

CLIMATE DENIAL AND FOREIGN POLICY: COMPARING THE CASES OF BRAZIL, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Maria Isabel Santos Lima

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Cold Wars (1947-1991), climate change has gained an increasing space in the international debate due to its potential risks to the preservation of life on the planet. But it was only in the late 1970s that the subject was included in foreign policy discussions through several international events that focused on themes connected to climate change. However, while the issue was gaining notoriety, a denialist movement also emerged, coordinated by sectors linked to fossil fuel and with the involvement of scientists and members of the conservative movement aiming to contain mitigation actions that could cause an economic impact on these industries. Over time, climate change became a public concern, mainly due to the increase in extreme events, giving it a sense of urgency. Nevertheless, these occurrences were not enough to stagnate the denialist discourses, which gained an even greater space in society with technological tools that facilitated the dissemination of information and fake news. With the most recent democratic crisis, and the consequent rise of conservative governments in several countries, these denialists' speeches started to be incorporated into the official discourses of some governments of this nature. Therefore, the present research project aims to analyze the formulation of foreign politics through institutional and paradiplomatic mechanisms on the issue of climate change, seeking to understand the role of actors such as parliaments and subnational governments. We will focus on three governments that adopt denialist positions – Jair Bolsonaro (2019-) in Brazil, Boris Johnson (2019-) in the United Kingdom, and Donald Trump (2017-2021) in the United States – to understand if there is any action in this regard and how subnational entities and non-state actors would act in this agenda throughout these governments. For this purpose, we will use sources such as official documents, speeches, and news articles, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants. The hypothesis we intend to prove is that, in the context of the cases studied, despite the negative action of governments at the national level, institutions and paradiplomatic mechanisms have continued to act actively on this international agenda to mitigate the politics of obstruction at the national or federal level.