

THE US WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Changing Perceptions in US Congress on Global Climate
Change Governance

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SUMMARY

This thesis is about the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (PA) and examines how this occurrence possibly changed the perceptions in US Congress regarding global climate change governance (GCCG). To research this subject, a comparison is made between the perceptions of Congress during the Obama administration, the Trump administration before the withdrawal, and the Trump administration after the withdrawal. To investigate GCCG, this concept is defined using four related concepts: accountability, legitimacy, responsibility, and transparency. This thesis relies on a qualitative research approach and has an intertemporal single case study design. This enables the thorough analysis and comparison of the perceptions of Congress. The perceptions are examined using the Congressional Records in which the debates of Congress are documented. The results of the analysis have discovered that even though the US withdrew from the PA under the Trump administration, the perceptions in Congress regarding GCCG only encountered small changes. To explain the results of the analysis, three theories are used: historical institutionalism, regime theory, and hegemonic stability theory. The theories explain that even though Obama bypassed Congress in signing the PA, this move was greatly applauded, mainly among the democratic Congress members who considered its crucial role in combatting climate change globally. This perception prevailed, also during the Trump administration, which shows the PA had created a new path and lock-in of the perceptions regarding GCCG in Congress. On the one hand, it is argued that the PA created a lock-in because Congress considered the US leadership role in GCCG as vital. This did not change with the Trump administration's withdrawal. On the other hand, the PA created a lock-in because it led to Congress members perceiving international cooperation regarding climate change as important. This also changed barely with the withdrawal. These considerations have led to the following main argument. Because the PA created a lock-in of the perceptions of Congress regarding the importance of US leadership and international cooperation in GCCG, when the withdrawal was initiated, Congress focused even more on those values and on convincing the Trump administration of their importance. Hence, the focus became more prominent on the inward developments regarding climate change than what other countries were doing.

PREFACE

When I started writing this thesis around six months ago, Donald Trump had just handed over the baton of the American presidency to Joe Biden. Rather soon after his inauguration, Biden announced his eagerness to get the US back in the Paris Agreement. As I knew that the withdrawal from this Agreement during the Trump administration had resulted in quite a bit of commotion, I figured that this would be the right time to delve into the four odd years of climate policy under the Trump administration. In a time of increasing climate change awareness, I was curious about the influence of deviant developments during Trump's presidency in terms of climate policy. The results of this curiosity are presented in this thesis.

I look back proudly on the process and results of this research project. Not only because of the outcome but also because it has been challenging to write this thesis during COVID-19. During the largest part of this process, it has not been possible to go to campus for meetings with my thesis supervisor and fellow students. However, I would still like to thank them for their main online support. First, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Darren McCauley for the positive meetings, always providing helpful comments on my work, and enabling me to get the best out of this project. I also thank my fellow students from the thesis circle for the ability to exchange ideas and provide feedback on each other's work. Additionally, I thank my parents for their continuous support, not only throughout this master, but my whole academic experience from the beginning. Lastly, I would like to thank Vincent for critically reviewing my work often, listening to my struggles on a daily basis, and providing great moral support throughout this whole process.

Now that I have finished this thesis, I am very much looking forward to what is ahead of me. Although I have truly enjoyed working on this research project, and the IMP master overall, I am really ready to start my professional career.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CANA	Climate Action Now Act
CBDR	Common but Differentiated Responsibilities
COP	Conference of Parties
GCCG	Global Climate Change Governance
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HI	Historical institutionalism
HS	Hegemonic stability
ICAA	International Climate Accountability Act
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
PA	Paris Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States

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1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter starts with a background of the topic explored for this thesis. Subsequently, the research goal and research question are defined, followed by this research project's societal and scientific relevance. Lastly, the thesis outline is provided to show the course of this study.

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The establishment of this framework symbolised the starting point from which the global climate change governance (GCCG) landscape could evolve. Since then, multiple international climate conferences have taken place to combat climate change collectively (Qian, 2020). At the time, the United States (US) was a great supporter of environmental action and treaties. In the two decades before the adoption of the UNFCCC, US leadership had been critical for the expansion of the international climate regime (Kelemen & Vogel, 2010). The US was even one of the first countries to ratify the UNFCCC, which officially pledged to realise “stabilisation of greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (Rabe, 2010, p. 4).

Nonetheless, as the 1990s progressed, a paradigm shift emerged in US climate policy. Under the George H.W. Bush administration, the US had suspended new environmental legislation (Steinhauer, 2020). The subsequent Bill Clinton administration tried but failed to restore US leadership in climate change since President Clinton could not get Congressional support for most of his climate-related initiatives (Kelemen & Vogel, 2010). Eventually, the adoption of the Byrd-Hagel Resolution in the Senate in 1997 revealed the increasing bipartisan reluctance to develop climate action. With a view to the forthcoming United Nations (UN) climate summit in Kyoto later that same year, the Byrd-Hagel resolution provided President Clinton little leeway because it had set out stringent requirements for a climate deal to gain support by the Senate (Kahn, 2003). Congress was sceptical of the Kyoto Protocol not because it questioned climate change but because Congress rejected the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) principle. Congress did not support the highly differentiated role as prescribed by the Kyoto Protocol since they considered climate change as a common problem (Murthy, 2019). This resistance of the US Congress was a harbinger for the gradual American detachment from GCCG that ultimately culminated in the non-ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (Steinhauer, 2020). Given these occurrences, significant international climate change-related agreements have always been proposed to the US Senate as treaties (Groves, 2016).

However, this was not the case for the Paris Agreement (PA – or hereafter also called the “Agreement”) as it was not proposed to the Senate. Initially, the PA was signed on December 12, 2015 by 196 countries at the Conference of Parties (COP) 21 in Paris. The Agreement came into force almost a year later, on November 4, 2016. The PA was created as an international treaty on climate change to limit global warming to well under 2 degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5 degrees, compared to pre-industrial standards. In order to reach this goal, all participating countries needed to cut down on GHG emissions drastically. The PA can be considered a milestone in the multilateral combat against climate change because it was the first binding agreement that united all countries to undertake joint and ambitious efforts to fight climate change (UNFCCC, n.d.). The PA was set up as a 5-year cycle during which increasingly ambitious climate actions would be taken by the participating countries each cycle. When they signed the Agreement in 2015, they agreed to present their climate action plans, also known as the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), by 2020. In these NDCs, all countries presented the actions they were going to take to decrease their GHG emissions and, consequently, reach the aims of the PA (UNFCCC, n.d.).

In general, the PA has proved to be a political success in terms of climate change negotiations and traditional diplomacy. Climate diplomacy for the Agreement turned out successful because international dialogue brought about cognitive change during the negotiations. In addition, the preferences in terms of policy commitments at international and national levels were altered by convincing arguments about the economic advantages of climate action (Dimitrov, 2016). On top of that, the implementation of the NDCs has contributed towards a more equitable future regarding the distribution of GHG emissions between countries. In fact, the NDCs lead to declines in GHG emissions inequality among countries compared to 1990 (Zimm & Nakicenovic, 2020).

To get back to the point of the PA not being proposed to the Senate compared to previous major international climate deals, this has been a highly debated subject. Essentially, the design of the PA had allowed the US to participate by way of a presidential-executive agreement legitimately. This design enabled the Barack Obama administration to bypass Congressional approval (Kemp, 2017). This action has been greatly criticised, for example the former UN climate chief argued that “what Obama did at the end of his second term was fundamentally undemocratic, to sign up to the PA without going to the Senate and Congress and instead doing it via executive order” (McGrath, 2020). Moreover, because the PA was signed by an executive order, it would also become easier for a subsequent Republican president to withdraw (Groves, 2016). This reality did not take long to happen, as the following Donald Trump administration was very outspoken about the intention to pull out of the PA since the beginning. Despite all the national and international uproar this intention caused, the official US withdrawal became a reality in November 2019 (Friedman, 2020; Sampathkumar, 2017).

1.2 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

Section 1.1 has shown that the US Congress has played an important role in the history of international climate agreements and the role of the US in them. Moreover, they have often been a constraining factor, as demonstrated with the non-ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. In contrast, the establishment of the PA developed somewhat differently from the perspective of the Congress. President Obama was highly criticised for bypassing Congress when signing the PA (Groves, 2016). Hence, it might seem likely that Congress was pleased when the subsequent Trump administration decided to withdraw. Furthermore, since this decision represented a major shift regarding climate change perceptions compared to the Obama administration, it might also seem apparent that the ideas and perceptions of Congress regarding GCCG were rather different during those two administrations. Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG and discover how these might have changed after the withdrawal from the PA. To investigate this topic, the following research question and sub-questions will be posed:

Research question	
What was the impact of the US withdrawal from the PA on the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG?	

Sub-questions	Answered in
1. How can GCCG be defined?	Chapter 2.1
2. How can changes in perceptions regarding GCCG be explained?	Chapter 2.2
3. How can the changes in perceptions of GCCG be examined?	Chapter 3
4. How did the US Congress perceive GCCG before and after the withdrawal from the PA?	Chapter 4
5. How can the changes in perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG before and after the withdrawal from the PA be explained?	Chapter 5

Table 1. Research questions and in what chapter they will be addressed

The overarching research question will reveal the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG and how these possibly changed because of the withdrawal from the PA. The time frame in which this will be examined runs from November 1, 2015, to January 20, 2021. The starting point has been chosen because this was right before the adoption of the PA, and the end date because this was the final day of the Trump administration. The specific research period and the division of the periods compared are elaborated on in section 3.3. To answer the research question comprehensively, the

sub-questions mentioned in *table 1* have been formed to consider the different aspects that play a role in the answer to the main research question. In section 1.4, these sub-questions are addressed in relation to the chapters.

1.3 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

The research for this thesis is scientifically as well as societally relevant. First of all, its societal relevance is mainly related to the importance of combatting climate change in general. Climate change is a global issue; it crosses borders and needs to be dealt with collectively. The whole world is profoundly interconnected, as the occurrences in one area of the world can have far-reaching consequences on the other side of the globe (Gills & Morgan, 2020). Since climate change affects everyone, this is a crucial topic to study. Also, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stressed the urgency of international climate action by stating: “Now more than ever, unprecedented and urgent action is required of all nations” (Christiansen et al., 2018). Because this scientific research has developed over the past decades, and these scientific findings are voiced increasingly, “the world’s leading decision-makers seem to finally be waking up to the emergency” (Charney & Hauke, 2020, p. 114). Considering these findings, it is interesting and relevant to look into international climate policy during the Trump administration, as President Trump made decisions that sailed right into global climate realisations. Therefore, the research for this thesis will focus on the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG. The originality of this research project lies in the fact that the perceptions are examined through different characteristics of GCCG, which will be explored in the next chapter. This has not been done before, but it gives the public and other governments a sense of what aspects of GCCG Congress considers critical. Because of this, climate interest groups and other governments can respond better to these perceptions and lobby or target their discussions more effectively to improve the international combat against climate change.

If this research finds that the perceptions in Congress change drastically because of the withdrawal from the PA, it can be argued that President Trump’s actions have been rather influential. However, suppose this is not the case, it shows that one administration does not affect the course of the US in the field of climate change that much and international environmental politics in general. Because President Trump’s decision to withdraw created great national and international uproar, it is relevant to determine the actual influence of this decision on Congress. After all, this will give more insight in the viewpoints of the representatives of the people, and therefore the American people, regarding GCCG. This will also guide other countries concerning viewpoints of the US outside of the Trump administration.

1.4 SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Next to societal relevance, this research also has scientific relevance. The main reason this research is scientifically relevant lies in the fact that the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG have not been investigated extensively in the context of the withdrawal from the PA. If a certain topic has not been studied yet, this does not directly mean it is relevant to examine. However, it is relevant in this case because the impact of the US withdrawal on GCCG is highly debated in the existing literature. For example, Chai et al. (2017) have studied the potential impacts of the withdrawal on global climate policies. Furthermore, Pickering et al. (2018) have considered the effect of the withdrawal on the ambition and compliance of other countries, and Cooper (2018) has examined the influence of the withdrawal on the efficacy and legitimacy of the PA. In general, these studies largely focus on the impact of the withdrawal outside of the US. Because the perceptions of Congress about the PA and GCCG have not been examined extensively before, this thesis contributes to the existing literature by diving into these perceptions. This is also where the originality of this research project lies.

Contrary to the perceptions of the Congress, the PA and the US withdrawal are highly debated in the existing literature. Therefore, examining these perceptions provides an original angle on GCCG. Moreover, since the Trump administration passed the baton to the Joe Biden administration so recently at the time this research project started, the perceptions of Congress can only be examined in its entirety now that Trump's presidency has come to an end. To sum up, seeing that the US withdrawal created great global uproar, and the fact that there is little research on this topic yet, it is relevant to investigate academically what the impact of the withdrawal was. This thesis aims to contribute to this from the perspective of Congress.

This research also offers an original theoretical contribution to the existing literature. This thesis applies the following theories: historical institutionalism (HI), regime theory, and hegemonic stability (HS) theory. Although these theories have been used in the existing literature to explain decisions and occurrences related to the PA, they have not been applied in the context of each other. To illustrate, Pistorius et al. (2017) have considered the path-dependency of institutions in relation to the PA, Gordon (2016) has examined the effectiveness of the PA through the lens of regime theory, and Lee (2020) has applied HS theory in his research regarding the prospects of socialisation under the PA by investigating the US and China cases. To complement the existing literature, this research will show that the three theories can be complementary, and they are combined to highlight the perceptions in Congress from different angles.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

This first chapter has introduced the research topic of this thesis, and the following chapters will elaborate on this. Hereafter, chapter 2 provides a literature review through an extensive discussion of GCCG and the related concepts. After this, the theoretical framework is constructed to help understand the findings of this thesis at a later stage. Hence, this chapter answers sub-questions 1 and 2. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology, and addresses sub-question 3. This chapter shows how the research for this thesis is conducted through a qualitative single case study design. It also elaborates on the methods and policy documents that are used for the analysis. Subsequently, chapter 4 contains the document analysis using the concepts explained in chapter 2. Here, sub-question 4 is answered as well. Thereafter, chapter 5 discusses those results and uses the theories to frame these. Hence, sub-question 5 is addressed here as well. Lastly, chapter 6 elaborates on the conclusions of this thesis and illustrates the limitations of this research as well as several recommendations for further research. In short, the main research question is answered in this final chapter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 presents the literature review and theoretical framework of this thesis. In the literature review, the concept of GCCG will be defined using an in-depth study of the existing literature on several connected topics. These also form the base of the analysis in chapter 4. Next to that, the theoretical framework for this research is outlined to demonstrate how changes in perception regarding GCCG can be explained. Three theories are introduced to provide a comprehensive explanation later in chapter 5.

