

Political Policy Narratives

Why carbon pricing is excluded from the Green New Deal

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Abstract

As a consequence of the Green New Deal and its refraining from carbon pricing policies, this study aims to examine further why actors supporting the new policy framework are taking a distance from all previous carbon pricing methods such as taxations and cap and trade systems. The study has been conducted through the methodology of an idea analysis, where arguments have been gathered from four election campaigns of democratic senators supporting the Green New Deal. Through the empirical findings and arguments provided, an analysis on the overarching narrative has been made with the purpose of finding answers to why these actors have refrained from policies of carbon pricing. By distinguishing and specifying a narrative through the theory of Narrative Policy Framework with characters, settings, plots and narrative strategies, a conclusion could be drawn that policies of carbon pricing do not fit the rhetorics and narratives used in the framework of the Green New Deal.

Key words: climate change, American 2020 election, Green New Deal, Narrative Policy Framework, carbon pricing

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1 Introduction

1.1 A changing environment

Climate change is a fact. The global temperature is rising along with sea levels, causing disastrous consequences to nature and societies. While North America experienced its warmest September this year since continental records were first taken, the ice coverage of the Arctic Sea reached its annual minimum, being the third lowest sea ice extent since 1979 (NOAA 1, 2019). Monthly carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere according to the Keeling Curve passed 400 parts per million in early 2014 and is still on the rise (Scripps, 2019). With May this year having the highest seasonal peak in 61 years, science can not only conclude the fact of an increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but also that the increase of carbon dioxide is accelerating (NOAA 2, 2019). The statistics can prove that carbon dioxide is indeed increasing and is a product of human conduct. Very few natural processes let out carbon dioxide in to the environment the same pace as our fossil-burning activities and thus creating an unsustainable situation. Hence, the problem is not the carbon emissions let out in the atmosphere or the greenhouse effect as such, but rather the intensification and unnatural acceleration of emissions (Monroe, 2018).

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was signed, with binding commitments for every participant to follow (UNFCCC, 1997). The commitments were not equal to all participants, but the countries were rather stated to have “common but differentiated responsibilities“. However, these commitments were not met and the more popular way to go was through the flexible mechanisms stated by the Kyoto Protocol, where countries of Annex 1 had the opportunity to meet their targets through emission cuts outside of nation borders (Jordan et al. 2018; Bulkeley & Newell, 2015:29). The Paris Agreement was held in 2015, where no new binding commitments were made, but rather aspirational goals where national climate plans could take the lead and stray climate politics from an almost monocentric approach to a multilevel approach (Jordan et al. 2018:4; Newell & Paterson, 2010).

1.2 The policy of carbon pricing

The features of climate governance is spoken about in terms of science, political polarization of North and South (in the Kyoto Protocol referred to as the Annex 1 and the non-annex countries) and the increasing marketization (Bulkeley & Newell, 2015). The marketization of our ways of governing climate is heavily due to the opportunities posed by the flexibility mechanisms presented by the Kyoto Protocol, generating interest from both polluters and investors due to cheaper emissions reductions when done in lower-income countries (Newell & Paterson, 2010:92-93). Instruments like Joint Implementation (JI) and especially Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was created to function as market mechanisms where Annex 1 countries can meet their targets as well as assisting non-annex countries in sustainable development projects (Ibid). Another example of the marketization of climate governance is the cap-and-trade model of EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). The system is framed as the most important and powerful instrument within the European Union for fighting climate change through cost-efficient means, giving actors on the market the right to buy and sell allowances for letting out emissions (European Commission, 2019). The “learning by doing” approach of the system divides the mechanism in different phases, where the former is used as a learning tool for the latter (Newell & Paterson, 2010). The overall policy ideas on the international arena have hence been surrounding ideas of implementing market mechanisms and putting a price on carbon. Together with the Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism, the three instruments cover most of the carbon market. The aim for these markets is to provide flexibility for actors and ultimately, reduce the carbon emissions let out in in the atmosphere and ecosystem (Newell & Paterson, 2010; European Commision, 2019).

These methods of climate governance are very popular and have been seen as highly successful on a policy level. CDM has been praised for its ability to generate interest among investors and traders, due to the instrument’s way of providing cheaper alternatives for emissions reductions. Climate governance in this regard is thus portrayed as highly attractive for investments since it is a more cost-effective way for polluters (Newell & Paterson, 2010). But emissions reductions through market mechanisms are not the only ways of pricing carbon and govern climate. Carbon taxes have been implemented in various countries and regions, making it more costly to pollute and once again attracts interest for more climate friendly methods for businesses and traders. Different initiatives for carbon pricing are continuously emerging, with 57 different projects already implemented or in progress of implementation this year (World Bank Group, 2019).

The belief of tackling climate change through carbon pricing has been the leading ideology and many scholars believe this method to be a key element for decarbonization and a sustainable development. Last year’s laureate of the Nobel Memorial Prize in

Economic Sciences William Nordhaus has been vocal about the need for a carbon tax, in order to create incentives for behavioural changes (Nordhaus, 2014). In Peter Newell and Matthew Paterson's *Climate Capitalism: Global Warming and the Transformation of the Global Economy*, the authors argue for the need of carbon pricing and that the potentials of flexibility and market behaviour, such as the JI, CDM or EU ETS, has "given many a glimpse of how carbon markets [...] may help decarbonise the global economy" (Newell & Paterson, 2010:87).

However, the practical benefits of carbon pricing methods have perhaps not met the expectations. Although the World Bank Group shows an increase of carbon market initiatives in a 2019 report, it is also shown that "less than 5 percent of global emissions covered under carbon pricing initiatives are priced at a level consistent with achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement" (World Bank Group, 2019:10). The "social cost of carbon" (SCC) is a political value and there are a lot of scholars and experts agreeing that the real cost of carbon on both nature and society is much higher than estimated (Howard & Sylvan, 2015). Yet, the nature of climate governance have not changed much and policymakers have generally not waived from this form of politics and governance.

