

Abstract

Climate change denial is a widely spread phenomenon in the United States that has for decades shaped the country's response to the numerous environmental challenges it has been facing. This thesis deals with the role of the American fossil fuels lobby in the analyzed matter, as it constituted the main force behind its rise. The main goal of the thesis is to prove that the success of the climate change denial orchestrated by the fossil fuels industry was enabled by its ties to the political establishment. Moreover, it argues that this was done by using professionally drafted strategies, which turned a once-widely-accepted fact – backed by a scientific consensus – into a matter of debate, opinion, politics, ideology, and identity. In order to do that, the thesis firstly covers the historical development of the climate debate in the United States. It looks at the major milestones in the country's approach in dealing with the problem of the environment as well as the emergence of the climate change denial campaign itself. Secondly, it analyzes the various connections between U.S. politics, special interests, and climate science from the 1970s until the end of the George W. Bush Administration. Next, it introduces the specific tactics and methods employed by the climate change denial campaign. Moreover, the thesis examines a number of aspects that enabled the rise of the denialist movement. It goes over the role of the media, the polarization of the American public, and the pre-existing political factors that determined the deniers' success. Lastly, the thesis takes apart the role that Exxon(Mobil) played in the issue. This example is used in order to support the theoretical basis laid out earlier. Furthermore, it allows for an introduction of some of the actors that played key roles in the industry's extensive denial campaign. Their ties to the country's politics are also demonstrated here.