How Can You Think About Climate Change at a Time Like This? Understanding Climate Change Saliency Amidst Economic Hardship

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This study draws on saliency theory to take a novel approach to investigating factors influencing climate change saliency among the public. We use three pilot studies from ANES (2019, 2022, and 2024) to explore how the economic behavior among (a new composite measure of economic hardship in the last year) age, education, political identity, and urban/rural residency shape climate attitudes. We find that cumulative economic hardships tend to lower the likelihood of climate change issue saliency. Sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income also moderate the direction of climate change issue saliency. Political affiliation emerges as a significant predictor, with Democrats being more likely to prioritize climate issues than Republicans amidst self-reported economic hardships. However – when we utilize the interaction effect between education, urban residency, and partisanships – we find that as the level of self-reported economic hardships increases, Democrats are likely to deprioritize the climate issue saliency. The current research significantly contributes to saliency literature by elucidating the heterogeneous nature of climate change perceptions across socio-political demographics, offering profound insights into how economic and political contexts influence the prioritization of climate issues.

Keywords (under 250 characters):

Climate Change, Economic Hardship, Saliency Theory, Political Affiliation, Public Perceptions, Inflation Behavior Index, Socio-political Demographics

Introduction

Climate change is, arguably, one of the most pressing global challenges of our time (IPCC, 2023; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023). Effects range broadly from impacts on ecosystems, to food systems, to public health, and even implications for the economy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023). Action is needed now in order to mitigate and adapt to growing climate change concerns. In order to see this action, climate change must be a salient issue (Bromley-Trujillo & Poe, 2018). However, this is increasingly challenging in the world today, as issues such as the economy, healthcare, and even human rights often take the forefront of our minds as more pressing and immediate concerns; they are more concrete and tangible in our lives, and they lend themselves easily to availability heuristics (Trope & Liberman, 2010; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Our research investigates just one of these many factors: how economic hardships impact climate saliency.

Literature Review

As stated by Bakó & Neszveda (2020), "according to salience theory decisions are not made in a vacuum, but rather in a comparative context and decision makers contrast the attributes of an option to the features of other available alternatives when facing a decision." The concept of issue salience was first used as an attempt to explain the voting behaviors of individuals (Eulau, 1955). It is essentially the focus of an individual's thinking in regards to the level of an importance of a given issue (Boyd & Wengrovitz, 2007; Miller et al., 2016).

Prior research studies find that sociodemographic characteristics of climate change saliency include age, gender, education, income, urban residency, and political identity (Dietz et al., 1998; Pampel & Hunter, 2012; Smith et al., 2024; Speiser & Hill, 2021) – all of which are measured in this study. Climate change is generally more salient for those who are younger, female, highly educated, live in urban environments, and are politically liberal. Climate change saliency also varies according to other factors such as social consensus (Goldberg et al., 2020) and elite cues (Smith et al., 2024), not measured in this study.

Diving deeper on political identity, a recent Pew Research Center survey (Oct 2024) revealed deep partisan divides in U.S. climate attitudes. The survey finds that 52% of Democrats think climate policies help the economy, whereas only 44% of Republicans think the same. Nonetheless, there is steady bipartisan support for environmental policies like tax credits for home energy efficiency (83%) and carbon capture (79%). Additionally, 64% of Americans say climate change affects their local communities. However, the sentiment resonates with 41% of Republicans compared to 86% of Democrats (Kennedy & Tyson, 2024).

At the height of economic hardships, people tend to deprioritize climate concerns. However, the findings and trade-offs between economic hardship and climate concerns vary due to the measurement strategies for capturing economic hardship and climate importance through fielding survey questions (Anderson et al., 2017; Lundquist, 2024). Economic downturns significantly impact the issue of saliency, with the economy generally being of grater saliency than other issues – especially those of an environmental nature (Kenny, 2020). Inspired by prior literature, our study focuses on personal reflection on perceived economic hardships and their saliency regarding climate change. Earlier studies explored the consumer price index, GDP, employment status, or annual income as a measurement of economic stability or downturn to measure climate change issue saliency among survey participants. In our study, we focus on the survey participants' perceptions and individual experiences in navigating their lives and whether they experienced limited accessibility to resources due to limited economic situations. Therefore, we focus on the following hypotheses:

H_1: Inflation-induced economic hardships decrease climate change saliency.
H_2: The attained education level increases the saliency of climate change under inflation-induced economic hardships.
H_3: Living in big cities increases the saliency of climate change under inflation-induced economic hardships depending on attained education level and partisanship.