In the United States, the Clinton carbon tax was introduced in early 1990's and would have, if implemented, taxed all energy from fossil fuels in the country, resulting in an increasing price for energy for both consumers and producers (OECD, 1997:27). In 2009 the Democrats presented a model for a cap-and-trade mechanism for emissions trading. This model was inspired by the EU ETS and was introduced and proposed in the American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R 2454). Under the Obama Administration, the idea of carbon pricing was once more resurrected as an optional strategy for the Clean Power Plan, intending to cut emissions and pressure power plants to operate more efficiently and cleanly. The pattern of policy follows the leading ideology of climate governance and carbon pricing has been the most sought-after instrument for these bills. Furthermore, these bills and policy proposals have been made in the beginning of new democratic presidencies. Still, all of the above mentioned proposals and instruments have either failed to pass the Senate, or been dismantled by the next Administration (EPA Fact Sheet, 2015; Meyer, 2018; Green, 2019).

1.3 A Green New Deal

On February 7, with less than one and a half year before the next american election and with several candidacies already campaigning, a new proposal was made in order to govern climate and combat the coming threats of temperature rise and environmental change. The initiative would not contain any price on carbon emissions and would not fall in line with previous proposals made by democratic politicians in the United States.

The call for a “Green New Deal” was suggested and brought up by Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Edward Markey, as a resolution by the same name was introduced to the House (H.R 109). The title is borrowed from the New Deal, created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s economic and technological reform strategy during the Great Depression (Hyman, 2019).

Instead of focusing on the economic aspects by governing through market mechanisms and flexible means to produce and offer cheaper and more attractive ways to cut emissions, the Green New Deal is a rather wide and far-reaching reform, with no interest in pricing carbon. The initiative is aimed to counter both climate change and inequalities in American society through a climate policy reform package that tackles energy, infrastructure, transportation, innovative development and international partnership. The proposal is initiated by recognizing climate change as a fact and that the United States has been a major factor to climate-related issues. It is also stated that climate change contributes to systemic injustices and threats to the nation, of which the resolution proposes a ten-year plan for the Green New Deal to a) reach zero in net emissions, b) create new jobs, c) invest in sustainable infrastructure and industry d) ensuring population access to clean water, healthy food and access to nature, and finally e) promoting equality and justice for “frontline and vulnerable communities” (H.R 109). In order to reach these goals, which will be implemented for a ten year period, the action plan consists of a) building communities that can withstand climate change, b) upgrading infrastructure, c) meeting energy needs with renewable energy, d) building efficient power grids, e) upgrading buildings for efficient energy, f) removing emissions from american industries, g) cooperate with local farmers and producers, h) rework American transportation systems, i) manage economic and health problems caused by pollution, j) restore ecosystems through low-tech solutions, k) protect vulnerable ecosystems, l) capture harmful emissions that have been let out in nature, m) identifying hazardous substances other than carbon dioxide, and n) promoting international cooperation in technology and knowledge (H.R 109).

The Green New Deal is indeed unique and unlike any other climate policies in its environment, due to its expansive nature with focus on rebuilding the society as a whole and with its regard to present and future climate injustices but also because of its refrain from carbon pricing. The uniqueness of this concept could also be a reflection on the political actors supporting it, since proposals of this policy thinking and governing climate have not been previously supported. The initiative is nevertheless a plan built on economic, technological and energy efficiency means. However, market mechanisms and the pricing of emissions are absent in this plan, making the Green New Deal, and perhaps thus also the policy actors standing behind it, an anomaly in the political arena.

2 Purpose of thesis

Due to its refrain from previous as well as contemporary policy proposals, the Green New Deal is indeed a unique initiative. By distancing itself from general climate governance strategies such as market mechanisms and flexible solutions for cheaper emissions, it is my hypothetical belief that something has changed in the policies of the political actors supporting it. Due to previous empirical findings, there is indeed a pattern of new policy proposals in connection with elections. This study therefore aims to examine the policies surrounding the support of the proposal of the Green New Deal. While still dealing with fossil fuel dominated domestic sectors such as energy, infrastructure and transportation, the policy proposal is not mentioning carbon pricing as a part of the solution for a more sustainable future. By examining the national policy proposals made by the candidating actors of the upcoming 2020 american election, supporting the Green New Deal, this study intends to investigate why carbon pricing is not mentioned or prioritized in this new public policy trend. From this purpose comes following question:

“Why are actors supporting the Green New Deal, refraining from carbon pricing?”

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Narrative Policy Framework

The theoretical approach taken in this study rests on the assertion that the relation between narratives and power are worth investigating as well as understanding. Since the interest of this thesis stem from the potential motives behind the changes of climate policy, I intend to examine the ideas and conceptions from actors within this policy subsystems. By identifying narratives in this political setting, an analysis concerning motives and reason can be made. The theory of Narrative Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as NPF) focuses on the power aspect of narratives and asks whether narratives play an important role in policymaking. The basic arguments for this reasoning are a) that political debates are being fought on “the terrain of narratives” from institutional platforms to social media and b) that narratives often are claimed to affect political processes and the theory thus notes that the understanding of narratives is important for the understanding of policy processes (Shanahan et al. 2018:173).

