Shades of green: a comparative study of climate discourse in the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement
**SHADES OF GREEN:** a comparative study of climate discourse in the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

**Abstract**

The Earth’s natural systems have evolved over billions of years to support the life we live today. Yet, the Earth’s innate ability to sustain the ecosystem is taken for granted. This research addresses on arguably the most ubiquitous issue to penetrate all aspects of the human experience – climate change. The omnipresent nature of climate change presents the challenge of approaching the issue: *where does one begin?* The discursive history of climate change can reveal where the current position stands, and how it may proceed in the future. The transformations in the conceptualization of climate change, including its evolutionary discourse, reveals humankind’s normative relationship with the Earth. This research aims to explore the evolution of climate discourse on an international level through a qualitative discourse analysis. It compares two important landmarks in the climate regime: the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 and the Paris Agreements in 2015. Through a coding scheme based on three discourse strands—national climate security frame, international climate security frame, and human security frame—this research uncovers that there has been a significant increase in the prominence of human security frame and international climate security framing in the Paris Agreement since the Kyoto Protocol of 1998. This is due to the increased inclusivity of international cooperation and informed awareness of the pervasive impacts on human welfare. The findings of this study contribute towards the evermore relevant and urgent field of green diplomacy and its discursive practice in policies. It surfaces normative assumptions and ideas held by the international community towards the climate threat and their strategies to combat it.

**Keywords:**

Climate security – green diplomacy – Kyoto Protocol – Paris Agreement – discourse analysis
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INTRODUCTION

In an ever-increasing globalized epoch, the Earth and its populace has confronted issues of grand proportions previously unknown. With the growing developments in human civilization comes with it new problems. This research addresses on arguably the most ubiquitous issue to penetrate all aspects of the human experience—climate change. Climate change takes on characteristics unlike any issue civilization has had to face. This research highlights the irony which comes with anthropogenic claims of human-induced climate change and its ultimate impact humans themselves. One could make a strong argument suggesting that the increased aggression of (fast) capitalism and imperialist pursuits have driven up the Earth’s rising temperatures, thereby threatening the natural systems in place to support human life on this planet (Nixon, 2011).

With the development of such problems, humans have to react with innovative problem-solving to respond to threats that do not ascribe itself to traditional or familiar frameworks. In the late-20th century, the marriage of international governance and scientific research took place to materialize policy in order to limit greenhouse gas emissions and instigate development policies that were environmentally sustainable (Dunne et. al., 2010). The establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are two international platforms that have legitimized climate change as a pressing issue for the security of the planet. The road to this milestone was turbulent, and in some fields, it has remained so. The discourse, or normative ideas communicated through power dynamics, of climate change is critical, contested, and ever-evolving. How climate change is understood and addressed determines how humans are going to strategize to tackle it.

This research aims to explore the evolution of climate discourse on an international level. It compares two important landmarks in the climate regime: the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 and the Paris Agreements in 2015. Both products of climate negotiations were hosted by the Conference of Parties (COP) of the respective time periods, and adopted by the UNFCCC. The Kyoto Protocol in 1998 was most notably known for the voluntary commitment of developed countries to uphold adaptation and mitigation systems to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, of which the developing country shared no equal burden. Indeed, it did not assign developing countries (i.e. China and India) to these thresholds despite their massive contributions to ozone depletion.
Seventeen years later, the Paris Agreement in 2015 was adopted and received with far more popularity and positive reception, coined as the “universal accord” in which participating countries of the COP aimed to limit global temperature rise to less than two degrees Celsius. Double the length of the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement of 2015 is revolutionary, even for the present day climate regime. This study aims to compare these two climate deals through a content and discourse analysis to uncover the evolution of climate discourse embedded in these documents. This presents the question:

*How has the climate change discourse in the Paris Agreement of 2015 evolved from the Kyoto Protocol (1997)?*

**BACKGROUND**

*Climate change*

The Earth’s natural systems have evolved over billions of years to support the life we live today. Yet, the Earth’s innate ability to sustain the ecosystem is taken for granted. The progress of human civilization depends on existing natural resources and, since the late-19th century, the extraction of resources for mass consumption. The natural production of such resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, and forestry are not proportionate to the rate of human extraction. In other words, man-made systems of consumption are abusing the ecosystem (Nixon, 2011). Ironically, exploitation of the Earth’s resources renders humankind’s days on this planet numbered.

Climate change is an environmental issue that is exponentially threatening all life on Earth. This developed as a result of increased levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses being trapped in the Earth’s atmosphere, causing irregularities in the Earth’s climate in the long-term (“What is climate change?”, n.d.). But this research approaches climate change not as an environmental phenomenon, but as a *human* phenomenon. While drastic variances in the Earth climate is not a particularly new occurrence (*What people get wrong about climate change*, 2015), human-induced climate change is. The increasingly aggressive methods of resource extraction fueled by imperialism and fast-capitalism has sped up the process of destroying the natural systems present to keep the Earth in balance and support human life (Nixon, 2011). This directly impacts
the ecosystem and well-being of all life on Earth, which includes the basic human needs such as food production, health, and water infrastructure (“What is climate change?”, n.d.). This environmental challenge is so disruptive to the foundations of human civilization that it is directly relevant in all aspects of public life, from politics to technology to trade to social justice. Crist (2007) argued that the consequences of climate change range from the controllable to the catastrophic. The irony in this issue is prominent: the exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems robs humankind of their longevity.

