“1,5°C to Stay Alive”

Climate Justice Discourse and Climate Change Denial Discourse in Climate Change Politics

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Abstract

Climate change as a global phenomenon threatens human rights and causes social injustices. This thesis examines the genealogies of climate justice discourse and climate change denial discourse in the context of international climate change politics. The aim is to understand the construction of and the correlation between the discourses and how the discourses relate to human rights. The thesis employs discourse analysis with a conception of climate justice and a neoclassical realist theory applied to climate change politics. Climate justice discourse is found to interact with chiefly moral and political terms, whereas the denial discourse interacts mainly with economic and scientific terms. Consequently, there is a lack of interaction between the discourses as they operate in different levels of communication and it has, to some extent, caused stalemate in climate change politics. Additionally, while climate justice discourse makes use of the human rights framework, the denial discourse undermines it.

**Key words**: Climate Justice · Climate Change Denial · Climate Change Politics · Human Rights

**Word count**: 13 996
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of contemporary international politics due to its adverse effects on the environment and on the livelihood of the human population.\textsuperscript{1} The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides the key forum for the international negotiations on what should be done to mitigate and adapt to climate change. A cornerstone in the negotiations is the role of justice in determining how responsibilities of climate change action should be distributed. However, it has been a controversial issue since the establishment of the UNFCCC in 1992 until the 21\textsuperscript{st} Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in 2015 in Paris, where the Paris Agreement was enacted.\textsuperscript{2}

Climate justice discourse in general advocates for a fair distribution of emissions reduction goals and wealth transfers between developed and developing states since developed states have emitted the majority of the greenhouse gases that are the cause of the human induced climate change.\textsuperscript{3} The actors in climate justice discourse range from states to nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and social movements which all aim to highlight the inequalities and injustices that climate change causes due to some states being more vulnerable to climate change than others. This thesis will focus on the United Nations (UN) and the states since they are the major actors in the climate change politics with decision-making power. As an example of climate justice discourse a speech by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu Enele S. Sopoaga at the COP21 in Paris will be analysed as it is a prime example of the discourse.

On the other end of the spectrum in views about climate change is the denial of anthropogenic climate change. In general, climate change denial discourse (denial discourse) questions some key aspect of the consensus view on climate change the key aspects being e.g. that climate change is caused by humans and that it is highly dangerous.\textsuperscript{4} Consequently, the denial discourse questions the action to be taken to prevent and adapt to climate change, such as the redistribution of wealth to developing countries. This discourse, despite not consistently labelled as denial, has in part hindered the international climate change negotiations which are currently

\textsuperscript{1} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 834
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Tan, 2017, p. 121
\textsuperscript{4} Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 235
experiencing an impasse. Analysed as an instance of climate change denial will be the US President Donald J. Trump’s speech, in which he announces the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement.

The research problem of the thesis is the conflict between the two discourses of climate justice and denial, and its implications on climate change politics, since climate change negotiation results have been evaluated to be inadequate in limiting the global warming. The aim of the thesis is to examine and describe how these discourses are constructed and reproduced, whether and how they interact in the UNFCCC framework and how do the discourses make us of the human rights framework.

The topic is relevant for the contemporary climate change politics since the purpose of the thesis is to understand how the interaction or the lack of interaction between the discourses has been unproductive. Furthermore, it encourages future research to focus on improving the construction of the justice and denial discourses to establish action-focused climate politics in the future. Effective climate politics and action are crucial in preventing human rights threats that result from climate change, such as food scarcity and loss of livelihood. Hence, the research topic is relevant to the field of human rights.

The thesis attempts to respond to the research problem by highlighting cases of climate justice and climate change denial discourses and by analysing them in order to reveal a discrepancy between the discourses. Thus, first the aim, research question and the delimitations of the thesis are introduced in detail. Second, the background of the discourses and the previous research in the field is presented. Third, introduced are a conception of justice and a neoclassical realist theory to analyse the discourses and the actions of states in climate change politics. Fourth, the methodology chapter will introduce the discourse analysis that is applied in the thesis in conjunction with the discursive nodes of the analysis and the relevant material. Fifth, presented is the analysis and finally the findings are represented and discussed in the conclusion.

1.2 Aim

First, the aim of the thesis is to analyse climate justice and climate change denial discourses and their relationship to human rights concerning the global politics of climate change by examining the major actors, namely the UN and the states, in the international regime of climate change politics, that is, the UNFCCC framework. Furthermore, the intention is to examine the

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5 Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 230
impasse in the international climate change negotiations that is to some extent assumed to be affected by the competing discourses on climate change.

Second, by applying discourse analysis the purpose of the analysis is to understand how the discourses have been constructed, and what the actors and strategies behind them are. Furthermore, the method is applied to specific examples of these discourses to understand how they are employed by state actors to advance their motives. With a conception of justice and a neoclassical realist theory applied to international climate change politics these methods allow an assessment of whether the positions adopted by states correspond to the norms of climate justice.

Third, the thesis seeks to develop an understanding of how these discourses are constructed and reproduced in order to enable a more productive approach towards climate change politics and to the fulfilment of human rights that are threatened by climate change. In other words, the thesis intends to contribute to the current research on climate justice and denial discourses by illuminating how these discourses interact with each other and how it affects the international politics of climate change within the UNFCCC framework.

1.3 Research Question

The previous research has demonstrated that there is certain ambiguity related to the relationship between the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial. In the UNFCCC forums climate justice has been a major consideration in shaping, for example, the Paris Agreement and issues of distributive justice and human rights have been in the centre of climate negotiations. Yet, while climate change denial has indisputably had an effect on international climate change politics, as in the case of the US’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, it is unclear how, if at all, and on what levels the denial discourse interacts with the climate justice discourse and the human rights framework.

The intention of the analysis is to empirically describe and elucidate the relationship between the two discourses in order to understand its implications on the international regime of climate change politics. Furthermore, the significance of the human rights framework to the discourses will be assessed, the framework encompassing the human rights institutions, human rights conventions and the rights and duties codified in them as well as the mechanisms to secure the realisation of human rights. Hence, the research question is as follows:
How do the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial relate to each other and how do they make use of the human rights framework?

1.4 Relevance to Human Rights

In the submission by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the COP21 of the UNFCCC, titled “Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change”, the OHCHR states that climate change affects human rights directly and indirectly, and that states as duty-bearers of human rights have an obligation to take measures to address climate change in the spirit of international solidarity. Explicitly is mentioned the responsibility of states to protect people living in vulnerable areas, for instance small islands. The respect for human rights in relation to climate change is secured in the Paris Agreement and other treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), embody rights, e.g. the right to life and the right to health, that are threatened by climate change. Since the UN takes a clear stance that climate change impacts are a global threat to several human rights climate change as a thesis topic is an appropriate one. Furthermore, as states and the UN are the major actors in human rights politics, the thesis places these actors in the centre of the analysis.

In the international sphere there are competing views on the nature of climate change and its relation to human rights and justice. Human rights are a tool for reaching justice and thus, it is relevant to describe and analyse how the climate justice discourse operates in order to realise justice and human rights. Even more, it is necessary to examine the climate change denial discourse to clarify the tension that exists between these two discourses in order to enable interaction between them that for so far has been nearly non-existent. This in part may have assisted to the current impasse on climate negotiations in the international regime. Therefore, the thesis is contributing to the field of human rights by assessing the climate justice and the denial discourses and how they relate to each other in order to encourage productive debate between the discourses on the action to be taken to combat climate change.

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6 OHCHR, 2019, p. 5
7 OHCHR, 2019, p. 2
8 Paris Agreement, 2015, p.2
9 Levy & Patz, 2015, p. 311
1.5 Delimitations

The research is interested in how the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial are reproduced and the whether there is a correlation between them. Thus, it does not engage with why climate change is discussed as an issue of justice or why climate change is denied despite them being relevant considerations that need to be shortly represented.

The thesis will analyse the history of the climate justice and denial discourses to some extent, yet the focus is on the impact that they presently have on international climate change discourse. Furthermore, while intergenerational climate justice is an integral part of the climate change debate the focus is limited on the current generation because intergenerational justice per se presents several philosophical issues that fall outside the scope of the thesis.

Climate change is inherently a global phenomenon and the most crucial decisions on climate change are done on the international level. Therefore, I have chosen it as the level of analysis leaving out regional, domestic and local decision-making despite their high impact on climate change politics and action. In the international climate change politics there are several actors, including the UN, states and non-state actors, such as corporations. However, the major actors are the UN and the sovereign states with the deciding power at which the thesis is focused on.

While the fragmented nature of international politics enables the other actors to have a large impact on climate change negotiations the thesis focuses in depth on the UN and states rather than the countless number of all actors. In addition, the specific examples will be limited to one representative case of each discourse, namely representatives of Tuvalu and the US, to allow more focus on analysing rather than describing several cases even though these two cases cannot represent the plethora of different positions.

