evidence will be explored in the problem stream analysis. In doing so, it will analyse the framing by Fox News of climate change, environmental regulations and the Paris agreement.

## 3.2.2 Political Stream

The first parameter that will be analysed in the political stream is the national mood. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, this parameter is hard to measure and obtain. However, it remains an important parameter to analyse as it could have considerable ramifications for policies (Zahariadis, 2015). Political leaders and pressure groups can use the national mood to justify their decisions but can also sway the mood in a particular direction (Zahariadis, 2015: Knaggard, 2015). The framing of climate change policies from an ideological perspective makes it a significant factor to analyse. Where both national mood and governmental turnover coincide is in Congress. Every two years, congressional elections are held in the US where different candidates strive to be elected. Congressional elections can be seen as important indicators of the national mood which also result in turnovers in House committees (Zahariadis, 2015: Keizra, 2014). Therefore, this thesis will analyse congressional committee reports. More specifically the Committee on Science, Space and Technology (SS&T). They are a standing committee (meaning they are relatively permanent) that has jurisdiction over the scientific research and policy development of climate change policies (House Committee on Science, Space & Technology, 2021). Furthermore, they decide the budget for the EPA and are tasked with oversight over the EPA. This committee comprises of Democrats and Republicans. The committee has 40 seats and the appointment of seats per party depends on the congressional elections which are held every two years. These elected officials can take positions in the committee on SS&T to make a public statement (Keizra, 2014). By doing so, they can appeal to voters in their districts and state they are for or against certain climate change policies.

The composition of the committee can thus reflect the national mood. For instance, the Vice-Chairman of the committee in 2013 was Republican Representative of California, Dana Rohrbacher. He campaigned against climate change regulations and is a climate change sceptic (Hand, 2018). He lost after the congressional election of 2018, after 30 years of service in Congress. A survey by Global Strategy Group in his district suggested that Rohrbacher lost due to his stance on climate change. California has seen heavy wildfires this decade and his climate sceptic approach led to a swing in his districts mood. This resulted in him losing to a liberal candidate who wants to implement climate change policies (Hand, 2018). Whilst this is not a depiction of the national mood but rather that of a district, the analysis will focus on congressional elections as these combined, can depict a shift in the national mood. Furthermore, Toff (2016) stated that Congressmen use public polling to anticipate what their constituents want and respond to this. Therefore, the composition of the committee on SS&T can be seen as a parameter of the national mood and governmental turnover.

The main tasks of the committee are to decide whether the President's budget for certain programs (e.g. EPA regulations) will get funding. The Committee can move the proposed bills to a vote or deny them from reaching the House (House Committee on Science, Space & Technology, 2021). This makes it an important actor in the climate change policies and will be therefore analysed. The committee reports of the SS&T that will be analysed are the 113th (2013-2014) and the 114th (2015-2016) congress. By doing so, it will strive to get a comprehensive view of the impact the turnovers had on climate change policies in the US, how political actors viewed these policies and what the national mood was during the congressional elections and before the presidential elections of 2016.

The political stream will then look at the effects of the governmental turnover after the elections of 2016. Kingdon (1995) states that a change of government may be enough to change policies. This might be because in the US, after an election, there is a turnover in cabinet members but also a turnover in high ranking civil servants. For instance, when Donald Trump was elected in 2016, he appointed Scott Pruitt (a conservative climate change denialist) as head of the EPA (Holden, 2017: Negin, 2017). This resulted in a change of policies at the EPA (Holden, 2017). Therefore, the turnover after the 2016 presidential elections will be analysed by looking at the change in environmental policies.

The analysis of the political stream will thus explore whether changes in the national mood in the period between 2013 and 2018 affected the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. This will be done by looking at the House Committee reports of the SS&T during three different congresses (113th and 114th congress). In doing so, it will explore whether there was a change in the national mood before the presidential elections of 2016. Thereafter, the governmental and administrative turnover after the presidential elections will be analysed by looking at the changes in these governmental bodies (Trumps administration and the EPA). By analysing the national mood before the presidential election of 2016 and analysing the impact of the turnover after the election, this thesis will strive to answer if these factors contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

### 3.2.3 Policy Stream

The policy stream is operationalized by analysing several scientific research reports and viable policy alternatives produced by policy communities regarding climate change and climate change policies. The policy community that was identified in the theoretical framework is the Heritage Foundation. Their database will be explored to provide a comprehensive view of their policy alternatives on climate change policies. The policy stream analysis will start by examining the relationship between the Heritage Foundation and Koch Industries. This will be done by looking at newspaper articles from esteemed news outlets and reports by NGO's (e.g. Greenpeace). Furthermore, it will analyse the relationship between the Heritage Foundation and the Republican Party. By examining their relationship with these prominent actors, it will strive to analyse the impact of politicisation of science on climate change and climate change policies. Moreover, the aforementioned analysis will also help identify the policy entrepreneurs that coupled the streams and provided a viable policy alternative. This is due to the key traits a policy entrepreneur should have, which were: to define and frame a problem, provide feasible policy alternatives, have persistence, have political connections and the ability to recognize a window of opportunity (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2016b). The defining and framing of the problem (problem stream), the proposal of an alternative (policy stream) and the political connections (political stream) are thus coupled by the policy entrepreneur. However, the policy entrepreneur should also have the ability to recognize that there is a window of opportunity and act when the time is right. This thesis will examine if the employees of the Heritage

Foundation had these key traits and were an influential factor/actor in the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

| Stream and Actors | Conceptualisation | Operationalization |
|---|---|---|
| **Problem stream**<br><br>*Main actor involved:*<br><br>Fox News | 1: A focussing event<br><br>2: How problems are defined and framed | 1: An event that caused Fox News to frame the situation in a way to gain attention from the audience and policy-makers.<br><br>2: Use of symbolic literary devices by Fox News. |
| **Political stream**<br><br>*Main actors involved:*<br><br>The Trump administration<br>House Committee on Science, Space & Technology<br>Republican Party | 1: The possible change in the national mood.<br><br>2: A governmental and administrative turnover. | 1: Analysis of the national mood by looking at the composition of the House committee on SS&T between 2013-2016.<br><br>2: The elections of 2016 that led to the election of D. Trump. |
| **Policy stream**<br><br>*Main actor involved:*<br><br>The Heritage Foundation | 1: How policy alternatives are presented by policy communities.<br><br>2: The impact of politicization on policy issues. | 1: The relationship between the Heritage Foundation and (1) Koch Industries and (2) the Republican Party<br>2: the amount of policy alternatives provided by the Heritage Foundation. |

*Table 1:* The conceptualisation and operationalization of each stream

Table 1. shows how each stream is conceptualized and operationalized in order to gain an answer to the research question.

## 3.3 Data Collection

The data collection method of this study is document analysis. Qualitative data collection methods usually comprise of observations, interviews and document analysis. Ideally, interviews with members of the Trump administration and employees of the Heritage Foundation would occur however, it is highly unlikely that they would cooperate. Furthermore, the timeframe of this study also makes it difficult to obtain these insights. Moreover, the decision to withdraw took place in 2017 and the processes that occurred before are probably beyond recall, making the insights of the respondents less reliably. Observations are also not suitable as the events already took place making it impossible to observe. Therefore, Bowen (2009) argues that a document analysis could be the most effective way to collect relevant data. The essential information of the historical event has been described by several media, government and academic sources. Therefore, the withdrawal of the Paris Agreement by the US has been well documented, making document analysis an ideal data collection method for this study.

There are a variety of documents a study can choose from. For example, organizational documents, news articles and policy documents (Bell & Waters, 2014). Each stream of the MSF will have different sources in which it will collect relevant documents. The essence of this document analysis is to comprehend the climate change policies in the US since 2013. The start date of the analysis is 2013 due to the creation of the Climate Action Plan at that time. The end date will be a year after the withdrawal (2018) in order to analyse the reactions to the withdrawal from the prominent actors. The selection of data is done by collecting primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are policy and government documents (e.g. letters in the senate or the transcript of the speech in which President Trump announced to withdraw from the Paris Agreement). Secondary sources are media reports, academic articles, think tank reports and book chapters.

| Data used in the problem stream | Date range | Search terms | Sample size **Samples used** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox News (articles) <br><br> (See appendix A, B, C for the identified articles) | 01-01-2013- 01-01-2018 | 1: Climate change <br> 2: Obama climate change policies <br> 3: Paris agreement | 1: N = 909 <br> **1: N = 10** <br> 2: N = 2300 <br> **2: N = 10** <br> 3: N = 1550 <br> **3: N = 10** |

*Table 2*: Data used for the problem stream.

The data in the problem stream was selected by using a sample of the documents. The date range is from 01-01-2013 to 01-01-2018. The main purpose of the data in the problem stream analysis is to examine whether the media (e.g. Fox News) contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The mean for examining this is by looking at the use of symbolic devices (Stone, 2011). First, the news articles on foxnews.com were selected by using the search terms that are depicted in table 2. The identified articles can be found in the appendix. The results of the used search terms were selected by looking at symbolic devices that were used in the headings of the articles. For instance, "Obama starts war on coal" or "ignore the critics: If Trump withdraws from Paris Climate Agreement, he will demonstrate US leadership". Whilst these examples are using symbolic literary devices, it should be noted that not all of the search results were so evidently biased. Therefore, the included articles will also look at the more unbiased articles to reduce the selection bias (see 3.4. limitations and threats). Furthermore, articles in association with other news outlets (e.g. AP press) were excluded as this stream focuses on the framing by Fox News.

| Data used in the political stream | Date range | Search terms | **Samples used** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Trumps campaign speech on Paris agreement and withdrawal speech | 2012-2017 | 1: Paris agreement 2: Climate change policies | 1: **N = 20** 2: N = 154 2: **N = 14** |
| House Committee on Science, Space & Technology reports. | 113th congress 114th congress | 1: Climate change policies 2: Paris Agreement | 1: **N = 6** 2: **N= 5** |
| Republican Party documents (GOP.gov) | 2016 | 1: Party program 2016 | 1: **N= 1** |

*Table 3*: Data used for the political stream.