The importance of narratives has a history far longer than NPF and has been studied in various disciplines, from psychology to health care. Theories on rhetoric have also been studied in a number of fields, as a close cousin to narratives. In late 90’s, a lot of policy theories were criticized for excluding postpositivist oriented thinking in favor for theories of positivism like the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) or Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD). There was hence a divide in what was thought as legitimate theory, where positivism (based on concepts, causal drivers and falsification) and postpositivism (understanding social constructions and narratives) contrasted each other (Shanahan et al. 2018:174). In order to try and tie the two variations of public policy theory, the NPF was created as a response and claims that narratives indeed construct reality but they can also be measured empirically (Ibid). The theory is relaying on a postpositivist foundation but with rational methods where narratives can be measured and empirically observed and the theory of NPF gives the researcher a clearer ground on the epistemological assumptions (which following sub-chapter will examine further). The NPF has been used on political systems in the United States but also in other political and policy domains and could therefore be argued as a theory of good transportability. Furthermore, the theory of NPF has been tested and applied to various public policy fields, from water policy in Jakarta (Leong, 2015) to educational policy in the United States (Ertas, 2015) and the theory can thus be acknowledged as well-used

but also well-implemented in the sphere of legitimate public policy theories (Shanahan et al. 2018:175).

3.1.1 Core assumptions

The NPF rests on a couple of core assumptions. First, the theory believe that social constructions matter in public policy, meaning that even though the theory acknowledge that there is a reality with processes independent of our perceptions, these processes and objects can be interpreted differently and mean various things dependent on human perceptions. Second, there is an assumption on bounded relativity. Processes and objects that are perceived by social constructions can create different policy realities, tough they are not random but instead bounded by ideologies, norms or belief systems, for example. Third, the NPF takes a structuralist perspective on narrative, meaning that policy narratives have structural elements that can be generalizable and identified in various narrative contexts. As for these various contexts, the fourth core assumption of the NPF recognizes three levels of where policy narratives can operate: macro, meso and micro level. The macro level refers to an institutional or cultural level, where meso indicates a group or coalition level and lastly micro level can be found on an individual plane and these different levels can furthermore operate simultaneously. Finally, the NPF assumes that narratives are influencing how individuals process information and reason (Shanahan et al. 2018:178-179).

3.1.2 Form & content of the NPF

The narratives that will be studied through the NPF are studied through their form and content. The theory is, as noted above, taking a structuralist stance on narratives, indicating that there are generalizable structural elements for every policy narrative. This is referred to as the form of the narrative, whereas the policy context and subject matter is called content (Shanahan et al. 2018:175). Following table present the different categories as well as their generalized variables.

Form	Possible content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Setting ● Characters ● Plot ● Moral of the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy beliefs ● Scope of conflict ● Causal mechanisms ● Devil-angel shift

Table 1

The setting of the policy narrative tells us about the environment in a specific policy context and consists of legal parameters, economic conditions, geography, norms and other features that are agreed by policy actors to be consequential for the policy area. The setting of policy narrative could be compared with the stage setting of a theatrical play (Shanahan et al. 2018,176). Policy narratives also have characters as a core element. “Villains”, “victims” and “heroes” could be just as important in a narrative as in any story. In studies conducted with the NPF as a theoretical approach, other more nuanced characters have been made visible in policy narratives, such as “allies”, “opponents” and “beneficiaries” (Ibid). A plot for the narrative focuses on the characters and their relationship. Actions and interactions between the characters and the setting is at the center of attention. Finally, a narrative provide a moral of the story, where policy solutions are suggested and explains (and perhaps also justifies) the characters’ motives and actions (Ibid).

The content of policy narratives can consist of different narrative strategies as well as policy beliefs. While studying narrative strategies can reveal different attempts to influence politics and policy processes, studies of policy belief can show how actors are more prone to hold certain policy decisions (Shanahan et al. 2018:177). The NPF acknowledges that there might be more narrative strategies, the theory have as of yet recognized three common strategies that may arise when creating a narrative in public policy: scope of conflict, causal mechanisms and the devil-angel shift. The scope of conflict strategy can either expand or contain a specific policy issues, depending on the actor’s success. If a political actor is losing on an issue, the narrative strategy is to expand the scope of conflict by concentrating benefits and diffusing the costs, in contrast to when a political actor is winning and the scope issue is contained to the status quo (Ibid). Causal mechanism refers to a strategy where narrative elements assign responsibility and/or blame for a specific policy issue. The devil-angel shift is through NPF measured by the extent an actor identifies the opposing actors as villains in comparison to how much the actor identifies himself as a hero in the narrative. The devil shift assumes that actors will exaggerate their opponents’ malicious motives and influence, while the angel shift is when actors emphasize their problem-solving ability while de-emphasizing their opponents (Shanahan et al. 2018:178).

3.1.3 Meso perspective - Agora narrans

Depending on what the thesis aims to examine, can the analysis be done on three different levels. Individuals and their relation to narratives are highlighted in a micro level approach, while a macro level analysis is concerned with narratives embedded in structures, cultures and institutions. At a meso level, the researcher is interested in the policy narratives that are made among policy actors in a specific policy subsystem. This is the level of analysis that will be concentrated on for this research.

The meso level, or the agora narrans, is focused on the public sphere where policies are made. The agora refers to the public space in ancient Greece where citizens reflected on as well as implemented different different policies and modern-day agora can be viewed as the policy subsystem (Shanahan et al. 2018:188). Political groups, coalitions or organisations are units of analysis for this level and the NPF aims to examine the strategic construction of policy narratives (Ibid).

4 Operationalization

4.1 Policy subsystem

Policy subsystems within the public policy realm, can be dominated by a few, or contested by many constellations of policy actors. These actors may not necessarily be elected political officials but could also be interest groups or media (Shanahan et al. 2018:190). In this context, the policy subsystem will be centered around the policies suggested by the candidating actors supporting Green New Deal and where carbon pricing previously would lie. The domestic policy parts of the Green New Deal, that is the energy, infrastructure and transportation sectors, will set the frames for this public policy subsystem, where political actors with the interest of implementing the Green New Deal will form the constellation of actors in this case.