Furthermore, there is a multitude of sources and documents relating to climate change, climate justice and climate change denial but since the material has to be limited the theoretical starting point for the discussions on climate change and climate justice is the UNFCCC framework. In the UNFCCC framework the discussion is focused on the UNFCCC treaty and the Paris Agreement as the most influential climate agreements. Within the treaties the major themes are mitigation, adaptation and compensation. However, compensation in magnitude is an inferior category to the former ones and it is excluded from the thesis. In general, to avoid bias in the selection process of the material the aim was to select literature that reflect over varying perspectives and approaches to the thesis topics.
2. Background and Previous Research

The chapter presents the background and the previous research related to the thesis topic. Each theme is discussed with the support of the relevant literature to embody the current state of affairs. The themes are (1) climate change as a phenomenon, (2) the history of climate justice discourse, (3) the international political forum, where the dynamics between the negotiating powers are present and approaches to climate change action are deliberated, and (4) the climate change denial discourse. Lastly, considered are the methods applied in previous research to provide reasoning for the choice of discourse analysis as the method of the thesis.

2.1 Climate Change

Climate change is a global phenomenon in which the average temperature of the Earth is rising which threatens peoples’ health and societies’ livelihoods and economies.\(^\text{10}\) The principal source of climate change science is the UN body Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which produces periodical reports about the stage and predictions of climate change. Its Fifth Assessment Report states that climate change is caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions\(^\text{11}\) and the chief source of GHGs are human energy use and especially the fossil fuels which in turn are on the rise because of global economy and population growth.\(^\text{12}\)

The emissions in the atmosphere cause a rise in the Earth’s mean equilibrium surface temperature which results in considerable harms for the nature and the people.\(^\text{13}\) These impacts are recapped by Levy and Patz in their annual review on climate change, social justice and human rights which comprehends more than 100 studies on climate change. Thus, despite the uncertainty related to predicting climate change events there is considerable consensus that unmitigated climate change causes and will continue to cause high risks of extremely negative impacts, including food insecurity, violent conflicts, rise of sea levels and an increased occurrence of diseases\(^\text{14}\) that threaten human rights. These findings are confirmed by a more recent report by the IPCC\(^\text{15}\) and other experts in the field, such as Scott and Vare.\(^\text{16}\)

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\(^{10}\) Benestad, et al., 2016, p. 699
\(^{11}\) IPCC, 2014, p. 2
\(^{12}\) IPCC, 2014, p. 5
\(^{13}\) Moellendorf, 2015, p. 173
\(^{14}\) Levy & Patz, 2015, pp. 315-316
\(^{15}\) IPCC, 2018
\(^{16}\) Scott and Vare, 2018
Climate justice is a multifaceted term that stems from other forms of justice and as a global phenomenon the accounts of justice applied to climate change are inherently forms of global justice. For the purpose of the thesis, global justice is defined as an inquiry that aims to identify obligations that people have towards each other worldwide across national borders and to explain the grounds and forms of these obligations.

Scholarly work nearly solely focuses on the content and actors of climate justice and not on whether it is a justified account to climate change or not, which suggests that at least on an academic level it is rather uncontested that climate change poses issues of justice. Climate change is a socially consequential phenomenon as it disproportionately affects low-income countries and vulnerable people making it into an issue of social justice and an issue of human rights. David Schlosberg confirms the link by situating the climate justice movements’ use of justice discourse under the heading of environmental justice as a sub-category for social justice. Hence, climate justice is a result of a lengthy historical development.

These categorisations of climate justice are reflected both in the philosophical and political accounts of the term. For example, John Broome discusses the scientific, economic, social and ethical aspects of climate change. Broome also analyses politically relevant issues such as how to address the uncertainty of climate change, what an appropriate cost-benefit analysis for mitigation would look like and how to value human lives. Most importantly, the author establishes a duty of goodness that governments have to address climate change since their purpose is to do good for their people. The moral duty to combat climate change and to fairly share the burdens one way or another is shared by most moral and political philosophers of climate change, such as Simon Caney and Eric Brandstedt who both review and sketch approaches on how to ensure that mitigation takes place.

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17 Fisher, 2015, p. 80
18 Tan, 2017, p. 2
19 Dietz & Garrelts, 2014, p. 2
20 Levy & Patz, 2015, p. 311
21 Schlosberg, 2007, p. 81
22 Broome, 2012
23 Broome, 2012, p. 50
24 Caney, 2014; Caney, 2018
25 Brandstedt, 2019
Politically, climate justice has been employed to convey a message of necessary climate change action on the basis of social justice. The origins of the political use of climate justice discourse are in social movements but it is deployed by NGOs and states alike. The main issue in the political sphere has been how to distribute the burden of mitigating and adapting to climate change. According to Tan and Lane, the discussion has mostly circulated around the “polluter pays”, “beneficiary pays” and “ability to pay” principles (but also other principles) which all place the major responsibility on developed, industrialised states on the basis of having emitted the most, having enjoyed the benefits of the emission the most or having the best ability to carry the burden.

On a state level climate justice discourse has been utilised by e.g. small island states, such as Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Previous research on them has focused on the vulnerability of the populations and the multiple barriers that prevent effective adaptation. Additionally, e.g. Parks and Roberts frame the threats experienced by Tuvaluans as injustices, and the rhetoric used by SIS leaders as climate justice discourse. Another recurrent theme is the discussion on the need of the Tuvaluans to relocate which poses several human rights issues. Yet, whereas the impacts of climate change are unanimously considered as threatening, some scholars question how the Tuvaluans experience climate change claiming that Tuvaluans do not experience climate change as a reason of concern or that Tuvaluans are rather framed in the Western world as evidence of climate change victims for the sake of the ‘crisis narrative’.

2.3 Climate Change Politics

The global climate change related political decision-making takes place in the UNFCCC framework, in which the latest treaty is the Paris Agreement from 2015. In part, the Agreement constitutes a political success since it was adopted by states with irreconcilable differences (US, China, India, the European Union and the island states) and the Agreement lays policy obligations

26 Patterson, et al., 2018, pp. 1-2; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014, p. 370
28 Tan, 2017
29 Lane, 2016
30 Tan, 2017, pp. 120, 124-129; Lane, 2016, p. 112
31 Betzold, 2015, p. 487; McCubbin, et al., 2015, p. 43
32 Parks and Roberts, 2016
33 Parks & Roberts, 2006, p. 340
34 Constable, 2017, p. 1030
35 Mortreux & Barnett, 2009, p. 105
36 Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012, p. 382
on all states, not only developed ones. The preceding major agreements include the UNFCCC in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC in 1997 and the Copenhagen Agreement in 2009 which were all unable to induce meaningful consensus or action.

The overarching principle of the Paris Agreement is “the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities”, which has been interpreted by developing countries as developed countries taking the lead in cutting emissions, whereas developed countries’ interpretation has been more indefinite. Indeed, since climate change became a political issue, a division between the developed and developing nations has been apparent: Whereas justice has been a guideline in the climate change politics the debate has mainly been directed by the states’ self-interests. The main approaches of the framework to climate change can roughly be divided into mitigation and adaptation. Other key provision in the Paris Agreement and in climate politics in general are the commitment of the signatories to keep the global warming below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, the commitment of the developed states to provide financial resources for the developing states and the establishment of carbon trading as an emission reduction measure.

Whereas NGOs, social movements and other non-state actors are increasingly recognised and researched as major influencers in climate change politics the principal actors in climate change politics are the UN and the states. The UNFCCC framework and the states have gained considerable attention amongst researchers focusing on e.g. the great powers’ power installations, analysing the Paris Agreement and the different measures in climate change action and their implications.