The data used in the political stream comprises of governmental documents, policy documents and political party documents published between 2012 and 2018. The governmental documents include legislation and committee reports by the US congress. More specifically the House Committee reports on Science, Space and Technology. The committee reports of the SS&T that will be analysed are the 113th (2013-2014) and the 114th (2015-2016) congress. This committee held several hearings about climate change and its policies. Moreover, they have jurisdiction over the EPA and authority over their research and policy development (Committee on Science, Space & Technology, 2021). By looking at these committee reports, it will gain a comprehensive view of how the political actors (i.e. Republicans and Democrats) viewed climate change policies and the Paris agreement. The included reports and hearings are those who actively talked about climate change and climate change policies. By looking at how this committee viewed climate change and the Paris agreement during both presidents, it will gain an answer to the question whether the elections of 2016 and the (potential) shift in national mood contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. Furthermore, the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections will be analysed. This will be done by analysing the GOP's and Trump's view on climate change policies and the Paris agreement. The documents used for this analysis are the GOP's party documents and the speech where Trump announced his withdrawal from the Paris agreement. In doing so, this thesis will explore whether the shift in the national mood, the governmental and administrative turnover resulted in environmental

policy changes. Which subsequently could have resulted in the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

| Data used in the policy stream | Date range | Search terms | Samples size **Samples used** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Heritage foundation policy reports on the environment. Under keywords "Climate Change"<br><br>(Heritage.org/environment) | 2013 – 2018 | 1: Environmental regulations 2: Paris agreement | 1: N= 114<br>1: N= **5**<br>2: N= **6** |

*Table 4*: Data used for the policy stream

The data used in the policy stream comprises Heritage Foundation reports. The identified reports are published between 2013-2018. The beginning of the date range is 2013 due to the development of the Climate Action Plan by the Obama administration. The end date is 2018, a year after the withdrawal. This is chosen to explore the reaction of the Heritage Foundation to the withdrawal. By exploring their reports under both administrations (i.e. Obama and Trump), it could potentially find evidence of the politicisation of policy advisory systems. Furthermore, the policy stream will examine the relationship between the Heritage Foundation, Koch Industries and the Trump administration. In doing so it will explore whether the Heritage Foundation had the economic and partisan motives to use politicised science in their reports. This thesis will examine their policy reports to explore whether their reports had partisan findings. It will primarily look at policy reports. The environmental reports that were included in the analysis were found in the database of the Heritage Foundation. Refined by the keyword "climate change" 114 reports were found. The reports that were included implicitly mention recommendations for the policy-makers. Furthermore, to narrow the search of the reports its subject should be environmental regulations by Obama or the Paris agreement. To find evidence on partisan/politicised science, this thesis will look at the reporting on environmental regulations, the Paris agreement under the Obama administration (Democrat) and the Trump administration (Republican). By providing context, it will strive to minimize human biases during the analysis (Thies, 2002). The evidence that

will be examined is the manner of reporting. Meaning if the Heritage Foundation favours the policies of one administration over the other. After the aforementioned analysis, the policy stream will examine whether the Heritage Foundation had the key trait of the policy entrepreneur and if they could have played this role in this case study.

## 3.4 Reliability, Validity, Limitations and Threats.

The limitation of a case study is its low external validity (Toshkov, 2016). Since the focus is on one single case, it is less plausible to generalize the findings to more cases. However, to date, the US is the only country that has formally left the Paris agreement. This makes it impossible to conduct a comparative study. Regarding reliability, this case study provided a clear search strategy in paragraph 3.2. By having a transparent data collection strategy, it is confident that the reliability parameter will be met. Meaning that if the same research methods were applied to the same databases, it will have the same conclusions (Toshkove, 2016).

The use of document analysis as the research method could impose threats to the research. Mainly the human biases. First, the researcher bias, which implies that the researcher is human which could lead to subjective analyses. Second, the selection bias, which implies that the selected sources were chosen because they are consistent with the case study (Thies, 2002: Toshkove, 2016). Thies (2002) and Toshkov (2016) argues that while these human biases cannot be terminated, they could be minimized. These biases apply especially in the analysis of the problem stream. By particularly focussing on Fox News for their problem depiction, this study is prone to researcher and selection bias. The operationalization of the problem stream is done by looking at Stone's (2011) symbolic literary devices. The search for metaphors, synecdoche's and narrative stories could be considered subjective. Therefore the inferences and the judgements are considered to be careful conclusions. Thies (2002) argues that triangulation could be considered to minimize these biases. However, the operationalization specifically focuses on Fox News, meaning that triangulation is not possible for this case study. Nevertheless, this study will focus on Fox News as empirical findings are suggesting that Fox News is a conservative media outlet created by and for Republicans (Ailes, 1968: Feldman et al., 2012: Hmielowski et al., 2014). Furthermore, Thies (2002) states that providing context when analysing documents could minimize these biases. Regarding the use of newspaper Thies (2002) suggest that this should be done in chronological order. This sequencing can provide the context and how the actors reacted during that time. Therefore, all the streams will provide context and chronologically display

the events to reduce these biases. This will be done by starting in 2013 with Obama's CAP till the withdrawal from the Paris agreement.

The second threat is this studies operationalization of the concept, national mood. This is a difficult concept to measure (Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2015). The operationalization of national mood is done by looking at congressional elections. This thesis does acknowledge that the depiction of the national mood by looking at the composition of the House Committee on SS&T has its flaws as there are various election issues. Nevertheless, the study by Keizra (2014) suggests that Representatives in House Committee's conduct polls under their constituents to sense which issues they found important. According to a poll by the PewResearchCenter, 84 % of registered voters named the economy as the most important election issue prior to the 2016 presidential elections. 52 % of voters named the environment an important issue. The environment could be considered a polarizing issue as 32% of the Republican-leaning voters found it important whereas 68% of the Democratic-leaning voters did find it important. Due to the relatively low ranking of environmental issues on the important voting issue ranking, the conclusions on the national mood are difficult to measure. Although it was ranked low, it should be noted that the Republican narrative was that environmental regulations would burden the economy and result in significant job losses (Republican Party Platform, 2016). This could be considered as a careful justification of this thesis its depiction of the national mood.

## 3.5 Summary of Research Design

The research design of this thesis is an exploratory case study. The justification is the complex nature of the study and the fact that the US is the only country that withdrew from the Paris agreement. Each distinct stream (i.e. problem, political and policy) has different main actors whom roles will be explored. The conceptualisation and operationalization of these streams can be found in *table 1*. The data collection method is document analysis. The search terms, date ranges and databases are depicted in *table 2, 3* and *4*. By depicting the search strategy, the reliability of the findings will be heightened. Whilst the reliability standard of the research design is considered sufficient, the validity has some weaknesses. Due to the unique nature of this case study, it has low external validity. The internal validity has several biases (i.e. researcher and selection bias). In order to minimize these biases, this study will provide context to each distinct stream in the analysis and strive to place the events

in chronological order. This could minimize the biases and make it a valid research design. (Thies, 2002).

## 4. Analysis

This chapter will analyse the findings of the document analysis outlined in chapter three. The objective of this chapter is to analyse the theoretical expectations outlined in chapter two. It will strive to explore the factors that contributed to the policy decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration. Each subsection of this chapter will examine a stream. First, the problem stream with particular focus on Fox News. Second, the political stream focuses on the US election of 2016 and its effects on environmental regulations. Third, the policy stream with a particular focus on the Heritage Foundation. This stream will also delve into the possible role (policy entrepreneur) they could have played in the policy-politico dynamics.

### 4.1 Problem Stream

The analysis of the problem stream will strive to explore whether *expectation 1* can be confirmed. The timeframe of the problem stream is between 2013 and 2018. In 2013 Obama presented his Climate Action Plan (CAP) in which his administration strived to regulate the fossil-fuel industry. 2018 is a year after the withdrawal and is used to provide context and explore the reaction by Fox News to the withdrawal. By examining this timeframe under both administrations it will strive to provide evidence for their allegedly partisan framing. The operationalization of this stream is done by identifying a focussing event and the use of symbolic literary devices (Stone, 2011). It will start with Fox News its depiction of climate change, then a depiction of Obama's climate policies and Fox News its depiction of the Paris agreement. In doing so, it will analyse whether *expectation 1* can be confirmed.

### 4.1.1 Fox News Depiction of Climate Change

This section will identify the focussing event. The most obvious focussing event as described by Birkland (1998) would be climate change. However, after the search on Foxnews.com, the focussing event is not climate change, but environmental regulations. The environmental regulations harm certain communities, mainly the fossil-fuel industry. These groups mobilize their communities (fossil-fuel industry-funded think tanks) to argue that these climate regulations are failures and should be changed. For instance, on April 19th of 2014, Fox News

published an article in their science category with the headline: "deepening divide over climate change sparks fierce debate" (Mckelway, 2014). The article quotes an IPCC report and asks the Vice-President of the Heritage Foundation to reflect on the message of that report. He states "the dirty little secret is, we are now at 17 years and 8 months of no global warming. Their models have failed year in and year out". Thereafter, sceptics of the GOP have their say on the matter stating "the costs of trying to limit emissions vastly exceed the benefits" (Mckelway, 2014). The article questions the sheer amount of regulations and argues that global warming impacts modestly and in line with "natural variability" (Mckelway, 2014).