The omnipresent nature of climate change presents the challenge of approaching the issue: *where does one begin?* The discursive history of climate change can reveal where the current position stands, and how to proceed in the future. The transformations in the conceptualization of climate change, including its evolutionary epistemology, reveals humankind’s relationship with the Earth (Bergthaller et. al., 2014; Williams, 2013). Rooted in research of the natural sciences, the study of the climate change phenomenon was utilized in the 1970s predominantly to support environmental justice (Crist, 2007; Dunne et. al., 2010). Early ideas of environmental sustainability was viewed as incompatible with development and modernity, also known as the *limits-to-growth* narrative (Crist, 2007; Dunne et. al., 2010). Unsurprisingly, such pessimistic views did not bode well in politics and there was a disregard of environmentalism in the public consciousness. Furthermore, while environmental activists pled for urgency and resources, time plays a complex role in the climate debate. Firstly, the impacts of climate change is not often immediate and thus, the “tipping point” of the issue is unestablished (Crist, 2007; Nixon, 2011). Secondly, the long-term impacts of climate adaptation and mitigation programs will often not be recognized instantaneously (Nixon, 2011). Despite the lack of initial support, this research was proven to be foundational in its critique of the human-environment relationship.

Climate change research persisted, led by scientists and NGOs, and grounded itself beyond its initial natural scientific field and to the likes of political sciences, economics, and humanities (Bergthaller et. al., 2014; Dunne et. al., 2010; Sorlin, 2012). In the late-1980s, the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) was established as the scientific body for UN climate research, and the issue became institutionally endorsed by the UN and thus, legitimized on an international scale (Bodansky, 2001; Crist, 2007; Dunne et. al., 2010; McDonald, 2013). This research-led shift oriented the idea of climate change from being “a single causal issue”, to a
“threat multiplier” endangering the fabric of human civilization (McDonald, 2013; Williams, 2013). The politicization of climate change did not occur until a few years after the creation IPCC, in which the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 was formed as the official UN arm for climate governance (Agrawala, 1998). Campaigns for environmental responsibility grew, led by NGOs and endorsed by politicians (Dunne et. al., 2011). Such developments in recent decades illustrate the advancements made in the climate debate. The once sidelined discussion of climate change grew in urgency, placing the issue of environmental security at the center of the environmental challenge (Dyer, 2001).

UNFCCC

While this research focuses on two prominent agreements which have derived from COP3 in 1997 and COP21 in 2015—the Kyoto Protocols and the Paris Agreement, respectively—these treaties were negotiated under the UNFCCC framework and, thus, a discussion of the organization is essential. This includes a conversation with previous works of literature exploring the history and internal dynamics of this climate cooperation initiative.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is a prominent international institution that is a product of historical developments in battling climate change. Looking to its roots, the pursuit to understand and tackle environmental issues was pioneered by independent scientific researchers. Through growing collaboration with policy-makers and government bodies, the environmental justice movement gained support through the establishment of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, thereby acting as the scientific base for policy and governance (Agrawala, 1998; Bodansky, 2001). Acting as a cross-disciplinary bridge, the IPCC symbolized a step from research to policy for climate change. It is significant to observe that this structural intersection of the natural, political, and social sciences is internationally legitimizing for the climate issue. In 1994, during the Rio Earth Summit, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed and established, and an evolutionary milestone in the field of climate politics was found (United Nations, 1994).

The UNFCCC is arguably the most high-profile, supra-national institution that places the climate issue as their central focus. The developed framework states the UN’s recognition of climate change and the need for policy adaptation, the inclusivity of developing countries, and
monitoring scientific and structural developments (United Nations, 1994). Through an annual gathering organized and chaired by the UNFCCC, the Conference of Parties (COP) events gathers UN member states and non-state actors to negotiate climate policies with an overarching goal to stabilize the global temperature so as to not threaten the climate any further. Through this ambition, one can assume that facilitating international climate cooperation comes with the grand obstacle of negotiating under various urgencies beyond politics and the market. To illustrate, the threat of rising global temperatures for small island nations and least developed countries is an issue of basic survival, an insecurity of their livelihoods and natural habitats—a status that is not given to all participating UNFCCC members. Thus, this consideration of unequal adverse effects of climate change will consequently effect the negotiations and internal dynamics of climate cooperation.

**EMPIRICAL STRATEGY**

**Theoretical framework**

*International cooperation*

This study will focus largely focus on how the climate security discourse plays on an international stage. Particularly, in international negotiations. Throughout the development of the environmental cause, it was not until the 1990s that environmentalism was taken as an international political concern (Bodansky, 2001). Its introduction on the international political sphere provided environmentalism, particularly climate change, the political legitimacy to be regarded as a global issue. Indeed, the creation of institutions like the IPCC and the UNFCCC materialize such impacts that environmental issues have on the international political landscape while simultaneously looking at these issues through governance and security lenses (Dyer, 2001). From this point, international relations and climate change continue to shape each other in theory and practical senses.

The “international” approach to climate security is varied. In fact, certain scholars question the appropriateness and effectiveness of placing the climate agenda on a level so diverse in interest and capacity. Dyer (2001) argues that “the international”, referring to the arena of supranational organizations, is bent out of shape when it comes to addressing the “wicked issue”
of climate change (Dunne et al., 2010). Keohane and Victor (2011) conducted research regarding the various climate regimes that exist in the international arena. They propose a spectrum of regime change which is based off of 1) interest-power distribution, 2) uncertainty, and 3) linkages (Keohane & Victor, 2011). They offer the two poles: regime complexes, which are narrowly-focused regulatory regimes, and internationally-integrated regimes, which are single integrated legal instruments. The former can be attributed to the likes of small NGOs that focus on forestry or water sanitation, whereas the latter refers to larger organizations such as the World Bank and the UNFCCC. They argue that regime complexes are more focused and more adaptable with specific issues within climate change, which guarantees greater certainty in providing long-term solutions (Keohane & Victor, 2011). They question the impacts that large integrated solutions, such as the Kyoto Protocol, have in the long-term and feasibility; the Kyoto Protocol has created a gridlock and yielded the creations of smaller coalitions to make solutions realizable.