2.1 GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE

In the first part, the concept of GCCG is explored through four associated concepts: accountability, legitimacy, responsibility, and transparency. These concepts are selected because they are prominent in the academic literature about GCCG. To illustrate, Najam and Halle (2010) described accountability as a critical challenge in improving GCCG and reaching climate goals. Bernstein (2004) considered that legitimacy had become a key concern because climate policy has increasingly become an international issue. Rive et al. (2006) also argued that responsibility is a critical issue in GCCG because it deliberates the countries' contribution to climate change and what this means for the actions they should take internationally. Likewise, Ciplet et al. (2018) discussed transparency as a critical area of political conflict in GCCG and its importance because it is often posed as a solution to problems in GCCG. These concepts are defined using different perspectives and approaches found in academic literature in the following four sections. Moreover, they are examined regarding climate change and their meaning and purpose in the PA precisely. Even though these four chosen concepts are not the only important characteristics of GCCG, they have the most relevant elements in the context of the PA. To demonstrate, other important concepts that could have been considered are democracy, globalisation, and sovereignty (Qian, 2020; Stevenson, 2021). Not only are these issues stressed much less by the PA, but the four chosen concepts also cover them principally since their issues can be addressed by the four chosen concepts as well.

2.1.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability poses a fundamental challenge to improving global environmental governance (Najam & Halle, 2010). Even though these efforts are of great importance in the face of continuing environmental deterioration, they are hampered by problems within global environmental governance. For example, the system is fragmented and characterised as a culture of unaccountability

(Kramarz & Park, 2019). Here, accountability can be defined as “some actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have filled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met” (Grant & Keohane, 2005). In GCCG, there have been multiple endeavours to deal with this culture of unaccountability. For instance, through providing more transparency, presenting justifications of governance decisions, and creating evaluation and monitoring processes. Kramarz and Park (2019) have considered that this development has led to an accountability trap. Indeed, accountability processes are increasingly important in GCCG. However, it remains unclear whether the increase of accountability instruments improves environmental outcomes, particularly since climate degradation continues unabated.

In general, two types of accountability can be identified. On the one hand, within “narrative accountability” actors explain the reasons for certain decisions and actions as well as engage in a dialogue with a technical panel (Mansbridge, 2009). According to Stevenson (2021), this type of accountability reflects the current architecture of the PA, but it is not the most effective type because diplomatic standards and respect for state sovereignty do not benefit a strong process of questioning and answering. Therefore, he proposes another type of accountability, namely nested accountability. A technical panel should be in place to improve accountability, and more dialogue with civil society to safeguard the integrity of the national climate change-related pledges. This form of accountability is useful for holding political leaders more accountable (Stevenson, 2021).

Bäckstrand et al. (2018) have argued that the climate governance system is characterised by polycentricity. This means that the system is characterised by interdependence among the different actors and institutional fragmentation. This leads to issues regarding the accountability and legitimacy of the system. Because accountability is about the agent-principal relationship, it becomes complicated in a polycentric governance system as there is not one consistent principle. In contrast, many different private and public actors are engaged in many different transnational networks. Therefore, not only hierarchical, top-down accountability is necessary, but also non-hierarchical, horizontal accountability that focuses more on reputational accountability through mutual monitoring (Bäckstrand et al., 2018). So, multiple forms of accountability are necessary to assess the accountability in climate governance (Bäckstrand, 2008).

Along the same lines, Widerberg and Pattberg (2017) have also discussed that the complex transnational climate change regime has raised several accountability challenges. For example, the expanding borders of the climate change regime are starting to move accountability away from the multilateral level, the UNFCCC, to a more intricate structure. Next to that, reporting, monitoring, and being transparent still pose serious challenges even though, for example, the amount of data is

increasing very quickly. Lastly, the availability and use of sanctions are insufficiently understood in the context of GCCG (Widerberg & Pattberg, 2017).

Furthermore, Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen et al. (2017) have also investigated the accountability of the global climate governance system. Contrary to the studies mentioned previously, they have considered the role of the media in strengthening accountability in GCCG. They have found that the general news coverage of, for example, global climate meetings in newspapers is not significant enough to hold governments accountable regarding the fragmented global climate governance system.

In contrast to international climate agreements adopted prior to the PA, this one differed because it provided a framework for major emitters to set their targets and be held accountable for their international activities (Falkner, 2016). Specifically, it can be argued that the explicit provision in the Agreement that focuses on the obligation to collaborate with non-state actors like local communities, civil society, and corporations has proved to be important for keeping the nations accountable to their commitments in the NDCs (Lesnikowski et al., 2017). Furthermore, the accountability issue also gained attention in the negotiations for the PA because the EU and the US collaborated to realise a hybrid system that would harmonise the flexibility of bottom-up oaths with top-down accountability in a purposeful way. This system would guarantee that the national pledges would be subject to stringent monitoring and reporting to verify that the nations were indeed fulfilling their obligations (Parker et al., 2017).

The key characteristics of accountability that are important in the context of the PA and will appear later in this research are mainly related to instruments that help keep countries accountable to the pledges they have made in the PA. To illustrate, presenting justifications of policies to reach climate goals, evaluation and monitoring processes to keep countries accountable to their NDCs, and horizontal accountability through mutual monitoring.

2.1.3 LEGITIMACY

Next to accountability, *legitimacy* is a critical issue in world politics. “Legitimacy can be defined as the acceptance and justification of shared rule by a community” (Bernstein, 2004, p. 142). To be able to handle major policy problems, global governance institutions need legitimacy. The concept of legitimacy has two different elements: normative and sociological legitimacy (Tallberg et al., 2018). On the one hand, normative legitimacy is the case when an institution “has the right to rule – where ruling includes promulgating rules and attempting to secure compliance with them by attaching costs to non-compliance and/or benefits to compliance” (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 405). On the other hand, sociological legitimation occurs when an institution “is widely believed to have the right to rule” (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 405).

In modern governance, democracy is a fundamental source of legitimacy. Moreover, democratic processes lead to better decision-making and greater compliance compared to other governance approaches. However, these democratic processes are largely tied to activities within nation-states. The increase of activity beyond this has awakened debates regarding the democratic deficit of global governance systems, including the global climate system. In other words, since democratic institutions are still connected to the individual nation-states, but the authority has moved beyond national borders, the issue of the democratic deficit has appeared (Bäckstrand & Kuyper, 2017). Dombrowski (2010) has highlighted this issue as well. She has considered that the democratic legitimacy of intergovernmental decision-making largely relies on the perception that the governmental delegates represent their citizens. However, the governmental delegates often do not represent their citizens and local communities well enough in practice.

Since the growth and expansion of international institutions because of supra-nationalisation and trans-nationalisation has emerged, issues regarding the acknowledgement of executive multilateralism as a decision-making method have developed as well. The more international institutions interfere in formerly national affairs, the more they will be challenged with legitimacy issues (Zürn, 2004). In fact, a large part of the decisions taken in multilateral environmental agreements usually does not get formal consent of the countries affected by those decisions (Andresen & Hey, 2005). Nonetheless, consent is still broadly perceived as a legitimate foundation of obligation because these commitments prevail through time and remain to bind countries, regardless of whether they acknowledge what the commitments specify (Bodansky, 2012).

Bernauer and Gampfer (2013) have examined a solution that is often posed to the legitimacy problem in GCCG, namely larger involvement of civil society. They have conducted several survey experiments on this involvement and found that individuals appreciate civil society engagement in GCCG. They also found that when civil society is excluded, popular legitimacy for GCCG declines. However, when civil society is added, it rises again (Bernauer & Gampfer, 2013).

Frumhoff and Stephens (2018) have argued that legitimacy can only be obtained when all different stakeholders' values and beliefs are considered respectfully. In fact, legitimacy relies partially on the participation of trustworthy actors. Legitimacy can most likely only be reached once there is international collaboration in which both major emitting countries and vulnerable developing countries are truly devoted to improving climate change nationally. With the establishment of the PA, this has been the case. According to Falkner (2016), since all major emitters have pledged to make the Agreement work, the reinforced legitimacy of it enlarges the sense of responsibility and obligation of most countries as a result. However, it is unlikely that this development alone will override clashing national interests.

Nonetheless, true efforts were made to consider everyone's main interests through mutual trade-offs and strengthen legitimacy. The negotiations were tightly controlled; everyone was being consulted, while the outcomes of the consultations were kept unknown overall to delegations who were not directly affected by a particular issue. In short, the PA was created by relying on the secrecy of the negotiations. While this is not unusual in diplomacy, it was different here as there was also a larger focus on connecting this secrecy with legitimacy (Dimitrov, 2016).

Even though the PA holds legitimacy as a product agreed to by countries, many of them legitimised it even though they did not consider the Agreement an adequate response to climate change. This also counts for many NGOs, as they publicly supported it but did not consider it sufficient to combat climate change. However, those actors also considered that the UNFCCC could not bear another failure like Copenhagen, and it was uncertain if a better Agreement would ever be on the table (Allan, 2019).

The fundamental issues of legitimacy for the PA and this research are mainly connected to democratic and legitimate decision-making in GCCG. The focus is on democratic legitimacy through representing civil society, the role of international institutions in formerly national affairs, equal international collaboration, and the PA as a legitimate response to climate change.

2.1.4 RESPONSIBILITY

Because climate change is a global issue, who carries *responsibility* for it is also a critical issue in global governance (Qian, 2020; Busby & Urpelainen, 2020). Regardless of where climate change is caused, the atmosphere of the entire globe is affected by it. On top of that, not every country is equally affected by climate change (Petri & Biedenkopf, 2019). Qian (2020) has argued that GCCG is a public good since it is non-excludable and non-competitive. This given causes the global climate governance process to remain slow and wandering, even though it is a critical issue in global governance. This is also because the existing global climate system is fragmented and multi-centralized (Qian, 2020).

Busby and Urpelainen (2020) have made similar observations. They have argued that climate change is one of the most challenging collective action problems since GHG emissions arise from fossil fuels, which are fundamental drivers of modern economies. Even though not all countries carry equal responsibility, emissions arise from many different countries, sectors, and private actors. Therefore, global cooperation is necessary to prevent dangerous climate change. Busby and Urpelainen (2020) have also considered that the atmosphere can be perceived as a global common. It is indeed difficult to exclude actors, but there definitely is rivalry. After all, there cannot be endless GHG emissions without dangerous consequences for the climate.

To distribute the responsibility of climate mitigation, several scholars have proposed to calculate the historical responsibility for global warming. These calculations can then be used to divide

mitigation requirements in climate agreements (Rive et al., 2006). In other words, the degree of responsibility a certain country carries in terms of global climate change is usually characterised by “its contribution to the temperature rise, radiative forcing, sea level rise, or realist actual emissions” (Pan et al., 2014, p. 1811). These measures of responsibility degrees should be interpreted carefully because, for example, “countries that have developed early benefited economically, but have high historical emission, and countries developing at a later period can profit from developments in other countries and are therefore likely to have a lower contribution to climate change” (Höhne & Blok, 2005, p. 141).

To deal with the issue of responsibility, the UNFCCC established the principle of CBDR to address equity. This principle called for developed countries to take the lead in restricting emissions (Zimm & Nakicenovic, 2020). In other words, this framework means that states carry a shared responsibility to protect and recover the environment. However, their levels and forms of responsibility can differ considering their national circumstances. The CBDR principle is still highly relevant for the UNFCCC, and it remains one of the main challenges for GCCG (Brunnée & Streck, 2013).

This challenge is also in place with the PA. For reaching the PA goals of limiting the global temperature rise, all countries should take responsibility by making ambitious and equitable contributions to reducing emissions. Therefore, the NDCs were formed, and they had to be along the lines of the principles of equity and the CBDR (Pan et al., 2017). Even so, the overall climate mitigation effort of the present NDCs fall short of achieving the climate goals set by the PA (Rogelj et al., 2016). Moreover, Pan et al. (2017) have found that most countries should endorse more ambitious reduction goals to meet 2 degrees Celsius. In the same context, the NDCs of the EU and the US are not ambitious enough regarding the emphasis on taking responsibility.

The fact that the EU and the US have not been leading by example in taking responsibility through their NDCs can be considered an issue in GCCG. In particular, the US has been a key player in the PA. Not only because it is a major carbon emitter but also because other countries perceive the US as an example. Moreover, since the US is a huge economy and carbon emitter, the country is often portrayed as a pivotal actor because of its big historical responsibilities for climate change. In short, how the US shapes its climate policy affects global governance (Bang et al., 2016).

In the context of PA and this research, how climate responsibility is perceived is an important element. Furthermore, how responsibility should be shared, the meaning of the NDCs for taking responsibility, and the degree of responsibility countries show to take through their NDCs. Next to that, the historical responsibility of the US returns later in this research as well.

2.1.5 TRANSPARENCY

The last concept concerning GCCG discussed here is the issue of *transparency*. Transparency is closely related to the concepts mentioned above, and it is a highly debated topic in international policy-making circles. For example, Hale (2008) has argued that increasing transparency has become the usual response of the international community to accountability issues at international institutions.

In general, the definition of transparency is not entirely clear-cut and straightforward. However, in terms of the UNFCCC, transparency is a set of arrangements that ensures “the submission and quality of information provided by the Parties within the context of the Convention” (Tian & Xiang, 2018, p. 255). In practice, the transparency framework of the UNFCCC comprises obtaining information, reporting the obtained information to the international community, verifying the quality of this information, and lastly, assessing it (Tian & Xiang, 2018).

To return to Hale’s (2008) argument about the relation between transparency and accountability, several studies have looked into this relationship in the context of GCCG. For example, Ciptet et al. (2018) have examined the transformative capability of transparency in GCCG. Applying the specific case of climate finance in the UNFCCC, the translation of various transparency norms into accountability mechanisms has not been strong. In fact, the information revealed by countries is often vague. Therefore, they state, focussing on greater transparency will not be enough to create an equal and adequate climate regime (Ciptet et al., 2018). Similarly, Gupta et al. (2020) have also argued that transparency cannot be perceived as the undisputed answer to accountability issues in global environmental governance. They have concluded that there is an “increasing need to scrutinize the performative effects of transparency, as deployed in ever more complex transnational value chains or as generated in ever greater quantities through innovative, digital ICT technologies” (Gupta et al., 2020, p. 93).

In the setting of the PA, the concept of transparency was focused on considerably. The Agreement created an upgraded transparency framework for support and action, with inherent standard procedures and a flexibility approach related to the capacity of countries. Transparency of support and action is fundamental to the Agreement in general, which is vital for reviewing the NDCs. Because these are nationally determined, the transparency framework is significant to help countries track their progress to reach their goals set out by the NDCs (Winkler et al., 2017). The EU and the US, the global leaders in the negotiations, applauded this transparency framework and had advocated for it. In particular, the US did not want the Agreement to be legally binding, but instead, the focus would be on NDCs with stringent transparency requirements (Parker & Karlsson, 2018). In short, to endorse stronger actions in the PA, the NDCs were integrated by international norms to guarantee transparency and to press nations to accelerate and increase their efforts (Bodansky, 2016).