Methods

We used data from 2019, 2022, and 2024 American National Election Studies (ANES) Pilot Studies to examine the relationship between economic hardship and climate issue saliency (ANES, 2019; ANES, 2022; ANES, 2024). The dependent variable, Climate Importance, was measured on an ordinal scale from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Extremely Important). Given the ordered nature of the dependent variable, we employed ordinal logistic regression (OLOGIT) to model the probability of higher levels of climate concern. Although the wording of each climate change issue saliency survey question varied in pilot study datasets, the core focus of capturing the issue of the saliency of climate change remained the primary focus for each dataset.

The primary independent variable, the Inflation Behavior Index (IBR), captured economic hardship through self-reported economic adjustments. Earlier research works applied the IBR in unpacking the voting intentions in the U.S. general election (2024), and how sociodemographic characteristics, work status, and partisanship influence voting intentions (Afzal, 2024a, 2024b). For the 2019 pilot study, the index included worry about economic situations, lack of economic mobility, and lack of access to healthcare due to economic concerns. The 2019 Cronbach alpha for the economic concerns index is 0.72, and the EFA and CFA both confirm a strong unidimensional structure, with over 65% of the variance explained by a single factor and high factor loadings across all three

items – indicating good internal consistency and construct validity. In 2022, the index included difficulty affording gas, groceries, and housing, while in 2024, it consisted of cutting spending, canceling purchases, and dipping into savings. Despite differences in measurement, the underlying concept of economic strain remains consistent. The IBR index Cronbach alpha[1] for 2022 is 0.88, which outlines more substantial internal consistency. Both EFA and CFA analysis show strong factor loading(~0.80). On the other hand, the IBR index Cronbach alpha for 2024 is 0.57, which outlines very moderate internal consistency, but both EFA and CFA analysis show strong factor loading (~0.49).

To ensure robust estimation, we controlled education, income, gender, age (where available), partisanship, and urban residency. The 2019 and 2022 datasets lack an explicit age variable, while the 2024 dataset includes an age variable. To verify consistency, we ran models with and without log age, and found no substantive change in results for the 2024 pilot dataset. Each dataset has undergone complete case analysis, where we excluded observations with missing values in any of the model variables. We estimated three hierarchical models for each dataset. The following mathematical equations explain the construction of the multilevel models for each dataset and the progression from bivariate (Model 1) to multivariate (Model 2) to interaction effects (Model 3).

Bivariate Model (Model 1): The first model of all three pilot studies examines the direct association between economic hardship and climate saliency (H_1). Although the construction for economic hardship induced due to inflationary reasons and economic hardships differ for each dataset, we observed similar trends from all datasets. Similarly, we operationalized the construct for climate saliency for each dataset slightly differently, but the core focus of issue saliency remains the same. The supplementary file discusses the variable construction in more detail.

$$logit(P(Y \leq j)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 \, Inflation\ Behavior\ Index \qquad (3.1)$$

Multivariate Model (Model 2): The second model for both ANES pilot studies controls for sociodemographic characteristics, partisanship, and urban/rural residency. We specifically aimed to explore how the level of attained education (H_2) and partisanship affected climate change saliency, and whether there were any significant shifts over time.

$$logit(P(Y \leq j)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 \, Inflation\ Behavior\ Index + \beta_2 \, Gender + \beta_3 \, Attained\ Education + \beta_4 \, Income + \beta_5 \, Democrat + \beta_6 \, Republican + \beta_7 \, Big\ City \qquad (3.2)$$

Interaction Model (Model 3): The third model incorporates interaction terms to examine the conditional effects of education and urban residency across partisan groups (H_3). We aimed to explore how economic distress due to inflation impacted climate change