2.4 Climate Change Denial

In climate change politics, the unwillingness of some states to confirm to binding climate change policies has partly been contributed to climate change denial and denial discourse. There are numerous alternative terms used to describe climate change denial, such as scepticism,
contrarianism and dismissal. Typically, science denial is defined as unwillingness to accept scientific evidence as true and fundamentally misrepresenting and dismissing the scientific consensus.\textsuperscript{47} For instance, climatologist Judith Curry claims that the understanding of the climate system as a complex phenomenon is hampered by excessive uncertainties and cognitive biases\textsuperscript{48} and climate scientist Rex J. Fleming holds that climate change is indeed not anthropogenic but caused by the Sun’s magnetic field’s strong and weak phases which correspond to phases of warming and cooling on Earth.\textsuperscript{49}

In their article Edvardsson Björnberg et al. review literature on climate change denial and answer questions, such as who denies, what is being denied, what are the strategies of denial discourse and how can it be explained. In general, contested are whether climate change exists in the first place, whether it is anthropogenic, and/or whether the impacts are (negatively) significant.\textsuperscript{50} The climate change denial discourse actors form networks where government officials, scientists, corporations, political and religious organisations, (conservative) think tanks, the public and the media all contribute to the discourse, ultimately hindering political action on climate change.\textsuperscript{51} The finding of denial networks by Edvardsson Björnberg et al. is confirmed by studies by Farrel\textsuperscript{52} and Bolsen and Shapiro.\textsuperscript{53} Farrel detects a link between corporate funding and organisations that disseminated denialist texts and showcases the impact that these activities have on deferred policy progress,\textsuperscript{54} whereas Bolsen and Shapiro identify polarising frames used in the US media while reporting on climate change.\textsuperscript{55}

Climate change denial discourse originates from the US,\textsuperscript{56} yet it became more threatening to international climate change policy progress when Donald Trump was elected as the President of the USA in 2016, as Trump is a notorious denier of climate change. In June 2017 he announced the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement.\textsuperscript{57} Whereas climate denial discourse has not been explicitly employed in the UNFCCC framework in a similar fashion for achieving policy goals than climate justice discourse has been, it is apparent that the Trump administration’s known denial is reflected in the US foreign and domestic politics.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
  \bibitem{47} Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 237
  \bibitem{48} Curry, 2011, p. 723
  \bibitem{49} Fleming, 2018, p. 1
  \bibitem{50} Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 235
  \bibitem{51} Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, pp. 235-236
  \bibitem{52} Farrel, 2015
  \bibitem{53} Bolsen and Shapiro, 2018
  \bibitem{54} Farrel, 2015, p. 5
  \bibitem{55} Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018, p. 149
  \bibitem{56} Collomb, 2014, pp. 1-2
  \bibitem{57} Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018, pp. 839-840
  \bibitem{58} Zhang H., et al., 2017, p. 221
\end{thebibliography}
the Paris Agreement the majority of the research has focused on analysing the reasons and implications of the withdrawal\textsuperscript{59} noting amongst other things that Trump’s personal convictions seem to be more influential than the actual burden of the Paris Agreement on the US.\textsuperscript{60}

\subsection*{2.5 Methods in the Previous Research}

Climate change is a phenomenon of natural sciences and thus, all the social sciences research is partially based on natural sciences and their methods.\textsuperscript{61} Consequentially, some quantitative data and methodology are oftentimes required to ground the social sciences research. Social science research is relevant to the study of climate change in addition to natural sciences as there is an intersection between the two sciences, namely that the natural scientific facts of climate change have social and political consequences and social sciences study these social and political aspects of climate change.\textsuperscript{62} The methods applied in the aforementioned research consist mainly of different types of social science qualitative content analysis. Some conduct interviews\textsuperscript{63} but most articles employ discourse analysis on other researches or primary material grouping arguments according to thematic issues.\textsuperscript{64} Furthermore, for the philosophical discussion on climate justice philosophical argumentation is applied,\textsuperscript{65} and some studies rather review than analyse the state of affairs,\textsuperscript{66} and some have a mixture of several methods.\textsuperscript{67}

The majority of the research discussed in the section is considered valuable for the examination of climate justice and denial discourses and is discussed in the analysis. However, some research was beneficial solely as background information by elucidating the philosophical grounding of the issues,\textsuperscript{68} the country-specific conditions\textsuperscript{69} and the international political constellations.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{59} Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018, p. 839; Zhang Y., et al., 2017; Zhang H., et al., 2017
\textsuperscript{60} Zhang H., et al., 2017, p. 222
\textsuperscript{61} Fleming, 2018; IPCC, 2014; IPCC, 2018
\textsuperscript{62} Lahsen, 2013, p. 556
\textsuperscript{63} Constable, 2017; McCubbin, et al., 2015; Morteux & Barnett, 2009
\textsuperscript{64} Betzold, 2015; Bollen & Shapiro, 2018; Brenton, 2013; Curry, 2011; Dimitrov, 2016; Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017; Falkner, 2016; Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012; Lane, 2016; Levy & Patz, 2015; Okereke & Coventry, 2016; Parks & Roberts, 2006; Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018; Zhang Y., et al., 2017; Collomb, 2014
\textsuperscript{65} Brandstedt, 2019; Broome, 2012; Caney, 2014
\textsuperscript{66} Schlosberg, 2007; Scott & Vare, 2018; Tan, 2017; Dietz & Garrelts, 2014; della Porta & Parks, 2014; Patterson, et al., 2018; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014
\textsuperscript{67} Farrel, 2015; Zhang H., et al., 2017
\textsuperscript{68} Broome, 2012; Brandstedt, 2019; Caney, 2014
\textsuperscript{69} Betzold, 2015; Constable, 2017; Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012; McCubbin, et al., 2015; Morteux & Barnett, 2009
\textsuperscript{70} Falkner, 2016; Kuyper & Bäckstrand, 2016; Kuyper, et al., 2018
3. Theory

The chapter aims to demonstrate the relevance and the applicability of the chosen theories of climate justice and climate change politics to the research problem of the thesis. First, presented is Darrel Moellendorf’s conception of climate justice in which the grounding principles for a just approach to climate change action are represented. Second, introduced is a neoclassical realist theory applied to climate change politics by Mark Purdon. Together the theories provide an account of what climate justice is and why nevertheless states do not act according to the compelling norms of climate justice.

3.1 Conception of Climate Justice

In the UNFCCC framework the term climate justice is mentioned only once in the Paris Agreement.\(^{71}\) Despite some principles of climate justice being apparent and integral in the texts of several treaties climate justice has been a contested issue in climate change politics.\(^{72}\) Hence, there is no definition of climate justice that would be articulated by an official UN body. However, in the academia there is an on-going debate on the issues of justice that climate change evokes and how to fairly distribute the related responsibilities, a debate that is echoed in climate change politics. In his article Darrel Moellendorf summarises and analyses the principles of justice that have been called for in the international climate change politics. Therefore, Moellendorf’s theorising of climate justice will be represented to define and explain the concerns of climate justice. Introduced are the basic premises of climate justice, the implications of climate change mitigation and adaptation to climate justice and how the uncertainty of climate change threats affects the requirements of justice.

Climate change is caused by human energy use and policy which produce high risks of extremely negative impacts now and in the future, such as food insecurity and violent conflicts. Thus, climate change gives rise to several concerns of justice.\(^{73}\) Principles of justice are statements of what people are owed either by others or by policies and institutions. Consequently, a moral account of climate justice for a practical approach requires an account of both justice and responsibility which is an account of who, and in virtue of what, must provide or perform what is owed.\(^{74}\)

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\(^{71}\) Paris Agreement, 2015, p. 2
\(^{72}\) Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 834
\(^{73}\) Moellendorf, 2015, p. 173
\(^{74}\) Moellendorf, 2015, pp. 173-174
Principles of justice require appropriate attention to be paid to the vulnerability of people to climate change. A response to the vulnerability to climate change is the principle of vulnerability reduction: “If a person is especially vulnerable to very bad things happening due to the actions and omission of others, that person has prima facie claim to have the vulnerability reduced.” Vulnerability reduction is done through mitigation and adaptation policies (the “what” in an account of responsibility), which have morally relevant differences.

Mitigation reduces the risk that climate change causes by lessening the threat that it poses to human beings. However, due to the inertia of climate change, mitigation policies only help the very young and future generations in coping with global warming and thus, it is also a matter of intergenerational justice which has its own philosophical controversies. The inertia of climate change refers to the long residence time of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere due to which emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases cumulate. The higher the cumulation the higher the temperature increase and the higher the risks are of negative climate change impacts. Therefore, if the vulnerability reduction principle is accepted it follows that the vulnerability of people to climate change should be mitigated.

Moellendorf discusses different approaches to mitigation that take into account the moral aspect of it. One of the main premises is whether to base the mitigation on ethical starting points, such as utilitarianism or human rights. Yet, since mitigation is a duty of justice the key issue is how to distribute the burden of mitigation between states and whether some states have a right to be less burdened. The emission reductions targets can be based on e.g. the baseline of current emissions, historical emissions or reduction duties per capita but the appropriate account of climate justice of emission reductions should be supplemented by an account of responsibility. There are two classes of responsibility principles. First there are historical principles such as fault or strict liability-based polluter pays principles and beneficiary pays principles that place the majority of the mitigation

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75 Patterson, et al., 2018, pp. 3-4  
76 Moellendorf, 2015, p. 174  
77 Moellendorf, 2015, p. 175  
78 Purdon, 2014, p. 180  
79 Moellendorf, 2015, p. 174  
80 Ibid.  
81 Moellendorf, 2015, p. 175  
82 Moellendorf, 2015, pp. 175-177  
83 Moellendorf, 2015, p. 177; Levy & Patz, 2015, pp. 311-312  
84 Tan, 2017, p. 120
burden on developed states. Second there are the capability to pay principles that also burden the developed states more.\footnote{Moellendorf, 2015, p. 179}