5 Methodology

It is often argued that different political science phenomena cannot be studied directly or concretely, because of their abstract nature. Thus, methodological tools are required in order to pinpoint and analyze our research issues and depending on the method of analysis, we can discover or reveal certain structures (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 54). The matter of my thesis can be studied through various analyzes and methods. My purpose is not to describe or demonstrate which of the contemporary approaches and policy proposals on how to fight climate change is the most advantageous. Instead, I want to focus on the politics and conceptions in this policy subsystem and more specifically the conceptions of the actors that are sponsoring and acknowledging the ideas of the Green New Deal. Through an analysis centered around the ideas and perceptions in this policy subsystem, a critical approach towards political ideas, arguments and conceptions can be made.

Studies examining political policies and ideas are automatically given their purpose since political activities are influencing every aspect of our societies. Here, one might find somewhat of a friction between the usefulness of political science and the classical political science doctrine. In classical terms, political studies are preferred to discuss the doctrine of politics and not politics itself. However, by not analyzing what lies within the key issues of certain politics and policy areas, it is argued by several scholars that critical understandings may be lost (Beckman, 2006:331-332). The analysis requires method and technique in order not to fall for unfounded conclusions, a crucial difference that separates those who carry political messages from those who examine them (Beckman, 2005: 9). This study therefore assumes and acknowledges the usefulness of studying politics and policies and takes the approach of an idea analysis with the techniques and tools given by an argumentative analysis.

5.1 Idea analysis: an argumentative approach

The methodology of an idea analysis is based on the importance of understanding political perceptions and ideas and takes a critical stance. It is a collective term for various combinations of purposes and techniques that aim to study political messages. The form of idea analysis can vary and is heavily dependent on the interest and purpose of thesis, rather than scientific view (Beckman, 2005:11-12). Due to the explanatory

nature of this thesis, the idea analysis will consequently take an explanatory approach. When explaining a phenomena through an idea analysis, the material gathered is not analyzed through its content but rather as different indicators. Although, in order to present the material, a descriptive stance must be taken. By interpreting empirical findings, the study is not referencing but rather inferencing the material. Here, I cannot avoid taking a certain position, since a descriptive approach requires an interpretation of the material and this aspect needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the material (Beckman, 2005:50, 52). Due to the chosen method of analysis, the empirical findings will be studied through reason and not through cause. The subject examined through an idea analysis is action and not behaviour. Behaviour is often assumed to follow the laws of cause and effect, where the former precedes the latter. However, when analyzing actions, searching for causes would be unreasonable since actions could be argued to come from reason (Beckman, 2005:83). Thus, the methodology of this thesis will not be carried out through variables of x and y but rather through finding reason. Because the study is not searching for cause and effect, it could perhaps risk losing traits of regularity. This is therefore important to keep in mind when announcing conclusions and attempting to generalize them.

The technique of the analysis will be key to find and distinguish reasons for political actions. The technique is neutral to purpose of thesis and is used to process empirical data (Beckman, 2005:30). Through the techniques of an argumentative analysis, the material will be examined by distinguishing the main arguments provided. The policy subsystem is the starting point for the argumentative analysis, where different texts regarding the same topic and in the same sphere, will be analyzed. When the material is processed, a main thesis can be identified that summarizes the field of debate and through the main thesis, arguments can be found and recognized (Beckman, 2005:40-41). The arguments, indicating reason for political and policy actions, will in turn be viewed through the theoretical lenses of the NPF.

Although the essay question of this study is not expressively concerning actors, the purpose of thesis is and the method of analysis therefore takes an actor centered approach, in contrast to a more idea centered approach. Indeed, this analysis will critically look at the ideas provided in the material and lift up main arguments. However, this study does not aim to test or review the durability or validity of these ideas. Rather, this study is interested in the change of policy and due to my hypothesis of actors expressing their politics in relation to 2020 voting campaigns and therefore puts the actors as primary subjects for analysis.

4.1.2 Material

Since the subject of the thesis as well as the perspective of the theory is located on a meso level within a specific policy subsystem, the research can be made as a qualitative analysis and is not dependent on survey data or any other quantitative material. Individual experiences have hence not been taken into account when gathering material, neither have institutional structures or cultures. Instead, written speeches and digital media platforms from actors within the policy subsystem have been the primary source of data, an attempt to secure validity by measuring the right things.

The material is taken from actors that are co-sponsoring the Green New Deal. These actors have implemented the policy of the Green New Deal into their climate governance policies. They have not created the proposal however, but are implementing the proposal's ideas and mindset towards climate governance in their election campaigns. The actors examined in this study are indeed all running candidates for the 2020 election and are currently democratic Senators of the State. Following actors will be examined: Bernie Sanders, Cory Booker, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar. Due to the interest and hypothetical belief of mine regarding a possible change of policies and the upcoming 2020 election, the material is taken from primary democratic candidates who have supported the Green New Deal. This is why the founders and front figures of the Green New Deal such as Alexandria Ocasio Cortez or Edward Markey are not a part of the material.

Since the theory and methodology of this study is sensitive to ideas, narratives and context, there should be no reason to argue why campaign platforms and websites would be unreliable or untrustworthy sources for analysis. The study has viewed the main campaign sites for the different actors running for President. Rhetoric and bias from the actors involved are the primary material and I would like to argue that both NPF and the method of analysis is capable of (and perhaps meant to be) dealing with political speeches and conduct.