There are multiple issues when climate change is taken on an international platform, such as the supranational character of the UNFCCC or the World Bank. Bodansky (2001) observes the international negotiations throughout the evolution of climate regime and argues that the diversity present at supranational organizations have hindered progress. The differing economic landscapes of countries, from the developed North to the developing South, create clashing camps of interests and capabilities. Also, infrastructure capacities and perceptions of vulnerabilities determine present a variety of risks that are not seen by some states than others (Agrawala, 1998; Bodansky, 2001; Dyer, 2001). Detraz and Betstill (2009) argue that the international tensions present at such negotiations are predominantly a North versus South issue. The relationship between the developed countries and the rest (which includes developing countries, the least developed countries, and small island nations) have been controversial; the North has been held accountable by other nations to assist them and be the main donors to the international climate pledge. Having such a polarizing debate on an international platform so varied in interests and capacities renders the negotiations contested and stagnant in materializing policy. However, the existing international climate cooperation is a testament of how far environmentalism has come from being a suspended and dismissive issue to being a pillar of human security.
Understanding the human-environment relationship remains an academic and practical debate. It is essential to understand that the discourse surrounding climate change is critical, contested, and fluid to the ongoing research and stakeholders. While the issue of climate change can be proven by scientific data, it can be understood through its discourse. Discourse is defined as the “particular way society discuss about the world, as a social practice” (Joye, 2009). If one’s reality is shaped by how one perceives the world, then discourse is a landscape in which realities are actively constructed. Hajer (1995) writes that discourse is contextual, reflecting the ideas of a time and place. He agrees with Foucault’s argument that there is power in discourse while simultaneously rejects other ideas of its universality and timelessness; Hajer proposes that the discursive landscape is not homogenous but competitive and hosts multiple, clashing perspectives about the world (Hajer, 1995). It is dynamic and not static to the universality proposed by Foucault (Hajer, 1995; Said, 1978), thereby producing dominant and marginalized narratives in society (McDonald, 2013). From this argument, one could add that discourse is not merely a product but it actively shapes society’s understanding of the world. In this case, climate change discourse both informs the public and determines the direction of future solutions (Detraz & Betstil, 2009; McDonald, 2013). Indeed, policy-makers and world leaders are not above public discourse about climate change; on the contrary, they are heavily involved in this conversation.

Power relationships are reflected in the discursive landscape. Various frames are constructed in the climate change discourse, which can be viewed as the “selection of certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way that promotes a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, p. 52, 1993). They are narratives with assumptions and referents. In this case, there are multiple frames in which climate change can be approached from. This framework will introduce examples which will be relevant for the study.

As certain frames dominate over others, climate change discourse reflects the focus and concerns of society. The specificities of a frame is provides a centrality and focus to the dialogue (Dyer, 2001; McDonald 2013). Crist (2007) acknowledges that climate change itself is a dominant narrative in the wider discourse of environmentalism. She further criticizes the climate change narrative is another opportunity for humankind to prioritize their security and instill “planet
entitlement” over ecological preservation (Crist, p. 33, 2007). She addresses the environmental community by urging criticism of this dominant narrative as a way to prevent climate change from acting as the focus problem of environmentalism (Crist, p. 36, 2007). Another frame that arguably dominates over all others is the security narrative of climate change (Bodansky, 2001; Crist, 2007; Detraz & Betstil, 2009; Dyer, 2001; Graeger, 2016; McDonald, 2013; Stritzel, 2007). The climate security frame is broad and encompasses many factions that emphasize various factions; from the national to the ecological—climate change as a security threat is a diverse discussion that often times contest with each other. A security approach to climate change is controversial theoretically and in the practical sense due to the politico-military nature of security (Deudney, 1990; Dyer, 2001). This research will observe the shifts, or the lack thereof, in the climate security narrative in international negotiations.

Security

Exploring the security dimension of climate change would benefit from a framework that establishes the concept of security. In the field of international relations, the neo-realist theory characterizes security as the end goal of all states. Indeed, neo-realism views states as anarchical, struggling for power in order to ensure security from each other (Dunne et. al., pg. 78, 2010). The power sought after by states are relative gains which emphasizes on the importance of gaining more power relative to other states to ensure survival (Dunne et. al., 2010). This highlights the assumption that, unlike classical realism, neo-realism recognizes the unequal distribution of power amongst states which can contribute towards heated security dilemma. Despite their emphasis on “security”, neo-realism fails to address that culture and various domestic regimes contribute towards the construction of the idea of “security”. Furthermore, this surfaces the shortcomings of neo-realism in its emphasis of only militaristic security (Baldwin, 1997; Dunne et. al., 2010; Paris, 2001; Stritzel, 1997). From this, one can concur that the threat of climate change is a non-issue under a neo-realist perspective. Nonetheless, this theory can serve beneficial when addressing climate change at an international level.

Various scholars discuss what it means to securitize an issue—particularly a non-military issue. Stritzel (2007) and Paris (2001) offer contrasting arguments regarding securitizing issues that are non-state and non-militaristic in nature. Stritzel elaborates on the Copenhagen School concept of securitization, also known as the rhetorical event of defining a security threat (2007).
While criticizing the Copenhagen School for the short-sightedness and reductionist nature of the theory (Hisbaron, 2016), he proposes that the process of securitization involves *performance* and *social embedment*. Despite his elaborations, Stritzel maintains a militaristic stance, assuming armed conflict as the ultimate level of insecurity. In other words, securitization defines an issue *just as* threatening as military conflict. On the other hand, Paris is critical in the overall approach of traditional security studies. His work highlights a problem within the field regarding its limited capacity to address non-state threats and insecurities (Paris, 2001). He offers a paradigm of *human security*, which has a spirit that is non-militaristic, that must find its way into security studies for the field to stay relevant (Paris, p. 96, 2001). His work is critical, questioning how non-state threats can be conceptualized in traditional security studies.