Whereas mitigation is aimed at future generations, adaptation policies reduce the vulnerability of current people by reducing the risk of climate change induced harms by providing resources to protect against the risks of climate change.\footnote{Moellendorf, 2015, pp. 174, 180} Adaptation does not require evidence that a certain harm is climate change induced (as it would be the case with mitigation policies), only evidence of vulnerability is needed to evoke the vulnerability reduction principle. Key question is who should bear the burden of adaptation.\footnote{Tan, 2017, p. 120; Dietz & Garrelts, 2014, p. 2} States with the highest need for adaptation would be unfairly burdened while they typically have not contributed to the emissions cumulation.\footnote{Moellendorf, 2015, p. 180}

Lastly, there is the question of what justice requires in respect to threats that are uncertain since there are no grounds upon which to ascribe a probability of an event’s occurrence based upon a priori rationale or from statistics of past events. There is no definite answer because the threats differ considerably but Moellendorf reasons for an account according to which the principles of justice and vulnerability reduction require some precautionary action to reduce uncertain climate change threats that fulfil certain criteria, such as that the anticipated harm is comparably grave.\footnote{Moellendorf, 2015, p. 181}

Whereas other formulations of climate justice can be equally applicable considering that the thesis is interested in resolving the tensions in climate change politics (which are mainly concerned with burden sharing), these principles are appropriate because they specify the differing approaches to just climate politics and the principles comprehend the practical aspect of climate justice, i.e. the responsibility aspect. Subsequently, the conceptualisation represented is helpful in clarifying the key characteristics of climate justice and the relations between other related concepts, such as human rights. However, not all of the concepts were beneficial for the analysis and therefore the specific responsibility principles related to mitigation are not included in the analysis.

The principles will supplement the neoclassical realist theory of climate change politics since the theory does not specify what the international norms of climate justice are. In turn, the principles of justice are ideal and may lack political feasibility, but the neoclassical realist theory will supplement the justice account with practical notions and hence, together these theoretical standing points will contribute to answering the research question of the thesis.
3.2 Neoclassical Realist Theory of Climate Change Politics

The scholar Mark Purdon applies neoclassical realist theory to climate change politics and contests whether cooperation on climate change is chiefly directed by shared norms of climate justice or rather whether the contestation of these norms is the major obstacle for meaningful progress in climate change negotiations. Neoclassical realist theory holds that there are systematic constraints on the cooperation on climate change (that would logically benefit all states in avoiding dangerous climate change) and it identifies political factors that are explanatory of the behaviour of individual states. Notably, the theory underlines the significance of relative gains concerns in the international resource transfer. That is, Purdon claims that the actions of states in climate change action is limited and explained by the states’ concerns of power relations and the redistribution of material capabilities in relation to other states.

In relation to climate change relative gains concerns arise for four reasons. First, the patterns of international redistribution unavoidably benefit some actors more than others, such as emissions trading that favours China and India over the US and the EU. Second, the non-excludable character of climate mitigation implies that while individual states make contributions to mitigation, they cannot prevent other states from enjoying the benefits. Third, the magnitude of resources to be redistributed is larger than in any other environmental policy field and these costs occur in addition to emission reduction costs and domestic adaptation. Finally, the time lags between the costs and benefits of redistribution are considerable meaning that the benefits of climate action will be realised in the far future. Hence, even if in long-term there is a balance in costs and benefits in short-term the costs will generate relative-gains concerns. For example, especially the US and China are sensitive to relative gains since they are economically the most powerful states.

Purdon argues for power to be phrased in terms of resiliency in climate change politics. In other words, climate change resilience is derived greatly through economic growth that leads to climate change in the first place. Thus, paradoxically the answer to climate change vulnerability is economic development which has been argued for as the appropriate response to climate change. This

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90 Purdon, 2014, pp. 301-302
91 Grasso & Roberts, 2014, p. 543
92 Purdon, 2014, p. 304
93 Purdon, 2014, pp. 309-310
94 Grasso & Roberts, 2014, p. 544
in turn encourages states to rather strengthen their domestic climate response instead of advancing the international politics.\textsuperscript{95}

Purdon represents the idea of a two-level game where a state’s behaviour is dictated not only by relative-gains but that states will differ in their sensitivity to relative-gains concerns due to international political and domestic forces that the state leadership must attend to.\textsuperscript{96} \textit{International political forces} include \textit{international forces} which comprehends factors such as the financial crisis and the rise of emerging economies that makes especially the US vary about resource transfer since these conditions benefit the rising powers on the detriment of diminishing power of developed states. Furthermore, the realist tradition of the foreign policy of the US makes it less sympathetic to the appeals of the developing countries.\textsuperscript{97} The other aspect of international political forces is the \textit{state specific forces} which consist of the vulnerability and the resiliency of the state, both of which are related to the geographical position of the state. Therefore, e.g. small island states and states with populated coastlines perceive climate change as more threatening. In addition, state specific forces consist of the particular state’s position in the global power balance meaning that for some states it is less burdensome to contribute to climate change action.\textsuperscript{98}

Furthermore, \textit{domestic forces} shape states’ sensitivity to relative gains. Purdon argues for three main factors. First is the domestic political actors’ \textit{reliance on climate science} and e.g. in the US climate scepticism has been used to explain the state’s reluctance in climate change policymaking. Second are the \textit{norms of justice} and how they are perceived in a particular state and its culture. Third, domestic policies are affected by the \textit{policies itself} for instance by encouraging political engagement.\textsuperscript{99}

Purdon clarifies that neoclassical realism does not deny that climate change is a moral imperative nor that moral politics have a role. Whereas Purdon agrees that morally the developed countries should carry a greater burden of climate change action, the feasibility of such position is shaped by political constraints. Since often the only politically possible choices are between imperfect options the value of neoclassical realist theory is in leaving space for moral reasoning within the political sphere.\textsuperscript{100}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{95} Purdon, 2014, pp. 310-311
  \item \textsuperscript{96} Purdon, 2014, p. 304
  \item \textsuperscript{97} Brenton, 2013, p. 543
  \item \textsuperscript{98} Purdon, 2014, pp. 314-315
  \item \textsuperscript{99} Purdon, 2014, pp. 315-316
  \item \textsuperscript{100} Purdon, 2014, p. 328
\end{itemize}
The neoclassical realist theory is beneficial for studying the climate justice and denial discourses because it explains the multivariable factors that cause states to employ the discourses for (usually) their own benefit. The theory helps to analyse the specific cases of Tuvalu and especially the US and their positions in the global power politics and climate change negotiations which is explanatory of the need and the emergence of the two discourses on state level. Especially the concern over the redistribution of wealth is present in both of the discourses by Tuvalu and the US.

This theoretical perspective contributes to answering the research question by clarifying the dynamics of climate change politics and how the discourses and motives behind them interact with each other. Even more, neoclassical realism is appropriate because it adequately takes into consideration both the moral and political implications of climate change politics whereas e.g. constructivism does not address why moral norms are insufficient in generating political action. However, some concepts, namely the non-excludable character of mitigation, (specific) international forces and policies themselves, were not beneficial for the analysis. In addition, the theory does not elaborate on what the international norms of justice are in relation to climate change, and hence it is supplemented with Moellendorf’s conception of climate justice.

4. Methodology

4.1 Method

This thesis will employ discourse analysis to examine how the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial are constructed and how they associate with each other. First, discourse analysis is applied to scholarly sources in order to empirically describe the genealogy of climate justice and climate change denial discourses. Second, the method is applied to the speeches of Enele Sopoaga and Donald Trump to demonstrate the use of the two discourses in international climate change politics. This chapter will introduce the discursive nodes of the analysis and the discourse analysis and demonstrate the method’s applicability to the research and discuss the strengths and the weaknesses of it in relation to the research topic and the chosen material.

4.1.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a type of qualitative textual analysis that aims to elucidate the ways in which discourse legitimises and gives meaning to social practices and institutions. The term discourse entails a collection of ideas, concepts and categories through which meanings are produced
and reproduced in a particular context and situation.\footnote{Halperin & Heath, 2017, p. 335} Thus, discourse can be analysed by examining language and semiotics in different types of content, such as texts. However, the meaning of the discourse can only be understood in a broader context which entails that discourse analysis is additionally concerned with factors such as the text’s source and audience, and power relations and constellations that shape that particular context.\footnote{Ibid.}

In the thesis discourse analysis is used to discover the themes present in scholarly material about the phenomena of climate justice and climate change denial. The analysis will observe the norms of climate justice and the reasoning of climate change denial in the texts to understand the genealogies of the discourses. Furthermore, discourse analysis will be applied to the speeches by Trump and Sopoaga in order to exemplify how the state leaders socially and discursively construct meanings through the production of these speeches. Furthermore, the discourses will be reflected against the reality of climate change politics in the UNFCCC forum and the impacts of the discourses in climate change negotiations.