Even though the PA would not be legally binding, “the transparency framework requires Parties to provide information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving their

NDCs” (Rajamani & Brunnée, p. 548-549). This is important for the transparency framework to be effective, and assess, estimate and compare the impacts of the NDCs. For instance, comparisons are useful for pressing those countries with relatively modest NDCs. Transparency reviews can also improve the credibility and probability that a country will deliver on its announced NDC, particularly with multiple review rounds. These reviews expose the preferences and interests of countries, which makes more well-informed negotiations possible. On top of that, facilitating transparency – through collecting, reviewing, and distributing information on the NDCs – can decrease the costs of international agreements and reinforce their legitimacy (Aldy et al., 2016). All in all, it can be considered that the transparency framework of the PA “will stimulate countries to increase the ambition of their pledges by revealing information on Parties’ climate efforts” (Weikmans et al., 2020).

In terms of transparency, this research mainly focuses on the transparency framework of the PA since this is an important feature. Furthermore, transparency is also discussed in relation to accountability and the NDCs because the accountability instruments and the NDCs are crucial elements for the transparency framework of the PA to operate.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 SELECTION OF THEORIES

The following theories will help explain changes in perceptions of GCCG, and therefore explain the results of the data analysis later: historical institutionalism (HI), hegemonic stability (HS) theory, and regime theory. They can explain why the US Congress changed or maintained their perceptions of GCCG in the context of the withdrawal from the PA. All three of them will highlight different aspects, and therefore be complementary to each other. After defining the theories, three theoretical expectations are derived and linked to the research of this thesis. These expectations are investigated in chapter 5 about the discussion.

2.2.2 HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Hall and Taylor (1996) have identified three types of analytical approaches in institutionalism: rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and historical institutionalism. All of them emerged in response to the prominent behavioural perceptions in the 1960s and 1970, and they attempt to clarify the role of institutions in determining political and social outcomes (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Generally, institutionalists agree about the assumption that all institutions are rules that structure behaviour. However, they have different understandings about “the nature of the beings whose actions or behaviour is being structured” (Steinmo, 2008, p. 162). HI stands roughly in between

the rational choice and sociological perspectives because it considers that “human beings are *both* norm-abiding rule followers *and* self-interested rational actors. How one behaves depends on the individual, on the context, and on the rule” (Steinmo, 2008, p. 163). In essence, HI considers how institutions shape efforts by groups of actors to follow their interests (Lockwood, 2017).

Path-dependency is an important concept from HI. The concept indicates that the paths of institutions are largely determined by critical foundational choices, which then limit future change and often strengthen the existing institutional model (Thelen, 1999). Kemp (2014) has used the concept of path-dependency in his research about the possibility of majority voting in the UN and to help analyse decision-making changes and passivity within the UNFCCC specifically. He has argued that path-dependency can be beaten because there are multiple precedents of international organisations developing their rules over time. Moreover, political crises or failures are crucial in breaking path-dependency in the UNFCCC (Kemp, 2014).

2.2.3 HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY

HS theory is broadly used as an explanation for the successes and failures in international cooperation. The theory “claims that the presence of a single, strongly dominant actor in international politics leads to collectively desirable outcomes for all states in the international system” (Snidal, 1985, p. 579). However, this also means that the world system is chaotic when there is no hegemon, which has undesirable consequences for the individual countries (Snidal, 1985). Furthermore, the theory assumes that “global order can be achieved through international institutions only if one or more dominant hegemons have power or political will to enforce a system that benefits them” (Lee, 2020, p. 79). American political scientists have used this theory extensively for analysing economic relations patterns of the leading capitalist nations since 1945 (Webb & Krasner, 1989).

Scholars have often favoured the concept of leadership instead of hegemony when considering the role of the US in global environmental politics. Nonetheless, HS theory can be useful for explaining climate negotiation outcomes, even when the regime is stumbling, and hegemonic leadership is lacking (Paterson, 2009; Milkoreit, 2019). Considering that, if the hegemon is expected to solve governance issues singlehandedly, there has never been one hegemon in climate governance. However, if a hegemon is defined as a strong and single leading actor or a veto player, the US might have been a hegemon since the beginning of global climate diplomacy in 1990 (Milkoreit, 2019).

HS theory provides a perspective on how hierarchy can promote the provision of collective goods. The theory envisions that a single, dominant country will generate greater levels of international public goods (Lake, 2011, p. 60). Nevertheless, when no actor is prepared or able to execute this task, actors need to collaborate and bargain to create governance mechanisms that can work out a certain issue. This is common in post-hegemonic world politics since there is no predominant state imposing

solutions from above. This also makes enforcement difficult because those institutions need to be self-enforcing. Therefore, it can be argued that public goods are undersupplied globally, also in climate change (Hale & Roger, 2014).

2.2.4 REGIME THEORY

Regime theory entails the collective decision-making and implementation regarding the handling and settlement of international conflicts through the establishment of regimes (Wijen & Ansari, 2007). In this context, regimes are “social institutions consisting of agreed upon principles, norms, rules, procedures, and programs that govern the interactions of actors in specific issue areas” (Young & Levy, 1999, p. 1). Regime theorists analyse why cooperation between nations takes place. In particular, they focus on the role of regimes in alleviating international anarchy and resolving multiple collective action problems nations come across. Regularly, regime theory is associated and used interchangeably with neoliberal institutionalism, which builds on the assumption that regimes are fundamental for facilitating international collaboration (Bradford, 2007).

When comparing regime theory with HS theory, the main difference lies in how the theories approach international cooperation. HS theory considers that lasting international cooperation is only attainable if a hegemonic power is willing to enforce this kind of cooperation to other countries. By way of contrast, regime theory recognises that international collaboration is feasible beyond power structures if this is in the common interest of all countries involved (Zangl, 2014).

2.2.5 THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS

HI would be able to say something about whether Congress members perceived the PA as a vital lock-in or not. It can explain how the PA possibly affected the direction of perceptions in the US Congress. However, because President Obama signed such a ground-breaking deal without running it by Congress, it can be expected that the withdrawal by President Trump would not be highly criticized. On the other hand, however, if the signing by President Obama created an institutional lock-in that set the direction for the future, it can be assumed that Congress perceived the PA still as an important mechanism that would be crucial for the global fight against climate change. This assumption would mean that the PA was a foundational choice, after which the perceptions in Congress about GCCG would not change significantly, even when the Trump administration decides to withdraw.

Because regime theory can explain why countries cooperate, it can be applied here to examine how Congress perceived international cooperation and whether these perceptions changed with the US withdrawal. If the US Congress perceived climate change as a collective action problem before the withdrawal from the PA, this presumably did not change significantly afterwards. Thus, in the context

of regime theory, the perception of climate change as a collective action problem will not change only because of a move by the Trump administration.

Lastly, since the US presumably has a hegemonic position in global climate diplomacy, HS theory can be used to explain what this position means for the perceptions in Congress. Therefore, it is also highly likely that Congress recognises the importance of the hegemonic position in climate change. Moreover, it is probable that if Congress perceived GCCG important before the US withdrawal, this did not change a great deal after the Trump administration pulled out. After all, like the reasoning of regime theory, the perception of GCCG and the role of the US in it, is not expected to change because of the withdrawal by the Trump administration.

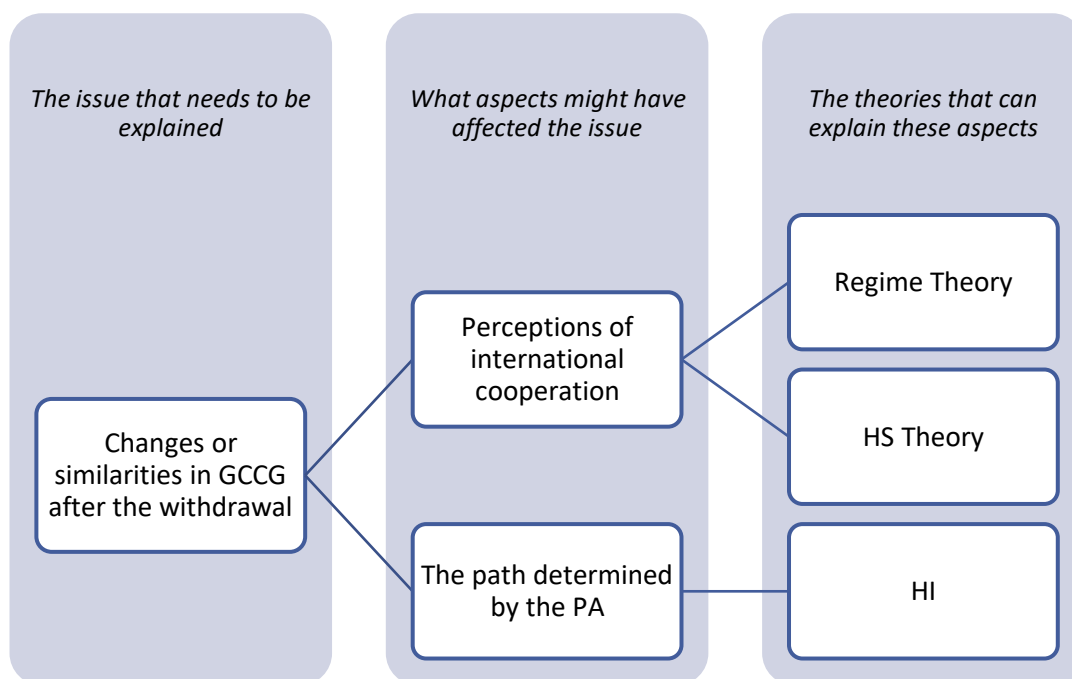


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Figure 1 shows the role of the theories in this research concisely. The strength of combining the three theories lies in the fact that regime theory and HS theory are used to explain the possible path-dependency of the PA. The originality of this approach is that the theories explain the outcomes of the research in different layers. HI is the first layer that illustrates a certain path set out by the PA and considers whether Congress members perceived the PA vital for international cooperation. So, HI will reveal how important international cooperation regarding climate change was for Congress. Subsequently, regime theory and HS theory form the second layer as they explain why international cooperation in this field was regarded as important or not. They can explain this issue from different perspectives as HS theory assumes that a hegemon in the world is important for international cooperation and regime theory does not.

2.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS: ANSWERING SUB-QUESTION 1 AND 2

To answer sub-question 1, GCCG can be defined using four associated concepts: accountability, legitimacy, responsibility, and transparency. Firstly, it has been argued that *accountability* in GCCG means presenting justifications of governance decisions to see whether they are in line with global environmental goals and creating evaluation and monitoring processes to hold countries accountable to the goals set by international climate agreements. Furthermore, *legitimacy* in GCCG has been defined by the presence of democracy and consensual decision-making, the importance of including civil society in global climate change politics, and the emphasis on equal international collaboration. Subsequently, the concept of *responsibility* in GCCG considers climate change as a non-excludable and non-competitive good that affects the entire globe. In the context of the UNFCCC, the CBDR principle is highly important to establish the level of responsibility. Lastly, *transparency* in GCCG can be characterised as a response to accountability issues, and establishing the transparency framework by the PA. This framework supports countries in tracking their progress to reach climate goals set internationally. To conclude, GCCG and the corresponding concepts also form the base of the coding scheme mentioned in the next chapter concerning the methodology.

To answer sub-question 2, changes in perceptions regarding GCCG can be explained by connecting three theories: HI, regime theory, and HS theory. First, HI can explain whether the US Congress perceived the PA as an important lock-in and what this meant for the direction of GCCG. Second, regime theory can clarify how the US Congress perceived international cooperation before and after the withdrawal of the PA. Lastly, HS theory can provide insights into the role of the US in GCCG and what this position means for the perceptions in Congress before and after the withdrawal. These theories return in chapter 5 when the analysis results in chapter 4 are discussed.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Since the previous chapter has provided the definitions of the concepts and theories that form the basis for chapter 4 and 5, this chapter elaborates on how the analysis is conducted. The following sections discuss the chosen research design, how the data is collected and analysed. Furthermore, the validity of the research is considered.

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine the perceptions within US Congress and their outlook on GCCG, the research for this thesis uses qualitative methods. Specifically, a co-variational analysis is used to show changes in the perceptions of GCCG. The advantage of this method is that it can show whether a certain factor, in this case, the PA, has an impact. The downside of this method is the difficulty to generalise the results and include other cases (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 33, 76). However, because the withdrawal from the PA happened just once in the case of the US, a single case study design is functional. Since a case study is a small-N study, this research method supports understanding certain motivations and perceptions of important actors (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 6).

Because the research for this thesis investigates one case at different times, before and after the US withdrawal from the PA, the mode of comparison chosen is an intertemporal design. After all, the independent variable of this research is temporal, as it compares the case before and after a change (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 44-45). Alternatively, a congruence analysis approach could have been considered because it is also a small-N design. This method would have focused on the explanatory relevance of different theoretical approaches, so it would have helped explain the perceptions of Congress more thoroughly (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 144). Nevertheless, the co-variational approach with an intertemporal design is chosen to compare the perceptions over time instead of analyse them thoroughly at one point to identify changes.

3.2 CASE STUDY SELECTION

As discussed, this research applies a single case study design. The advantage of this type of design is the focus on an in-depth examination of the setting. Case studies focus on revealing unique features of a specific case (Bryman, 2016, p. 60-61). Instead, a longitudinal approach could also have been chosen because it considers changes over time. However, a longitudinal approach is not the best fit for this research since it often involves interviews with the same people over a longer period (Bryman, 2016, p. 59). In this study, the focus is not on the perceptions of the same people over a longer period but on the general views at different times. So, a longitudinal approach is beneficial for

panel and cohort studies where people are followed for a longer period. If this is the aim, a case study design is less advantageous because it focuses more on an intensive study of one case. However, this is useful for this thesis as it also concentrates on identifying the most important characteristics of the nature of the case, which is the goal here (Bryman, 2016, p. 70).

Yin (2014) has distinguished four types of case study designs: critical, unusual, common, and revelatory types of cases. Changing perceptions of GCCG regarding the US withdrawal from the PA can mainly be characterised as an unusual case. Indeed, the fact that the US withdrew from the PA can be described as unique since a withdrawal has never happened before. Consequently, considering changes regarding the perceptions of GCCG in the US Congress before and after the withdrawal provides a unique opportunity to examine the impact of this occurrence. Therefore, this case study analysis can lead to new insights into the meaning and perceptions of GCCG.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Since this research focuses on the perceptions of the US Congress, governmental policy documents are used to investigate those perceptions. Even though it would be interesting to examine the perceptions by interviewing members of the US Congress, this does not lie within the scope of the research for this thesis. Due to time and distance constraints and the challenge of reaching out to those members, the focal point of this thesis will be document analysis. Also, media coverage could be used to investigate the perceptions, but this would not cover in-depth opinions and would not show specific debates and discussions between Congress members. Therefore, this research is based on a thorough analysis of policy documents. For examining the perceptions, the Congressional Records of the US Congress form the core of the analysis. These documents have been chosen because they include in-depth and elaborate discussions and explanations of the Congress members' perceptions and ideas.