The arguments against securitizing non-state threats is due to the compromising relevance of security studies. Paris (2001) and Stritzel (2007) both utilize the ambiguities presented in the concept of security. Indeed, the broad idea allows for instrumentalization for policy-making, including securitization (Baldwin, 1997; Stritzel, 2007). While this has its benefits, Dyer (2001) argues that the concept of security is already over-stretched and capitalizing on its ambiguities questions its relevance. One could find a link between any issues to the expansive nature of *security*. And although a scope of security could be called for, this can be argued against as specifications could cause divisiveness in agenda-making (Paris, 2001). Thus, the dilemma of security studies asks: what is *not* regarded as security?

*Climate security*

The climate security narrative has evolved to encompass various conceptual ideas of *security* and its relation to the threats of climate change. The link between *security* and *climate change* is utilitarian as it is epistemological. In the world of policy-making, it grants the issue access into the “high politics” of society, mobilizing funding and prompting urgency to the issue (Detraz & Betstill 2009; McDonald, 2013). Furthermore, the study of climate security meets at an increasingly relevant intersection between security studies and environmentalism; climate security challenges the normativity of traditional ideas of security (McDonald, 2013).

While many scholars debate on *how* the security narrative should be constructed others question whether the security association is valuable at all. This debate is rooted in the outdated
implications of traditional security studies. Traditional security studies are characteristically state-centered; the (militarized) state is the unit of study playing the relational roles of offensive-defensive strategy and feeding into the idea of the security dilemma (Williams, 2013). Such features of state-centeredness are not central to climate change; the state does not threaten another through militarization and the complexities brought by climate insecurity cannot be narrowly reduced to a state-centered analysis. Detraz and Betstill (2009) criticizes “the state” as a unit of climate change analysis, arguing that states are necessary actors of climate regime but should not be central. Crist (2007) argues that the status quo of state-centered policies, driven by national interests and prosperity over human and ecological well-being, cannot be maintained while simultaneously combating the climate issue. These strong cases argue against making “the state” as the subject of threat within climate security discourse. However, Dyer (2001) highlights an assumption of such non-state centered approaches by arguing that the theoretical shift away from “the state” is not always clear, asking to what degree the environment can be separate from state issues. This emphasizes the pervasive nature of climate change. While national climate security and environmental conflict are insightful narratives, non-state centered approaches arguably dominate the climate security discourse.

The general idea of environmental security implies the existence of environmental insecurity. Thus, one might question the point at which insecurity can lead to instability or conflict. Detraz and Betstill (2009) conducted research to observe whether there has been a discursive shift from environmental security to environmental conflict from the Kyoto Protocols to 2009. Environmental conflict can be defined as the group engagement in violent conflict due to environmental degradation (Detraz & Betstill, 2009). In such a circumstance, national security derived from political and economic stability is prioritized over the well-being of their population. This state-centeredness is translated in environmental conflict policies in which military intervention will be required to ensure national security. Their study showed no such shift in discourse. They further argue that such a shift is unnecessary and even dangerous to the progress made towards ensuring climate security (Detraz & Betstill, 2009). The narrative itself only addresses conflict avoidance in the short-term, therefore not tackling the root causes of environmental degradation. Furthermore, emerging and vulnerable countries are more likely to receive bias by policy-makers due to the various political and economic regimes developing in their states. The environmental conflict approach is a specifically-militarized faction that embodies
a top-down mentality. Thus, while the environmental conflict narrative gives insight to the risks of climate change, it should not receive primacy over ensuring climate security.

If “the state” is inherit of traditional security studies, then what unit of security does climate security utilizes? McDonald (2013) refers to the subject of this threat as the *locus*, identifying what or who climate security is meant to be protecting. His study proposes that there are three dominant climate security discourses that are centered on different loci—human security, national security, and international security—and a fourth marginalized discourse of ecological security (McDonald, 2013).

Firstly, the *human security frame* is a discursive approach that places human well-being at the center of its security focus. This frame is informed by the dimensions outlined by the Human Development Report of 1994 that lists seven dimensions of human security: economic, health, personal, political, food, environmental, and community (Paris, 2001). This challenges state-centered security policy. As highlighted by the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, human security is centered on the well-being of humankind over states (McDonald, 2013; Paris, 2001). However, one should recognize that separating the state from human security is arguably not possible due to the interdependence (i.e. responsibility to protect). Secondly, *national security framing* approaches the climate issue by placing nation-states as the focal subject that is both under threat but also guarantors of security from external threats (McDonald, 2013). This frame is arguably the most appealing to national security and defense institutions when connecting the non-militaristic threat of climate change to the safeguarding of one’s national interests (Detraz & Betsill, 2009; Dunne et. al., 2010; Dyer, 2001; O’Brien et. al., 2007; McDonald, 2013; Paris, 2001). One can argue that this is the securitization of climate change because, like the theory of securitization (Stritzel, 2007), national security framing illustrates the protection of national interests from climate threats through state-centered security policy. Thirdly, the *international security frame* focuses on protecting the “international community” from the threat of climate change, focused on (state-based) international order and human welfare (McDonald, 2013). This frame recognizes international organizations as central to building security, emphasizing order and justice as actions towards adapting and mitigating climate change (McDonald, 2013). The importance of highlighting the loci of climate security is discussed by Dyer (2001) who argues that such a focus is important to tackle any issue and to materialize policies. A lack of locus in the
climate security discourse allows the status quo to go unchallenged. For this study, these three loci will be used as coding categories when exploring the presence of security framing in the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. This study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1**: The Paris Agreement will have a more prominent security framing than the Kyoto Protocol.

**Methodology**

**Data collection**

To explore the research topic in question, the products of key international climate change negotiations will be analyzed. Specifically, a study on the climate change discourse embodied in the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 and the Paris Agreement of 2015 will be conducted to shed light on the developments of the climate discussion on an international level. Both documents were produced and adopted by the Conference of Parties (COP) members, the decision-making body of the UNFCCC, with 192 and 197 signatories for the respective agreements ("Introducing The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", n.d.; "Paris Agreement - Status of Ratification", n.d.; "Status of Ratification", n.d.). This research acknowledges that various agreements and accords have been reached regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation, both from within and outside of the UNFCCC. However, it will focus on the two agreements as they are two out of the three “key steps” taken by the UNFCCC, an international climate change organization that is unmatched in scope and size ("Introducing The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", n.d.). In other words, their adoptions were set in an internationally-rich discursive context with diverse key players. It is through this relevance that the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement will serve as the documents for discourse analysis to uncover the narratives of climate change.