The discourse analysis will be performed by identifying discursive nodes of analysis in the material and by placing the nodes to categories of statements. The statements are concerned with prominent issues in climate change politics, such as the redistribution of wealth. The baseline for the search for categories and groupings is a Foucauldian framework in which the starting point is a pure description of discursive events followed by a search of unities within the discourse.\footnote{Foucault, 2002, pp. 29-30. While the methodological choice is inspired by Foucault, the method itself is not a Foucauldian discourse analysis, but withdrawn from Halperin and Heath.} Hence, first the genealogies of the discourses are represented and then the occurrence of themes and statements will be categorised in each discourse and the categories of both discourses will be reflected against one another in order to discover shared levels of communication between the discourses. Additionally, the analysis will focus on action-oriented discourses since these discursive events have a bearing to the climate change politics.

The statements that emerge in the analysis can be categorised to scientific, moral, legal, social, economic and political groupings. Statements might be different in form and dispersed in time, but they form a category if they refer to the same type of objective\footnote{Foucault, 2002, p. 35} e.g. financial concerns. An overarching theme in the statements made in the climate justice discourse is human rights and therefore, the occurrence of human rights statements is observed in the texts. Additionally, attention
will be paid to the disparity of the groupings between the two discourses. The observations are not attached to certain words or phrases but rather to the recurring themes and subjects within the two discourses.

A weakness of discourse analysis is that it is sensitive for the author’s bias in conducting the procedure. Thus, the treatment of the texts needs to be trustworthy and transparent. Even more, the conclusions’ validity and reliability needs to be demonstrable. However, discourse analysis is well fitted for the purpose of the thesis to understand how the interaction between the discourses affects global climate change politics because it focuses on how discourse legitimises certain practices and analyses the different categories in a discourse which is a key component in enabling the two opposing discourses to find a common accord in climate politics. Furthermore, discourse analysis considers the wider context of a discursive event which is germane for the thesis since the discourses in climate politics are relevant only as far as they acquire desired gains such as policy outcomes.

4.1.2 Discursive Nodes of the Analysis

The section will represent the discursive nodes of analysis (written in italics) which are the concepts previously introduced in the theory section. The purpose is to recap the concepts in order to attach them as the nodes to the empirical case of climate justice and climate change denial discourses in the analysis. In other words, the nodes are identified in the discourses in order to understand their construction. The discursive nodes are crucial in understanding the relationships between the concepts and the discourses as a whole.

Attention will be paid to principles of justice and corresponding accounts of responsibility. Principles of justice in turn require the consideration of vulnerability amongst people. Vulnerability consists of exposure to risk and insufficiency of resources. Principles of justice have a bearing to both mitigation and adaptation measures. Mitigation responsibilities are distributed according to principles of responsibility, such as polluter pays principle, beneficiary pays principle, capability to pay principles and other less popular principles. Also, with adaptation relevant is the question of who bears the responsibility. Additionally, the uncertainty of future climate change events and its implications to provisions of justice are observed.

Ideally states would act according to these norms of justice, yet there are systematic political constraints on the actions of states. States are sensitive to relative gains, such as the uneven

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105 Halperin & Heath, 2017, p. 355
patterns of redistribution, the non-excludable character of climate change action, the magnitude of resources and the time lags between the acts and the corresponding benefits. Furthermore, there are international political forces that can be divided to international forces, such as the impacts of a financial crisis, and state specific forces, such as the vulnerability and resiliency of a state. Lastly, there are domestic forces such as the people’s trust in climate science and national norms of justice.

4.2 Material

The section overviews the material used for the analysis and a justification for the selection process. The material is discussed in two groupings which serve the purpose of the thesis. The first grouping is scholarly articles and books used to describe and analyse the emergence and the development of the climate justice discourse, the relevant actors in climate change politics and the strategies, actors and content of climate change denial discourses. The material has been retrieved with search engines from several journals and publishers. Different combinations of search terms were used, and the material was chosen based on whether the focus of the material was on one or more of the topics of the thesis and whether the articles demonstrated different perspectives on the topics. Hence, the collection of the material is not a systematic overview of all relevant literature, but it is rather a qualitative sample on the topics of the thesis. Furthermore, the amount of material available on the topic is extensive and an examination of all relevant texts is out of the scope of the thesis.

The impartiality, neutrality and credibility of the sources are evaluated on an individual basis as is demonstrated in the previous research section. However, the articles are retrieved from well-known peer-reviewed journals to guarantee the highest level of credibility. Despite the varying motivations and incentives of the authors the strength of the scholarly work is the multitude of it and thus, the sources can be reflected against one another to evaluate their integrity. The books used as material, namely Scott and Vare,106 Dietz and Garrelts107 and Schlosberg108 provide general knowledge of climate change and climate justice discussions and reflect the majority of the published work on the field as is clear from their references to other works.

The second grouping is primary sources used to exemplify and analyse the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial. The climate justice discourse is visible in the speech by

106 Scott and Vare, 2018
107 Dietz and Garrelts, 2014
108 Schlosberg, 2007
the Prime Minister of Tuvalu Enele S. Sopoaga presented at the Leaders Events for Heads of State and Government at the Opening of the COP21 to the UNFCCC in Paris on 30th November 2015. Sopoaga’s speech was chosen because it represents the stance of a state that is highly threatened by climate change and reliant on the results of the international climate change negotiations. Other speeches by small island state representatives at the conference were reviewed as well and it was found that Sopoaga’s speech addressed same themes as the other statements. In addition, whereas other states could be equally representative of advocates of climate justice discourse Tuvalu is a prime example of a nation that is experiencing climate injustices since it has not contributed to climate change itself. Additionally, the texts of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement will be analysed to exemplify climate justice discourse in the outcomes of international climate change politics. While other treaties showcase relevant discourse as well the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement were chosen to reflect the development of the genealogy of climate justice discourse from the beginning of the UNFCCC regime in 1992 until the contemporary state of affairs.

Climate change denial discourse is exemplified by a speech of the President of the US Donald J. Trump. In a speech given at the White House on 1st June 2017 Trump announces the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement. The discourse of the speech reflects scepticism on the aims and measures that were agreed upon in the Paris Agreement and some of the arguments counter what is taken to be scientifically proven of climate change and hence, it demonstrates climate change denial discourse. It was considered as the most relevant primary source example since the denial discourse originates from the US and Trump is an outspoken representative of the discourse.

The particular speech was chosen since it is a representative and characteristic of Trump’s general discourse in speeches, tweets and other public appearances in which he uses ample rhetoric and reflects nationalist views. Furthermore, the speech is relevant because it argues against the Paris Agreement from the point of view of a wealthy developed state whereas Sopoaga’s speech argues for the Agreement as a developing state. The speeches by both Sopoaga and Trump are opinionated statements aimed to gain support from the audience and thus, the partial nature of the speeches will be taken into account in the analysis.

5. Analysis

The analysis examines how the climate justice and climate change denial discourses are related and how they make use of the human rights framework. First, the genealogy of climate justice discourse and how it is constructed is discussed. Second, the genealogy of climate change denial
discourse is looked at and its structure is illuminated in order to find out if there are common features with the climate justice discourse. Third, the politics of climate change are introduced and discussed is how the discourses are visible in the international sphere and what are the internationally relevant actors that represent the discourses. Fourth, the interaction between the two discourses is reflected on and the discourses’ impacts on international climate change politics are reviewed.

5.1 The Genealogy of Climate Justice Discourse

This section analyses the climate justice discourse, its origins in related discourses of social and environmental justice, its emergence, popularisation and purpose, and the actors, structures and issues related in order to clarify the construction of the discourse. Subsequently, within the discourse the concepts of climate justice as the units of analysis are identified, and the themes of the discourse are divided into categories of statements (scientific, moral, legal, social, political and economic) with the aim of disentangling and describing the ways in which the discourse communicates to initiate climate action.

Climate change is oftentimes taken to raise issues of social justice as it unequally impacts different regions, resources vary from country to country and therefore the responsibilities fall unevenly.\(^{109}\) Social justice is framed to be a principle aiming to protect vulnerable people from climate change and from disruptions of societal transformation and to enable an equitable post-carbon society.\(^{110}\) Furthermore, social justice is equated with human rights and the existing human rights mechanisms,\(^{111}\) both of which strengthen the claim of the climate justice discourse by adopting a larger frame to support the discourse. These appeals to justice, while nevertheless aiming to varying objectives and audiences, employ the same principles of justice and the concept of vulnerability and vulnerability reduction which imply communication in moral and legal terms.