4.1.3 Delimitations

The proposal of the Green New Deal have been co-sponsored by senators but also supported by several political characters. Popular figures like former Vice President Joe Biden and former secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro have supported the proposal and are implementing several ideas from the Green New Deal in their policies and 2020 campaigns. However, the assessment has been made that in order to not stray from the policy subsystem, only political actors who have co-sponsored and adopted the policy proposal of the Green New Deal in their policies,

will be examined. Hence, the amount of voters or the size of political platform does not weigh as heavy in this study, as the relevancy for the policy subsystem.

Since the purpose of this thesis is to examine the policy ideas of certain actors in a specific public policy subsystem, the time frame will be limited to the period of campaigning for candidacy as well as from when the co-sponsored proposal of the Green New Deal was introduced in February 2019, since the policy proposals have been inspired and founded upon that climate governance framework. Due to the interest in the lack of carbon pricing within this new set of climate governance policies, only the sectors where fossil fuel is the dominating force will be examined. The Green New Deal is indeed an expansive framework and is concerning international relations in the form of technological partnerships and innovation development. However, due to previous attempts of governing climate change through carbon pricing have been heavily focused on domestic politics through national cap and trades and domestic taxes, this study will exclusively examine the policy proposals and policies surrounding the national issues of energy, infrastructure and transportation.

6 Empirical data

Sanders

Now serving his third term in the United States Senate, Bernie Sanders is, again, campaigning for President in the 2020 election. While calling the environmental changes a “climate crisis”, he argues that this phenomena is both “the single greatest challenge facing our country” but also the “single greatest opportunity to build a more just and equitable future” (Sanders, 2019). The campaign is centered around the notion that climate change has to be viewed as a global emergency and is relaying on the findings of the scientific community that the Green New Deal announced (Bernie, 2019; HR 109). With references to the melting ice shelf in Greenland and the burning rainforest in the Amazon, Bernie points out people, both in the United States but also worldwide, who are suffering due to the consequences of environmental changes. It is further argued that these environmental changes are creating health emergencies, destroying jobs and threaten livelihoods. Communities of color, working class and the so-called “frontline communities” are in focus and are explained as the most vulnerable groups in the country. In order to create “justice” for these communities, Sanders argues for the importance of having resources to recover from and prepare for climate related changes and he will thus invest \$40 billion in a Climate Justice Resiliency Fund (Sanders, 2019).

The energy issue is one of the larger issues in the Green New Deal and is indeed a great portion of the Bernie Sanders 2020 campaign and his goal for 100% renewable energy is due 2030, with a complete decarbonization of the american economy in 2050 (Sanders, 2019). With a public investment of \$16.3 trillion into these goals, the possible future Sanders Administration aims to change the country’s energy sources and thus avert a future climate catastrophe (Ibid). But the main winner in this policy proposal is not portrayed to be nature itself, but rather the american citizens. By investing in green, clean energy, Sanders argues that this would create an opportunity for 20 million jobs for americans. These jobs would arise in workplaces such as renewable power plants, auto manufacturing and energy efficiency retrofitting. “Good-paying jobs” are guaranteed to all americans, especially for those who Sanders claim “have been historically excluded from economic prosperity”. It is further argued that workers in the fossil fuel industry need not to worry, since the plan for new jobs would include a “just transition” for workers who have “powered our economy for more than a century” by

guaranteeing five years of income, job training, pension and health care. The plan for clean energy could thus be summarized as an action plan for averting climate catastrophe as well as creating new jobs for the american citizens (Ibid). The economic aspect is addressed when stating that the plan for climate governance will, over 15 years, pay for itself. This claim is founded upon the economic losses per year if the United States *does not* take action against the climate changes. The investment itself will be paid by the state and Sanders claims that the investment will not harm the american people in the process (Ibid).

Here, Sanders also points out accountability and the need for prosecuting polluters in the fossil fuel industry. A carbon tax is not expressed, however, it is said that the industry have “spent hundreds of millions of dollars protecting their profits at the expense of our future” and promises to “end the greed” in the american energy system by making sure that the energy generated by the policies influenced by the Green New Deal will be publicly owned (Sanders, 2019).

Not only is the energy system one of the biggest polluting areas, but also the transportation sector and Sanders embraces the policy of Green New Deal when making the goal of decarbonizing the american transportation sector. By fully electrify infrastructure, the transportation sector can transform away from fossil fuels. Also this sector of Sanders’ campaign is centered around the american citizens, when promising both a vehicle trade-in program where moderate- and low-income families can trade in old cars and a \$2.09 trillion investment in grants where these families can trade in cars for new electric vehicles. Public transportation is promised to be affordable and the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy will not affect the american people negatively (Sanders, 2019).

Booker

Cory Booker, another Senator running for the 2020 election, shares the view of climate change as a crisis and argues that “climate change is not some distant threat - it’s happening now” (Booker 1). Human disasters are expected in Bookers view if the american society does not change for a 100% clean energy economy. At the same time, he acknowledges that there is an economic inequality where many americans struggle to maintain a working economy and Booker’s plan for climate governance is claimed to be heavily inspired by the initiative Green New Deal. Yet again, the notion that it would be more costly not to act is present and the senator claims that the leaders of the United States, as well as the people, can not afford to simply stand by. But these costs are not just economic, but humanitarian as well. Booker argues that previous attempts of moving forward have succeeded in doing so, but failed to include all american citizens:

“We ended slavery and replaced it with systematized discrimination and [...] incarceration. We climbed out of the Great Recession, creating wealth for Wall Street and the cities on the coasts, and yet wages for most remain frustratingly stagnant” (Booker 1).