[1] Cronbach's alpha measures internal consistency (reliability) of a scale, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identifies underlying factor structures, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) tests whether a hypothesized factor structure fits the observed data (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

saliency while having clear partisanship and a higher level of attained education. The IBR is constructed differently for 2022 and 2024, yet both indices capture the economic constraints due to inflation.

$$logit(P(Y \leq j)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 \, Inflation\ Behavior\ Index + \beta_2 \, Gender + \beta_3 \, Attained\ Education + \beta_4 \, Income + \beta_5 \, Democrat + \beta_6 \, Republican + \beta_7 \, Big\ City + \beta_8 \, (Educ \times Democrat) + \beta_9 \, (Educ \times Republican) + \beta_{10} \, (Educ \times Democrat \times Big\ City) + \beta_{11} \, (Educ \times Republican \times Big\ City) \quad (3.3)$$

For the 2024 dataset, we have an age variable explicitly specified in the pilot study dataset. Therefore, we also investigated the effects of age vs. without age, and found no significant shifts. The supplementary file also includes models with and without age for the 2024 ANES pilot study for further clarification. Therefore, the revised model 2 and 3 for ANES 2024 pilot study data are:

Model 2 with age (ANES 2024 Pilot Study):

$$logit(P(Y \leq j)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 \, Inflation\ Behavior\ Index + \beta_2 \, Gender + \beta_3 \, Attained\ Education + \beta_4 \, Income + \beta_5 \, Democrat + \beta_6 \, Republican + \beta_7 \, Big\ City + \beta_8 \, Log\ Age \quad (3.4)$$

Model 3 with age (ANES 2024 Pilot Study):

$$logit(P(Y \leq j)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 \, Inflation\ Behavior\ Index + \beta_2 \, Gender + \beta_3 \, Attained\ Education + \beta_4 \, Income + \beta_5 \, Democrat + \beta_6 \, Republican + \beta_7 \, Big\ City + \beta_8 \, (Educ \times Democrat) + \beta_9 \, (Educ \times Republican) + \beta_{10} \, (Educ \times Democrat \times Big\ City) + \beta_{11} \, (Educ \times Republican \times Big\ City) \quad (3.5)$$

We also applied a complete case loop for each yearly pilot study dataset's three multilevel models to address the missing data models. We used weights for each model to ensure it was nationally representative instead of analyzing within the sample. The complete case-weighted estimation ensures generalizability, with probability weights applied to adjust for survey design. The results across both years reveal consistent patterns in how economic hardship, education, and partisan identity influence climate issue saliency.

Results

In the 2019 ANES Pilot Study, we tested to what extent economic hardship is associated with climate change issue saliency. Table 1 outlines all three models, where model 1 shows a strong positive relationship between the IBR and climate saliency. The odds ratio is 1.34 ($p < 0.001$), which means each one-point rise in economic distress increases the odds of reporting higher climate concern by 34%. The findings from Model 1 do not

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support our first hypothesis, as increased economic hardships increase climate saliency. We included gender, education, income, party identity, and urban residency in Model 2. The inflation effect remains statistically significant (OR = 1.29, $p < 0.001$). However, we did not observe any statistically significant association between education and climate saliency, so the second hypothesis is also not supported. Finally, we added interaction effects in Model 3, capturing education, party identity, and urban residency. Even after accounting for interactions, the inflation index stays positive and significant (OR = 1.29, $p < 0.001$). We observed that, specifically in 2019, when people were experiencing a cumulative higher level of economic hardships, they tended to prioritize climate concerns. We observe a similar trend across all three models.

Table 1: Ordinal Logistic with Odds Ratios for Climate Importance (ANES 2019 Pilot Study)