Since the research for this thesis pursues to compare before and after the withdrawal from the PA, the data of three distinct and subsequent periods is collected. First, the period from the adoption of the PA onwards, in which the Obama administration was still in office. Second, the first stage of the Trump administration, the extent of time until the US officially withdrew from the Agreement. Third, the last stage of Trump's presidency, the period from the official withdrawal until the end of the Trump administration. From each of these three periods, the analysis uses the first thirty most relevant documents. Their relevancy is based on the order of the search results of "Paris Agreement" in the database of the Congressional Records. Not all first thirty documents were selected blindly, but a selection was made on documents that were really about the PA. After all, some of the findings also had the words "Paris" and "Agreement" in them, but were for example about the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015.

The fact that only the first thirty most relevant documents are used for each period can be considered a methodological limitation of this research. It is outside the scope of this study to analyse all documents in the database, but it would have provided the most comprehensive view. However, as the most relevant ones are selected for this research, these will provide the most important and extensive insights. Another limitation that can be identified here is that the analysed documents only provide one-sided information as they only describe what is said during public debates. This research does not consider how the perceptions of Congress members were voiced outside those debates, such as the media. Despite this limitation, the perceptions and discussions of many Congress members are analysed, which will provide for a comprehensive view.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

To analyse the collected data properly, it must be structured so that it can be interpreted. For this purpose, the method of coding is applied using the program ATLAS.ti. This program is an effective tool for conducting a qualitative analysis, because it can analyse large bodies of text documents (ATLAS.ti, 2021). For this research, the Congressional Records are studied through this program. Because the collected data is divided into three time periods, as pointed out in the previous section, the analysis is also split up in three corresponding parts. All three sections investigate the perceptions in US Congress about GCCG in relation to the PA. However, these perceptions will not be straightforward because they do not refer to GCCG directly. Therefore, the perceptions that appear from the documents are linked to the four concepts of GCCG – accountability, legitimacy, responsibility, and transparency – as illustrated in the literature review. These four concepts are used as the codes in the program, and they will show specifically how these issues come forward in Congress, and how they changed or not before and after the withdrawal. In the next section, the specific codes for each of the four concepts are discussed.

3.5 CODING SCHEME

Codes	Signs of the codes
1 Accountability	
1.1 The establishment of evaluation and monitoring processes	Signs of whether US Congress members have perceived accountability instruments important
1.2 Keeping other countries accountable	Signs of whether US Congress members consider it important to keep other countries accountable to the commitments they have made in the PA

1.3 Presenting justification of governance decisions	Justifications by Congress members for why certain policies and governance decisions in the field of climate change, and related to the PA, are important
2 Legitimacy	
2.1 Convincing to act	Signs of whether US Congress members have tried to convince Congress to act in the field of climate change, and show the urgency of acting, as well as looked for ways to legitimise climate action
2.2 Focus on international collaboration	Signs of whether US Congress members have stressed the importance of international collaboration with regards to the PA
2.3 The inclusion of civil society	Signs of whether US Congress members have included civil society opinions to legitimise climate action
3 Responsibility	
3.1 Signs of taking responsibility	Signs of whether US Congress members have perceived taking responsibility for climate action as important and whether the US has taken responsibility
3.2 International responsibility	Conversations of US Congress members about other countries taking responsibility for climate action and about other countries taking responsibility related to the national pledges of the PA
3.3 Calling on other countries to take responsibility	Signs of whether US Congress members have called other countries to take responsibility for climate change and act in relation to the PA
3.4 NDCs to take responsibility	Discussions about how US Congress members perceive responsibility through the national pledges made by the countries that signed the PA
4 Transparency	
4.1 Transparency as a response to accountability issues	Discussions about how US Congress members perceive the connection between transparency and accountability
4.2 The transparency framework of the PA	Signs of how US Congress members address this transparency framework established by the PA

4.3 Link with reviewing NDCs	Signs of US Congress members discussing NDCs to ensure transparency
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Table 2. Concise coding scheme

Table 2 illustrates the coding scheme used for the analysis in the next chapter. These codes are applied to the policy documents from the Congressional Records as laid out in the previous sections. Table 2 demonstrates a condensed version of the coding scheme. The complete coding scheme can be found in the Appendix [A].

3.6 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY

The validity of a study is a critical aspect of scientific research. The validity shows the level of integrity of the conclusions that arise from a particular study. Two types of validity concerning the research for this thesis are distinguished here: internal and external validity. Internal validity concerns causality and whether a conclusion holds a causal relationship between two or more variables (Bryman, 2016, p. 41). For case study research, the internal validity can be much higher than large-N studies since “difficult to observe cognitive aspects of individual actors play a central role” (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 20). This is the case for this research because it is a case study in which perceptions are analysed. Moreover, as the focus is on one case, much attention is being devoted to how the perceptions of the US withdrawal are measured, and what concepts are used for distinguishing these perceptions. Therefore, the accuracy of the indicators can be considered high. Taking into account all these aspects, the internal validity of this research can be ensured.

On the other hand, external validity concerns whether research conclusions can be generalised beyond the particular research context (Bryman, 2016, p. 42). Because a specific case is examined here, the focus on external validity is lower (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 229). The conclusions of this research will not have a high level of generalisation because they will be related to specific conditions and not compared to other cases either. This can be considered a limitation of this research because it is difficult to apply it straight to another case. However, this is not surprising since a withdrawal from the PA had not happened before the US did. Despite this limitation, the results of this study can show the impact of such occurrence, and the single case study design enables the conduct of a thorough and comprehensive investigation.

3.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS: ANSWERING SUB-QUESTION 3

To answer sub-question 3, the changes in perceptions of GCCG can be examined by conducting a co-variational analysis and using an intertemporal single case study design. This

enables to draw a comparison of the perceptions of the US Congress before and after the withdrawal from the PA. The perceptions are examined using the Congressional Records and coded through ATLAS.ti to uncover the changes because of the withdrawal. To investigate the specific changes, the four concepts of GCCG are used to code the documents.

4. ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 provides the analysis of this research and is conducted according to the methodology set out in the previous chapter. As mentioned, the analysis is divided into three parts that examine the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG in three subsequent periods. This allows an adequate comparison of the different periods to be made afterwards. All documents analysed are taken up in the Appendix [B,D,C]. For each period investigated, a table is created to show all documents and how often the concepts occur in each document. In other words, the tables demonstrate the frequency of each code in each document.

4.1 FIRST PERIOD: PERCEPTIONS DURING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first part of the analysis, the perceptions of Congress regarding GCCG during the Obama Administration are examined. Specifically, the period from the adoption of the PA until the end of the Obama Administration. Documents from the period November 1, 2015, until January 20, 2017, are used. In the next four sections, the perceptions are investigated using the Congressional Records. In particular, the perceptions regarding GCCG are considered in connection with discussions about the PA.

4.1.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability has appeared regularly in the discussions during this period (19.73%). When there have been discussions about this theme, the focus has been chiefly on justifications for why certain policies and governance decisions in climate change are essential. Especially in the weeks before and after the negotiations regarding the PA, many democratic members of Congress have tried to justify the importance of the Agreement. Mr. Tonko called it “good for our national security, our economy, and our environment” (2015-11-03, H7399-7). Mr. Markey discussed how “the consequences of climate change are evidenced around the world,” and that “temperatures are increasing, sea levels is rising, glaciers are receding, rainfall is changing, and people’s health is suffering.” He also discussed how “these impacts can worsen the tensions that are fuelling terrorism and conflicts around the world,” as well as that “the Pentagon and the CIA have both issues reports that found that instability from changes in the climate can contribute to conditions that breed

insurgencies” (2015-11-17, S7992-2). These statements were meant to explain the importance of international agreements, and justify actions in this field with scientific arguments (2015-11-17, S7992-2).

Similarly, Mr. Gallego stated: “I stand with the scientific, environmental, and public health communities who all agree that Paris must be the floor, not the ceiling, of our ambition” and, “If the world takes a step forward in Paris, our partners will be prepared to build stronger climate policies and agreements moving forward” (2015-12-09, H9085-2). This argument shows how the PA could function as an accountability instrument for urging countries to take steps forward. Furthermore, several months after the signature of the Agreement, Mr. Tonko argued that “the PA is already working, setting the foundation for a historic reduction in greenhouse gases, and paving the way to a thriving, clean global economy” (2016-04-19, H1837-2).

To ensure accountability, the creation of evaluation and monitoring processes has come up in the discussions several times. For example, Mr. Franken has argued that the Agreement “puts the planet on a safer trajectory than the one we have been on, but we have to remain vigilant and build upon that success,” and that “we have to hold other nations accountable, ensure that they commit to stronger reduction targets over time” (2015-12-16, S8697). These statements demonstrate that accountability processes and keeping other countries accountable have been key issues for Congress members.

Lastly, several discussions about keeping other countries accountable have also taken place. For example, Mr. Cardin mentioned the participation of US negotiators in Paris “in bilateral countries to encourage them to be aggressive in submitting their obligations and how we could follow up and make sure we achieve our goals” (2015-12-10, S8576-2). The perception that the US had played a key role in enabling the international collaboration to deal with the causes of global warming and support poorer countries most affected by it was rather prevalent. According to Mrs. Shaheen, “President Obama’s leadership was key in encouraging China, the world’s largest emitter, to submit an aggressive climate action plan, and helping countries to find consensus necessary to make such a landmark agreement” (2016-04-27, S2488). These remarks illustrate that the US Congress was eager to keep other countries accountable for their climate commitments made in Paris.

4.1.3 LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy has appeared the most in the period examined here (42.86%). Considering this theme, convincing to act and, consequently, to make legitimate decisions has occurred the most. Most members of Congress have attempted to convince to act on climate change and show the urgency of acting. Furthermore, they have tried to legitimise global climate action and used scientific evidence to do so. Many have pressed the issue, like Mrs. Shaheen saying: “no country is insulated from the

increasingly present and escalating effects of climate change” (2016-04-27, S2488). Furthermore, Mr. Cardin argued that “there is nothing disputable about the facts: rising carbon dioxide and methane pollution, rising consequences for our States across America, rising consequences for the world. Scientists tell us it will get worse” and that “we must come together as an international community and address that” (2015-12-10, S8576-2). Mr. Whitehouse has also used the fact that major American corporations see the need for global climate action as an argument for legitimising and urging strong climate action in Paris. Climate change “is so big an issue that it has its own page on Coke’s and Pepsi’s Web sites and, indeed, on the Web sites of most major American corporations” (2015-12-15, S8661). These statements show that Congress members have used various arguments to convince Congress to act.

To ensure legitimate decision-making, the focus on international collaboration has also been quite prominent. Most Congress members discussing this issue have stressed the importance of international collaboration through the Paris negotiations. For example, Mr. Durbin has argued that “no one nation can do this alone. The good news is that, together, the nations of the world can act to avoid irreversible disaster” and “the Paris climate agreement is a historic step in that direction. Never before have so many nations come together to tackle this threat” (2016-04-21, S2379-2). Mr. Quigley also stated: “today America’s business leaders, the Pentagon, the majority of Americans, the scientific community, and nations around the world recognise that we cannot wait to act”. He used the fact that 40,000 negotiators from 196 countries travelled to Paris as evidence for this argument, but also discussed that even though the Agreement provides “an effective global framework for addressing climate change, our work is far from over” (2016-02-03, H501-2). These discussions illustrate that the PA has also been used to legitimise global climate action.

Lastly, the mentioning of inclusion of civil society has also been used sometimes to legitimise climate action. For instance, Mr. Whitehouse argued that “2015 was a year of growing public recognition across America of the need to act,” and “for the first time, a majority of self-identified Republicans now believe there is solid evidence of global warming” (2016-1-11, S21-3). Although the PA has not been connected directly with the inclusion of civil society in these discussions, they often use numbers and percentages of people that favour global climate action. Thereby, many proponents of global climate action in Congress have used these arguments to legitimise and push actions in this field.

4.1.4 RESPONSIBILITY

Next to legitimacy, *responsibility* has also come into view quite often (31.97%). Within this theme, signs of taking responsibility have come up the most. Many Congress members have brought up that the US has been taking responsibility for combatting climate change globally. According to Mr.

Cardin, the US had mentioned their “commitment to carry not just our individual commitment but to be part of the global agreements in Paris” (2015-12-10, S8576-2). Similarly, Mrs. Shaheen discussed that the US “must also be responsive to climate change’s impact on our friends in the world’s least developed and most vulnerable countries,” and that “as one of the world’s largest emitters of carbon emissions, we have a responsibility to the world on climate change” (2016-04-27, S2488). These remarks illustrate that Congress members stressed the importance of the US taking responsibility.

Multiple discussions also show perceptions regarding the PA and how it is a sign that countries are taking responsibility globally. As Mr. Markey described it, “the swiftness with which the Paris Climate Accord came into force demonstrates the global commitment to addressing the serious concerns of climate change,” and through the Agreement “the international community has decided to face this challenge head on” (2016-12-05, S6702-2). Moreover, other countries have also taken responsibility with their pledges in the PA, which is often praised. For instance, Mr. Lowenthal applauded the contributions from the world’s biggest polluting countries, including India and China. “These international contributions demonstrate how seriously the world is taking its moral responsibility to care for our common home, our families, and our neighbours” (2016-02-11, H715-2).

Furthermore, members of Congress have also called for action in terms of taking responsibility many times. For example, Mr. Quigley called on “my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up for coastal communities, farmers, vulnerable people all over the world, and future generations to not fall victim to the self-serving propaganda from those who seek to profit by polluting the world” (2016-11-16, H6241-4). In the discussions, the PA has also often been perceived as a way for countries to take responsibility for climate change, as well as the idea that the US has played an important role in getting countries to take this responsibility in Paris. Indeed, Mr. Markey stated that “US leadership has helped secure climate pledges for Paris from more than 150 countries,” and that this created an “opportunity to forge an international climate agreement that included all countries doing their fair share for a global solution to global warming” (2015-11-17, S7992-2).

Lastly, the NDCs were also discussed several times in the sense that these are a sign that countries have taken responsibility. Several Congress members have applauded these commitments and their importance for “laying out the actions they intend to take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” (2015-11-03, H7399-7). However, this has also shown that “the Agreement has been crafted in a way that gives some of the countries that are parties to the Agreement more leeway than others. Some major economies do not have to play by the same rules that the US would,” according to Mr. Cornyn (2015-12-16, S8712). These discussions show that Congress has perceived responsibility through NDCs as a generally positive development but that they also provide countries with a lot of freedom in terms of the level of responsibility they take.