Booker’s vision is described as a plan for ensuring 100% clean energy as well as good-paying job opportunities when building and creating fossil fuel-free energy systems, infrastructure and vehicles (Booker 1). In order to fund a transition to the decarbonization of the American economy, Booker plans to invest \$3 trillion by the year 2030 and the goal of a 100% renewable energy is due 2045. By eliminating current fossil fuel subsidies and future fossil fuel leases as well as investing \$400 billion in communities for innovations, Booker expects a faster transformation of the society into being resilient and carbon-free. In addition to that, a \$1.5 trillion is promised to be invested in energy storage and electric vehicles, in order to decarbonize the transportation sector and giving the people cheaper ways of purchasing carbon-free options on the market. By the end of 2030, all new vehicles would be required to let out zero emissions (Ibid).

Except from climate governance through energy and infrastructure transformations with the ultimate goal of not only climate sustainability but also providing Americans with new jobs, Booker’s campaign also entails environmental justice by “putting people over polluters” (Booker 1). Cory Booker is born and raised in New Jersey and claims that the low-income communities and the communities of color are and will be disproportionately harmed by the coming effects of climate change (Booker 2). Thus, the legislation and creation of the United States Environmental Justice Fund will be one of Booker’s promises to his community, where \$50 billion will be deposited each year (Booker 1). Booker further gives insight on the injustices he argues will be seen in these communities. Polluted water sources and other hazardous chemicals are being brought into American homes in industrialized regions and Booker argues that those are the consequences when polluters are allowed to privatize profits. The senator claims that the actions of polluters have been enabled due to federal policies through subsidiaries. He therefore argues for the need to change federal policies and hold industries and corporations legally responsible for their harming conduct. It is stated that through an Environmental Justice Act, polluters would be charged to clean up their mess. The candidate for the 2020 election states that American policy must “put the overall health of communities ahead of corporations” (Ibid).

By facing the large corporations and working towards a cleaner society, Booker claims that his plan will generate millions of job opportunities. Workers that are currently employed in fossil fuel jobs will be offered aid in order to transit into new lines of work. But the energy transformation will not only create jobs, but Booker argues that his policy will also involve communities and local ownership. By demanding that all new projects prioritize local and minority-owned businesses, as well

as growing union density, Booker's campaign wishes to reduce inequality, both economically and environmentally (Booker 1).

Warren

As another co-sponsor of the policy proposal Green New Deal, Elizabeth Warren is competing against her fellow Democrats in the 2020 American election. Not only is she a "proud" co-sponsor of the Green New Deal, but also states that the policy proposal provides a "framework for an ambitious effort to transform our economy and save our planet" (Warren 1). In her campaign, the scientific evidence for a man-made disaster is thoroughly explained and her main issue with current federal policy is expressed as the lack of response towards climate change. However, this expressed "crisis" is also portrayed as an opportunity, where jobs can be created and where racial and economic inequalities can be confronted (Warren 1).

The racial and economic inequalities are stated to be embedded within the carbon-based economy. By investing \$10.7 trillion in a green economy, the campaign estimates a creation of 10.6 million jobs. These jobs will arise from the need of building new infrastructure, clean energy but also from the need of workers for future climate response in health care and housing. The campaign lifts the urgency for workers with the knowledge of building the society that is sought for and it is argued that "we" have no chances of succeeding without the commitment of the people. Warren calls for "national mobilization" in order to fight climate change (Warren 4). Warren's campaign also lifts the concern for the next generation and plans to find profitable pathways for kids who choose to not go to college as well as investing \$20 billion over a 10-year period for apprenticeships (Warren 2). Labor rights are promised to be extended, in order to defend and guarantee workers in this new economy to have a voice when it comes to shaping the rights of workers in the economy (Ibid). Warren states that there has been a great tension between the creation of a green economy and the creation of good-paying jobs. With this policy approach, Warren argues that there will be no need to pin those two goals against each other (Warren 4).

A great obstacle towards transforming into a fossil fuel free economy, according to Warren, is the permission of letting companies and corporations rule the economy without transparency. Although having the obligation to disclose information about their business, it is argued that industries do not share much of how climate change could affect them. By creating a Climate Risk Disclosure plan, Warren aims to address the issues concerning the lack of transparency through requirements of public disclosure (Warren 3). This could, according to Warren, give investors and interest groups a better foundation when choosing to invest in companies and through this initiative she hopes to encourage actors to move their money from the fossil fuel industry (Ibid).

The large fossil fuel corporations are not only portrayed as obstacles for a green economy, but are also seen as actors competing for the American public lands. Warren states that public lands are sold off to oil and coal industries and are thus taken away from the American people. By banning all further drilling for fossil fuels in public lands, Warren claims to help prioritize the health and well-being of American citizens, since water and other resources can be protected against pollution. The plan for taking back American lands is portrayed as a matter of public rights and Warren expresses her stance clearly when she states “keeping our public lands in public hands” (Warren 5).

Klobuchar

Seeing the environmental changes as an “urgent priority”, Sen. Amy Klobuchar states that the threats of climate change will affect the planet, our economy and our communities. Climate change is indeed seen as a national security issue when declaring it as a national emergency and the candidate for the 2020 election claims that consequences of warmer temperatures will impact the United States’ food system and public health (Klobuchar, 2020). A plan has been made to pass 100 bills for the first 100 days of President and the Possible future Klobuchar Administration would, among other proposals, introduce an overarching framework inspired by the Green New Deal with the aim of creating job opportunities in a green economy, in order to combat climate change and poverty (Ibid).

The Klobuchar Administration would further shed a light on what Klobuchar calls “dark money”. She states in her plan for the first 100 days of President, that exposing corporate dark money spending will be a high priority, by requiring industries and corporations to disclose information (Klobuchar, 2020). In addition, a plan for greenhouse gas registry has been proposed in order to keep major industries accountable for their emissions (Klobuchar, 2019). For the fossil fuel companies are seen as actors on the American market that need to be supervised. Federal subsidies to fossil fuel companies have, according to Amy Klobuchar, been on taxpayers expense. Also, she argues that bold actions towards a more sustainable society have been blocked by the power of interests and claims that there is thus a need for eliminating dark money from politics and policy making. By holding companies accountable and striving for transparency, Klobuchar plans to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable (Ibid).