There are two sets of resources in this research: the UNFCCC documents (the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement), and contextual documents (news articles, previous literature). The former is focal as it is the primary discursive arena of which climate change discourse will be explored, while the second set contextualizes the findings of the former set.

*Method*
The design of this methodology is to approach the research question with descriptive and analytically discursive means. With the collected documents and articles, this research will conduct an inductive, qualitative method using content analysis to conduct a discourse analysis for context. More specifically, this analysis is inspired by the theoretical findings of McDonald (2013) and research design of Florian Schneider (2013). Previous research conducted by McDonald (2013) proposes that discourse analysis uncovers how and why ideas are addressed the way they are. Such an analysis assumes that documents are not passive political or cultural artefacts, but inherently reflexive of society—or, in this case, the international community. The way they engage with the idea of climate change determines how they aim to solve the issue (Detraz & Betstill, 2009; McDonald, 2013). Schneider’s research method for discourse analysis will guide the design of this study (2009). His work has informed the creation of three main discourse strands in this study: national security, international security, and human security. These are three different security framing foci that the research will explore, using three sets of coding categories (see Operationalization). Coding categories are themes and key ideas uncovered from theoretical research on climate security (see Theoretical framework) that are used as indicators for each of the discourse strands. When key ideas of the coding categories can be found in the documents, they will act as discourse fragments as they illustrate the presence of a discourse strand (Schneider, 2009).

Information and ideological themes collected from the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement will be extracted through manual content analysis. While this is largely explorative and descriptive, the discourse identified in the two UNFCCC documents will be placed into its greater contexts to enhance the findings of the development of climate change discourses. These two analytical methods of content analysis and discourse analysis will be used unearth the changes, or lack thereof, in the discussion of climate change on an international level.

Operationalization

In order to answer the research question, the hypothesis will be operationalized in order to navigate through the documents and resources. This research presents the hypothesis that the Paris Agreement will have a more prominent security discourse than the Kyoto Protocol. In this context, prominence is defined by a heightened use and embodiment of security discourse, which includes the three security framings in focus (i.e. national security, international security, and human security).
security). It will approach the UNFCCC documents by conducting a discourse analysis with the discourse strands and their coding categories, created in accordance to previous literature used. It will explore the extent to which the hypothesis is accepted. The operationalization of the three security frames aim to code the UNFCCC climate deals to uncover traces of security framing in order to accept/reject the hypothesis. The national security frame is based on the theoretical framework on the main tenants of neo-realist theory and ideas from security studies (i.e. securitization, security dilemma). The international security frame is built off of the institutionalist theory of International Relations, and the theoretical framework on international cooperation. The human security frame is informed by the UNDP dimensions of human security found in their Human Development Report of 1994, referred to multiple times in the works of McDonald (2013) and Paris (2001).

Table 1.1: Table of discourse strands and their respective categories used for empirical strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse strands</th>
<th>National security frame</th>
<th>International security frame</th>
<th>Human security frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coding categories</td>
<td>Sovereignty</td>
<td>Global cooperation</td>
<td>Economic security</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Military defense</td>
<td>Institutionalism</td>
<td>Health and well-being</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statehood</td>
<td>Institutional cooperation</td>
<td>Personal security (identity/cultural)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conflict prevention</td>
<td>Global justice</td>
<td>Political security</td>
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<td>Environmental security</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community safeguarding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following coding scheme will guide the manual content analysis of the two UNFCCC documents in order to reject or accept the hypothesis. It will not only shed light on the existence of security discourse, but it will also identify the relation of the security discourse (i.e. national/international/human). The three discourse strands allows for a more descriptive and analytic comparative study on the climate discourse development from the Kyoto Protocol to the
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Paris Agreement. These coding strands are largely descriptive, however the findings will be further contextualized to understand its greater significance regarding the international developments of climate change discourse.

RESULTS

This research utilizes qualitative research methods to analyze the given documents and data, particularly content analyses to inform a discourse analysis. Through the manual content analyses of the UNFCCC documents, various topical themes and underlying political dynamics within the texts were unearthed. The results of these analyses build upon each other to explore the hypothesis of whether increased security framing has developed in the climate discourse of Paris Agreement since its predecessor, the Kyoto Protocol. This section of the study critically illustrates these findings and connects them to the wider research and theories previously deliberated.

Climate security frames in the UNFCCC climate deals

The hypothesis of this study argues that the Paris Agreement of 2015 has greater climate security framing than that of the Kyoto Protocol of 1998. This refers to the research question at hand which aims to uncover the developments in climate change discourse between the two UNFCCC climate deals. The focus on security framing explores the assumptions of climate change as a threat and how this idea is utilized in climate negotiations. As discussed in the theoretical framework, there are various climate security frames actively present in climate policy, media, academia, institutional structures, and other cultural spaces (Detraz & Betsill, 2009; Deudney, 1990; Dyer, 2001; McDonald, 2013; Paris, 2001). The findings of the content analysis will be organized according to the locus or referent of the security frame—that is, the subject that the security frame is centered on (Dyer, 2001; McDonald, 2013). This will uncover the development of security frames and its implications in the climate discourse and negotiations.

National security

The national security frame approaches the climate issue by placing nation-states as the focal subject in need of safeguarding from climate threats. The content analysis of this research reveals that the national security frame is not present in the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 with zero coding
fragments found and only loosely associated through the intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) introduced in the Paris Agreement of 2015 with one coding fragment found. While the Kyoto Protocol predominantly used nation-states as the main actors of the climate regime, it was used to address international cooperation and not as the focus of security. This study argues that due to the intergovernmental nature of the UNFCCC structure, the national security frame cannot be a dominant discourse in the international climate deals as it would undermine the credibility and reception of the UNFCCC.