4.1.5 TRANSPARENCY

In the first period, *transparency* has only emerged a limited number of times (5.44%). When mentioned in the discussions, it has primarily been addressed in connection with accountability and as a response to accountability issues. Mr. Franken applauded the US for acting nationally and leading internationally through the PA, but he also considered that the job was not done by signing the Agreement. “The agreement in Paris puts the planet on a safer trajectory than the one we have been on, but we have to remain vigilant and build upon that success,” with which he meant that “internationally, we have to hold other nations accountable ensure that they commit to stronger emission reductions over time, and make sure that those reductions are transparent and verifiable” (2015-12-16, S8697). This remark is a sign that Congress felt the need to oversee the climate actions of other countries.

The specific transparency framework of the PA was also discussed only a few times. Mr. Cardin mentioned being proud that all negotiating countries stepped forward and decided to be transparent about their goals (2015-12-10, S8576-2). However, Mr. Schatz also said that the transparency mechanism would not be an issue for the US, and it was an element that the US negotiators pushed. Nevertheless, he also argued that such reporting mechanisms would also be “a little bit more of a challenge in the developing world, so we had to develop a matrix so we know that countries are not cheating or they are not getting their data wrong,” but he felt “satisfied that it is likely to hit those marks” (2015-12-10, S8576-2). These statements show some perceptions about transparency, but they were mainly directed at keeping other countries accountable and transparent in their actions. Furthermore, these discussions have only taken place around the time of the negotiations. After that, there has been little focus on the transparency theme.

One exception to this can be found, namely transparency in the context of the NDCs specifically. This issue has also only appeared once in the discussions of this period. Mrs. Shaheen mentioned that “for the first time, countries have committed to putting forward ambitious, nationally determined climate targets and reporting on their progress towards those targets using a standardised process of review.” She also discussed that “the PA encourages transparency, accountability, and collaboration among nations not only to meet their climate targets, but to encourage innovation while doing so” (2016-04-27, S2488). These findings show that the attention for transparency was limited in Congress, while the US negotiators in Paris had really focused on this element and implementing the transparency framework.

4.2 SECOND PERIOD: PERCEPTIONS DURING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION UNTIL THE WITHDRAWAL PROCESS STARTED

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The second part of the analysis covers the perceptions of Congress regarding GCCG during the Trump Administration. Specifically, the period from the inauguration of Trump until the official withdrawal process starts is examined. Documents from the period January 21, 2017, until November 4, 2019, are explored. Like the first part, the next four sections discuss the perceptions regarding GCCG and the PA in Congress using the Congressional Records.

4.2.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability has come up quite often in the discussions during this period (28.79%). Within this theme, the focus has largely been on justifications for climate change-related policies and governance decisions. Particularly, the Climate Action Now Act (CANA) has been discussed extensively in Congress. This legislation attempted to keep the US in the PA, require President Trump to form substantial emissions plans, and “recommit the US to global climate leadership” (2019-04-30, H3312). To illustrate, Mr. Kilner argued that the CANA would be critical “to develop a comprehensive plan to meet the significant emission reductions that we as a Nation, and nearly every Nation in the world, committed to back in 2015” (2019-05-01, H3350-5). Mr. McNerney also argued that a withdrawal from the PA would condemn future generations “to a world filled with catastrophic climate change and conflict” and that the CANA would “help heal this rift by putting us in alignment with the rest of the global community and holding us to standards that we helped put in place” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). These remarks show that Congress perceived the CANA as a vital instrument for keeping the US accountable its pledges with the PA.

Consequently, the CANA was passed in the House of Representatives. This resulted in a Senate proposal called the International Climate Accountability Act (ICAA). However, in the words of Mrs. Shaheen, “the majority leader has refused to bring these bills to the floor for a debate” (2019-07-17, S4887-2). Mr. King criticised the Senate’s inaction and the resulting free rein for Trump to withdraw from the PA by stressing its importance. He argued that “it was a set of goals, and the entire world was engaged. Now there is the entire world but one—us. We are out. We are outliers. We have lost our voice” (2019-07-17, S4887). These findings illustrate that there was a large focus on accountability in the sense of trying to reach legislation and action regarding the climate commitments made in Paris, but that these efforts were not enough to prevent the withdrawal from happening.

In relation to accountability, evaluation and monitoring processes have also been mentioned quite often in the discussions. Overall, Congress members have perceived the NDCs as an important accountability instrument (2019-10-31, S6344-2). To illustrate, Mr. McGovern, among many others, called “the President to develop a plan for the US to meet its NDC under the PA” (2019-04-29, H3302).

In addition, the CANA was also perceived as an important tool for requiring President Trump to meet American commitments under the PA (2019-05-01, H3351).

Contrary to the topics above, discussions about keeping other countries accountable for their pledges under the PA have appeared infrequently. Whenever this topic did come up, it was often criticism about countries not fulfilling their pledges made in the PA or not taking sufficient climate change action. For instance, Mr. McCaul argued that “it is outrageous that China and India are not doing more. They are emitters. China, in fact, will not even comply to reduce its carbon emissions until 2030. Many other countries that made commitments are not fulfilling them” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). However, it was also considered that “a recommitment to the goals of the PA would show the world that America takes its promise to cut pollution seriously, encourage other nations to honour their climate pledges as well” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). This illustrates the perception of the US being a leader since other countries would follow what they would be doing. Still, the focus on keeping other countries accountable was limited as Congress mainly paid attention to keeping the US itself accountable to their pledges made in Paris.

4.2.3 LEGITIMACY

In the period examined here, *legitimacy* has been focused on the most (44.95%). Within this concept, convincing to act and make legitimate decisions has appeared most frequently. Members of Congress have tried to legitimate climate action by scientific evidence and environmental changes. To illustrate, Ms. Smith stated: “Climate change is the existential threat of our time. I know this because this is what the science says” (2019-05-08, S2745). Furthermore, Mr. Cardin mentioned a UN report that expressed the urgency of dealing with climate change immediately and “that science tells us that we can reverse the most extreme impact of climate change. We can mitigate the impact of climate change if we take action – if we act now – on this issue” (2019-03-26, S1953). These examples show the use of science to convince to act on climate change. Moreover, economic aspects have been used to legitimate global action by stating, for example, “there is increasing consensus among scientists and economists that there will be serious economic consequences if we fail to reduce global carbon emissions quickly” (2019-05-14, S2812). Likewise, Mr. Whitehouse claimed that “it turns out that actually the true economic hazard is not climate action but climate inaction” (2019-07-17, S4916). These arguments show that Congress members have tried to legitimate global climate action extensively and tried to convince Congress to act because it would be to the advantage of the economy.

Next to that, many discussions show attempts to convince Congress to adopt the CANA and recommit to the PA. Mr. Brown expressed his support for the CANA by calling President Trump “to stop sabotaging the country he is supposed to lead” (2019-02-26, S1468-2). Ms. Matsui also stated

concerning the CANA: “by not participating in the PA, we risk irreversible damage to our planet” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). Similarly, Mr. Pallone argued that “the PA will stand with or without the US; but not meeting our commitments does not hurt the PA, it just hurts the US diplomatically and economically.” Also, “other countries, not to mention US cities and States, are still moving forward on climate action, making the Trump administration only appear more isolated and irrelevant as the world moves past us” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). These arguments were used to convince Congress to act on global climate change, adhere to the goals set in Paris, and adopt the CANA to reach them.

To enable legitimate decision-making, Congress members have also mentioned international collaboration rather often. When Mr. Cardin talked about the importance of the PA for international cooperation, he mentioned that “the Trump administration is an outlier in the global community in dealing with the realities of climate change,” and that “every other nation in the world has acknowledged that we need to work together” (2019-03-26, S1953). Ms. Shalala also stated that the PA “strengthens the international response to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and capacity building,” and “it is our best, collective effort to combat climate change” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). These statements show that Congress members perceived international collaboration on climate change as highly important and the PA as a valuable tool to achieve this.

Lastly, the inclusion of civil society has also appeared quite often in the conversations examined. During the discussions about the adoption of the CANA, Congress members used many letters from interest groups and companies in favour of the Act to convince Congress to adopt it. For example, a Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy letter stated that they perceive “international engagement and maintaining US commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement as critical to our continued economic success” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). More generally, Mr. Huffman argued that “the American people overwhelmingly support aggressive action to combat climate change,” and that “public opinion polling shows that the majority of Americans say that it must be addressed, and it has got to be addressed now. The majority of Americans overwhelmingly believe this is a crisis, and they are right to believe that” (2019-09-19, H7819-2). Moreover, Mr. McGovern argued, “Americans overwhelmingly want the US to remain in the [Paris] Agreement” (2019-05-01, H3351-2). These remarks show that Congress members have used civil society perceptions extensively to legitimise and push global climate change action.

4.2.4 RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility has come up regularly in the discussions (24.75%). Considering this issue, signs of taking responsibility were by far the most common in the conversations. Many Congress members have expressed the need to take responsibility for climate action. To illustrate, Ms. Pelosi stated: “We have a moral responsibility to the next generation to pass this planet on in a better way than we found

it in a very responsible way” (2019-05-02, H3411-3). Also, the fact that the US has played a big part in fostering climate change has come up rather often. Mr. McGovern argued that “the US has a unique role to play in fighting climate change” because “we played a major role in furthering the crisis” (2019-05-01, H3351-2). He explained this by saying: “between 1970 and 2013, the US ranked number one in total emissions. We released more carbon into the atmosphere than China, Japan, or any of the other 40 global nations” and “I do not think we should be turning our back on a problem that we helped create” (2019-05-01, H3351-2). This perception is a sign of taking responsibility because the US was an important part of fostering climate change.

Furthermore, many Congress members have criticised President Trump for acting irresponsible in the field of climate change. Mr. Schrader explained that the US could not abdicate its “serious responsibility to lead the world in curbing the effects of climate change. That is why I have strongly opposed the President’s reckless decision to withdraw from the PA, which has seriously damaged the US credibility on the world stage” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). This shows that Congress members have been vocal about their opposition to the withdrawal. Because the Trump administration has moved in the wrong direction regarding climate change, Mr. Cardin argued: “that puts special responsibility on us in Congress. We have to fill that vacuum” (2019-02-27, S1530-2). Also, Mr. King argued that he wanted this Congress to be remembered as people “who met our responsibility, who thought about others more than ourselves and made a difference in the life of this country and the world” (2019-07-17, S4887-2). These arguments show that Congress members felt responsible for acting on climate change, not only because of its urgency and the fact that the US contributed to it, but also because the Trump administration failed to take on this responsibility.

Contrary to signs of taking responsibility, discussions about international responsibility have been limited. In relation to this, several Congress members have expressed to be proud of the international community taking responsibility by means of the PA. Ms. Shalala said to be “heartened when the international community came together to sign the PA,” but also to be “devastated when this administration announced the US withdrawal” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). Because of this, Ms. Smith has argued, “our global competitors are happy to dominate in this field” (2019-05-08, S2745). Since the Trump administration pulled back from the international community, other countries could take the lead.

Furthermore, the NDCs in relation to responsibility has also appeared only a few times. Arguments about this mainly include calls to President Trump “to develop a plan for the US to meet its NDC under the PA” (2019-04-29, H3302). Several Congress members wanted President Trump to take responsibility and act on climate change by setting up a plan to reach the targets set by the American NDC (2019-09-19, H7819). So, Congress members have urged the Trump administration to set up a

plan in relation to the American NDC sometimes, but the focus was more on convincing to act on climate change in general.

Lastly, calling on other countries to take responsibility has appeared the least. Mrs. Shaheen only mentioned it in relation to the UN climate summit in 2015. She argued that “during the summit, we were impressed by the leadership and determination that was shown by the US to encourage other nations to reach ambitious emissions reduction goals.” However, “unfortunately, when President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the PA, the US forfeited this leadership to other countries” (2019-07-17, S4887). These results demonstrate that the discussions in Congress were mainly about American responsibility and taking responsibility for global climate action themselves, instead of focusing on the responsibility of other countries.

4.2.5 TRANSPARENCY

In this period, the focus on *transparency* was minimal (1,52%). The connection between transparency and the NDCs only came up a few times. For example, Mr. Levin considered the transparency of upcoming NDC discussions during a UN Climate Action Summit as an important opportunity for the US “to show leadership and push other countries to follow us” (2019-09-19, H7819-2). However, this mentioning is one of the exceptions on this topic. The focus was more on the previously addressed topics than on transparency.

Furthermore, the transparency framework of the PA has only come up twice. To illustrate, Congress found that the US would use the “PA’s transparency provisions to confirm that other parties to the Agreement with major economies are fulfilling their announced contributions to the Agreement” (2019-05-01, H3363-3). Next to that, a Senate Resolution included transparency in decision-making to increase public support for environment-related decisions (2019-07-09, S4726-6). These statements show that Congress perceived the transparency framework important to monitor other countries and give the public insight into climate-related decisions. However, even though these remarks are explicit, they are the only remarks on these subjects. Therefore, their overall importance can be called into question.

Lastly, transparency has been discussed once in the context of its value as a solution to accountability issues. Mr. Engel argued that because the targets and plans of each country are widely known, “the idea is to create a culture of accountability and maybe some peer pressure to get countries to reduce emissions” (2019-05-02, H3411-3). Even though transparency is often used to counter accountability issues, this finding demonstrates that this has not been the case in Congress during this period.

4.3 THIRD PERIOD: PERCEPTIONS DURING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL PROCESS STARTED

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Like the second part of the analysis, the third part also considers the perceptions of Congress regarding GCCG during the Trump Administration. Here, however, the focus is on the period from the start of the official withdrawal process until the end of Trump's presidency. Therefore, documents from the period November 5, 2019, until January 20, 2021, are examined. Like the previous parts, the next four sections delve into the perceptions regarding GCCG and the PA in Congress using the Congressional Records.

4.3.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

In the last period, *accountability* has appeared considerably (28.09%). Within this issue, the greatest focus has been on justifications for climate change-related policies and governance decisions. Even though the Trump administration had started the withdrawal process from the PA, democratic voices in Congress continued to focus on the importance of complying with the goals set internationally. For example, Mr. Schneider introduced a resolution as a response to the "irresponsible decision to abandon the climate agreement" and stressed the importance of fulfilling "the commitments that our Nation made under the PA to address the climate threat" (2019-12-05, H9263-7). This shows that Congress members perceived it important to keep their country accountable to the goals set in Paris. Congress also discussed a Green New Deal extensively and its importance to combat climate change globally and reduce GHG emissions (2020-02-26, H1215-3). To illustrate, Mr. Udall argued the importance of establishing a policy to reduce GHG emissions "to the levels required to meet global targets or transition us to a clean energy economy" (2020-03-03, S1280-2). This is also an example of a policy justified to be able to adhere to PA goals.