The studies Fox News frequently refers to are reported by conservative think tanks (i.e. Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute and Heartland Institute). In doing so, Fox News creates narratives in which the problem is not climate change but the number of environmental regulations. For example, the article "new study says; threat of man-made global-warming greatly exaggerated". The new study it refers to is a report produced by the Heartland Institute in which they state that the amount of human impact on the climate is low and thus in line with the natural variability of the climate (Mckelway, 2013). This is part of the greater narrative that Fox News articles with "new studies" have. Meaning, the new studies are produced by conservative think tanks that reject the notion of man-made climate change and argue that climate change policies hurt the US economy. The narrative story in question are mostly stories of decline as they show a fraction of the story and do not provide context (Stone, 2011). Furthermore, several articles defend the climate change sceptics, stating that they are as (or even more) knowledgeable as climate change believer scientists. To reduce selection bias, this thesis also choose some more objective sounding articles. For instance "How climate change can hurt your health" (Imus, 2014). However, the article did not mention air pollution or heavy flooding's but that the discussion regarding climate change and its effects can damage your mental health. It states that worrying about the effects of global warming (longer droughts and more extreme weather), damages the mental health of US citizens as it is "exhaustive" to worry about them (Imus, 2014). Meaning that the more objective sounding articles rejected the scientific consensus on climate change.

The first identified trend when analysing the problem stream is that the articles on Fox News regarding the search term "climate change" are rejecting the scientific consensus on climate change. This is done by using "experts" of conservative think tanks who reject man-made

climate change in their reports. The studies Fox News refers to are mostly from these think tanks (i.e. Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute and Heartland Institute). Furthermore, by downplaying the significance of climate change, they do not view climate change as a focussing event instead, the regulations put forth by the Obama administration are considered to be focussing events. Meaning that their depiction of climate change is considered to be an exaggerated phenomenon and should not be acted upon as the regulations hurt the US economy (Mckelway, 2013: Mckelway, 2014: Imus, 2014: Fox News, 2013).

The narrative they provide is a story of decline, meaning that Fox News states that regulating businesses will lead to a decline in the US economy. They downplay the significance of climate change and state that regulations will damage the economy (Mckelway, 2013: Mckelway, 2014: Imus, 2014: Fox News, 2013). The message of these articles is that climate change regulations equal losing US jobs (Mckelway, 2013: Mckelway, 2014: Fox News, 2013: Chiaramonte, 2014). This story of decline is meant to warn the audience of the suffering that will be caused when the Obama administration regulates the fossil-fuel industry. This story is used to motivate the audience to seize control. Stone (2011) states: "The story of decline is meant to warn us of suffering and motivate us to seize control" (p. 168). The story of decline, Fox News evokes with their narrative, sets the stage for a story about power (Stone, 2011).

## 4.1.2 Depiction of Obama's Climate Change Policies

The second search term in the analysis of the problem stream was "Obama climate change policies". The section above argued that regulations were considered to be the focussing event that mobilized interest groups to advocate for policy changes. The focussing event thus can be considered to be Obama's climate change policies. This section will search for symbolic literary devices in Fox News their depiction of Obama's climate change policies. Three trends were identified in this section which will be discussed below. The first being that Fox News used a story of power, more specifically conspiracy theories (Stone, 2011). The second trend being the use of synecdoches. The third is the extensive use of metaphors to strategically present the problem.

Climate change could be considered to be an unexplained phenomenon that people have hard times grappling with. It is a complicated phenomenon to understand and by using conspiracy theories (i.e. Obama is using climate change regulations to gain more power) they allegedly

try to create a power-driven story (Stone, 2011). The articles that ran these conspiracy stories questioned the data provided by the UN and the Obama administration. By doing so, they argued that the Obama administration had a "hidden agenda" and was trying to gain more power and control. For instance, "Obama's climate change plan masks hidden agenda" (Morici, 2013), "Climategate II: scientists pushed to hide data" (Stirewalt, 2014) or "Obama uses executive order in sweeping takeover of nation's climate change policies" (Chiaramonte, 2013). Furthermore, the use of symbols like "hidden agenda" and "sweeping takeover" moves the story behind the realm of control. Meaning that these articles claim to show that Obama pulled the strings and deliberately harmed industries for his gain. These articles suggest that Obama put forth these policies to grab more power and control (Morici, 2014). They also frequently mention that Obama, by using his executive powers, neglects the democratic process. It ends with a call to take back control from these beneficiaries. This is in line with Stone's (2011) analysis of conspiracy stories. The following headlines are considered evident examples that use conspiracy stories. These are, in chronological order: "Climategate II: scientists pushed to hide data" (Stirewalt, 2013), "UN's new climate change report an embarrassment self-serving and beyond misleading." (Knappenberg, 2013), "Obama declares War on Coal" (Kerpen, 2013), "Obama's climate change plan masks hidden agenda" (Morici, 2013), "Obama uses executive order in sweeping takeover of nation's climate change policies" (Chiaramonte, 2013), "Is the government tinkering with global warming data?" (Curry, 2015) and "Junk Science? Studies behind Obama regulations under fire" (Lucas, 2017).

Fox News also used synecdoches. For example, the article "Study: Gov't losing billions on 'inefficient' tax subsidies that don't curb climate change"(Fox News, 2013). Whilst the study Fox News referred to, did mention that the government would lose billions, they also mentioned that it would lose billions if they were not implemented correctly. Meaning that the subsidies and tax policies should be part of a comprehensive tax package in order to have an impact (NRC, 2013). However, Fox News dramatized the findings and wrongfully depicted the reality of the problem. The second trend that is identified in this section is the use of metaphors. Metaphors are used to strategically represent a problem (Stone, 2011). The identified metaphors are the use of "war" in the article "Obama Starts War on Coal" (Springer, 2013). This article implies that the environmental regulations put forth by the Obama administration are similar to a "war". Another example is the "Climategate" metaphor

which implies that there is a scandal regarding the climate change agenda of the Obama administration.

The use of literary devices by Fox News regarding the Obama administrations environmental regulations created a wrongful depiction of the social reality of the problem. They perceive climate change as an exaggerated phenomenon and the regulations by the Obama administration culminates in the loss of job and has little to no effect for global temperatures. The next section will look at how Fox News framed the Paris agreement and the withdrawal by the Trump administration.

## 4.1.3 Depiction of Paris Agreement

The depiction of the Paris agreement by Fox News is one of confusion (Russel, 2015). After the signing of the Paris agreement, Fox News mostly focussed on the ambiguity in the agreement. For instance, "Paris climate goals a patchwork of confusion"(Russel, 2015) and "The Paris agreement is all about Carbon and Confusion" (Morris, 2016) mentioned that the agreement is "vague and ambiguous" and that its goals are unnecessary. They are unnecessary as the US already put forth "draconian" regulations on the fossil-fuel industry (Russel, 2015: Morris, 2016). The use of the metaphor "draconian" suggests that the regulations are viewed as heavy punishments. This fits in the larger narrative discussed in the sections above in which the environmental regulations are viewed as the focussing event. Furthermore, after the withdrawal of the US, EPA chief Scott Pruitt and Vice-President Pence reiterated that the withdrawal will help protect US jobs. This is also in line with the problem depiction of Fox News in which they stated that the vast array of regulations on the fossil-fuel industry, cripple the US economy (Russel, 2015: Kerpen, 2015: Mckelway, 2013: Mckelway, 2014). The Paris agreement is thus depicted as the accumulation of the problem, which is the vast array of regulations on US industries that leads to a loss of jobs.

The depiction of the Paris agreement continued the narrative in which Fox News stated that Obama wrongfully bypassed congress when signing the agreement (Fox News, 2015: Pergram, 2017: Lewis, 2016). This narrative states that the Paris agreement was wrongfully signed as the Obama administration did not get congressional consent (Pergram, 2017). Furthermore, they suggest that Trump should submit the agreement to the Senate, "which was bypassed by the Obama administration's endorsement of the accord" (Lewis, 2016). In doing so, it will "put the entire US government on record, not just the Trump administration, as

rejecting the Paris Agreement" (Lewis, 2016). This article also reiterated that the US does not have to withdraw as it was never in the agreement (Lewis, 2016).

### 4.1.4 Creating a Problem

The analysis of the problem stream strived to explore how Fox News contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. It showed that the portrayal of the policy problem by Fox News was one of overregulation. Meaning that their focussing event is not man-made climate change, but environmental regulations. Climate change regulations equal loss in jobs according to Fox News. Furthermore, Fox News rejects the scientific consensus on man-made climate change and uses studies by conservative think tanks to justify their stance. Employees from the Heritage Foundation and Heartland Institute frequently give commentaries on climate change on Fox News (Mckelway, 2013: Mckelway, 2014). Their involvement (i.e. Heritage Foundation) will be discussed further in the policy stream.

The narrative Fox News depicted was a story of decline which then turned to a story of power, more specifically conspiracy stories. The story of decline is meant to warn the audience and motivate them to seize control. The story of decline sets the stage for the conspiracy story of power (Stone, 2011). By suggesting that Obama had a "hidden agenda" (Morici, 2013) and that his administration was "tinkering with global warming data" (Curry, 2015), Fox News created a conspiracy theory. The implications of these articles were to suggest that the Obama administration used environmental regulations to grab more power and control. To seize this power and control, Fox News suggest that the Obama administration declared a "War on Coal" (Springer, 2013). Which is a metaphor that is used to strategically represent a problem (Stone, 2011). Lastly, Fox News used synecdoche's when describing Obama's climate change policies to wrongfully depict the social reality of the problem.