In contrast to the focus on making large polluters accountable for their wrongdoings, Klobuchar is showing interest in American farmers and rural communities and argues for their importance in responding to climate change. By increasing land conservation, sustainable agriculture and opportunities for small rural businesses, both jobs and local ownership can arise (Klobuchar, 2019).

7 Analysis

7.1 Main arguments

By examining the campaign rhetorics of the democratic candidates co-sponsoring the Green New Deal, several general features can be distinguished. Although there are various interests and focus points that separates the candidates' campaigns, one could argue for a number of similar features that argue for the rhetoric used. Climate change is portrayed as a rather urgent matter, that cannot be overlooked or pushed down on the political agenda. It is stated that the coming consequences of environmental changes will be one of the most, if not *the* most, important issues of our time and is not to be taken lightly. There seem to be a time aspect, where every second is crucial. However, this existential threat is in all cases and campaigns portrayed as a great moment of policy changes, and all the candidates have provided a set of measures that needs to be taken in order to seize this opportunity. Whether it is a policy proposal for creating jobs along with a new, clean economy, investments in new innovation or an initiative for reclaiming land, I would argue that the recurring idea and main argument is as follows: *climate change is the greatest threat to the american society, but it is also the greatest opportunity for change and justice.* This thesis suggests that this idea characterizes the policy subsystem of the Green New Deal and could be argued to summarize the four co-sponsoring candidates' politics. It could further be argued that each argument read from these 2020 election campaigns could be traced back to this very notion and the main argument of climate change being the single biggest threat as well as a historical opportunity for change and justice, creates a series of arguments that defines the rest of the campaign reasonings.

Initiating incentives for changing the american economy

All of the candidates examined have presented the argument of climate change being an incentive for changing the american economy. The notion that bold measures have to be made have created the arguments for a decarbonization of the american economy. By establishing transparency and accountability to disclose emissions, investors can be influenced to move their money from fossil fuel companies. Also, as stated by all

candidates, by recognizing the opportunities of the process of decarbonizing the economy and transform energy and transportation sectors, new possible jobs can be found and invested in. It could be argued that the notion of changing the american economy hence lies on the foundation of seeing opportunities for change. Further arguments for the future health and well-being for american citizens, especially in what has been called “frontline communities” are centered around the negative impacts of emissions let out in society and is in great need for less carbon in the economy. Changing the economy would thus not only be an opportunity for change but also an opportunity for the justice that the candidating senators are seeking.

Offering the opportunity to challenge the power scales between industries and communities

As Elizabeth Warren argued for in her campaign, public lands have been offered to the industries, making it even more difficult for low-income communities to maintain safe drinking water. And as Cory Booker describes in his politics, there is an environmental injustice for low-income communities and communities of color due to their surroundings. Local businesses and ownership is also argued to be crucial for fighting climate change and by exposing what Amy Klobuchar called “dark money” and other misconduct from industries, both rural companies and farmers can be benefitted. Larger corporations and companies within the fossil fuel industry are being pointed out as perpetrators and in order to obtain justice, it is argued that these companies must be held accountable. It is perhaps not clearly stated what accountability will look like in this new policy trend, however, exposing companies and larger corporations for the injustices that they are blamed to have caused, is a significant part of the campaigns.

Discovering ways to end racial and economic injustices

It is further argued that the opportunity that the urgency of climate change provides, can and will be used to make sure that all american citizens are included in this new economy and societal development. The campaigns claim to fight for both economic and societal injustices and are promising great investments in protection funds that would provide a safety net for both low-income communities but also for rural communities and farmers. The safety from coming natural disasters such as floodings, droughts and storms are also perceived as issues of injustice and not issues of environmental alterations. To be a part of a new, carbon free society is argued to be

every citizen's right when describing plans for how low- and moderate-income families can transition to a low carbon lifestyle while still being financially stable.

Creating tools to end unemployment

The perhaps most impactful arguments provided are the ones involving ways to end unemployment in the United States. Through investing in energy, infrastructure and transportation, new jobs are arising and it is further argued that the country will need the knowledge of its citizens in order to move forward. Also, the already working citizens in coal, oil and gas industries are promised a profitable transition towards green jobs. This is argued to promote healthier workplaces as well as reassuring that the american people are positively impacted through every aspect of the societal transition.

7.2 Narratives

Setting

The setting of the narrative is portrayed as somewhat of a crossroads, where time is of the essence. Climate change is described as an urgent crisis that threatens american societies on an existential level and as the main argument describes, climate change will be the most important issue due to both its detrimental consequences if left unattended but also because of its power to create opportunities for justice and drastic societal changes. The arguments provided paints a picture where not only nature is at risk, but more importantly people all over the globe. The issue could hence be interpreted as no longer being a problem where solutions need to be found for the climate, but rather for the people living in it. The upcoming 2020 election could be seen as the actual crossroads and the narrative provided could be interpreted as an encouragement for both the people and american political leaders to achieve something great, or lose a precious future. The overall setting is further enhanced as an environment of economic and societal injustices, which have been exacerbated by climate change.