Viewed from a neo-realist lens, the INDC-system introduced in the Paris Agreement emphasizes the sovereignty of nations by allowing states to create their own climate goals to collectively, as Parties to the Convention, maintain the Earth’s temperature from reaching 2°C warmer. Limitation targets are to be formulated by the Parties themselves in accordance of their various national circumstances, respecting national sovereignty that is both facilitative and non-intrusive, as stated in Article 13.3:

“13.3) The transparency framework shall build on and enhance the transparency arrangements under the Convention, recognizing the special circumstances of the least developed countries and small island developing States, and be implemented in a facilitative, non-intrusive, non-punitive manner, respectful of national sovereignty, and avoid placing undue burden on Parties” (United Nations, 2015).

A similar attitude can be found in the Kyoto Protocol of 1998, as expressed in Article 2 in which “each Party included in Annex I… in order to promote sustainable development, shall: implement and/or further elaborate policies and measures in accordance with its national circumstances (United Nations, p. 1, 1998). The national security framing exemplified in both climate deals was aimed at securing the sovereignty of states from external intrusion and forcible compliance.

However, one can argue that the Clean Development Mechanism of 1998 and the INDC system of 2015 are characteristic of an international security frame; by protecting national sovereignty from a punitive climate regime, the UNFCCC and its climate deals can facilitate a culture of mutual cooperation that is more likely to have more participants sign and ratify the treaties on their own terms. This implies that traditional security studies, which rejects the possibility of mutual trust and security (Williams, 2013), is a paradigm unfit for international
climate negotiations. Furthermore, a previously conducted research regarding environmental conflict argues that the militarization of climate regime is not only incompatible with the threat of climate change, but inherently dangerous (Detraz & Bestill, 2009). Indeed, the nature of climate change as a “threat-multiplier” suggests its impacts to spread beyond the military’s capacities (McDonald, p. 46, 2013). Therefore, the weak presence of national security frames in the climate agreements can be argued as strategic and tactical to avoid forcibly subscribing states to a narrow scope of security.

*International security*

The *international security* frame focuses on protecting the “international community” from the threat of climate change. This research recognizes the nature of the UNFCCC as characteristically internationally-oriented and mutual cooperation is essential to its strength. The content analysis will explore in which ways the international security frame is embodied in the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, and whether a development can be observed. From the findings, the Kyoto Protocol has 10 coding fragments, and the Paris Agreement has 12 coding fragments. Both climate deals have a strong presence of the international security frame due to pronounced emphasis on international cooperation to meet collective goals. However, the international security paradigm is more expansive in the Paris Agreement, which invites ambitious participation from more Parties and underlining goals of global sustainable development.

The Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement are both climate deals that are supported by institutional cooperation within the UN framework, all with the common goal of tackling the climate issue. Both documents indicate a reliance on the IPCC (the UN body for climate change research) and the UN Environmental Programme (United Nations, 1998; United Nations, 2015). Furthermore, both are famously known for developing mechanisms for international cooperation, which includes technological and financial transactions, while respecting each other’s sovereignty. The second Article of the Kyoto Protocol, dedicated to the promotion of sustainable development, underlines the necessity for international cooperation and facilitation for the success of the Protocol (United Nations, p. 1-3, 1998). There is also emphasis on the collective responsibility to reduce adverse impacts of climate change on developing country Parties in Article 3.14 of the Kyoto Protocol:
“3.14) Each Party included in Annex I shall strive to implement the commitments mentioned in paragraph 1 above in such a way as to minimize adverse social, environmental and economic impacts on developing country Parties… Among the issues to be considered shall be the establishment of funding, insurance and transfer of technology” (United Nations, 1998).

A similar initiative can be seen in the Paris Agreement, most notably in the INDC system. The goal of that mechanism is one of cooperation: allow each country to set their nationally determined goals of climate adaptation and mitigation, with the hopes of collectively limiting the increase in global temperatures to under 2°C, as seen in Article 4.3-4.4:

“4.3) Each Party’s successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the Party’s then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition, reflecting its common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

4.4) Developed country Parties should continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets. Developing country Parties should continue enhancing their mitigation efforts, and are encouraged to move over time towards economy-wide emission reduction or limitation targets in the light of different national circumstances.” (United Nations, 2015).

An exchange of research, expertise, and technology is also promoted with references made three times in both climate deals (United Nations, 1998; United Nations, 2015). One can argue that an international security framing is inherent in international negotiations such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreements. While this research agrees to the argument, one cannot assume that any discourses remain static between 1998 and 2015.

As previously discusses, the Paris Agreement addresses the diversity of participants (see *Actors: inclusivity and specificity*). Indeed, this effects how responsibility is addressed and proposed to the countries of various capacities. By recognizing the different aptitudes of developing countries, coupled with the INDC system, the Paris Agreement allows all Parties to ratify the treaty, as aimed in the Paris Agreement point 65:
“[The Paris Agreement] urges the institutions serving the Agreement to enhance the coordination and delivery of resources to support country-driven strategies through simplified and efficient application and approval procedures, and through continued readiness support to developing country Parties, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, as appropriate” (United Nations, 2015).

This is complimented by its reference to the Cancun Adaptation Framework that was created in 2010 to help strengthen cooperation amongst Parties. This includes: “strengthening institutional arrangements to support the synthesis of relevant information”, “assisting developing country Parties in identifying effective adaptation practices” (United Nations, pg. 25, 2015). This is a stark difference to the Kyoto Protocol which did not address the self-determination of developing countries with the same regard.