Fox News their depiction of the Paris agreement is one of confusion and ambiguity. They also state that the US never joined the Paris agreement because the Obama administration bypassed Congress and did not receive their consent and advice on the matter (Pergram, 2017: Lewis, 2016). Therefore, the Trump administration was "right and brave" to withdraw from the agreement (Schaefer, 2017). Trump's withdrawal is praised as he is depicted as a

champion of US jobs and by withdrawing, he will bolster the economy and save numerous jobs (Schaefer, 2017)

Feldman et al., (2012) researched the portrayal of climate change in US media outlets. They concluded that Fox News vigorously denied man-made climate change. Furthermore, Hmielowski et al., (2014) argued that the citizens that watch Fox News distrust scientists and the scientific consensus on man-made climate change. Trump frequently referred to Fox News as "real news and real reporters" and stated that he frequently watched Fox News. On this premise, this analysis formulated an expectation being:

*Expectation 1*: The framing by Fox News of climate change, Obama's environmental policies and the Paris agreement have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

This expectation is most likely confirmed when looking at the analysis above. The use of literary devices by Fox News created a narrative story that rejected climate change, used conspiracy stories of power and depicted the Paris agreement as an unlawful and hurtful event. Knaggard (2015) argued that the problem stream and the role of the media were underexposed. The role Fox News played according to this analysis is that of a problem broker which is defined as an actor who frames "a condition as a public problem with the purpose of making policymakers accept it and, in the end, do something about it (Knaggard, 2015, p. 452). The changing media landscape makes the problem stream a more significant factor than when Kingdon (1984) developed his MSF. The 24/7 news cycle and constant "breaking news" segments are relatively new phenomena. This could have had ramifications for the framing of problems in the problem stream. This with the combination of the extensive use of symbols by Fox news framed the problem as one of overregulation instead of man-made climate change. The constant rejection of the scientific consensus on man-made climate change and the framing of climate change regulations as a hurtful event for the US economy could therefore have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

## 4.2 Political Stream

Kingdon (1995) stated that a change of government may be enough to change policies. After the 2016 election in the US, Donald Trump became president and this resulted in a governmental and administrative turnover. Meaning that this event led to a change in cabinet members and high ranking civil servants. Aside from the presidential elections, congressional elections that resulted in a shift in the national mood will also be analysed. This will be done by analysing the composition of the House Committee on SS&T and their reports. This Committee has authority over the EPA and jurisdiction over climate change policies making it an important actor to analyse in the political stream.

The timeframe of the political stream will be between 2013-2018. It will start with the 113th (2013-2014) and then the 114th congress (2015-2016). The congressional elections prior to the presidential elections of 2016 could depict the national mood at that time. After the analysis of the 113th and 114th House Committee on SS&T, the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the 2016 elections will be analysed. In doing so it will examine whether *expectation 2* can be confirmed.

## 4.12.1 House Committee on Science, Space & Technology

The congressional elections of 2013 saw shifts in the House Committee on SS&T. The Republicans held the majority in the Committee with 22 Republicans against 18 Democrats (H. Rept. 113-302, 2013). The first act of the newly assembled Committee was to question the scientific integrity of the EPA under the Obama administration. The background of this act was the "Climategate" scandals (H. Rept. 113-302, 2013). Republicans used these scandals to attack what they called EPA overreach (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013). The Climategate scandals suggested that global warming scientists hid data that showed that the earth was not warming (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013). Hackers stole thousands of emails written by climate change scientists and whilst the majority of the emails suggested that the earth was warming, sceptics took a small number of emails that seemed to suggest that scientists manipulated data to exaggerate climate change (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013: Stirewalt, 2013). The narrative that the Republicans in the Committee used was that scientists at the UN and EPA tricked the public

to hide the decline in warming. Therefore, they proposed that the EPA's scientific advisory board (SAB), should be reformed (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013: H. Rept. 113-619, 2013). The bill would see that the public could participate in advising the SAB of the EPA. Previously, the EPA administrator would choose the members of the SAB. These members were scientists in the environmental field. By opening the door to the public to participate in advisory activities, the bill could open the door for corporate influences in the scientific board of the EPA. Many scientists opposed the bill stating that "The bill would make it nearly impossible for the EPA to exclude experts with substantial financial ties to industries" (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013, p. 88). The provision of the bill which is considered to be problematic is the phrase "Persons with substantial and relevant expertise are not excluded from the Board due to affiliation with or representation of entities that may have potential interest in the Board's advisory activities" (H. Rept. 113-165. 2013, p. 2). This implies corporate influence from the fossil-fuel sector could advise the SAB of the EPA. The bill passed the Committee and every member voted along party lines (i.e. 22 Republicans against 18 Democrats). Democrats opposed the bill but were in the minority making them unable to stop the bill from passing the House of Representatives. The larger narrative that is told by the Republicans in the Committee is that the scientific consensus surrounding man-made climate change cannot be trusted. This bill exemplifies the heightened distrust of domestic and international environmental scientists by the GOP.

The 113th Committee also assessed the Obama administrations Climate Action Plan (CAP). The hearing was entitled *The Administrations Climate Action Plan: Failure by Design* (H. Rept. 113-94, 2014). The Committee saw testimonies by Obama's scientific advisor J. Holdren and acting assistant administrator of the EPA, J McCabe. The opening statement of Republican chairman Smith stated that the CAP was the most intrusive government program ever and that it comes with great costs and zero to no benefits (H. Rept. 113-94, 2014). Cost prices of electricity will rise for American households and countless jobs will be lost according to Representative Smith (H. Rept. 113-194, 2014). The Republicans also continued their attacks on the scientific integrity of the administration. The following interaction between Republican Representative Buchson and Dr Holdren shows the distrust between Republicans and the scientific consensus regarding man-made climate change. Bucshon referred to public comments about climate change and Holdren responded by saying "You should look at the scientific literature rather than the public comments" (H. Rept. 113-94, 2014, p. 52). In response, Rep. Buchson stated, "Of all the climatologists whose career

depends on the climate changing to keep themselves publishing articles, yes, I could read that but I don't believe it." (H. Rept. 113-94, 2014, p. 52). This interaction exemplifies how Republicans in the Committee distrust the scientific consensus regarding man-made climate change. Republican leaders framed the policy issue of climate change as one of distrust and governmental overreach. This framing was politically exploited by the GOP in the Committee as could be seen in the Committee reports and hearings. GOP leaders thus seemed to influence a policy decision by framing the national mood in a politically expedient way (Zahariadis, 2015).

The tactics deployed by the GOP seemed to work as they won two extra seats in the Committee after the congressional elections of 2014. The Committee's composition was 24 Republicans and 16 Democrats (H. Rept. 114-884, 2015). The 114th Congressional Committee presided over the Paris agreement. The Committee held four meetings to discuss the Paris agreement. In chronological order these were: *The president's U.N. climate pledge: scientifically justified or a new tax on Americans? (2015)*, *The administrations empty promises for the international climate treaty. (2015)*, *Pitfalls of unilateral negotiations at the Paris climate change conference (2015)* and *Paris climate promise: a bad deal for Americans?* (2016). What is interesting in these meetings is that the Republicans in the Committee use the same narrative as was depicted in the problem stream by Fox News. For instance, in his opening statement during the first meeting, Republican Representative Smith states "Now the administration has packaged up all these regulations and promised their implementation to the U.N. But the president's ''Power Plan'' is nothing more than a power grab." (*The president's U.N. climate pledge: scientifically justified or a new tax on Americans?* 2015, p. 8). Furthermore, he states that the environmental regulations are based on "unjustified science", will burden the economy and in return have "little to no environmental benefits. It will prevent 0.02 degree C temperature rise" (*The president's U.N. climate pledge: scientifically justified or a new tax on Americans?* 2015, p. 9). The Republicans in the Committee also reiterated that the Paris agreement was legally binding (*The administrations empty promises for the international climate treaty,* 2015: *Pitfalls of unilateral negotiations at the Paris climate change conference*, 2015: *Paris climate promise: a bad deal for Americans?,* 2016). This is misleading as the agreement is non-binding and each member state can set their own targets (IPCC, 2020). Nevertheless, the GOP used this narrative before and during the presidential elections of 2016. (Republican Party Platform, 2016).

## 4.2.2 Presidential Elections of 2016

Donald Trump tweeted in 2012 that he believes climate change is a "Chinese hoax" (Trump, 2012: Jacobsen, 2016). Regarding the Paris agreement, he stated that "I would cancel the Paris Climate Agreement and stop all payments of US tax dollars to U.N. global warming programs."(Jacobsen, 2016). Furthermore, he stated that the Obama administration used executive powers to impose "draconian climate rules" and destroy numerous US jobs in the process (Worland, 2016: Jacobsen, 2016). The 2016 Republican Party platform reinforced these claims and called the IPCC a "political mechanism, not an unbiased scientific institution" (Republican Party Platform, 2016, p. 22). The beliefs in the GOP was that environmental problems should be solved by developing new technologies and "not through top-down, command-and-control regulations that stifle economic growth and cost thousands of jobs" (Republican Party Platform, p. 23). The GOP program called environmental regulations "Regulations: the Quiet Tyranny of the Nanny State" (Republican Party Platform, p. 27). Stating that environmental regulations will lead to considerable job losses and burdens the economy.