Characters

The narrative distinguished through the arguments of climate governance policies brought to light by the democratic 2020 election candidates tells of several characters. Although climate change is portrayed as the primary threat for the American people, through calling for national emergency and arguing for future health and the threatening of livelihood, it is perhaps not the environmental alterations and the following consequences, that are seen as the perpetrators. By polluting and not being held accountable, it is rather the fossil fuel dominated industries who are narrated as villains in this plot. The opposing political parties and previous or temporary policy makers are surely pointed out as enablers, but the main threat towards the American people and nature could be interpreted as a consequence of industrial conduct.

The victims in this narrative is thus the American people. Nature itself is perhaps not seen as an actor or a character, but rather as a resource for the people when arguing for public lands, safe water and a pollution free environment. The consequences of damaging nature is primarily a threat to human well-being, when diseases and the risks of losing property are debated over rather than the harm to nature itself. Communities of color and low-income communities are also primary victims in need of aid and the climate governance policies presented are heavily focused on investing both resources and justice funds in order to fight inequalities, both economically and environmentally. Workers in the coal, oil and gas industry are not seen as a part of the industry, but rather as a part of the American people and are thus offered aid and resources, possibly in order to escape the realm of the villains.

The heroes in this narrative are perhaps more contested and not fully agreed on in a larger context. Indeed, when promising investments, funding and the creation of prosperity to all Americans, each and every candidate might be portrayed as the hero of the story. However, there lies a constant encouragement in almost every aspect of the policy proposals made. It could therefore be argued that the political narrative painted by the Green New Deal co-sponsoring election candidates offers a story where the people are the heroes, if acting on the urgent climate matters. By arguing for the power of people coming together, the narrative provided could be interpreted as illustrating the people themselves as heroes if coming together at the crossroads, or perhaps the 2020 election.

Plot & moral of the story

The villains in this narrative, that is the carbon dominated industry that is argued to hinder development in the American economy and polluting natural resources, are in this story profiting on the suffering of American citizens. They are blamed for health issues in low-income areas and stated to have been given freedom on the expense of the

taxpayers. By demanding accountability (although we do not know exactly how) and taking care of the frontline communities, a notion of justice seeking can be understood in this narrative. The narrative constructed could be argued to arrange the relationship of the characters where the industries are pinned against the well-being of the people and through the opportunity of climate change, as well as the event of a possible new set of power holders, the people themselves have the tools necessary to overcome the threats of climate change as well as getting justice. As partly heroes in this narrative, the candidates promise investments in the people through clean jobs and loans for electric vehicles, giving them the resources and tools needed for facing the future. The moral of the story could therefore be interpreted as the encouragement of the people, as well as the movement of leaving no american behind when transitioning into a climate resilient and just America.

Scope of conflict

As a narrative strategy for influencing the leading policy ideology, the *scope of conflict* strategy focuses on the extent of an issue or a threat, in favour of one's own political stance. The entire policy proposal of the Green New Deal could very much be seen as such strategy, in order to enlarge and emphasize the importance of the matter. Thus, the issue itself stresses the importance of addressing it and could therefore give credibility to the ambitious climate governance policies. By addressing climate change as not only a matter of environmental consequences but also social, health and economic consequences of racial injustices and diseases, the issue of climate change is narrated as an existential threat that would impact all of the american society.

8 Conclusion

This study has aimed to examine and analyze actors who have embraced and implemented the climate governance policies provided by the Green New Deal, with the purpose of answering the question to why these actors are refraining from the use and policy of carbon pricing. Through an idea analysis with an argumentative approach, a main topic as well as several arguments have been found to give reason to policy ideas. Furthermore, these arguments have been used as a basis for analysis when investigating the narratives that may characterize the overall reasons for policy making. The results have shown a strong argument for climate change to be both a great threat as well as a great opportunity for societal change and justice and this notion has further given support for other extensive arguments of decarbonizing the economy, transforming power relations, ending economic and racial injustices and unemployment. Through these arguments, a narrative where large corporations are to be held accountable for profiting on the expense of vulnerable communities has been made visible. The setting of the narrative is centered around an environment where dangers and injustices are exacerbated by climate change and where time is of the essence if a change is to be made. By rallying the people and promising them tools for a sustainable future, the narrative could be interpreted as promoting encouragement to participate in this change.

The policies of climate governance are indeed concerning a drastic societal and economic change, as well as a transition towards a just society. The narrative focuses on frontline communities getting justice and for the American people to be able to live a healthy and wealthy life. It shows concerns towards how to protect communities and how to reduce societal gaps. After examining the new policy proposals made by the 2020 election candidates, one could perhaps question whether these politicians believe in carbon pricing at all. However, despite the belief in carbon pricing itself, the long-used policy might perhaps not fit in the narrative that has been discovered in this study. Carbon pricing is indeed an economic tool for measuring and governing climate change. But the narrative investigated here is not solely concerned about the climate, but also about the people and social aspects. The main thesis of the arguments provided could be interpreted as the idea that tackling climate change will be a great opportunity for change and justice. The narrative further enhances the notion that the American people are victims of injustices and climate change and therefore the solutions are suggested to be more than solely climate-oriented. Carbon pricing and other market mechanisms could perhaps be argued to be able to mitigate climate change, but are they capable of handling injustices and the social consequences of environmental alterations? This study does not conclude by stating that the policies of carbon pricing are refrained

from due to a disbelief in the capacity to reduce carbon emissions. However, due to the issues of the arguments and narrative found in the rhetoric of the candidates, one could conclude that regardless of believing in the power of carbon pricing, the policy does perhaps not fit as the solution to the problems presented. Pricing carbon might very well be a useful tool when mitigating climate change or help punishing the perpetrators presented in this narrative, but the policy is not presented to be able to save frontline communities or give the justice, that the narrative provided by the election candidates has claimed to be a crucial goal for the future America. It could perhaps further be argued that through the ways of narrating an issue, as well as the relating characters of the story, different policy approaches are more likely to be adopted or accepted.

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