

# Comments about

« **On Climate Fat Tails and Politics** » by **Charles F. Mason and Neil A. Wilmot**

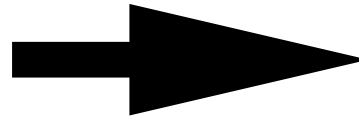
# Two surprising results

- Politicians in the US are sensitive to the weather anomalies induced by climate change
- The link between their behaviour and weather runs contrarily to the intuition.
- Why it is surprising?

# Climate change and meteorology

- The first manifestations of climate change have materialised only recently.
- The temperature rise trend is too slow to be remarked until now.
- People lack generally weather memory.
- The US climate geography is too diverse (from Alaska to Florida) to expect finding a consistent link between politics and climate at a nationwide scale.
-  **The 'climate signal' is too diverse and noisy to have political effects.**
- *The paper introduces extreme events, much more noticeable.*
- *The paper shows that « recent » events do not play a role.*
- *The paper uses a state by state panel approach to deal with spatial heterogeneity.*

# Climate change and political behaviour

- The author focus on actual behaviour (voting behaviour) rather than speeches or media activity.
- Politicians could claim that extreme weather events have ‘nothing to do’ with climate change.
- Polarisation and party vote discipline should dominate : politicians do not vote ‘following their oneself consciousness’.
- Vote behaviour is the outcome of complex ‘vote trading’ games where politicians seek alliances to protect the interests of their constituencies. No reason to expect that the game outcome be correlated with the specific weather events in their state.
-  **The ‘climate signal’ should play a minor role (almost nil) in political behaviour.**

# But...

- The paper shows that climate anomalies have an influence on politicians behaviour.
- However it seems that more disruptive climate events induce less support to climate action from the politicians. Puzzling...
- Belief bias : strange cold episodes reinforce the belief that there is no climate warming, hot episodes are undervalued.
- Human responsiveness in warming: disruptive events are seen as a 'fatality'.
- Spatial climate heterogeneity does not help achieving a 'climate consensus' for political action at the federal level, promoting a state scale approach (tension between local and national politics).