Furthermore, evaluation and monitoring processes have also been discussed regularly. Even though the NDCs have not been referred to specifically, multiple policies have been brought up to ensure the US would be monitored and evaluated in relation to the PA. For instance, Congress adopted a Senate Resolution to express the urgency of working towards reaching the goals of the PA (2019-12-10, S6953). A few months later, Mr. Cardin introduced another resolution, "expressing support for the [Paris] Agreement and calling on the US to continue working with the global community to address the causes and effects of climate change" (2020-05-07, S2319). These initiatives show that Congress members considered it important to monitor and evaluate how the US was doing in terms of the PA goals.

4.3.3 LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy has been most apparent in this period (47.19%). Within this concept, Congress members have mostly focused on convincing to act on climate change and the PA. In the context of the withdrawal from the Agreement, multiple Congress members have tried to convince Congress to act on climate change nevertheless. Specifically, they have mainly used scientific arguments to push climate action. To illustrate, Mr. Sanders argued: “The scientific community has been very clear. If we do not act boldly and aggressively to transform our energy system away from fossil fuel and into energy efficiency and sustainable energy, the future of this planet is in doubt” (2020-01-15, S220). Furthermore, IPCC reports have often been used to urge climate action. For example, Ms. Barragan argued that “the global consensus, the IPCC report coming out the UN, is sounding the alarm on what will happen if we do not keep emissions down to contain our warming levels below 1.5 degrees Celsius”. However, “if you look at today, we are on track to hit 3 degrees Celsius by 2100. This can bring unprecedented chaos to our order” (2020-02-26, H1215). Congress members have also used these arguments to discuss how damaging the withdrawal from the PA is for limiting global climate change. As Mr. Durbin described it, “clearly, this administration’s strategy of removing the US from the Paris climate accord and skirting around climate change is one that is not helping us address this issue successfully and effectively” (2020-03-04, S1452). Overall, Congress members have tried to highlight the importance of acting against climate change even more because of the withdrawal.

To allow legitimate decision-making, Congress members have also mentioned the perceptions of civil society rather frequently. As a result of President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the PA, Congress members have used civil society opinions about this ruling extensively to show that this is not in line with the views of the American people. Mrs. Shaheen argued that “the administration’s withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement and the general refusal to bring climate change legislation to the floor is out of step with the desires of the American people”. Indeed, “approximately two out of every three Americans believe it is the job of the Federal Government to combat climate change, according to a recent poll from the Associated Press,” and “64 percent of Americans disapprove of the President’s climate change policies” (2019-11-06, S6435-2). Not only the perceptions of the American people, but also the views of corporations have been used to legitimise climate action in line with the PA. Mr. Whitehouse, among others, has mentioned the Business Roundtable which consists of over 200 CEOs of major American companies. They have called for “science-based climate policy to reduce carbon pollution, consistent with the PA” (2020-09-30, S5928). These views outside of Congress have all been used to persuade the US government to keep working towards the goals of the PA.

Lastly, Congress members have also mentioned international collaboration to enable legitimate decision-making regularly. They have often stressed the urgency of tackling the climate crisis globally. For example, Mr. Cardin considered that the PA works towards “strengthening the national adaptation efforts, including through support and international cooperation,” and “it recognises that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all, including the US” (2019-12-05, S6878-2). Moreover, since so many countries are in the PA, it is crucial for the US to re-join the deal because “not only would we be establishing trust and a working relationship alongside other countries, but America would be delivering a message to all citizens living in it that fighting climate change is crucial to the outcome of our future” (2020-06-30, S4030-2). This demonstrates that Congress members perceived the PA as essential to keep collaborating with other countries.

4.3.4 RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility has appeared regularly in the discussions of Congress during this period (24.72%). Overall, signs of taking responsibility have occurred the most. Congress members have discussed how the US has a responsible role since it has the financial ability to support developing countries in reducing their GHG emissions and because it has “historically been responsible for a disproportionate amount of GHG emissions” (2020-02-26, H1215-3). Next to that, in response to the decision to withdraw from the Agreement, many Congress members have also called for the US to take responsible action in line with the PA. To illustrate, Mr. Casey argued that many Congress members would “continue to fight for policies that bring the US in line with its Paris goals, ensuring we are doing our part to address this global threat to human life” (2019-11-06, S6421-2). Also, Mr. Cardin urged “President Trump to reassert our Nation’s strong leadership in implementing the PA before the next Conference of Parties” (2019-12-05, S6878-2). These remarks show that Congress members did not want the US leadership role to be abandoned but to act responsibly in the international community by adhering to the goals set in Paris.

Furthermore, conversations about international responsibility have occurred sometimes. Because of the goals set by the PA, the signed countries have been drawn into an “international race to develop clean energy technologies and practices that reduce GHG emissions” (2019-11-06, S6435-2). Because of the targets established in the Agreement, countries have been more inclined to take responsibility. Moreover, various Congress members have argued that other countries have been given the opportunity to take greater international responsibility and a leadership role because of the US withdrawal. To illustrate, Mrs. Shaheen has mentioned that President Trump has put the US on the sidelines instead of claiming a leadership role. “We are going to watch our allies and our adversaries clamour to fill the void he has created,” and “after decades of American leadership in clean energy technology innovations, other countries are now poised to develop new low-carbon technologies to

help countries throughout the world to meet their Paris commitments” (2019-11-06, S6435-2). This illustrates that Congress members regretted seeing the leadership role slipping away from the US because of the withdrawal.

Lastly, the NDCs in relation to responsibility and calling on other countries to take responsibility have come up the least. They have both appeared only once. Regarding the former, Mr. Whitehouse has argued that the US is still in the PA, despite the actions of the Trump administration. After all, states, cities, companies, and universities still honour the commitments made in Paris. These entities have continued to take responsibility by adhering to the NDCs when the Trump administration has abandoned theirs (2019-12-11, S6995-6). Regarding the latter, the Green New Deal resolution mentioned the “aim of making the US the international leader on climate action, and to help other countries achieve a Green New Deal” (2020-02-26, H1215-3). This remark shows a call for other countries to take responsibility for climate change, and act to reach the Paris goals. However, because both issues only appeared once, there has not been a substantial focus on them.

4.3.5 TRANSPARENCY

Transparency has not occurred in this period (0.0%). Congress members have not talked about transparency as a solution for accountability issues, the transparency framework of the PA, or connected transparency with reviewing the NDCs. Because Trump had started the withdrawal process, Congress members perceived other issues related to the PA as more urgent to discuss. Consequently, the focus of the discussions in Congress was more on taking climate change action in relation to the goals of the PA instead of the aspects of the Agreement itself.

4.4 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS: ANSWERING SUB-QUESTION 4

Now that the analysis has been conducted, the results of the three periods can be compared, and sub-question 4 can be answered. Table 3 below shows how often the examined concepts occurred in the three periods. These percentages show how Congress perceived these issues and how this changed during these times. Consequently, because these issues together form the concept of GCCG, the differences and similarities between the periods examined show how the perceptions of Congress did or did not change between the Obama and Trump administration, as well as the discussed events regarding the PA.

Codes	First period	Second period	Third period
1 Accountability	19.72%	28.79%	28.09%
1.1 The establishment of evaluation and monitoring processes	4.08%	9.85%	11.24%
1.2 Keeping other countries accountable	3.40%	1.52%	0.0%
1.3 Presenting justification of governance decisions	12.24%	17.42%	16.85%
2 Legitimacy	42.85%	44.95%	47.19%
2.1 Convincing to act	24.49%	26.26%	29.78%
2.2 Focus on international collaboration	10.88%	9.85%	6.74%
2.3 The inclusion of civil society	7.48%	8.84%	10.67%
3 Responsibility	31.96%	24.75%	24.72%
3.1 Signs of taking responsibility	10.20%	17.42%	16.29%
3.2 International responsibility	8.16%	4.29%	7.30%
3.3 Calling on other countries to take responsibility	10.88%	0.51%	0.56%
3.4 NDCs to take responsibility	2.72%	2.53%	0.56%
4 Transparency	5.44%	1.52%	0.0%
4.1 Transparency as a response to accountability issues	2.72%	0.25%	0.0%
4.2 The transparency framework of the PA	2.04%	0.51%	0.0%
4.3 Link with reviewing NDCs	0.68%	0.76%	0.0%

Table 3. The frequency of the codes in each period

In general, as can be seen in the table, *legitimacy* has occurred the most in all three periods, and *transparency* the least. Between those two concepts, *responsibility* has appeared significantly more than *accountability* in the first period. However, in the second and third periods, *accountability* has come up slightly more than *responsibility*. These overall small changes in percentages show that, even though the US withdrew from the PA under the Trump administration, the perceptions in Congress have only encountered small changes.

Within the four overarching concepts, several notable changes can be detected. Within *accountability*, discussions about the evaluation and monitoring processes of the PA increased. Congress members continued to stress the importance of adhering to the standards set in Paris,

despite President Trump's decision to withdraw. Furthermore, keeping other countries accountable decreased. Because of the US withdrawal, Congress members increasingly focused on keeping the US accountable to the decisions made in Paris instead of doing this for other countries.

In terms of *legitimacy*, the focus on international collaboration slightly decreased. With the arrival of the Trump administration and the announced withdrawal, the focus was more on convincing Congress to keep working on climate change in general and show the urgency. Furthermore, the inclusion of civil society increased to some extent. Because of the withdrawal, Congress members have not only tried to convince Congress to act regarding climate change, but also used civil society perceptions increasingly to legitimise action regarding the PA.

Regarding *responsibility*, Congress members focused more on the importance of taking responsibility for climate change when the Trump administration was straying away from it. At the same time, a significant difference can be noticed in relation to the extent to which Congress has called on other countries to take responsibility. This has been done much less during the Trump administration than during the time Obama was still in office. This can be explained by the fact that the conversations were more about keeping the US in the PA and making sure the US would take responsibility instead of calling other countries to do this.

Lastly, the mentioning of *transparency* decreased overall and did not occur anymore in the last period. This can be explained by the focus on the internal processes of the PA, like the transparency framework, becoming a less important topic when the bigger issue of the US withdrawing from the Agreement is discussed.

5. DISCUSSION

As the results of the analysis have been presented in chapter 4, this chapter elaborates on how these results can be explained using the three theories outlined in chapter 2. HI, regime theory and HS theory are used to explain different angles of the changes and similarities that have been identified throughout the period examined.

5.1 THE PATH DETERMINED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT

In chapter 2, two theoretical expectations were stated regarding HI. On the one hand, it was assumed that the criticism of President Obama and his decision not to seek consent with Congress about the PA would set out the path for the future. Therefore, it could be expected that the withdrawal under the Trump administration would not be criticised greatly. Considering the outcomes of the analysis, this assumption can be disproved. Congress members have been highly critical of the decision to withdraw, as well as stressed the importance of GCCG by expressing the need of the US staying in the PA to make sure climate change could be dealt with internationally.

The findings of the analysis can also support these statements. Congress members have still, even increasingly, tried to convince Congress to act regarding climate change and perceived taking responsibility for climate action internationally as necessary. Kronlund's (2020) research supports this as she argued that Congress made increasing efforts to introduce climate change legislation. Also, during the Trump administration, even Republicans came up with climate-related solutions. Hence, from this perspective, the decision of the Obama administration not to seek consent of Congress, which received a great deal of criticism, was not institutionalised. It did not set out a path for the future. In general, according to the HI perspective, path-dependency makes change difficult once institutions are in place (Pistorius et al., 2017). However, in this case, the criticism of the Trump administration withdrawing prevailed over criticism of President Obama's bypassing Congress.

On the other hand, it was also presumed that President Obama created an institutional lock-in by signing the PA. Because of this, the perceptions in Congress about GCCG would not change significantly, even when the Trump administration decided to withdraw. In contrast to the aforementioned assumption, this assumption can be confirmed. As soon as President Obama signed the Agreement, this move was greatly applauded. In fact, the majority in Congress was convinced that the PA would play a crucial role in combatting climate change internationally. It can be argued that the generally positive perception in Congress about GCCG through the recently signed international climate deal created a lock-in. Given that one of the main premises of HI is the "importance of

institutions in setting the stage for political behaviour” (Nasiritousi & Linnér, 2016), this argument demonstrates how the PA directed the behaviour of Congress in terms of GCCG.

Since the signing of the PA largely determined the future behaviour of Congress, it can be argued that the signing of this international climate accord was a major shock, or “a punctuated equilibrium” (Peters, et al., 2017). Because the PA had a great impact, it determined the policy path for GCCG. The Agreement created path-dependency because it decided on the direction of climate change for many countries, including the US. The argument of the PA forming a “punctuated equilibrium” can be supported by the claim that the importance of combatting climate change with the international community prevailed throughout the examined period. Even when the Trump administration came to office and came with very different perceptions regarding climate change compared to the previous Obama administration, and even wanted to withdraw from the PA, the perceptions in Congress remained similar. Many Congress members presumed the importance of the PA for combatting climate change globally. For example, Congress mandated a report which highly criticised the withdrawal and warned of the growing economic damage of climate change (Ward & Bowen, 2020). This shows that the PA had set a well-established policy path and created a lock-in of the perceptions regarding GCCG in Congress.

The results of the analysis can also support these arguments. The path-dependency approach of HI helps to explain why several of the percentages increased. The conception that the PA established a lock-in is apparent from the rising accountability numbers. Because of the signing of the PA, Congress members considered it essential to keep the US accountable to its goals, regardless of the ideas articulated by President Trump. Thus, the policy path set out by the PA could not be broken because of the importance of accountability in GCCG. Kramarz and Park (2019) have also addressed this importance. The same goes for legitimacy in terms of Congress members trying to convince Congress to act on climate change and the PA, mentioning civil society opinions and the importance of taking responsibility for climate action. These percentages have all increased over the period examined. These elements have all been perceived as increasingly important, even, or especially, during the withdrawal process. Again, this shows the path-dependency created by the signing of the PA. The PA set the direction of the perceptions regarding GCCG of Congress for the years to come.

5.2 THE IMPACT OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

As explained by HI, the US Congress perceived the signing of the PA as a major shock – a “punctuated equilibrium”. It has also been discussed that this set out the path for their perceptions about GCCG. Moreover, the ideas and actions of the Trump administration were not able to alter this direction very much. This also means that the withdrawal from the PA cannot be perceived as a

“punctuated equilibrium”. Hence, the issue that will be discussed in the next two sections is about the reason why the PA was a major shock and why the withdrawal did not have this effect so much on the perceptions in Congress. Two attempts are made to explore this. First, this importance of the PA for GCCG through the eyes of Congress members will be considered in the light of HS theory. After that, the same will be done for regime theory.

5.2.1 REINFORCING THE HEGEMONIC POSITION

Regarding HS theory, it was assumed in chapter 2 that Congress recognises the importance of the hegemonic position of the US in the field of climate change. Moreover, it was also expected that this would not change during the period examined, and the withdrawal from the PA would not affect this either. From all three periods analysed, it appears that many Congress members perceived a hegemonic position for the US as important. Specifically, they often mentioned that the US should take the lead in GCCG and set an example for other countries to combat climate change. Yu (2018) also addressed this by arguing that the withdrawal has undermined the image of the US as a responsible leader of GCCG, and it set a bad example for the international community.