The election of Trump saw a major governmental and administrative turnover. The Republicans had a majority in the House and Senate. Which meant that they could reverse Obama's CAP and deregulate the environmental sector. Besides the governmental turnover, there were also administrative turnovers. The most notable for this case study being the appointment of climate sceptic, Scott Pruitt as the head of the EPA. Pruitt's appointment led to deregulations in the environmental sector (Davenport & Friedman, 2018: Irfan, 2018). Pruitt started the process of deregulating the fossil-fuel industry (Irfan, 2018: Davenport & Lipton, 2018). After he deregulated the US transportation sector he stated: "This is another step in the president's deregulatory agenda" (Irfan, 2018). The process of deregulating was part of the Republican and Trump's campaign promise to stop the damaging regulations on US industries. The withdrawal from the Paris agreement was also part of that promise (Republican Party Platform, 2016: EPA, 2018). Regarding the withdrawal from Paris agreement, the EPA administrator stated: "Your decision today to exit the Paris Accord reflects your unflinching commitment to put America First. And by exiting, you are fulfilling yet one more campaign promise to the American people." (EPA, 2017).

Trump's speech where he announced the US withdrawal from the Paris agreement was also in line with the Republican Party program and his campaign promises. In his speech, Trump stated that the Paris agreement was legally binding and that by 2040, the US would lose 2.7

million jobs, 440,000 manufacturing jobs, three trillion dollars in lost GDP, 6,5 million industrial jobs and in return get 0.02 per cent degree Celsius reduction (Trump, 2017). Meaning that Trump continued the Republican narrative of climate change regulations equals loss in jobs and burdens the economy. Therefore, the Trump administration decided to leave the Paris agreement.

### 4.2.3 The Visible Participants and Environmental Policies

The analysis of the political stream strived to explore whether the national mood as depicted by the composition of the House Committee on SS&T contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. In addition, it analysed the GOP's stance on environmental regulations in the Committee. Furthermore, it analysed the consequences of the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections. In doing so, it strived to explore whether *expectation 2* could be confirmed.

*Expectation 2*: the shift in the national mood during 2013-2016 and the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the US elections in 2016 has contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

The findings of this analysis are that the Republican Representatives that were elected and chosen to serve on the House Committee on SS&T, distrusted the science behind climate change. The interaction between Representative Buchson and Dr Holdren is evidence of the hostile nature of the Republicans towards climate change scientists. The epitome of this was the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act, which could open the doors for corporate influences in the SAB (H. Rept. 113-165, 2013: H. Rept. 113-619). The GOP's stance on environmental regulations is thus considered to be hostile. The congressional elections of 2014 resulted in two extra seats in the Committee. The 114th congress of the House Committee on SS&T presided over the Paris agreement. The Republican Representatives reiterated that the Paris agreement is a bad deal for Americans and that it would burden the economy and in return have little benefits for the environment (H. Rept. 114-884, 2015). The political actors also continued the narrative that was depicted in the problem stream. The GOP's attitude towards environmental regulations and the Paris agreement is thus: harmful for the economy, would lose countless jobs, based on biased science and have no benefits in return (H. Rept. 114-884, 2015: *The administrations empty promises for the international climate treaty,* 2015: *Pitfalls of unilateral negotiations at the Paris climate change*

*conference*, 2015: *Paris climate promise: a bad deal for Americans?*, 2016: Republican Party Platform, 2016). As the Republicans gained the majority in the House and Senate during this period, the careful conclusion could be drawn that the national mood shifted the balance of power in US politics in favour of the Republicans prior to the elections of 2016.

The presidential elections of 2016 resulted in the election of president Trump. Trump could be considered a climate change sceptic as he called it a "Chinese hoax" and that these unjustified environmental regulations would burden the economy. The GOP frequently stated that environmental regulations would see countless jobs lost and thus framed the environmental issues as economic. The 2016 elections saw a major governmental and administrative turnover in US politics. The administrative turnover resulted in the appointment of climate change sceptic, Scott Pruitt as the head of the EPA (Holden, 2016: Davenport & Lipton, 2017: EPA, 2017). The administrator started a process of deregulation for the US industry and played a part in the withdrawal from the Paris agreement (Davenport & Friedman, 2018: Irfan, 2018: EPA, 2017).

The expectation is most likely confirmed based on this analysis. The Republican narrative seemed to have worked with their constituents looking at the results of the elections between 2013-2017. Whilst this is a careful conclusion due to the difficulties in measuring and obtaining the national mood, the electoral wins by the GOP did have considerable effects on environmental regulations and the Paris agreement. Due to the difficulties with depicting the national mood, it is a careful conclusion. What is less careful is the election of Trump after the 2016 elections. He ran his campaign on the notion that he would withdraw from the Paris agreement. Therefore, this thesis can confirm that the governmental and administrative turnover after the 2016 election did contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

## 4.3 Policy Stream

The policy stream analysis will examine the policy alternatives that are developed in policy communities. The policy community that will be analysed is the Heritage Foundation. The feasible and possible policy alternatives they provide will be examined. This section will also explore whether these alternatives were based on politicised science. Therefore, it will start by analysing the relationship between the Heritage Foundation and Koch Industries. Thereafter, the relationship between the Heritage Foundation and the GOP. In doing so, this could help

identify if the Heritage Foundation could be considered the policy entrepreneur in this case study. This analysis strives to explore whether *expectations 3, 4* and *5* could be confirmed.

### 4.3.1 Heritage Foundation-Koch-Gop Relationship

The policy stream will start with an analysis of the relationship between Heritage Foundation and Koch Industries. The Heritage Foundation is part of the State Policy Network, an umbrella organization for various conservative think tanks (Roper et al., 2016). The funding of this organization is done by Koch Industries. the fossil-fuel enterprise has considerable stakes in deregulating environmental policies (Brulle, 2014). Roper et al., (2016) argued that they have been ardently funding climate sceptic think tanks since the signing of the Kyoto Protocol. According to reports by Greenpeace, Koch Industries donated via the Koch Family Foundation, approximately 6 million dollars to the Heritage Foundation between 1998 (Kyoto Protocol) and 2017 (Greenpeace, 2017). The same report, which based its findings on IRS forms submitted by the Koch Family Foundation, found that the Koch Family Foundation donated close to 130 million dollars to climate sceptic groups in the same period. With the biggest donations going to the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation (Greenpeace, 2017: Brulle, 2014).

Koch Industries also made considerable donations to Republican policymakers (Prokop, 2019). Charles Koch is a member of the Republican Party who frequently organizes fundraising events for the GOP (Davenport & Lipton, 2017: Prokop, 2019 Holden, 2017). Charles Koch mentioned in an interview with ABC News that he raised over 400 million dollars for the GOP prior to the presidential elections of 2016 (BBC, 2018: Prokop, 2019: Malin & Karl, 2016). Furthermore, the Koch Family Foundation made considerable campaign donations to some of the Republican Representative in the Committee of SS&T (Armiak, 2018). For instance, Republican Representative Buchson (see political stream) received 10,000 dollars from Koch (Armiak, 2018: Centre for Responsive Politics, 2018: S. Rep. No. 2443-2445, 2018).

When the Obama administration created the Climate Action Plan, Koch Industries went on the assault calling the administrations plan "the greatest assault on American freedom and prosperity in our lifetimes (Prokop, 2019: Allen, 2015). According to Prokop (2019), Koch Industries intensified its financial and strategic involvement in politics after the creation of the CAP. Meaning that this could be evidence for the CAP being the focussing event for Koch Industries. Charles Koch mentioned that the environmental regulations in the CAP

"make people's lives worse rather than better" (Davenport & Lipton, 2017). The analysis above strived to explore whether Koch Industries had motives to oppose environmental regulations. It finds that Koch Industries has the economic and partisan motives to oppose environmental regulations. They oppose environmental regulations by funding climate sceptic think tanks (e.g. Heritage Foundation).

This section will examine the relationship between the Heritage Foundation and the GOP. More specifically, the Trump administration. On the Heritage Foundations website under notable achievements, they state that 64% of their policy prescriptions were embraced by the Trump administration. Mark Meadows (Trump's chief of staff) stated that "For decades, Heritage has been on the forefront of policy innovation and impact" (Heritage Foundation, 2021). Aside from being a policy developer for the Trump administration they also played a significant part in creating his administration (Mahler, 2018: Glueck, 2016). For instance, the appointment of Scott Pruitt as EPA administrator was recommended by the Heritage Foundation (Mahler, 2018). Besides recommendations, the Heritage Foundation saw 66 employees and alumni join the Trump administration (Mahler 2018). Meaning that they did not only have political connections, but that they were involved in the Trump administration.

### 4.3.2 Heritage Foundation and Politicised Science

This section will analyse the proposed policy alternatives by the Heritage Foundation and strive to explore whether their alternatives could be beneficial for the fossil-fuel industry and the GOP. It will start by examining their stance on Obama's CAP. Thereafter how they viewed the Paris agreement. Lastly how they reported on the withdrawal from the agreement. In doing so, it will explore whether *expectation 3* and *4* can be confirmed.

Craft and Howlett (2013) state that the politicization of policy advisory systems can see a push for a partisan agenda. The Heritage Foundation's funding is primarily done by Republicans (Mahler, 2018: Holden, 2017: Brulle, 2014). Most notable being Koch Industries. Meaning that the Heritage Foundation could become prone to using politicised science (Craft & Howlett, 2013).