Variable	**Model 1 (Bivariate)**	**Model 2 (Multivariate)**	**Model 3 (Interaction)**
Main DV: Climate Importance *(1 = Not Important ... 5 = Most Important)*			
Inflation Behavior Index	1.337* **(0.033)**	1.293* **(0.034)**	1.292* **(0.034)**
Gender (Female)		1.287 (0.194)	1.252 (0.190)
Log Age		—	—
Education		1.105 (0.062)	1.150 (0.096)
Income		*1.063* (0.028)	*1.060* (0.028)
Democrat		3.646* (0.702)	2.411 (1.174)
Republican		0.572 (0.101)	1.123 (0.502)
Big City Resident		1.172 (0.201)	1.154 (0.271)
Education × Democrat			1.162 (0.159)
Education × Republican			0.812 (0.097)
Education × Democrat × City			0.914 (0.091)
Education × Republican × City			1.084 (0.115)
Cut 1	0.549* (0.077)	1.506 (0.532)	1.598 (0.644)
Cut 2	0.996 (0.133)	2.850 (1.007)	3.038 (1.227)
Cut 3	3.139* **(0.437)**	9.996* **(3.609)**	10.736* **(4.413)**
Cut 4	7.406* **(1.127)**	26.537* **(9.859)**	28.699* **(12.082)**
Observations	673	673	673
Log Likelihood	-921.763	-868.814	-865.051
BIC	1876.085	1809.256	1827.778
AIC	1853.527	1759.627	1760.102
Pseudo R^2	0.080	0.133	0.137

Notes:
• Exponentiated coefficients (Odds Ratios) reported; Standard errors in parentheses
• $p < 0.05$ = *, $\mathbf{p} < 0.01$ = **, $\boldsymbol{p} < 0.001$ = ***

The 2019 ANES pilot study data provides a solid foundational benchmark about economic hardships and policy prioritization of climate change, such as across all three models, economic hardship increases climate concern. Democrats are over three times more likely than others to care about climate change (Model 2 OR = 3.65, p < 0.001), and Republicans are less likely (OR = 0.57, p < 0.01). These differences decline when we include education and urban residency interactions. By Model 3, the Democratic effect shrinks (OR = 2.41, not statistically significant), and the Republican effect disappears (OR = 1.12, not statistically significant). The interaction terms show a shift: Democrats with urban residency with higher education are slowly deprioritizing climate change saliency under economic hardship, while Republicans with the same profile become more concerned. Although these patterns are not statistically strong in 2019, they hint at a reversal that becomes pronounced in 2022 and 2024. The 2019 models show that economic hardships impact climate change saliency, but it is not stable across urban, educated, self-declared partisans.

We operationalized the economic hardship index slightly differently for the 2022 ANES Pilot Study. The rationale behind separate and different operationalization mechanisms for cumulative economic hardship index and climate saliency among three pilot datasets is that each pilot dataset fielded a different framework appropriate to gauge the salient issues and economic concerns. Therefore, for 2022, we use a refined IBR that captures concern over gas, groceries, and housing.

Table 2: Ordinal Logistic with Odds Ratio for Climate Importance (ANES 2022 Pilot Study)

Variable	Model 1 (Bivariate)	Model 2 (Multivariate)	Model 3 (Interaction)
Main DV: Climate Importance(1 = Not Important, …..5= Most Important)			
Inflation Behavior Index (Three Inflation-Induced Economic Behaviors)	0.855** (0.041)	0.897* (0.045)	0.908 (0.046)
Gender (Female)		1.656*** (0.218)	1.648*** (0.219)
Education		1.085 (0.052)	1.138 (0.084)
Income		0.966 (0.021)	0.969 (0.022)
Democrat		2.977*** (0.471)	3.419** (1.283)

Republican		0.306*** (0.050)	0.479 (0.201)
Big City Resident		1.354 (0.238)	1.521 (0.355)
Education × Democrat			1.007 (0.106)
Education × Republican			0.862 (0.096)
Education × Democrat × City			0.859 (0.073)
Education × Republican × City			1.250 (0.148)
Cut 1	0.194*** (0.025)	0.422** (0.135)	0.523 (0.194)
Cut 2	0.339*** (0.041)	0.822 (0.259)	1.027 (0.376)
Cut 3	0.719** (0.081)	2.056* (0.639)	2.595** (0.937)
Cut 4	1.857*** (0.210)	6.295*** (1.963)	8.016*** (2.906)
Observations	1026	1026	1026
Log Likelihood	-1623.840	-1494.602	-1488.240
BIC	3282.347	3065.473	3080.481
AIC	3257.680	3011.205	3006.480
Pseudo R^2	0.004	0.083	0.087

Notes:

- **Exponentiated coefficients (Odds Ratios) reported standard errors in parentheses.**
- *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