To illustrate the focus of Congress on the US hegemonic position, Congress members praised US leadership through implementing the PA and making sure other countries would comply in the first period. In the subsequent two periods, it was also evident that US leadership in GCCG was considered important and that leadership should be taken by adhering to the goals set in Paris. On top of that, multiple Congress members called on President Trump to take this international leadership role. They have argued that because Trump abandoned the American leadership role, other countries would take greater international responsibility and take the lead in GCCG. Steinhauer (2018) supports this and has argued that the withdrawal had created a notable void in leadership. Moreover, other countries were ready to take on this role.

The considerations above show the connection with the path-dependency set out by the signing of the PA. From the establishment of the international climate accord onwards, Congress members have applauded US leadership regarding it. This has continued to be the case over the entire period examined. Hence, signing the PA truly decided the direction of thought regarding the role of the US in GCCG.

These findings also appear in the results of the analysis in the previous chapter. The issue of leadership has been discussed primarily in relation to responsibility. Even though the percentages of responsibility, in general, declined when the Trump administration was in office, discussions about taking responsibility for climate action and whether the US has done that, increased reasonably. This can be explained by the fact that Congress stressed the importance of keeping the US in a hegemonic position to a greater extent, especially when the Trump administration endangered this role. Gill

(2020) supports this explanation. Indeed, he has argued that the Trump administration has negatively affected US influence and global power, with lasting consequences, also after 2021.

The stronger focus on the role of the US itself also explains why the discussions about keeping other countries accountable, international collaboration, international responsibility, and calling on other countries to take responsibility decreased. After all, Congress was more concerned with preserving the leadership role of the US.

5.2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

The last assumption in chapter 2 was regarding regime theory. It expected that the perceptions in Congress regarding GCCG would not change drastically with the US withdrawal from the PA. The reason for that is because if Congress perceived international cooperation regarding climate change as important and as a collective action problem, the decision of the Trump administration to withdraw would not change this very much. In the three periods analysed, the importance of combatting climate change through collaborating has come up regularly. In all three periods, Congress members have tried to legitimise climate action about the PA because climate change could only be dealt with effectively if tackled collectively. The PA has also often been considered as the best instrument to reach international collaboration in this field. These conclusions can be supported by Gordon's (2016) findings. In the framework of regime theory, he has argued that the strength of the PA lies in the level of international consensus. However, he has also discussed its fragility and dependency on US leadership to reach its goals. Therefore, it is not surprising that Congress members urged the government to stay in the PA to combat climate change globally and effectively.

These considerations can also be drawn from the findings in the previous chapter. The importance of international collaboration and the corresponding importance of the global climate regime can be seen in the increasing percentage of Congress members trying to convince Congress to act on climate change. Indeed, the level of international collaboration in the climate regime considerably depends on the leadership of the US. The withdrawal is "the last thing the regime needs when ambition needs to be dramatically ramped up" to reach the international climate goals (Jotzo et al., 2018, p. 815).

Nevertheless, regime theory cannot explain why the focus on international collaboration, international responsibility, and calling on other countries to take responsibility decreases. Following regime theory, it would be plausible that Congress understands the importance of international climate cooperation if they often mentioned these issues. However, as discussed before, this can be explained by the fact that Congress members were more focusing on convincing Trump to stay in the

PA. After all, the period in which the Trump administration was in office, was a time in which the US was disengaged from the global climate regime (Steinhauer, 2018).

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS: ANSWERING SUB-QUESTION 5

To answer sub-question 5, all three theories – HI, regime theory, and HS theory – can be used to explain the perceptions of the US Congress before and after the withdrawal from the PA. In essence, the theories complement each other so that they can all explain different elements and angles of changes in the perceptions. First, HI has clarified that President Obama had created an institutional lock-in by signing the PA. Hence, when the Trump administration decided to withdraw, the perceptions in Congress did not change significantly. After all, the signing of the PA had largely determined the behaviour of Congress, and they upheld the idea that the PA was crucial for combatting climate change together with the international community.

In support of this finding, the PA had largely defined a new path in GCCG because of its great legitimacy globally. Many countries and NGOs praised its establishment. Because of the legitimacy the PA held as a product agreed to by countries, the US withdrawal was a deep betrayal. “Countries agreed to a treaty that was built upon legitimate institutions, with US involvement, and negotiated in a transparent process” (Allan, 2019, p. 9). This shows how the PA was institutionalised and widely perceived as essential in GCCG.

Additionally, as HI has revealed that the PA was a “punctuated equilibrium”, HS theory and regime theory have attempted to explain why this was the case. From the view of HS theory, the signing of the PA created a lock-in because Congress applauded the US leadership role in it as important. This did not change with the withdrawal. In fact, keeping the US in the PA and thereby keeping the US in a hegemonic position were even increasingly emphasised by Congress during the Trump administration. The existing literature can also support these perceptions. Multiple scholars have shared Congress’s fear of the negative impact of the withdrawal on GCCG. For example, Pickering et al. (2018) and Sprinz et al. (2018) have argued that the greatest threat of the withdrawal would be the demotivation and decreasing participation of other countries.

Next to HS theory, regime theory illustrated that the signing of the PA created a lock-in because it led to Congress members perceiving international cooperation regarding climate change as important. The withdrawal barely changed this conviction, as the PA was still considered as a way to achieve international environmental collaboration. After all, the US presence in the PA was essential for the international climate regime to work.

To conclude, the overall argument that can be identified here is that the PA created a lock-in of the perceptions of Congress regarding the importance of US leadership and

international cooperation in GCCG. Hence, the focus became more prominent on what the US itself was doing and inward developments regarding climate change policy, instead of convincing other countries to act on climate change and keeping other countries accountable to the pledges they made with the PA.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, the following research question was posed: “What was the impact of the US withdrawal from the PA on the perceptions of the US Congress regarding GCCG?” It was argued that the US Congress had played an important role for the US in international climate agreements since international climate politics has emerged. Because the PA developed rather differently than previous international climate deals, not only because Congress was bypassed for the first time, but also because the next administration under President Trump withdrew from the Agreement, this research question was considered worthy of investigation.

In the following chapters, the corresponding sub-questions have been answered. The concept of GCCG has been defined by characterising accountability, legitimacy, responsibility, and transparency. Their typical features have been used to analyse the Congressional Records applying an intertemporal single case study design. This design has ensured that a thorough comparison before and after the US withdrawal could be made. After that, HI, HS theory, and regime theory could explain the results of the analysis.

Several meaningful findings are worthy of highlighting here. The results of the analysis have shown that the perceptions in the US Congress regarding GCCG only encountered small changes after the withdrawal from the PA. Even though the frequency of the concepts did not change drastically over the period examined, several noteworthy changes have been identified. First, the focus on other countries – keeping them accountable, collaborating internationally, and their climate responsibility – have all decreased at some point during the time the Trump administration was in power. Furthermore, presenting justifications for climate policies, attempts to convince Congress to act on climate change, and calling the US to take responsibility for climate change internationally have all increased. The main finding here is that the withdrawal from the PA resulted in a greater focus on what the US was doing to combat climate change and stress climate action when the President did not. Above all, because Congress was more preoccupied with convincing the US act, the focus was more on what was happening within the US than what other countries were doing specifically.

Theoretically, these findings have been explained by the fact that the signing of the PA created an institutional lock-in. The withdrawal by the Trump administration was not able to change the path set out by the PA. Before and, perhaps even stronger, after the withdrawal, the US Congress perceived the leadership role of the US regarding climate change and international collaboration in this field as important aspects of GCCG. Therefore, the impact of the withdrawal has been limited. If anything, the

focus on these viewpoints slightly increased during the Trump administration to convince their importance.

Thus, the overall argument here is that the impact of the withdrawal on GCCG was mainly related to the shifting focus of the perceptions of Congress from other countries towards the occurrences within the US. This was the case because the PA created a lock-in of the perceptions of Congress regarding the importance of US leadership and international cooperation. When the withdrawal was initiated, Congress focused even more on those values and convincing the Trump administration of their importance. These findings contribute to the existing literature because they reveal where the interests of Congress lay in terms of global climate change. The above has revealed the impact of the withdrawal on GCCG and what the corresponding changes meant for the perceptions of Congress regarding it.

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Even though this research has raised noteworthy findings, it also has several limitations. Its methodological limitations have already been discussed in chapter 3. One other limitation can be identified concerning the concept of GCCG and its definition by the related concepts. Even though these four concepts have been linked to GCCG using a large amount of literature, these are not the only issues that define GCCG. They have been considered here because they were perceived as the most critical and overarching issues in the context of this research.

The limitations can be deliberate in further research. Other concepts related to GCCG could be examined in a similar way to discover other changes or similarities in the perceptions of Congress before and after the withdrawal from the PA. This would give an even more comprehensive view of the different angles of the perceptions. Furthermore, on top of the thirty most relevant policy documents for each period used in this study, the remaining documents could also be included in a subsequent study to analyse all perceptions regarding the PA. Lastly, it could be interesting to look further than the Congressional Records for the perceptions. Other sources could be included to expose multiple angles of the perspectives, such as media coverage and interviews. Despite being outside the scope of this thesis, it could provide an even more extensive investigation of the perceptions.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has shown that the focus in Congress became larger on what the US was doing internally during the Trump administration. Therefore, it can be stated that even though the withdrawal by the Trump administration can be perceived as a general unfortunate development for international climate change combat, the silver lining of this is that Congress started pushing climate

change and the US role in international climate change more than ever before. Thus, climate awareness increased because of the withdrawal. This reasoning is societally relevant because it guides other countries as aimed in the first chapter. It does so because, at first sight, it seems like the US climate combat only developed negatively during the years of Trump's presidency. However, since Congress increasingly focused on the importance of the US role in GCCG, this can have positive results on GCCG. This leads to a recommendation for other countries to not let loose on the international combat of climate change and hold on to the perceptions of GCCG in the US beyond the Trump administration. Because these considerations illustrate the value of national reflection on international climate change policy, this leads to another recommendation for countries to maintain this awareness and act on it.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE CODING SCHEME

Codes	Signs of the codes	Specific topics looked for
1 Accountability		
1.1 The establishment of evaluation and monitoring processes	- Signs of whether US Congress members have perceived accountability instruments important	- Holding accountable - Commit to targets
1.2 Keeping other countries accountable	- Signs of whether US Congress members consider it important to keep other countries accountable to the commitments they have made in the PA	- Encouraging countries - Submitting climate action plans - Commitments other countries made
1.3 Presenting justification of governance decisions	- Justifications by Congress members for why certain policies and governance decisions in the field of climate change are important - Signs of whether Congress members have tried to justify actions or policies related to the PA	- Consequences of climate change - Good for environment - Policies to meet NDCs
2 Legitimacy		
2.1 Convincing to act	- Signs of whether US Congress members have tried to convince Congress to act in the field of climate change, and show the urgency of acting - Signs of US Congress members looking for ways to legitimise climate action	- Pressing effects of climate change - Scientific climate change facts - Need for global climate action
2.2 Focus on international collaboration	- Signs of whether US Congress members have stressed the	- Acting/working together - Global challenge

	importance of international collaboration with regards to the PA	
2.3 The inclusion of civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of whether US Congress members have included civil society opinions to legitimise climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public recognition - Public opinion Americans - Letters and messages from interest groups and companies presented
3 Responsibility		
3.1 Signs of taking responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of whether US Congress members have perceived taking responsibility for climate action as important - Discussions about whether the US has taken responsibility for combatting climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US committing to PA - US must be responsive/We have a responsibility - US role in causing climate change
3.2 International responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conversations of US Congress members about other countries taking responsibility for climate action - How Congress members perceive responsibility of other countries in relation with the national pledges of the PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global commitment - Other countries have taken responsibility - International contributions
3.3 Calling on other countries to take responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of whether US Congress members have called other countries to take responsibility for climate change, and take action in relation to the PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other countries taking responsibility - Secure climate pledges
3.4 NDCs to take responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions about how US Congress members perceive responsibility through the national pledges made by the countries that signed the PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US NDC to take responsibility - Actions/targets to reduce GHG emissions
4 Transparency		

4.1 Transparency as a response to accountability issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since transparency can be linked to accountability because it is often presented as a solution to accountability issues, discussions about how US Congress members perceive this connection will be signs of this code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold nations accountable in the context of transparency - Transparency to pressure countries to act
4.2 The transparency framework of the PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of how US Congress members address this transparency framework established by the PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency framework - Transparency of the targets and outcomes of other countries
4.3 Link with reviewing NDCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of US Congress members discussing NDCs to ensure transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NDCs in the context of transparency - Show and report on targets

APPENDIX B: CODE-DOCUMENT TABLE FIRST PERIOD

		Accountability	Legitimacy	Responsibility	Transparency	Totals
CREC-2016-04-27-pt1-PgS2488.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT	Absolute	2	2	4	2	10
	Table- relative	1,36%	1,36%	2,72%	1,36%	6,80%
CREC-2015-11-03-pt1-PgH7399-7.pdf U.N. CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE	Absolute	1	1	2	0	4
	Table- relative	0,68%	0,68%	1,36%	0,00%	2,72%
CREC-2015-11-17-pt1-PgS7992-2.pdf PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY	Absolute	5	2	2	0	9
	Table- relative	3,40%	1,36%	1,36%	0,00%	6,12%
CREC-2015-11-19-pt1-PgS8166-2.pdf SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 25	Absolute	4	1	0	0	5
	Table- relative	2,72%	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2015-11-30-pt1-PgS8183.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE	Absolute	0	2	3	0	5
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,36%	2,04%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2015-12-01-pt1-PgE1688-2.pdf IN OPPOSITION TO S.J. RES. 23 AND S.J. RES. 24	Absolute	0	2	2	0	4
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,36%	1,36%	0,00%	2,72%
CREC-2015-12-01-pt1-PgH8829.pdf PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	Absolute	0	0	3	0	3
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,00%	2,04%	0,00%	2,04%
CREC-2015-12-08-pt1-PgE1738.pdf PARIS CLIMATE SUMMIT	Absolute	0	2	1	1	4
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,36%	0,68%	0,68%	2,72%
CREC-2015-12-09-pt1-PgH9085-2.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO OUR PLANET	Absolute	3	1	1	0	5
	Table- relative	2,04%	0,68%	0,68%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2015-12-09-pt1-PgS8522.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE	Absolute	1	0	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2015-12-10-pt1-PgS8576-2.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS	Absolute	8	19	9	3	39
	Table- relative	5,44%	12,93%	6,12%	2,04%	26,53%
CREC-2015-12-14-pt1-PgS8624-5.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT	Absolute	0	1	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2015-12-15-pt1-PgS8655.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT AND SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS	Absolute	0	1	1	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,68%	0,68%	0,00%	1,36%
CREC-2015-12-15-pt1-PgS8661.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	5	0	0	5
	Table- relative	0,00%	3,40%	0,00%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2015-12-16-pt1-PgS8697.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT	Absolute	2	1	2	2	7
	Table- relative	1,36%	0,68%	1,36%	1,36%	4,76%
CREC-2015-12-16-pt1-PgS8712.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT	Absolute	0	0	1	0	1
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2015-12-16-pt1-PgS8715-2.pdf PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT	Absolute	0	1	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2016-01-11-pt1-PgS21-3.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	3	2	0	5
	Table- relative	0,00%	2,04%	1,36%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2016-02-03-pt1-PgH501-2.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE – A TIPPING POINT	Absolute	0	4	1	0	5
	Table- relative	0,00%	2,72%	0,68%	0,00%	3,40%
CREC-2016-02-11-pt1-PgH715-2.pdf CLEAN POWER PLAN	Absolute	0	1	2	0	3
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,68%	1,36%	0,00%	2,04%
CREC-2016-04-12-pt1-PgS1886.pdf PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT	Absolute	1	2	0	0	3
	Table- relative	0,68%	1,36%	0,00%	0,00%	2,04%