The Heritage Foundation had several reports on Obama's CAP. Kreutzer, Loris and Dayaratna's (2013) Heritage report stated that Obama launched a "war on coal" which would cost "hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and 1.47 trillion of lost national income by

2030 (Kreutzer et al., 2013, p. 1). The "war on coal" framing could be considered as an indicator of the use of symbolic literary devices to strategically represent a problem which possible suits the Heritage Foundation (Stone, 2011: Kreutzer et al., 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, Tubb (2013) argued that the CAP was unjustified as there is "no consensus" on climate change and the role CO2 plays in this process. The report by Schaefer and Loris (2013) states that "the onslaught of regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will hurt consumers directly through higher energy costs and indirectly through higher prices for goods and services" (p. 3). The result of these regulations is less economic output and high unemployment. These are just three examples of a larger narrative the Heritage Foundation created. The reports that were analysed depicted the CAP as scientifically unjustifiable and harmful to the economy. The reports suggest that the regulations in the CAP will have no impact on climate and is EPA overreach (Loris, 2013: Kreutzer et al., 2013: Tubb, 2013: Schaefer & Loris, 2013). The policy alternative that the Heritage Foundation advocated was one of embracing markets mechanisms (Kreutzer et al., 2013: Tubb, 2013: Loris, 2013). The problem depiction of the Heritage Foundation is thus considered to be, the extensive regulations on the fossil-fuel industry, put forth by the Obama administration, which would lead to high unemployment and tremendous losses of national income ((Loris, 2013: Kreutzer et al., 2013: Tubb, 2013: Schaefer & Loris, 2013). Thus, the policy alternative that is proposed is one of embracing markets. Meaning deregulating the fossil-fuel industry.

The first identified report on the Paris agreement began with a suggestion that Obama wanted to avoid the Senate in signing the Paris agreement (Groves, 2015). Groves (2015) suggested that it is plausible that Obama will not submit the legally binding parts to the Senate as this will most likely be rejected. After the signing of the Paris agreement, the Heritage Foundation published a report which looked at the possible consequences of the agreement. Their scientific method depicted "devastating economic costs with zero environmental benefits (Dayaratna et al., 2016, p. 1). This report stated that the Paris agreement would see a loss of GDP of 2.5 trillion by 2035, 400,000 jobs lost and an increase in electricity bills between 13 and 20 % (Dayaratna et al., 2016: Kreutzer, 2016). The benefits in return will be "even if all carbon dioxide emissions in the United States were effectively eliminated by 2100, there would be less than two-tenths of a degree Celsius reduction in global temperatures" (Dayaratna et al., 2016, p. 5). After this report, the Heritage Foundation published a report in which it distrusted the science behind the Paris agreement.

This report called the scientific consensus regarding man-made climate change a "myth" (Kreutzer, Loris, Tubb & Dayaratna, 2016). It argued that it is a myth that 97% of scientists believe that climate change is real. Furthermore, it suggests that there are biases in climate research as these are "not truly independent" (Kreutzer et al., 2016, p. 3). Therefore, they suggest that the US should leave any international climate agreement (Groves, Schaefer & Loris, 2016).

After the withdrawal from the Paris agreement, the Heritage Foundation praised the Trump administration for their decision. What is striking is that the Heritage Foundation did not publish any environmental reports during the Trump administration. However, they did provide commentaries by their environmental experts. These commentaries were from the experts displayed above. For instance, Loris (2017) published a commentary giving four reasons why Trump was right to withdraw from the Paris agreement. Schaefer (2017) had a commentary that Fox News also displayed on their site (Ignore the critics: if Trump withdraws from Paris climate agreement he will demonstrate U.S. leadership). These commentaries plauded Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The fact that they did not publish any environmental reports, could be an indication of them reaching their policy goal. Meaning they reached their goal of persuading the Trump administration to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

### 4.3.3 Politicised Science in Policy Alternatives

Section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 strived to explore whether the politicisation of policy advisory communities led to the use of politicised science which was then used to justify the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. By examining the relationship between the Heritage Foundation, Koch Industries and the GOP, this thesis looked for evidence of partisan and economic motives to oppose climate regulations and the Paris agreement. Furthermore, by examining the policy alternatives provided by the Heritage Foundation, it explored whether the Trump administration recognized these policy alternatives and if they contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

The analysis shows that the Heritage Foundation (the policy community) opposed environmental regulations and the Paris agreement. This is in line with the goals of their corporate donors (Koch Industries). Meaning that the Heritage Foundation is an example of the politicisation of policy advisory systems and thus became prone to politicised science (Craft & Howlett, 2013). Influential private companies (i.e. Koch Industries) thus influenced

decision-makers (i.e. Republicans) via the policy advisory system (i.e. Heritage Foundation). The provided policy alternatives by the Heritage Foundation were thus prone to politicised analyses (Pralle, 2009: Craft & Howlett, 2013). The alternative they provided was to oppose climate regulations and embrace market mechanisms. Furthermore, they extensively reported that the US should withdraw from the Paris agreement. These findings suggest that *expectation 3* and *4* could most likely be confirmed.

*Expectation 3*: The politicisation of policy advisory systems led to the use of politicised science which was used to justify the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

*Expectation 4*: The amount of policy alternatives proposed by the Heritage Foundation contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

Kingdon (1995) called the policy communities the hidden participants. The Heritage Foundation is considered to be a hidden participant which influences policy processes and shaped the visible actors (i.e. Trump administrations) perception of environmental problems. The defining and framing of the problem was one of governmental overreach by the Obama administration. The extensive regulations on the fossil-fuel industry would lead to high unemployment and a tremendous loss of national income (Loris, 2013: Kreutzer et al., 2013: Dayaratna et al., 2016). This was reiterated by Trump in his withdrawal speech where he used similar numbers to highlight the consequences of the Paris agreement. An example being the 0.02 degree Celsius claim which was calculated by the Heritage Foundation report (Consequences of the Paris Protocol: Devastating Economic Costs, Essentially Zero Environmental Benefits. Dayaratna et al., 2016). The solution in the Heritage Foundation reports suggested embracing markets and withdraw from the Paris agreement. This was recognized by the Trump administration as they withdrew from the Paris agreement and deregulated the fossil-fuel industry.

### 4.3.4 Heritage Foundation as the Policy Entrepreneur

This section will explore whether the Heritage Foundation had the key traits of a policy entrepreneur. It will analyse if they were capable of coupling the three streams when the window of opportunity arose. Subsequently, this section will explore whether *expectation 5* can be confirmed. The analysis of this has been provided in the analysis of the three streams

in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Kingdon (1995) identified certain traits a policy entrepreneur should have in order to couple the streams. These were: having political connections, experts in their field, able to recognize a window of opportunity and display skills to seize this opportunity to pursue their policy alternatives (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Kingdon, 1995: Zahariadis, 2016b). Zahariadis (2016b) and Mintrom and Norman (2009) add persistence to the key traits as the defining and framing of a problem needs persistence. By framing and defining a problem in a certain manner, they can propose a policy alternative that they deem fit for the problem (Mintrom & Norman, 2009: Zahariadis, 2016b). The next section will analyse the framing and defining of the problem by the Heritage Foundation. Secondly, it will examine if they have political connections. Third, their policy alternative and fourth, if they recognized a window of opportunity which they acted upon. It will then explore whether *expectation 5* can be confirmed.

The analysis of the problem stream (4.1) found that the Heritage Foundation was involved in the problem framing by Fox News (Mckelway, 2013). They argued that climate change was an exaggerated phenomenon. This fitted the narrative constructed by Fox News in which they distrusted the scientific consensus on climate change. Another suggestion of their distrust in the scientific consensus is the environmental report in which they argued that the 97% consensus is a myth (Kreutzer et al., 2016). Furthermore, Schaefer (2017) contributes to Fox News its environmental section. He is also one of the policy experts who reports on the environmental reports of the Heritage Foundation. This is evident from the article (on Fox News) and commentary (Heritage Foundation) titled "Ignore the critics, if Trump withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord he will demonstrate U.S. leadership" (Schaefer, 2017). This could be considered evidence of the Heritage Foundation using its resources to define and frame a problem via Fox News. The problem narrative being: distrust in climate change scientists at the U.N., regulations are a form of governmental overreach, regulations will harm the economy, regulations will lead to a loss in jobs and will have zero environmental benefits. The narrative on the Paris agreement was also similar but added that it was unlawful as Obama bypassed congress (Groves, 2015: Pergram, 2017: Lewis, 2016). The similarities between Fox News and the Heritage Foundation's problem depiction is considered to be evident from the analyses. This could also confirm Knaggard (2015) and Wolfe et al., (2013) their analysis of the problem stream. They argue that problem framing in the problem stream has become more important due to the changing media landscape. Furthermore, Zahariadis (2015) mentioned that the use of emotions in the media by the policy entrepreneur can frame

a problem in a manner that suits them (i.e. Heritage Foundation). Meaning that the Heritage Foundation could have contributed to the defining and framing in the problem stream. Furthermore, their persistence is also considered evident as they have been arguing against regulations on the fossil-fuel industry since at least 2013.

The analysis of the political stream (4.2) found that this narrative was continued by the GOP in congress between 2013-2016 and during the presidential elections of 2016. Later, in the policy stream, this thesis found that the Heritage Foundation played a significant role in designing the Trumps administration (Mahler, 2018: Glueck, 2016). This includes the appointment of climate change sceptic, Scott Pruitt as head of the EPA (the administrator), 66 Heritage Foundation employees and alumni joining the Trump administration and that 64% of their policies were adopted by the Trump administration (Mahler, 2018: Heritage Foundation, 2021). Therefore, this thesis finds that the Heritage Foundation had the political connections.