In the hierarchy below social justice is environmental justice, a broad term that comprehends issues such as air, soil and water pollution and environmental disasters but also societal problems e.g. access to nutritious food.\(^{112}\) Whereas the understandings of environmental justice are plural it is an organising frame for similar aims.\(^{113}\) While the environmental justice is rooted in

109 Dietz & Garrelts, 2014, p. 2; also Levy & Patz, 2015, p. 311; Patterson, et al., 2018, pp. 1-2
110 Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 2
111 Levy & Patz, 2015, p. 311
112 Scott & Vare, 2018, p. 64
113 Schlosberg, 2007, pp. 5,8
political movements\textsuperscript{114} it calls for the distribution of environmental risks as they mirror (unfavourable) socioeconomic statuses of people.\textsuperscript{115} In other words, the environmental justice claims aim to rectify the existing injustices in the distribution of environmental burdens, a phrasing which is present in climate justice discourse.\textsuperscript{116} Thus, environmental justice is concerned with the same \textit{principles of justice} and an account of \textit{responsibility} as the social justice discourse which can be categorised as \textit{moral} arguments. In addition, evident in the discourse is the use of natural scientific expertise and \textit{reliance on science}.\textsuperscript{117}

Climate change is a special type of environmental concern around which different climate change discourses have developed.\textsuperscript{118} On one hand, climate justice can be framed as bridging the climate change and \textit{human rights} frames.\textsuperscript{119} On the other hand, climate justice discourse can be framed as the more extreme and action-oriented version of the climate change discourse combining features from other movements, e.g. social justice movements, which allows climate change to emerge as an issue of justice and a cause of injustices. This recent discursive shift can be seen to originate from failures in climate change politics, such as the COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 (even though climate justice discourse per se has existed since the 1990s\textsuperscript{120}). Thus, climate justice discourse leans towards mobilisation of all possible actors instead of traditionally relying on states\textsuperscript{121} while otherwise the components are reflective of the climate change discourse. Nevertheless, a key characteristic of climate justice discourse is to equitably distribute the \textit{responsibility} between states to mitigate and adapt to climate change\textsuperscript{122} on the basis of harms caused by the global warming.\textsuperscript{123} As a political movement climate justice is portrayed as a \textit{moral} issue which needs to be responded to \textit{politically} on the basis of \textit{scientific} findings. Hence, science is penetrating the political discourse.\textsuperscript{124}

Chronologically, climate justice first emerged as several traditions aiming to build a mass-based movement to enhance red-green politics internationally when the elite failed to solve the major environmental and social climate issues.\textsuperscript{125} Therefore, while identifying detailed conceptions of the original movements is out of the scope of the analysis, it is plausible to encapsulate the

\textsuperscript{114} Schlosberg & Collins, 2014, p. 360
\textsuperscript{115} Schlosberg, 2007, p. 79
\textsuperscript{116} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 836; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014, pp. 361-362
\textsuperscript{117} Schlosberg & Collins, 2014, p. 361
\textsuperscript{118} della Porta & Parks, 2014, p. 23
\textsuperscript{119} della Porta & Parks, 2014, p. 25
\textsuperscript{120} Bond, 2012, p. 2; della Porta & Parks, 2014, p. 19
\textsuperscript{121} della Porta & Parks, 2014, p. 28; Bond, 2012, p. 2
\textsuperscript{122} Tan, 2017, p. 120
\textsuperscript{123} Moellendorf, 2015, p. 173
\textsuperscript{124} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 835
\textsuperscript{125} Bond, 2012, pp. 1,5
movements with the agenda of distributing burdens and resources fairly among people based on principles of justice. What is visible in the genealogy of the discourse is that the problem of justice gets extended from a philosophical and moral issue into a socially and politically compelling imperative for action eventually included in the UNFCCC framework despite lacking broad traction. Furthermore, it is evident that the climate justice discourse operates in a different category than climate change discourse as well as denial discourse which are occupied with non-moral levels of discourse.

While the multifaceted approach to climate change action is generalising the institutionalisation of climate change action into the UN framework, despite it being a work in progress, is yet to be politically challenged in a meaningful scale. The movements of climate justice at first attempted to communicate their agenda to the UNFCCC delegates which did not yield results as states’ interests overpowered them. Evidently, the developing states’ leadership adopted the climate justice agenda since it would distribute the burdens more to the developed states. The core of the climate justice discourse is in the continuation of the movements and traditions of climate justice and in the agenda of the UNFCCC (visible in e.g. the Paris Agreement), yet they are unable to progress while lacking the support of the industrialised nations.

As mentioned earlier, there is no accord on climate justice in the UNFCCC framework due to the domination of developed states. In other words, there is no consensus on the principles of justice or an account of responsibility in how the burdens of mitigation and adaptation should be distributed. Accordingly, it is the actors that want to initiate action and change the status quo that address climate justice since justice is a moral imperative as opposed to climate change which only conveys the scientific meaning of the phenomenon. As it has been seen, the means used for delivering the discourse are largely moral and political in nature despite practically the topic being economic. The political action on climate change has been inadequate for so far as can be seen from the lack of progress in climate negotiations before, during and after COP21 in Paris which implies that the climate justice discourse has been ineffective.

126 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 834; Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 1
127 Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 5
128 Bond, 2012, p. 2
129 Fisher, 2015, p. 73
130 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 835
131 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 846
5.2 The Genealogy of Climate Change Denial Discourse

This section analyses the climate change denial discourse (denial discourse), its origins, emergence, spreading and definition. Additionally, what is being denied, the factor of uncertainty in climate change and its utilisation by the denialists, and the actors and networks that construct the discourse are illustrated. Consequently, within the discourse the concepts of the neoclassical realist theory are identified as the nodes of analysis, and the themes in the discourse are divided into categories of statements (scientific, moral, legal, social, political and economic) with the purpose of retracing and illustrating how the discourse communicates in order to suppress climate change action.

The denial of the advantages of the environmental regulation originates in the US, where it first emerged in the early 20th Century when the government took an active role in preserving natural resources. This development was opposed on the grounds that privatisation of resources would increase economic well-being in the country and better protect the environment as the landowners would have an incentive to preserve their lands. Currently, the phenomenon is visible in the attempt of regulating climate change action and in the opposition of this regulation, namely, climate change denial discourse.132 While climate change denial as an ideology has spread globally, the American ideal of economic freedom provides a prime platform for such discourse. The connection between the climate change denial movement and the fossil fuel industry’s aim to protect its self-interest to emit greenhouse gases has been robustly researched and verified.133 Therefore, visible are the domestic forces in the US, such as the effects of the policies themselves to the politics of climate change.

Science denial is generally defined as unwillingness to accept scientific evidence as true and principally misrepresenting and dismissing the scientific consensus.134 However, the terminology is not fixed (terms such as scepticism and contrarianism are also employed) which implies the multitude of grounds for the denialist views. Denial discourse questions or denies whether climate change is occurring in the first place, whether it is anthropogenic in nature, e.g. Fleming,135 or even if it exists contested is the significance of the negative impacts of climate change,136 e.g. Curry.137 In other words, (the lack of) trust in science as a political condition allows climate change denial to flourish, and the discourse uses scientific statements to underline its agenda.

132 Collomb, 2014, p. 2
133 Collomb, 2014, pp. 3-4; Farrel, 2015, p. 1
134 Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 237
135 Fleming, 2018
137 Curry, 2011
A noteworthy feature of climate change is the uncertainty of the scientific predictions, and a key argument of the denial discourse is the claim that the IPCC representation of the uncertainty factor is erroneous in underrating the level of uncertainty.\(^{138}\) Thus, any \textit{economic} burden on states due to climate change policies based on uncertainty would be unjustified.\(^{139}\) In the denial discourse it is argued that the adverse effects of global warming are grossly overstated for the audiences to accept the environmentalist \textit{political} agenda. Additionally, it is argued that climate change policies would be \textit{economically} destructive and environmentally trivial affecting the society unfavourably.\(^{140}\)

There are several categories of actors identified in denial discourse. There are denying scientists that offer alternative explanations on climate change.\(^{141}\) Political and religious organisations then coordinate the discourse by e.g. disseminating the denialist texts which in turn are used by media and the public as a source for denialist discourse\(^ {142}\) the media representations being event-driven and inconsistent.\(^ {143}\) Notably, governments engage in denial discourse as actors allowing the undermining of climate change policy progress within the administration\(^ {144}\) the motivation being to secure \textit{economic} growth and competitiveness.\(^ {145}\) However, the core actor identified in several sources is corporations and other private business associations which are the prominent funders of the denial activities of the other denialist actors.\(^ {146}\) That is, denial discourse is highly organised and well-funded form of science denial utilized by the industries that are threatened by climate change policies.\(^ {147}\) The chief motivator of the discourse is not the distrust in science but the \textit{economic} advantages that these actors profit by preventing and delaying climate change policies.

