Democratic Processes and Natural Disasters: How the United States is Representing Those Most Affected By and Most Concerned About Climate Change

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Introduction

Research Hypothesis: In the United States, the incidents of the most common crisis--climate change--affected natural disasters (billion dollar storms, hurricanes, floods, and winter storms) have been increasing and the democratic process has been failing to address it. Earthquakes have also been included as a natural disaster because they are not necessarily a natural disaster associated with human intervention in the climate (i.e. climate change), and wildfires have been excluded because they are often man-made.

Methodology

The data is looking at nationwide incidents and severity (by damage) of natural disasters of a full year over two different time periods. The two years used are 2000 and 2019, which represent "normal" years spaced largely apart. There is also a presentation of storm type and size in 2019, showing what types of maps take precedence. To measure the difference in damage caused by natural disasters, the method used was the Standard Deviation (SD) compared to the mean. The two years used are 2000 and 2019, which represent "normal" years spaced largely apart. The data is looking at nationwide incidents and severity (by damage) of natural disasters of a full year over two different time periods. The two years used are 2000 and 2019, which represent "normal" years spaced largely apart. The data is looking at nationwide incidents and severity (by damage) of natural disasters of a full year over two different time periods. The two years used are 2000 and 2019, which represent "normal" years spaced largely apart.

Results

The clear solution for alignment of American interests with government action is to have the United States rejoin the Paris Agreement, which President Trump officially pulled support for on November 4th. 2020. 46% Americans recognized that the current administration has not been representing their interests effectively, specifically with regard to climate change action, and as of November 7th, 2020, have elected new representatives who have promised to enact greater climate change mitigation plans, including rejoining the Paris Agreement. The 2020 American election cycle had climate change as one of the primary issues, with representatives such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who represents the Bronx, New York, rising to prominence among those voters. President Peres and Ocasio-Cortez both outlined plans to make America a leader in climate change, which many candidates clearly laid out their policy plans (or lack thereof). A record number of climate change activists were elected, with President Trump's defeat bringing in 72 million dollars in inauguration donations. Five states voted to remain in the Paris Agreement. The change in leadership in the United States has been a major victory for climate action for climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change.

Discussion of Climate Change in the United States of America

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Scientists say that we have mere years until the world is irreparably damaged due to climate change, where climate change can no longer be mitigated, making Earth unsuitable for human life. Natural disasters due to climate change in the United States have been increasing, with 10 times more billion dollar natural disasters in 2019 than in 2000. **Experts agree that the most important issue to slow climate change is for swiftly, globally sweeping action that holds all governments and peoples accountable.** The Paris Agreement was an attempt at such action, where the United States signed under the Obama Administration in September 2016. The Paris Agreement, while having many clauses, is an international agreement where each country at the time of ratification has agreed to limit their emissions. Almost every country in the world, including the United States, who produces almost 15% of the world's carbon emissions (as of 2017) signed it. **However, not all American politicians see climate change as a problem or even actively work to address it.**

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

When President Trump came into office in 2017, and throughout the following four years, many of the climate protection policies set by previous-era presidents were dismantled, with the slashing of the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency, the promotion of the fossil fuel industry, and others. **However, anti-climate change beliefs were not the only votes in 2017.** Republicans chose Ocasio-Cortez and Ed Markey brought about a new wave of climate change activism with the proposal of the Green New Deal. The Green New Deal gathered huge swaths of support from the American people, especially among the younger generations. **However, the Green New Deal was rejected for Congressional approval in the House of Representatives, with 57 representatives voting against it, 41 abstaining, and zero voting in favor of it.**

CLIMATE ACTION NOW ACT (CANAct)

Less than a year after the signing of the Paris Agreement, President Trump announced his intentions to pull out of the United States support, but due to legal arguments, the United States could not officially withdraw until November of 2020 at the earliest. The Climate Action New Act, or CANAct, was proposed in April 2019 by the United States House of Representatives. The legislation was a bill that would have forced the leadership of the United States government by preventing the government from using any federal money to withdraw from the deal, essentially requiring the United States to remain. Those who were in favor of the United States leaving the Paris Agreement argued that it is costly and restrictive to any action that the United States could have taken on its own, but these representatives were not united. The CANAct passed the House of Representatives with a 231-190 vote and has been listed in the Senate since May 7th, 2019.

PUBLIC OPINION ON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

According to the Pew Research Center, almost 2/3 of the American public believe that the United States government is not doing enough to combat global climate change. But who are these people, and are they the ones being most affected by disasters?

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The clear solution for alignment of American interests with government action is to have the United States rejoin the Paris Agreement, which President Trump officially pulled support for on November 4th, 2020. 46% Americans recognized that the current administration has not been representing their interests effectively, specifically with regard to climate change action, and as of November 7th, 2020, have elected new representatives who have promised to enact greater climate change mitigation plans, including rejoining the Paris Agreement. The 2020 American election cycle had climate change as one of the primary issues, with representatives such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who represents the Bronx, New York, rising to prominence among those voters. President Peres and Ocasio-Cortez both outlined plans to make America a leader in climate change, which many candidates clearly laid out their policy plans (or lack thereof). A record number of climate change activists were elected, with President Trump's defeat bringing in 72 million dollars in inauguration donations. Five states voted to remain in the Paris Agreement. The change in leadership in the United States has been a major victory for climate action for climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change. If these states prove to be successful, it will show that the United States can be a leader in climate change.

Limitations

Some limitations in this data are: the project does not expand the search beyond two time frames and therefore cannot show true trends in increased natural disasters, there is no data on what special types of disasters happened in 2000, and CANAct votes are used as a proxy for action for climate change, which may or may not be accurate, as House representatives may have taken other action. However, the Paris Agreement is considered the most progressive action of today and can be interpreted as an accurate proxy.

Sources