



Understanding US Climate Politics

Dana R. Fisher
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
Columbia University

Basis of my Comments



- **Bargaining for Non-Participation Project** with the Norwegian Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo (CICERO)
- **Social Networks as Agents of Change in Climate Policy Making Project (COMPON)**

A Little Background on the US...

- Very Resource Rich
 - Particularly coal, which is geographically distributed across the country
- Geographically spread-out
 - Therefore, very car-reliant
- Political Diffusion of Power
 - Senate must approve any treaty and it requires “implementing legislation” to be passed

US Climate Politics Today (1)

- Sub-National Climate Politics
 - Regional Programs
 - State-level Programs
 - Mayors' Agreement on Climate Change



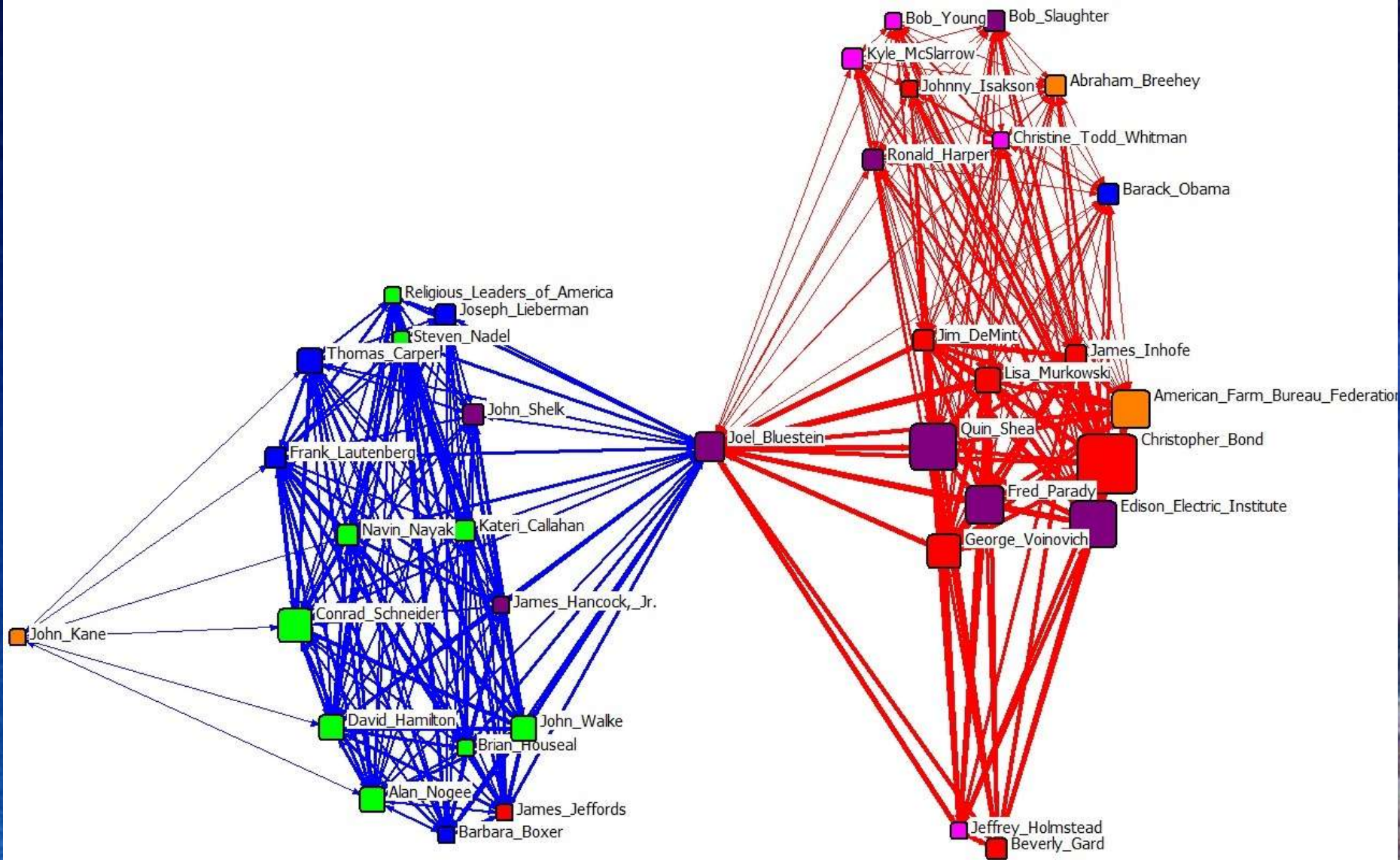
Mayors' Agreement on Climate Change



US Climate Politics Today (2)

- American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (Waxman-Markey bill)
- Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (Boxer-Kerry bill)
 - Stalled in the Senate
 - Still the Product of Very Partisan debates

Understanding the Actors Involved



US Climate Politics Today (3)

- The Obama Factor
 - The President supports having a domestic climate change policy, which we do not currently have
 - EPA Decision to regulate CO₂ as a pollutant in August 2009

What Happened at COP-15 in Copenhagen

- Copenhagen Accord
 - Signed by the U.S., China, India, Brazil, South Africa
 - Nonbinding resolution that varies by country
 - Agreement on compliance/monitoring
 - \$100 billion a year from wealthy nations
- Civil society gets left out in the Cold...literally