In Model 1, economic hardship is linked to lower climate saliency (OR = 0.86, $p < 0.01$), supporting our study's first hypothesis. In Model 2, the effect weakens but stays negative (OR = 0.90, $p < 0.05$). The impact of education is not statistically significant. By Model 3, the inflation effect fades and becomes statistically not significant (OR = 0.91, ns). This shift suggests that the impact of economic distress is no longer clear-cut. Other variables play a more decisive role in model 3. Gender has a strong effect (OR = 1.66, $p < 0.001$), and Democrats are almost three times more likely than others to prioritize climate change (OR = 2.98, $p < 0.001$), while Republicans are far less likely (OR = 0.31, $p < 0.001$). These core patterns hold, but the interaction terms in Model 3 show interesting patterns regarding partisanship, education, and urban residency.

Model 3 for the 2022 dataset unpacks an interesting pattern where urban, educated, Democrats begin to deprioritize climate saliency when experiencing higher economic hardships. The interaction between education and Democratic identity is flat (OR = 1.01, ns). However, the three-way interaction between education, Democratic identity, and urban residency is negative (OR = 0.86), but this is not statistically significant. For Republicans, the pattern moves in the opposite direction. The three-way interaction between education, Republican identity, and city residency is positive (OR = 1.25); again, it is not statistically significant, but suggests the impacts of economic crises and climate saliency among party lines. We observe that urban Democrats, expected to hold strong

climate values, start to scale back when inflation rises. On the other hand, urban Urban Republicans who normally deprioritize climate begin to acknowledge its importance, perhaps due to rising insurance costs, utility bills, or real estate risks. While the p-values are still weak in 2022, the behavioral shift is fundamental.

We used the same modeling structure for the 2024 pilot study, but operationalized the IBR slightly differently this round. The 2024 ANES Pilot Study repeated the same modeling structure using a new IBR based on personal spending cuts, limiting significant purchases, and dipping into savings. In Model 1, economic hardship lowers climate saliency (OR = 0.90, $p < 0.05$). In Model 2, the effect fades (OR = 0.94, ns). In Model 3, the IBR stays negative, but remains statistically insignificant (OR = 0.94, ns). Education becomes a strong predictor (OR = 1.13 in Model 2, OR = 1.22 in Model 3, $p < 0.01$), and Democrats continue to show much higher odds of climate concern (Model 3 OR = 3.56, $p < 0.001$). The Republican odds ratio rises in Model 3 (OR = 0.65), losing statistical significance. These shifts suggest that traditional partisan divides are beginning to bend. Education and urban residency now matter more, but not in the ways we expect.

Table 3: Ordinal Logistic with Odds Ratio for Climate Importance (ANES 2024 Pilot Study)

Variable	Model 1 (Bivariate)	Model 2 (Multivariate)	Model 3 (Interaction)
Main DV: Climate Importance(1 = Not Important, …..5= Most Important)			
Inflation Behavior Index (Three Inflation-Induced Economic Behaviors)	0.901* (0.044)	0.940 (0.050)	0.944 (0.050)
Gender (Female)		1.003 (0.115)	1.015 (0.119)
Log Age		0.613*** (0.087)	0.608*** (0.087)
Education		1.127** (0.045)	1.220** (0.080)
Income		0.970 (0.018)	0.971 (0.018)
Democrat		2.828*** (0.395)	3.556*** (1.226)
Republican		0.348*** (0.050)	0.651 (0.237)
Big City Resident		1.429** (0.197)	1.843** (0.388)
Education × Democrat			0.996 (0.088)
Education × Republican			0.808* (0.080)
Education × Democrat × City			0.807*** (0.050)
Education × Republican × City			1.186* (0.092)
Cut 1	0.207*** (0.021)	0.038*** (0.022)	0.049*** (0.031)
Cut 2	0.379*** (0.036)	0.078*** (0.046)	0.103*** (0.063)
Cut 3	0.777** (0.072)	0.189** (0.110)	0.256* (0.156)
Cut 4	1.818*** (0.174)	0.518 (0.303)	0.714 (0.438)
Observations	1357	1357	1357
Log Likelihood	-2091.461	-1923.456	-1908.218
BIC	4218.987	3933.468	3931.845

