

Excerpt

Climate change denial is not about conservatives versus liberals, Republicans versus Democrats, or business versus environmentalism. It is about ideology versus science. *It is essential to view climate change denial as ideology to understand its raison d'être. This book is based on the distinction between ideology and science.*

The science is straightforward and concise: greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, trap heat in the atmosphere. With the advent of widespread fossil fuel use 250 years ago, human activities have increased greenhouse gases from 270 parts per million (ppm) to 400 ppm today. Stabilizing climate requires limiting greenhouse gases. More than 97% of climate scientists agree on this. All of the major scientific bodies in the world also endorse these findings.

Why doesn't 97% of the public agree on the science? Fear of the actions required to reduce greenhouse gases is pervasive, and there are many who would not like to face this reality. They are advocates or followers of denial ideology.

When people deny reality, their ideas can range all over the map. Climate change denial ideology is confusing and diffuse. Is it true belief or propaganda? Many politicians promote it; they may be true believers or not. Propagandists and apologists for fossil fuel industries play a major role, but whether they believe in the ideology or not they are paid skills. Some of the public believes the propaganda for reasons that include expediency and intentional disbelief. All of this requires further analysis because of its implications for the future.

An existential issue of our time is the role of climate change denial ideology. By denying the science, the ideology delays and harms effective action. Understanding this threat requires scrutiny of the conflict between ideology and science. There are scientific findings with which denial ideologues take issue, and those disputes lead to doubts (chapter 1). Organizations supporting denial ideology provide rationales for these doubts (chapter 2). Some of their underlying arguments involving ethics, growth, capitalism, and social change lead to further doubts (chapter 3). These arguments affect American politics in statements by politicians that reflect denial ideology (chapter 4). Political conflict over climate change tends to magnify culture conflict, making resolution of climate issues more difficult (chapter 5). I wrap up all these considerations with some personal views on political and ideological conflict over climate change (chapter 6).