Evidently, the actors form structures and networks through which the alternative reality of climate change is constructed. However, while only a fracture of the denialists are experts in the field of climate change\(^ {148}\) these actors nevertheless peculiarly gain popularity amongst the public. Since it is not by conveying a trustworthy and reliable message per se it appears that denial discourse undermines competing discourses by bypassing the \textit{moral} arguments, such as claims to justice and human rights, and \textit{scientific} arguments, and instead replying with \textit{economic} arguments and by

\(^{138}\) Curry, 2011, p. 724
\(^{139}\) Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018, p. 151
\(^{140}\) Collomb, 2014, p. 7
\(^{141}\) Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 235
\(^{142}\) Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 236; Farrel, 2015, p. 3
\(^{143}\) Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018, p. 154
\(^{144}\) Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 236
\(^{145}\) Collomb, 2014, p. 8
\(^{146}\) Ibid.
\(^{147}\) Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 236; Farrel, 2015, p. 5
\(^{148}\) Edvardsson Björnberg, et al., 2017, p. 235
politically downplaying the impact of climate action. Especially in the US the denial discourse and the economic arguments still persist even though the basis of the discourse has been fundamentally discredited.\textsuperscript{149} It appears that the discourse’s tactic is effective since it has been observed that in some cases the discourse has led to policy stalemate\textsuperscript{150} and the international climate change negotiations are perceived to be in an impasse.\textsuperscript{151}

5.3 Actors and Climate Change Politics

This section analyses the international climate change politics and how the UN and the states position themselves in controversial questions, such as climate justice and the distribution of burdens. The setting of the international climate change regime is discussed, and the statements of justice and political constraints are identified on a general level in order to reveal how the climate justice and denial discourses operate in the international sphere. The following sub-sections will discuss three examples of actors in climate change politics representing different facets and perspectives in the discourses, namely the UN, Tuvalu and the US.

The principles of justice and the subsequent accounts of responsibility indicate to certain actors as the liable ones\textsuperscript{152} and given the current international model of nation-states the primary duty-bearers are states, as in human rights mechanisms. Hence, the baseline is that states have a responsibility to engage with climate change issues and put climate justice into effect. Furthermore, the intergenerational justice and what is owed by the current people to the future people in relation to climate change is essential to the debate\textsuperscript{153} but due to the scope of the thesis these considerations are not addressed. However, climate change politics evolve around the UNFCCC framework and while climate justice has played a prominent role in its establishment and operation,\textsuperscript{154} it has been a contentious issue in the UNFCCC framework since the politicisation of climate change.\textsuperscript{155}

Interrelated with the concept of justice are human rights which are highly embedded into the UN and the UNFCCC framework.\textsuperscript{156} Indeed, the climate change regime seems to replicate

\textsuperscript{149} Collomb, 2014, p. 12
\textsuperscript{150} Farrel, 2015, p. 1
\textsuperscript{151} Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 1
\textsuperscript{152} Lane, 2016, p. 112
\textsuperscript{153} Caney, 2018, p. 476
\textsuperscript{154} Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 2
\textsuperscript{155} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, pp. 834, 835
\textsuperscript{156} Levy & Patz, 2015, p. 311
the human rights regime with entitlements, respective duties and the system of national reporting. The structure of the regime enables the assignment of responsibilities to states as addressees, and the political recognition of climate change makes it from a natural science phenomenon into a social issue. While the participation to the climate change politics is voluntary in the end\textsuperscript{157} the scientific evidence and justice claims together make it pressing for states to politically address climate change.\textsuperscript{158} In other words, the UN has institutionalised climate change and coordinates the mediation between different facets.

The key differentiation between the positions on climate change and climate justice is between developed and developing states on the issue of how to equitably distribute the emission reduction goals\textsuperscript{159} and whether to let developing nations continue to emit in order to develop.\textsuperscript{160} Thus, it is a matter of patterns of redistribution and relative gains. Due to the climate policy decisions requiring consensus in the UNFCCC the developed nations as the most powerful ones have been able to dominate the negotiations. Additionally, evident are the short-term aims of the developed states in the climate change negotiations since they prioritise near-future economic gains instead of far-future climate justice. While it is politically extraordinary that developing nations have been able to influence the negotiations to some extent with emphasis on statements of justice\textsuperscript{161} and the UN enabling justice discourse, the political constraints of the developed countries have dominated the policy progress.\textsuperscript{162}

An apparent constraint on states’ climate change action is the magnitude of resources that climate finance requires, and as discussed in the previous section the reasoning behind denial discourse often comes down to economic incentives. Funding climate change action is highly necessary for the realisation of climate justice\textsuperscript{163} and hence, the dominance of the developed countries with interests in relative gains is extremely detrimental to climate justice. Therefore, the international setting is repellent towards the realisation of climate justice since the feasibility of climate justice norms seems unlikely.\textsuperscript{164}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{157} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 839
\bibitem{158} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 836
\bibitem{159} Brenton, 2013, p. 543
\bibitem{160} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 836
\bibitem{161} Brenton, 2013, p. 542; Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 836
\bibitem{162} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 846
\bibitem{163} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 843
\bibitem{164} Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 1
\end{thebibliography}
5.3.1 The United Nations

This section analyses the UN’s key treaties on climate change, the UNFCCC as the first one and the Paris Agreement as the last one for so far in order to elucidate the state of recognition for climate justice in the international law and to provide a standard to reflect against Tuvalu’s and the US’ statements. In the text of the UNFCCC climate justice or justice is not mentioned per se but some principles of justice are present in the discourse. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, the historical responsibility of the developed countries and the right of the developing countries to develop as well as the vulnerability of small island states and other developing countries are emphasised in the treaty. These are balanced with notions of sovereignty and the value of economic development as if to secure the right for the states to nevertheless act as they prefer. Additionally, there are no specific policies or emissions reduction targets in the treaty so there are no provisions against which to measure the realisation of these principles.

There are 23 years between the enactment of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and while other more or less successful treaties have been enacted in between the Paris Agreement has been the greatest accomplishment for so far. The text refers to equity and to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities but also to human rights and group rights of vulnerable people and to sustainable development and climate justice despite only referring to climate justice as important to some actors. However, the Agreement generally favours the developed countries of the global North in its key provisions. The emphasis on limiting global warming to 1.5°C is seen as a victory for justice by the small island states but it is rather deceptive since, as has been mentioned, the principles of justice will hardly be realised under the domination of the developed states which affirms the hypothesis of the neoclassical realist theory. Either way, the UN is a representative of climate justice discourse perhaps purposefully employing the discourse to initiate climate action.

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165 UNFCCC, 1992, pp. 1-3
166 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 837
167 Paris Agreement, 2015, pp. 1-2
168 Dimitrov, 2016, p. 8
169 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 839
5.3.2 The Case of Tuvalu and the COP21

Amongst other island states and Least Developed Countries the Tuvaluans have vocally drawn attention to the injustices that climate change potentially causes to vulnerable people e.g. with their slogan “1.5°C to Stay Alive”. In his speech at the COP21 the Prime Minister of Tuvalu Enele S. Sopoaga does not use the word justice but principles of justice and responsibility are evident in the content. Survival, future and powerlessness of the Tuvaluans are reoccurring themes that reflect the vulnerability of the nation and the society and Sopoaga calls for states to “unite” to fulfil the common responsibilities by mitigation and adaptation measures. To combat vulnerability and the lack of resilience and to realise human rights Sopoaga advocates for economic support in the form of finance, technology and capacity building. Considering the colonial history of Tuvalu and hence, the historical responsibility of the colonising states the moral statements seem appropriate, yet in practice they have been ineffective as can be seen from the results of the Paris Agreement.

In addition to these moral messages Sopoaga acknowledges the political constraints of other states and urges them to put aside their domestic issues in order to reach a legally binding treaty. Therefore, while Sopoaga communicates with political and legal terms as well, he does not appeal to the economic vulnerability of Tuvalu, nor does he point out to other states any incentives to act on climate change. The IPCC has stated that the world will economically benefit from early mitigation and adaptation and e.g. the US’ competitive power is predicted to diminish because of Trump’s anti-climate policies and thus, these rhetorical tools would be available.

5.3.3 The Case of the US and the Paris Agreement

The US’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement demonstrates the controversial relationship that the US has with climate change. In his speech Donald Trump announces the withdrawal, its justifications and implications on the American economy and society. The major emphasis of the reasoning is on economic factors. Repeatedly Trump refers to the restrictions

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170 Ibid.
171 Sopoaga, 2015, pp. 2-3
172 Sopoaga, 2015, p. 3
173 Parks & Roberts, 2006, p. 348
174 Sopoaga, 2015, p. 3
175 Parks & Roberts, 2006, p. 349
176 IPCC, 2014, p. 19
177 Zhang Y., et al., 2017, p. 218
178 Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018, p. 839
179 Zhang H., et al., 2017, pp. 221-222
unduly placed on the US by the Paris Agreement, such as emissions reduction targets that restrict the energy industry which in turn reduces the quantity of jobs and well-being of the citizens and increases poverty. However, while the US as a high-tech industry and service economy has a possibility to change its structure of production Trump does not refer to the option of increasing the quantity of jobs in fields such as green technology. Trump’s aim to invest to the fossil fuel industry is an example of economic short-termism\textsuperscript{180} which is unsustainable and predicted to be economically unfavourable to the US in long-term.\textsuperscript{181} A key argument in the speech evolves around the patterns of redistribution that are economically unfavourable to the US compared to developing states and other developed states.\textsuperscript{182}

Another recurrent allegation in the discourse is that the Paris Agreement does not establish “a level playing field” among the US and the other states leaving the US comparatively disadvantaged in economic terms. In other words, the relative gains restrict the cooperation of the US in climate politics. Trump introduces statistics on the US spending on international climate change action noting the magnitude of resources being redistributed from the US to developing countries, especially to China and India that are growing emitters. In addition to praising the rising economy of the US Trump embraces the American environmental protection, values, and leadership. However, he does not elaborate on the US’ climate change action barely mentioning the word “climate” so it is unclear how the US would continue climate action outside the Agreement.\textsuperscript{183}

During the regime of the Trump administration there has been a denialist hegemony led by Trump indicating to the structure of the US political system where the government has the power to remove the influence of the previous government, in this case the Obama administration that supported the cause of climate justice.\textsuperscript{184} As an individual Trump is highly influential to climate change policies whereas for example China’s political structure does not allow individual leadership in a comparable way. This discrepancy demonstrates the problematic nature of the concepts of “state” or “leader” when it comes to climate politics and how Trump personally enables the flourishing of denial discourse.