The analysis of the policy stream (4.3) analysed the policy alternatives that were proposed by the Heritage Foundation. Their main alternative for regulations was to deregulate and embrace market mechanisms. Regarding the Paris agreement, the Heritage Foundation opposed the agreement calling it unlawful and harmful for the US economy (Groves, 2015: Kreutzer et al., 2016: Dayaratna et al., 2016). Furthermore, the analysis found that there were similarities between Trump's withdrawal speech and the Heritage Foundation environment report. This could be an indicator of a politically feasible and accepted policy alternative. The policy alternative being withdrawing from the Paris agreement and deregulating the fossil-fuel industry. Therefore, this thesis finds that the Heritage Foundation had an accepted policy alternative.

This last section will examine if the Heritage Foundation acted when the window of opportunity arose. The identified window of opportunity was the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections. The election of former president Trump opened a political window that the Heritage Foundation utilized by presenting their policies to Trump. The question thus remains whether *expectation 5* can be confirmed.

*Expectation 5:* The policy entrepreneurs at the Heritage Foundation had the key traits to effectively influence the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement by the Trump administration.

By defining and framing the problem, showing persistence, having the political connections, providing politically acceptable feasible alternatives and recognizing a window of opportunity, the Heritage Foundation had the key traits of a policy entrepreneur. Their presence in the problem, political and policy stream led them to be able to couple the streams when the window of opportunity (election of Trump) arose. Therefore, This thesis finds it highly plausible that the Heritage Foundation could be considered the policy entrepreneur who effectively influenced the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

## 4.4 Concluding Remarks

Chapter 4 strived to analyse the rationale behind the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration. It chose MSF as its theoretical framework due to the universal concepts it provides. MSF is an analytical framework in which it provides the researcher with the factors/variables that should be observed and analysed. Kingdon's (1995) MSF is helpful when it comes to identifying the potential factors and actors in the three streams. It describes the potential factors (focussing event, national mood etc) and acknowledges the role of state and non-state actors (i.e. Fox News, US government and Heritage Foundation) in the policy process. What is especially helpful is Kingdon's (1995) acknowledgement of context. External factors can contribute to the agenda-setting and decision-making stages. For instance, focussing events (i.e. the CAP) which mobilize interest groups or the swings in the national mood can draw the attention of policymakers to certain policy ideas. These ideas (i.e. withdrawing from the Paris agreement and deregulating the fossil-fuel industry) are generated in the policy communities and are expanded going forward. The networks of these policy communities are also acknowledged in the MSF. This can be done through the funding of Republicans or the Heritage Foundation. Furthermore, the MSF was created in the political system of the US, making it a valid choice for this exploratory case study. Its adaptability is also a strength that makes it an adequate analytical framework for this research (Cairney & Jones, 2016). It can be used in different policy issues ranging from healthcare to, in this case, environmental policies. These traits of the MSF made it an adequate analytical framework to use for exploring the factors that contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement.

## 5. Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to explore the factors that might have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration. The research question was: *Which factors contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?* The goal was to create an integrative framework that would help to answer this question. The framework was based on Kingdon's MSF. Kingdon's framework uses three distinct streams: the problem, political and policy stream. The policy stream analysis also explored the politicisation of policy advisory systems which could have led to the use of politicised science and helped identify the policy entrepreneur. Each stream strived to answer a sub-question to answer the research question. These being:

- To what extent did the media (i.e. Fox News) contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?
- To what extent did the governmental turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections contribute to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration?
- What policy alternatives were provided by the policy community on the issue?
- Were there partisan and/or economic motives for the actors involved that lead to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration

The goal was to create an integrative framework. This led to the development of five theoretical expectations which this thesis strived to confirm or reject. The design of this thesis was based on a document analysis as this was considered to be the best method for this case study. Each independent stream used different databases to analyse the concepts of the framework. In doing so, it strived to explore how and why each stream could have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

The analysis of the independent streams strived to explore how the actors in these streams could have contributed to the withdrawal. The problem stream strived to explore what the focussing event was for the actors who were involved and how the main actor in this stream (i.e. Fox News) used symbolic literary devices to define and frame the problem. In doing so, it strived to explore wheter Fox News could have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The justification for using Fox News was that it appeared to be a partisan conservative media outlet (Ailes, 1968: Feldman et al., 2012: Hmielowski et al., 2014). After

analysing the articles, it found that Fox News distrusted the scientific consensus regarding man-made climate change. These articles relied heavily on the studies developed by conservative think tanks in the US (e.g. Heritage Foundation, Heartland Institute and Cato Institute). They used metaphors in these analyses, for instance, "Climategate" and "Climategate II". Regarding the CAP, it found that this could be considered the focussing event. The articles on the CAP opposed the environmental regulations put forth by the Obama administration. Stating that Obama was waging a "War on Coal". The narrative story Fox News provided was one of decline and thereafter one of power (i.e. conspiracy theory). The Paris agreement was seen as the accumulation of the problem, which is the vast array of regulations on US industries that consequently, hurts the US economy. Therefore, Fox News is considered to be the problem broker who defined and framed the problem so that the policymakers would accept and act accordingly. This in combination with the rather extensive use of symbols could have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

The analysis of the political stream strived to depict the national mood by looking at the composition of the House Committee on SS&T and the effects of the governmental turnover as a result of the 2016 elections. The analysis looked at the congressional elections of 2013 and 2015 and the presidential elections of 2016. The findings were that the GOP won quite overwhelmingly, which had effects on environmental regulations and the Paris agreement. The gains by the GOP in the governmental elections shifted the composition of the Committee in their favour. Furthermore, the election of Donald Trump and the appointment of Scott Pruitt as head of the EPA, saw two climate change sceptics holding office. The GOP's and Trump's views on environmental regulations and the Paris agreement were negative as they viewed them as exaggerated and harmful to the US economy. Therefore, this thesis finds that the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the presidential elections of 2016, could have contributed to the withdrawal from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration.

The policy stream analysis was twofold, meaning that it looked at the politicisation of policy advisory systems (i.e. Heritage Foundation) and the proposed policy alternatives. With regard to the politicisation, it found that the Heritage Foundation could be considered a partisan conservative think tank with ties to the fossil-fuel industry. Therefore, the actor in the policy stream, the Heritage Foundation, could have had partisan and economic motives to oppose

environmental regulations and the Paris agreement. The alternatives the Heritage Foundation proposed was in line with the goals of their corporate donors. This could be an indication of politicisation of policy advisory systems making the Heritage Foundation's reports prone to politicised science (Craft & Howlett, 2013). The Heritage Foundation policy alternatives could be prone to politicised analyses. The alternatives they provided was to deregulate the fossil-fuel industry and embrace market mechanisms that could be considered beneficial for their corporate donors (Koch Industries).

The last concept of the MSF that was analysed was the possible role of the policy entrepreneur. It found that the Heritage Foundation had the resources to be the policy entrepreneur in this case study. They were active in the defining and framing of the problem in the media (i.e. Fox News), showed persistence, had the political connections (part of the Trump administration and its transition team) and provided politically feasible policy alternatives to the Trump administration. Due to the similarities in Trump's speech and the Heritage Foundation reports, it is highly plausible that their policy alternatives were considered by the Trump administration. Moreover, the Heritage Foundation stated that the Trump administration embraced 64% of their policy recommendations, making their influence much more likely in this case study. Furthermore, they recognized that the 2016 elections result were a window of opportunity which they, as the analysis shows, most probably seized in order to secure a policy change. Therefore, the Heritage Foundation is considered to be the policy entrepreneur who coupled the streams which led to a policy change. This policy change was deregulating environmental regulations and withdrawing from the Paris agreement. Which was ultimately adopted by the Trump administration on June 1st 2017.

In conclusion, the factors that contributed to the withdrawal from the Paris agreement by the Trump administration are, based on this thesis its findings, the portrayal of the problem by Fox News where Fox News adapted to the role of the problem broker, the shift in the national mood between 2013-2016, the governmental and administrative turnover as a result of the 2016 presidential elections and the policy alternatives that the Heritage Foundation proposed. In addition, the politicisation of the policy advisory systems in the US led to the use of politicised science that was used to justify the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The Heritage Foundation policy alternatives were found to be based on politicised science that benefitted their corporate donors.

## 5.1 Discussion and Limitations

This exploratory case study explored which factors could have contributed to the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. The MSF framework was used due to its flexibility and universally adaptable concepts. Subsequently, this made the identification of the variables straightforward. Its acknowledgement of the wide variety of actors who are involved in the policy dynamics is considered a strength. In addition, it recognizes the important role context plays via the external factors (i.e. swings in national mood or focussing event) it provides. Whilst the MSF its strength is considered to be its use of universal concepts, this is also its pitfall. The flexible nature in which the concepts can be used makes it prone to a rather superficial analysis. This thesis encountered this with its analysis of the national mood. Due to the ambiguity regarding this concept, it found that it was troubling to depict this. The adaptability of MSF is a strength however, it comes at the expense of clarity. It strived to reduce the ambiguity regarding the national mood by providing a clear justification in the operationalization section. However, this thesis does acknowledge that the congressional elections are not a clear indicator of a shift in national mood with regard to environmental policies as elections revolve around a plethora of issues. MSF also states that the streams flow independently and the analysis showed that this was not the case. The Heritage Foundation was present in all three streams. They provided political commentaries on Fox News and were a part of the Trump administration.