Human security

In order to find evidence of human security framing, this research considers non-state subjects and references to the elements of the UNDP Human Development report on human security as traces of human security frames. The manual content analysis of the two climate deals reveals that there is a drastic difference in the use of the human security frame between the climate agreements; the human security framing in the Kyoto Protocol is loose by association and does not refer to the humanity of climate threats, revealing 5 coding fragments. Whereas, the 2015 Paris Agreement refers to specific issues within the human security paradigm while often addressing humankind in the Agreement, revealing 13 coding fragments.

Human security framing was utilized not only to unify the Parties under an apolitical banner of the “human race”—it also underlined the omnipresent threat of climate change. The Paris Agreement introduces its draft decision by addressing the climate issue as “a common concern of mankind… an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet” (United Nations, p. 1, 2015). A similar address can be found in the Annex of the Paris Agreement:

“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous
people, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity” (United Nations, 2015).

Here, the Paris Agreement annex acknowledges the respective obligations on human rights, health, and human right to development and women empowerment as essential to the action taken against climate threats (United Nations, p. 21, 2015). However, an address to humankind, irrespective of the states, was not made in the Kyoto Protocol. The concerns of climate change were only addressed to “the Parties”, states, and non-governmental and intergovernmental bodies. In fact, the Kyoto Protocol uses the word “human” four times, three of which referring to human-induced activities (i.e. land-use, anthropogenic emissions) and the fourth use referring to human capacities to mitigate climate change—none of which were used as a subject of security discourse. These findings highlight that the 2015 climate deal conceptualizes climate change as an issue that transcends political borders, whereas the Kyoto Protocol relies heavily on state-centered units of transactions.

Human security framing is also reflected in the way the effects of climate change are described and the proposals they generate. Both the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement acknowledge the adverse impacts of climate change, which include food insecurity and social inequity; however, the latter climate deal is explicit with the issues that threaten human security, whereas the former broadly recognizes the elements of human security. For example, poverty and food security, while connected to the state, are regarded as elements of human security according to the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 (Paris, 2001). The Annex of the Paris Agreement recognizes the “intrinsic relationship that climate change actions… have with access to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty… and the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security” (United Nations, p. 21, 2015). Poverty reduction is mentioned three more times, and food insecurity one more time.

Such key issues are not explicitly mentioned in the Kyoto Protocol. Instead, the human security framing of the Kyoto Protocol was loosely associated with the recognition of “adverse effects” of climate change. These include economic, social, and environmental effects that are recognized as human security elements by the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 (Paris, 2001). This can be seen in Article 2.3 of the Protocol which calls the Parties “to implement policies
and measures… in such a way as to minimize adverse effects, including the adverse effects of climate change, effects on international trade, and social, environmental and economic impacts on other Parties, especially developing country Parties” (United Nations, p. 2, 1998). These adverse effects under the human security paradigm are referenced four more times in the Kyoto Protocols.

While both documents recognize the adversity of the climate threat on human well-being, explicit references to poverty and food security found in the Paris Agreement suggests that the human security frame is well-informed and cemented in the climate discourse. The various issues put forth in both documents are conceptualized through the human security frame to underline the pervasive nature of climate change and its impact on civilization. However, the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 remain grounded on states as subjects of concern, with no recognition of apolitical subjects. This idea changes in the Paris Agreement in which the threat of climate change is framed as an issue of humankind, and not solely of nation-states. As seen in the climate discourses between the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 and the Paris Agreement of 2015, one can argue that the development from loosely-associated human security frames to issue-specific security frames illustrate an increased prominence of the human security frame.

Actors: Inclusivity and specification

A comparative content analysis between the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement reveals that there is a difference in the way the respective documents address participants and actors of the accords. The research argues that this shapes the respective security discourse and uniquely serves all three discourse strands. The “universality” of the Paris Agreement, as often used to characterize the latter climate deal, (“Paris Agreement”, 2017), can easily be observed from the greater number of signatories than the Kyoto Protocol. However, its “universal” not only proven by numbers—the inclusivity and differentiation of such actors in the Paris Agreement allowed for global applicability. This is a discourse fragment of international climate security, as well as human security due to its recognition of various degrees of adversely risks. While the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 was also an international climate agreement, the accountability between developed and developing countries are unduly polarizing. By bringing one’s focus onto how the decision-makers address actors in the documents, it becomes clear that the Paris Agreement calls for collective action from every actor in greater specialization than called upon previously in the Kyoto Protocol.
An important catalytic development in the UNFCCC climate regime is the termination of the use of the “Global North/South divide” when referring to the various states. The Global North/South divide is terminology that categorizes countries into two distinct groups based on their economic standing: developed countries with richer market economies and countries with developing/transitioning market economies (United Nations, 1998). As socio-economic capacities of nation-states are one of the determinants of their contributions to the climate deal, one can understand why such considerations were made (Agrawala, 1998; Dyer, 2001; Nixon, 2011). The UNFCCC refers to such categories to differentiate circumstantial approaches to climate regime.

Article 11 of the Kyoto Protocol illustrates the relationship between developed and developing countries in regards to financial and technological transfer (United Nations, 1998). Explicitly indicated in Article 11.2 and 11.3, developed countries were tasked to:

“Provide new and additional financial resources... including for the transfer of technology... to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties in advancing the implementation of existing commitments... The implementation of these existing commitments shall take into account the need for adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds and the importance of appropriate burden sharing among developed country Parties.” (United Nations, pg. 10-11, 1998).

However, this categorization is dichotomist and problematic as it regards the global political economy as seemingly black-or-white, glancing over the variations of economic and environmental discrepancies within the categories themselves. For example, emerging economies of 1998 that emit greater amounts of greenhouse gases (e.g. India, China, and Russia who have released over 930 million tons of CO₂ emissions each) are in the same grouping as underdeveloped countries who have released under one million tons each (i.e. Chad, South Sudan, French Guyana) (Ritchie & Roser, 2017). This lack of differentiation oversimplifies the politico-economic and environmental profile of all Parties.