CREC-2016-04-19-pt1-PgH1837-2.pdf EARTH DAY AND THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT	Absolute	1	0	1	0	2
	Table-relative	0,68%	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	1,36%
CREC-2016-04-20-pt1-PgH1878-3.pdf EARTH DAY	Absolute	0	0	2	0	2
	Table-relative	0,00%	0,00%	1,36%	0,00%	1,36%
CREC-2016-04-21-pt1-PgS2379-2.pdf PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT SIGNING AND EARTH DAY	Absolute	0	5	2	0	7
	Table-relative	0,00%	3,40%	1,36%	0,00%	4,76%
CREC-2016-05-17-pt1-PgS2911-4.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	2	0	0	2
	Table-relative	0,00%	1,36%	0,00%	0,00%	1,36%
CREC-2016-06-14-pt1-PgS3871-3.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	1	0	0	1
	Table-relative	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2016-11-15-pt1-PgH6184.pdf STOP CLIMATE CHANGE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE	Absolute	0	1	0	0	1
	Table-relative	0,00%	0,68%	0,00%	0,00%	0,68%
CREC-2016-11-16-pt1-PgH6241-4.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	2	1	0	3
	Table-relative	0,00%	1,36%	0,68%	0,00%	2,04%
CREC-2016-12-05-pt1-PgS6702-2.pdf SECRETARY KERRY'S REMARKS AT COP22	Absolute	0	1	2	0	3
	Table-relative	0,00%	0,68%	1,36%	0,00%	2,04%
CREC-2017-01-17-pt1-PgS328.pdf PRESIDENT OBAMA'S LEGACY	Absolute	1	0	3	0	4
	Table-relative	0,68%	0,00%	2,04%	0,00%	2,72%
Totals	Absolute	29	63	47	8	147
	Table-relative	19,73%	42,86%	31,97%	5,44%	100,00%

APPENDIX C: CODE-DOCUMENT TABLE SECOND PERIOD

		Accountability	Legitimacy	Responsibility	Transparency	Totals
CREC-2019-02-06-pt1-PgS876-2.pdf NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT – MOTION TO PROCEED – RESUMED	Absolute	5	14	4	0	23
	Table-relative	1,26%	3,54%	1,01%	0,00%	5,81%
CREC-2019-02-26-pt1-PgS1468-2.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE (EXECUTIVE CALENDAR)	Absolute	7	8	3	0	18
	Table-relative	1,77%	2,02%	0,76%	0,00%	4,55%
CREC-2019-02-27-pt1-PgS1530-2.pdf NOMINATION OF ANDREW WHEELER (EXECUTIVE CALENDAR)	Absolute	1	3	3	0	7
	Table-relative	0,25%	0,76%	0,76%	0,00%	1,77%
CREC-2019-02-28-pt1-PgS1559-2.pdf NOMINATION OF ANDREW WHEELER (EXECUTIVE SESSION)	Absolute	1	6	5	0	12
	Table-relative	0,25%	1,52%	1,26%	0,00%	3,03%
CREC-2019-03-26-pt1-PgS1953.pdf THE GREEN NEW DEAL (EXECUTIVE SESSION)	Absolute	4	4	4	0	12
	Table-relative	1,01%	1,01%	1,01%	0,00%	3,03%
CREC-2019-04-29-pt1-PgH3302.pdf REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	1	0	1	0	2
	Table-relative	0,25%	0,00%	0,25%	0,00%	0,51%
CREC-2019-04-30-pt1-PgH3312.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	1	2	1	0	4
	Table-relative	0,25%	0,51%	0,25%	0,00%	1,01%
CREC-2019-05-01-pt1-PgH3350-3.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE IS OUR PRESENT	Absolute	1	1	0	0	2
	Table-relative	0,25%	0,25%	0,00%	0,00%	0,51%
CREC-2019-05-01-pt1-PgH3350-5.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL	Absolute	2	3	1	0	6
	Table-relative	0,51%	0,76%	0,25%	0,00%	1,52%
CREC-2019-05-01-pt1-PgH3351-2.pdf PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 9, CLIMATE ACTION NOW ACT	Absolute	13	20	7	0	40
	Table-relative	3,28%	5,05%	1,77%	0,00%	10,10%
CREC-2019-05-01-pt1-PgH3363-3.pdf CLIMATE ACTION NOW ACT	Absolute	36	40	31	2	109
	Table-relative	9,09%	10,10%	7,83%	0,51%	27,53%
	Absolute	0	1	1	0	2

CREC-2019-05-02-pt1-PgH3410-3.pdf ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE	Table- relative	0,00%	0,25%	0,25%	0,00%	0,51%
CREC-2019-05-02-pt1-PgH3410-5.pdf LEAD ON THE CRISIS OF CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	2	1	0	3
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,51%	0,25%	0,00%	0,76%
CREC-2019-05-02-pt1-PgH3411-3.pdf CLIMATE ACTION NOW ACT	Absolute	7	3	7	1	18
	Table- relative	1,77%	0,76%	1,77%	0,25%	4,55%
CREC-2019-05-02-pt1-PgH3437.pdf LEADING ON CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	1	1	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,25%	0,25%	0,00%	0,51%
CREC-2019-05-08-pt1-PgS2745.pdf STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	0	3	3	0	6
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,76%	0,76%	0,00%	1,52%
CREC-2019-05-14-pt1-PgS2812.pdf PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS	Absolute	1	4	1	0	6
	Table- relative	0,25%	1,01%	0,25%	0,00%	1,52%
CREC-2019-07-08-pt1-PgS4689.pdf ORDER OF PROCEDURE	Absolute	1	8	2	0	11
	Table- relative	0,25%	2,02%	0,51%	0,00%	2,78%
CREC-2019-07-09-pt1-PgS4726-6.pdf PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS	Absolute	4	2	0	1	7
	Table- relative	1,01%	0,51%	0,00%	0,25%	1,77%
CREC-2019-07-17-pt1-PgS4887-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR	Absolute	6	11	9	0	26
	Table- relative	1,52%	2,78%	2,27%	0,00%	6,57%
CREC-2019-07-17-pt1-PgS4916.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	2	9	0	0	11
	Table- relative	0,51%	2,27%	0,00%	0,00%	2,78%
CREC-2019-07-25-pt1-PgE993-3.pdf AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	1	4	0	0	5
	Table- relative	0,25%	1,01%	0,00%	0,00%	1,26%
CREC-2019-09-19-pt1-PgH7819-2.pdf COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE WITH AGGRESSIVE ACTION AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP	Absolute	3	11	3	1	18
	Table- relative	0,76%	2,78%	0,76%	0,25%	4,55%
CREC-2019-09-26-pt1-PgS5740.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	0	2	1	0	3
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,51%	0,25%	0,00%	0,76%
CREC-2019-10-16-pt1-PgS5815-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR -- CONTINUED	Absolute	6	2	3	0	11
	Table- relative	1,52%	0,51%	0,76%	0,00%	2,78%
CREC-2019-10-30-pt1-PgS6281-2.pdf COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT ...	Absolute	3	1	1	0	5
	Table- relative	0,76%	0,25%	0,25%	0,00%	1,26%
CREC-2019-10-31-pt1-PgS6344-2.pdf SENATE RESOLUTION 404	Absolute	4	7	3	1	15
	Table- relative	1,01%	1,77%	0,76%	0,25%	3,79%
CREC-2017-05-08-pt1-PgS2798.pdf PARIS AGREEMENT	Absolute	2	2	2	0	6
	Table- relative	0,51%	0,51%	0,51%	0,00%	1,52%
CREC-2019-06-04-pt1-PgS3187.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE (EXECUTIVE CALENDAR)	Absolute	1	3	0	0	4
	Table- relative	0,25%	0,76%	0,00%	0,00%	1,01%
CREC-2017-06-08-pt1-PgH4712-5.pdf PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT	Absolute	1	1	0	0	2
	Table- relative	0,25%	0,25%	0,00%	0,00%	0,51%
Totals	Absolute	114	178	98	6	396
	Table- relative	28,79%	44,95%	24,75%	1,52%	100,00%

APPENDIX D: CODE-DOCUMENT TABLE THIRD PERIOD

		Accountability	Legitimacy	Responsibility	Transparency	Totals
CREC-2019-11-05-pt1-PgS6366-2.pdf EXECUTIVE SESSION	Absolute	0	0	2	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2019-11-06-pt1-PgS6421-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR	Absolute	2	4	3	0	9
	Table- relative	1,12%	2,25%	1,69%	0,00%	5,06%
CREC-2019-11-06-pt1-PgS6435-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR	Absolute	3	7	4	0	14
	Table- relative	1,69%	3,93%	2,25%	0,00%	7,87%
CREC-2019-11-13-pt1-PgS6525-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR -- CONTINUED	Absolute	1	5	3	0	9
	Table- relative	0,56%	2,81%	1,69%	0,00%	5,06%
CREC-2019-12-04-pt1-PgS6844.pdf U.N. CLIMATE CONFERENCE	Absolute	0	0	2	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2019-12-05-pt1-PgH9263-7.pdf WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME	Absolute	2	2	1	0	5
	Table- relative	1,12%	1,12%	0,56%	0,00%	2,81%
CREC-2019-12-05-pt1-PgH9293-2.pdf PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	1	0	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,56%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,56%
CREC-2019-12-05-pt1-PgS6863-6.pdf BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE	Absolute	0	2	0	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2019-12-05-pt1-PgS6878-2.pdf EXECUTIVE SESSION	Absolute	4	8	2	0	14
	Table- relative	2,25%	4,49%	1,12%	0,00%	7,87%
CREC-2019-12-06-pt1-PgH9298-2.pdf DEMOCRATS ARE WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE	Absolute	1	0	1	0	2
	Table- relative	0,56%	0,00%	0,56%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2019-12-10-pt1-PgS6950.pdf SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	1	0	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,56%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,56%
CREC-2019-12-10-pt1-PgS6953.pdf SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	4	3	4	0	11
	Table- relative	2,25%	1,69%	2,25%	0,00%	6,18%
CREC-2019-12-11-pt1-PgS6995-6.pdf DELAWARE DAY AND HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT	Absolute	0	5	4	0	9
	Table- relative	0,00%	2,81%	2,25%	0,00%	5,06%
CREC-2019-12-12-pt1-PgH10257.pdf PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	0	0	1	0	1
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,00%	0,56%	0,00%	0,56%
CREC-2019-12-17-pt1-PgS7121-4.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	1	2	0	0	3
	Table- relative	0,56%	1,12%	0,00%	0,00%	1,69%
CREC-2020-01-07-pt1-PgS42-2.pdf EXECUTIVE CALENDAR -- CONTINUED	Absolute	0	1	4	0	5
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,56%	2,25%	0,00%	2,81%
CREC-2020-01-07-pt1-PgS47.pdf UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST -- S. CON. RES. 32	Absolute	1	7	0	0	8
	Table- relative	0,56%	3,93%	0,00%	0,00%	4,49%
CREC-2020-01-08-pt1-PgH17-3.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE	Absolute	2	3	1	0	6
	Table- relative	1,12%	1,69%	0,56%	0,00%	3,37%
CREC-2020-01-15-pt1-PgS220.pdf LEGISLATIVE SESSION	Absolute	4	1	1	0	6
	Table- relative	2,25%	0,56%	0,56%	0,00%	3,37%
CREC-2020-01-16-pt1-PgS262-2.pdf VETERAN TREATMENT COURT COORDINATION ACT OF 2019	Absolute	2	0	0	0	2
	Table- relative	1,12%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2020-01-28-pt1-PgH609-2.pdf STATE OF THE ECONOMY	Absolute	1	0	2	0	3
	Table- relative	0,56%	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	1,69%
	Absolute	8	6	2	0	16

CREC-2020-02-12-pt1-PgS1012.pdf DIRECTING THE REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES ...	Table- relative	4,49%	3,37%	1,12%	0,00%	8,99%
CREC-2020-02-26-pt1-PgH1215-3.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM	Absolute	4	5	3	0	12
	Table- relative	2,25%	2,81%	1,69%	0,00%	6,74%
CREC-2020-03-03-pt1-PgS1280-2.pdf ADVANCED GEOTHERMAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2019 -- MOTION TO PROCEED -- CONTINUED	Absolute	1	3	1	0	5
	Table- relative	0,56%	1,69%	0,56%	0,00%	2,81%
CREC-2020-03-04-pt1-PgS1452.pdf ADVANCED GEOTHERMAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2019	Absolute	4	5	2	0	11
	Table- relative	2,25%	2,81%	1,12%	0,00%	6,18%
CREC-2020-05-07-pt1-PgS2319.pdf 50 TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY	Absolute	3	7	1	0	11
	Table- relative	1,69%	3,93%	0,56%	0,00%	6,18%
CREC-2020-06-30-pt1-PgS4030-2.pdf VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS	Absolute	0	2	0	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2020-07-02-pt1-PgS4214-2.pdf VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS	Absolute	0	2	0	0	2
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,12%	0,00%	0,00%	1,12%
CREC-2020-09-30-pt1-PgS5928.pdf CLIMATE CHANGE (EXECUTIVE SESSION)	Absolute	0	3	0	0	3
	Table- relative	0,00%	1,69%	0,00%	0,00%	1,69%
CREC-2020-12-10-pt1-PgH7147.pdf PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS	Absolute	0	1	0	0	1
	Table- relative	0,00%	0,56%	0,00%	0,00%	0,56%
Totals	Absolute	50	84	44	0	178
	Table- relative	28,09%	47,19%	24,72%	0,00%	100,00%