There are several limitations in this exploratory case study which will be discussed in this section. As mentioned in the limitations section in chapter three, this thesis has a low external validity as it is a case study with the case being exceptional. Meaning that the US is the only country that had withdrawn from the Paris agreement. The second limitation is the possible human biases in the document analysis. It strived to reduce these biases by providing a chronological order to the events and provide context (Thies, 2002). Nevertheless, regarding the reliability, by being transparent about the search strategy, this thesis strived to heighten the reliability of this study. However, this exploratory case study does acknowledge that these biases could be present. What it also acknowledges is the presence of coincidence in the analysis of the policy stream. Whilst it seems highly unlikely that identification of the Heritage Foundation as the policy entrepreneur is based on coincidence, it cannot be ruled out. The third limitation is that not all the concepts were used due to the time and resource constraints of this thesis. For instance, the political pressure group concepts were neglected as

this would require an extensive search for the political PACs in US politics. The single focus on Fox News could also be problematic as other conservative media deny the scientific consensus on man-made climate change. For instance, Breitbart but also the influences of social media could be explored.

Future research should also strive to pay attention to other conservative think tanks that reject the scientific consensus on man-made climate change. For instance the Cato Institute (founded by Koch) and its role in the policy dynamics (Cato, 2021). By expanding the approach, more trends could be identified when it comes to the politicisation of policy advisory systems and the use of politicised science. It also recommends that these future studies strive to conduct interviews with the policy experts to examine their motivations. This triangulation of data methods could reduce the biases that this thesis did encounter. Furthermore, by examining a variety of conservative think tanks (e.g. Heartland and Cato), future explanatory studies can find the cause of events, identify the causal mechanisms and uncover the causal effects. A comparative approach to why and how conservative think tanks reject the scientific consensus could then be explained. In doing so, these future comparative explanatory studies can improve the external validity and provide a more comprehensive explanation of the climate change sceptic think tanks their motivations and role in US politics.

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Appendix A: Depiction of Climate change by Fox News

| Source | Heading | Message | Retrieved from: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox News | "UN finding on climate change is just a bunch of hot air, new report claims" | UN findings on climate change are exaggerated and false. | https://www.foxnews.com/science/un-finding-on-climate-change-is-just-a-bunch-of-hot-air-new-report-claims |
| Fox News | "Climate change brings needed rain to Africa" | Climate change and its positive effects are ignored by the scientists. Furthermore, climate change is a natural phenomena | https://www.foxnews.com/science/climate-change-brings-needed-rain-to-africa |
| Fox News | "UN's massive new climate report adds little explanation for pause in warming" | Suggests that the climate change report by the UN does not explain why global temperature have not risen the last 15 years. | https://www.foxnews.com/science/uns-massive-new-climate-report-adds-little-explanation-for-pause-in-warming |
| Fox News | "Climate change skeptics as knowledgeable about science as climate change believers, report says" | Suggests that climate change sceptics are as well-informed about climate change as IPCC scientists. | https://www.foxnews.com/science/global-warming-skeptics-as-knowledgeable-about-science-as-climate-change-believers-study-says |
| Fox News | "A new low in science: criminalizing climate change skeptics" | Suggests that lead scientists unjustifiably attack climate change sceptics. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/a-new-low-in-science-criminalizing-climate-change-skeptics |
| Fox News | "UN climate change report dismisses slowdown in global warming" | Suggests that the UN climate change report does not explain the "pause" in rising temperatures. | https://www.foxnews.com/science/un-climate-change-report-dismisses-slowdown-in-global-warming |
| Fox News | "deepening divide over climate change sparks fierce debate" | VP of Heritage Foundation suggests that UN has a "dirty little secret." | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/deepening-divide-over-climate-change-sparks-fierce-debate |
| Fox News | "New study says; threat of man-made global-warming greatly exaggerated" | Suggests by using a study of the Heritage Foundation that man-made climate change is exaggerated. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/new-study-says-threat-of-man-made-global-warming-greatly-exaggerated |
| Fox News | "UN calls for 'all hands on deck' to tackle climate change" | After several blows to its climate change agenda, they are pushing harder for a climate agreement. | https://www.foxnews.com/science/un-calls-for-all-hands-on-deck-to-tackle-climate-change |
| Fox News | "How climate change can hurt your health" | Suggest that the discussion regarding climate change is bad for your mental health. | https://www.foxnews.com/health/how-climate-change-may-be-hurting-our-health |

Appendix B: Depiction of Obama's climate change policies

| Source | Heading | Message | Retrieved from: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox News | "How Obama uses executive order in sweeping takeover of nations climate change policies." | The Obama administration uses their executive power to implement climate change policies. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/obama-uses-executive-order-in-sweeping-takeover-of-nations-climate-change-policies |
| Fox News | "Billions spent in Obama climate plan may be virtually useless study suggests." | The Obama administrations Climate Action Plan is useless as it only has an environmental benefit of 0.02 degree Celsius | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/billions-spent-in-obama-climate-plan-may-be-virtually-useless-study-suggests |
| Fox News | "The inconvenient truth about climate change and Obama's policies." | Suggest that climate change policies put forth by the Obama administration are useless. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/the-inconvenient-truth-about-climate-change-and-obamas-policies |
| Fox News | "Fact checkers rip Obama groups claim on climate change 'Hoax' vote." | An alleged Obama aligned group used a video to wrongfully depicted the reality of climate change procedures in congress. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/fact-checkers-rip-obama-groups-claim-on-climate-change-hoax-vote |
| Fox News | "Obama declares a war on coal" | Obama's regulations on the fossil-fuel industry is a "War on Coal" | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/obama-declares-a-war-on-coal |
| Fox News | "Climategate II scientists pushed to hide data" | Scientists allegedly withhold data that showed the earth was not warning in the recent decade | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/climategate-ii-scientists-pushed-to-hide-data |
| Fox News | "Obama planning to sidestep congress for next phase in climate change agenda" | Obama wants to bypass congress in order to regulate the fossil-fuel industry. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/obama-planning-to-sidestep-congress-for-next-phase-in-climate-change-agenda |
| Fox News | "Is the government tinkering with global warming data?" | Suggesting that the Obama administration "tinkered" with data for own personal gain. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/is-the-government-tinkering-with-global-warming-data |
| Fox News | "UN's new climate change report an embarrassment self-serving and beyond misleading." | Suggest that the UN's new report is an embarresment and misleading. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/uns-new-climate-change-report-an-embarrassment-self-serving-and-beyond-misleading |
| Fox News | "Junk science? Studies behind Obama regulations under fire." | The science behind the environmental regulations is based on "Junk Science" and therefore illegitimate. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/junk-science-studies-behind-obama-regulations-under-fire |

Appendix C: Depiction of the Paris agreement

| Source | Heading | Message | Retrieved from |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox News | "Paris Climate Goals a Patchwork of Confusion" | Presents the carbon emission regulations as already "draconian" and that Paris agreement will heighten them. | https://www.foxnews.com/world/paris-climate-summit-goals-a-patchwork-of-confusion |
| Fox News | "Republicans fear end-run, warn Obama ahead of climate talks" | States that Obama is trying to bypass congress by signing a deal that will see more funds into "unnecessary" climate regulations. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/republicans-fearing-congressional-end-run-warn-obama-ahead-of-climate-talks |
| Fox News | "Without congressional 'advice and consent' was the US ever officially in the Paris Climate Accord?" | Suggest that the Paris agreement was wrongfully signed and should be terminated as congress did not give consent on the matter. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/without-congressional-advice-and-consent-was-us-ever-officially-in-paris-climate-accord |
| Fox News | "Here's why the Senate should help Trump repudiate the Paris climate agreement" | Suggests that the US was never in the agreement and as it is bad for the US economy, the senate should help Trump to withdraw. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/heres-why-the-senate-should-help-trump-repudiate-the-paris-climate-agreement |
| Fox News | "The Paris agreement is about carbon and confusion" | States that the Paris agreement is signed by climate "alarmists" to push for policies that would benefit them put harm the US. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/the-paris-climate-agreement-is-about-carbon-and-confusion |
| Fox News | "Ignore the critics. If Trump withdraws from Paris climate agreement he will demonstrate US leadership | Suggests that withdrawing from the Paris agreement will be beneficial for the US (in terms of jobs) and its world leadership. Written by a policy expert from the Heritage Foundation. | https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/ignore-the-critics-if-trump-withdraws-from-paris-climate-agreement-he-will-demonstrate-us-leadership |
| Fox News | "Paris agreement on climate change: Pence says Trump is fighting for American Jobs" | Vice-President Pence weighs in on withdrawal from Paris and suggest that it is all about American jobs. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/paris-agreement-on-climate-change-pence-says-trump-fighting-for-american-jobs |
| Fox News | "Trump pulls out of Paris climate deal and does something right (and brave). | Praises the decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement as it is based on unjustifiable science and harms the US economy. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-pulls-out-of-paris-climate-deal-and-does-something-right-and-brave |
| Fox News | "Scott Pruitt outlines problems with Paris climate agreement" | Transcript of Scott Pruitt on Fox News in which he states that climate change is a natural phenomenon and the Paris | https://www.foxnews.com/transcript/scott-pruitt-outlines-problems-with-paris-climate-agreement |

| | | agreement is a treaty that binds the US to undesirable goals. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox News | "Getting hot in here. Why the media hate Trumps climate deal-exit." | Criticizes other media outlets for their depiction of the withdrawal from the Paris agreement as these are negative towards Trump. | https://www.foxnews.com/politics/getting-hot-in-here-why-the-media-hate-trumps-climate-deal-exit |