While the terms developed and developing countries were still used in the Paris Agreements, it also recognized new groups under the developing country Parties umbrella: small island developing States and least developed countries. They were introduced in the Proposal by the President address of the Adoption of the Paris Agreement, in which the President of the
UNFCCC urges institutions for “continued readiness support to developing country Parties, including the least developed countries and small island developing States” (United Nations, pg. 9, 2015). The creation of the new group highlights the vulnerable physical, political, and economic circumstances that contribute towards their risk perception regarding climate change, breaking away from the dichotomist two-category divide of the Kyoto Protocol.

The two new subgroups remain involved in the climate deal due to the recognition of their circumstances. While small island developing States and least developed countries are called to submit assessment reports, which include anthropogenic emission inventory and nationally determined contribution progress reports (United Nations, pg. 28-29, 2015), “[they] may submit this information at their discretion” and not on a biennial basis that developed and the remaining developing countries have to adhere to (United Nations, pg. 12, 2015). However, this does not deconstruct the normative idea of states as the main units of transactions, thereby reinforcing respect for sovereignty to protect national interests. Thus, this specification of countries’ capacities can be argued through a national climate security discourse.

By redefining how the UNFCCC views their state-actors through recognition of circumstance and capacity, the Paris Agreement is not only perceived as universal but target-oriented. For example, Article 6 regarding “Clean Development Mechanisms” calls on small island developing States and least developed nations to prepare strategies for low greenhouse gas development based on their circumstances:

“The least developed countries and small island developing States may prepare and communicate strategies, plans and actions for low greenhouse gas emissions development reflecting their special circumstances” (United Nations, 2015).

Alongside the newly-established intended nationally determined contributions, such developments in the Paris Agreement allows Parties more agency to design their climate policies on a state-level in order to reach the -2°C target.
DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute towards the evermore relevant and urgent field of green diplomacy and its discursive practice in policies. The scope in this academic endeavor looks at the development of climate discourse between the Kyoto Protocol of 1998 and the Paris Agreement of 2015. Built into the design of this research, the International Relations security frames on the national, international, and human level served as units of observation. The purpose of this study is to explore the discursive developments in international climate diplomacy to expand the history and understand current state of climate affairs.

Limitations of the study

Firstly, this research can be improved through its design. Currently presented, it involves a qualitative methodology to uncover the climate discourses in the climate deals. As complimentary data to further enhance findings, this research would benefit from utilizing both a qualitative design and quantitative operationalization of discourse fragments and strands. The combination of both approaches allows for greater discussion, one which is expansive in data yet specific in its aim.

Furthermore, the operationalization of security discourse strands of international, national, and human security discourses are mainly informed through Western schools of International Relations and security studies. Not only are the concepts of International Relations security predominantly illustrated using Western academia, it also determines the conceptual lenses in which the coding scheme went through the UNFCCC climate deals. This research would have benefitted from non-Western and post-colonial literature regarding climate change and climate diplomacy.

Future research

Looking into the normative ideas of climate change is valuable in all of the available cultural and political artefacts which include political campaigns, literature, marketing campaigns, scientific reports, and others. The scope of this research is limited to two UNFCCC climate deals with regards to security discourse. An area for future academic study can be referred to investigating whether security discourse is present in IPCC Special Reports which are known for
developing data-informed scientific reports regarding climate change and their adverse effects. The context of such a research has a predominantly natural scientific basis, and the possible framing of scientific reports would be a significant contribution to climate discourse studies. Furthermore, a comparative study of regional media systems and their coverage of climate change can serve as another valuable area of study. Comparing regional discourses of climate change may reveal their perceived risks and normative ideas of their relationship with climate change.

CONCLUSION

This research was able to explore the climate discourses embedded in the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement to observe the developments between 1998 and 2015. While a discourse analysis cannot unearth what the actors of the Conference of Parties were deliberating at the time of the conferences, this comparative discourse analysis revealed the evolution of norms with regards to the international conceptualization of climate change. In conclusion, the hypothesis for this research is accepted; the Paris Agreement has a more prominent security framing than the Kyoto Protocol. The empirical design of this study is able to reveal, more specifically, that human security and international climate security are more prevalent in the “universal accord” of the Paris Agreement than the Kyoto Protocol.

By dissecting the discourse embedded in policy, one can unearth how ideas are communicated within the text and context of the source. Through the manual content analysis of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement using the coding scheme, the two most evident changes between the documents is how the latter document has greater presence of international climate security and human security.

Firstly, while the groundwork for international cooperation were laid down in the Kyoto Protocol, the mechanisms available in that time did not allow for collective action towards climate adaptation and mitigation from both developed and developing countries. The accords resembled that of environmental duties for developed countries as opposed to global unifying climate regime. Whereas, the Paris Agreement indicated a greater prominence of international security based off of two main ideas: the universality of the agreement and the INDC mechanism—both of which
inform each other. Here, countries’ sovereignty and capacities were respected to encourage domestically-determined emission targets and cooperation of virtually all parties.

Secondly, the human security frame is drastically more evident in the Paris Agreement and was barely addressed in the Kyoto Protocol. While the Kyoto Protocol indicated loose associations to the frame from usage of the term “adverse effects” several times throughout the accords, the Paris Agreement relied on illustrating explicit risks towards human security in order to frame the climate deal in a universal and apolitical way. Indeed, the Paris Agreement was more informed on the connections between climate change and food security, poverty, and sustainable development. This research argues that by presenting the threat of climate change as inherently widespread, it allowed for more countries to get on board and ratify the climate deal.

However, despite the growth in human security and international climate security, it must be recognized that the development of the national climate security frame remained stagnant between the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. One can argue that the national security frame is not only incompatible with such an expansive, international climate deal such as the aforementioned but it is also counter-productive to the aims of a global climate regime. This may leave one to question whether the disputed ideas between (traditional) security studies and climate diplomacy may ever find a common ground.

**Bibliography**