Not only is Trump a reason for concern because he questions international norms but also because in withdrawing from international treaties, he undermines the international institutions.

\textsuperscript{180} Caney, 2018, p. 489
\textsuperscript{181} Zhang Y., et al., 2017, p. 216
\textsuperscript{182} Trump, 2017
\textsuperscript{183} Trump, 2017
\textsuperscript{184} Zhang Y., et al., 2017, p. 214
The neoclassical realist theory recognises that national self-interests supersede climate justice norms but the theory does not anticipate how Trump is able to delegitimise and destabilise the international institutions and undermine their constructions as he has questioned, threatened to withdraw or has already withdrawn from eight international treaties and UN organisations, such as the UN Human Rights Council.\textsuperscript{185} Thus, by withdrawing from the Council and the Paris Agreement Trump has undermined the institutionalisation of human rights and climate justice.

Conclusively, Trump manifestly communicates with economic statements and reasoning against the Paris Agreement and climate change obligations. In connection with Trump’s known climate change denial and lack of planned climate change action, the denial discourse in his speech is evident. Furthermore, he does not refer to concepts like \textit{justice} or \textit{human rights}. Another theme that he refers to is to retain the American sovereignty and not to submit to legal liability in the international climate politics, also referring to \textit{relative gains}. The denial discourse and the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement may not be a great threat to the functioning of the climate change regime in other aspects but in climate finance the lack of funding from the US can be grave\textsuperscript{186} especially because the finance is essential for the realisation of climate justice.

5.4 The Interaction between Climate Justice and Denial Discourses

As demonstrated in the previous sections, the climate justice discourse chiefly communicates with moral arguments which are supported by some scientific, political and social statements.\textsuperscript{187} Inherent in the scientific discourse is that there is room for contestation as it is the nature of science yet whereas climate justice discourse seems to engage with the uncertainty factors, the denial discourse misinterprets the uncertainty as no evidence at all. Hence, the way science is consumed should be addressed in the political sphere. Most importantly, the justice discourse does encompass economic issues which are the most controversial matter in the climate change politics but even then the economic arguments are delivered through moral reasoning e.g. by “aligning decarbonisation with other pressing social issues.”\textsuperscript{188} Thus, either the influential actors in the discourse, such as the UN and certain states, unconsciously communicate with such terms (perhaps unwilling to subjugate themselves to the capitalist frame) or they deliberately use justice discourse as

\textsuperscript{185} CNN, 2019
\textsuperscript{186} Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018, p. 840
\textsuperscript{187} Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 4
\textsuperscript{188} Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 4
a tactic. Either way, despite the climate justice discourse making use of the well-established human rights framework, moral reasoning has not turned out beneficial for the discourse.

As showcased in previous sections, the representatives of the denial discourse chiefly oppose the economic losses that climate change actions cause. The foremost issues in climate change politics have been how to simultaneously prevent climate change harms, eradicate poverty and let developing states to develop\(^{189}\) all of which are at least partially economic in nature. The redistribution of wealth inevitable for climate justice is in fact an incentive for climate change denial discourse to pertain the discourse to avoid the costs. If one denies the existence of climate change as a factual matter it is not necessary to even take a stance on the issues of justice. In other words, denial discourse is a way to evade the moral dilemma and normative reasoning of climate justice discourse and e.g. political conservatives are researched to be less responsive to justice frames.\(^{190}\) Additionally, there are signs of the denial discourse undermining the institutionalisation of both human rights and climate justice as demonstrated by the Trump example and hence, the denial discourse does make use of the human rights framework in the sense that by undermining the framework the denial discourse also undermines the climate justice discourse.

While there is no such sharp dichotomy in the real political sphere the two discourses relate to each other by being competing discourses on the same matter and how to act upon it. However, whereas climate change and climate change denial operate in the same factual register, climate justice discourse is communicated in a normative register. In other words, climate change denial operates in scientific and economic spheres and climate justice in moral and political spheres, but these spheres do not touch upon each other, since justice discourse does not speak in economic terms and denial discourse does not speak in moral terms there is no common ground for the discourses, and they do not share a level of communication in a worthwhile manner nor is there progress in climate change politics.

Currently, the actors that would exploit the planet for profit are outshining the others when it comes to the dominance of the public sphere\(^{191}\) and the inability of the discourses to communicate is problematic in relation to successful climate politics and to the realisation of climate justice and human rights. Thus, to reach meaningful communication the climate justice discourse needs to elevate the economic arguments at its disposal to respond to the denial discourse in an

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189 Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 836
190 Patterson, et al., 2018, p. 5
191 Scott & Vare, 2018, p. 146
effective manner since incorporating climate justice is a substantive component for policy success\textsuperscript{192} while it seems to be the issue exactly.

6. Conclusion

The research problem of the thesis is the impasse between the two discourses of climate justice and climate change denial and its implications on international climate change politics since the negotiation outcomes have been assessed to be insufficient in limiting the global warming. The research question that the thesis has attempted to answer is “How do the discourses of climate justice and climate change denial relate to each other and how do they make use of the human rights framework?” The aim of the thesis is to assess and describe how these discourses are constructed and reproduced and whether and how they interact in the UNFCCC framework and how they relate to the human rights framework.

Climate justice discourse advocates urgent climate action and the consideration of social justice and human rights in redistributing the burdens of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Climate change denial discourse denies either whether climate change exists in the first place, whether it is anthropogenic or whether the impacts are significantly negative. Therefore, the denial discourse opposes climate change action and the redistribution of wealth and emissions reductions that preventing climate change would require. The argumentation was developed through examining the constructions of the discourses and how they have appeared in the public sphere, as well as by analysing examples of the discourses. The UN climate treaties the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement were assessed and the speeches by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu Enele S. Sopoaga and the President of the US Donald J. Trump were analysed.

Climate justice discourse was found to mainly communicate through moral and political statements in order to initiate climate change action whereas climate change denial discourse was found to interact nearly solely with short-term economic arguments. In other words, while the discourses relate by being competing discourses on the same matter the two discourses do not share a level of communication which in part is argued to have led to the lack of progress in climate change negotiations in the UNFCCC framework. Furthermore, climate denial discourse operates on a factual level denying the scientific grounding of climate change by which it avoids taking a stance on the moral and justice issues. Furthermore, whereas the climate justice discoursed makes use of the

\textsuperscript{192} Okereke & Coventry, 2016, p. 842
existing human rights framework to further its cause, the denial discourse undermines the framework and the institutionalisation of human rights as well as climate justice.

The thesis employed a combination of a conception of climate justice and a neoclassical realist theory on international climate change politics as the theoretical starting point. Together the theories provided the international norms of climate justice and an understanding of why nevertheless states do not act according to these norms. The material was analysed with discourse analysis that allowed the categorisation of different statements to illustrate the levels of interaction of the discourses. A potential weakness of the research is the large scope of the phenomenon that could not have been represented in the thesis in its entirety and the manner of the selection of the material allows subjectivity. For instance, the speeches could have been supplemented with other speeches to increase generalisability. In addition, the social phenomenon of the discourses on climate change is manifold and intertwined, yet due to the scope of the thesis specifically only the dichotomy between the climate justice and climate change denial discourses was represented.

Climate change is a relevant topic for human rights research because climate change threatens several human rights encoded in treaties such as ICCPR and ICESCR, directly and indirectly, for example by causing food scarcity. In relation to climate justice human rights and climate justice are interrelated concepts aiming for the equal distribution of burdens and social equity. The thesis contributes to the field of human rights by examining the obstacles for effective climate justice discourse and climate change action and future research is needed to elaborate on how to overcome these obstacles. Future research could focus on formulating economic arguments and responses by climate justice discourse to climate change denial discourse to enable productive interaction between the discourses. Furthermore, research on the discrepancy between the intergenerational justice and economic short-termism would be beneficial to elucidate on the dissonance between the discourses.
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