AIC	4192.922	3870.911	3848.436
Pseudo R^2	0.001	0.081	0.089

Notes:

- **Exponentiated coefficients (Odds Ratios) reported standard errors in parentheses.**
- *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

We observe the interaction between Democrats, education, and urban residency and how climate inflation-induced economic hardships lower climate saliency. Specifically, model 3 from the 2024 pilot study shows that self-identified Democrats with urban residency and higher education are less likely to prioritize climate change as their topmost issue. On the other hand, we also observe that Republicans with urban residency and higher levels of education adopt and prioritize climate change as their salient issue. In 2024, urban, educated Democrats become less likely to prioritize climate change under economic stress (OR = 0.81, $p < 0.001$), while urban, educated Republicans become more likely to do so (OR = 1.19, $p < 0.05$). This shift shows that climate concern turns from a moral stance into a practical trade-off shaped by economic pressure.

Discussion

Our research study offers three unique contributions. First, we developed novel indices for three ANES pilot study datasets to capture self-reported economic struggles. We operationalized the cumulative economic struggles construct for each pilot study to capture climate saliency. Our supplementary file details the structure and composition of each cumulative economic struggle. Instead of utilizing unemployment, GDP, annual income, home ownership, etc., we specifically focused on self-reported economic hardships due to the perceived economic crisis.

Second, we explored the role of partisanship in climate saliency at three different times, and we observed that climate saliency is not a stable partisan issue. In 2019, we observed that climate saliency was a priority for the participants regardless of increased personal economic hardships. However, slowly, we observed that in 2022 and 2024 the increased level of individual economic hardship lowered the climate saliency. Self-identified Democrats were more likely to adopt climate change as a salient issue, whereas self-identified Republicans did not prioritize climate change.

Finally, we also found through the interaction models (Model 3) from each pilot study that at the height of personal economic hardships and struggles, urban Democrats with higher levels of education are more likely to deprioritize climate saliency. On the other hand, urban Republicans with higher levels of education tend to prioritize climate issues at the height of personal economic hardships; this effect is pronounced in both the 2022 and 2024 pilot studies.

Limitations

Our current study has several limitations. First, we analyzed three cross-section ANES pilot study datasets from 2019, 2022, and 2024. We focused on pilot studies from those three years, as these three pilot studies explicitly asked specific questions about economic struggle. However, these questions did not make it to the final ANES time-series study. Also, all three datasets included appropriate weights, so the statistical modeling and analysis are nationally representative. Regardless, due to their cross-sectional nature, we cannot claim causality for our findings. Second, there could be self-reported and social desirability biases during the survey participation in responding to the saliency of climate importance in these pilot studies. Additionally, constructing the economic hardship index varies across years and the operationalization of climate importance. Although we kept the core focus intact for all three datasets, the exact, strict comparability needs further nuanced attention. Finally, we did not include local-level and micro-level factors such as elite cues, influence of social media, direct exposure to a climate-associated crisis, or policy exposures. We acknowledge that these factors play important roles in shaping perceived economic hardships and climate saliency. However, these factors are outside of our scope of analysis for the current study.

Future Research

The findings show a unique and novel pattern: at specific points, with additional layers of economic hardship, there is a trade-off of climate saliency among Democrats and Republicans. Among more interesting findings is the occurrence of highly educated urban Democrats deprioritizing climate saliency when their Republicans counterparts did the opposite at the height of personal economic hardships. This result is counter to what is typical of Republicans generally (Hornsey et al., 2016), as well as to Republicans who have experienced economic hardship (Uba et al., 2023). One possible explanation is that urban, highly-educated Republicans are more liberal, and more rural, less-educated Republicans are more conservative in their political views – hence influencing their belief of and concern about climate change. Highly educated urban Democrats deprioritizing climate saliency may have to do with prioritizing other, more immediate, urgent, and/or tangible needs (Trope & Liberman, 2010; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Future research should work to dissect these nuances.

Conclusion

Our study finds that, as the layers of individual economic hardships increase, the saliency of climate issues decreases. However, sociodemographic characteristics contribute to climate issue saliency among individuals. Most importantly, climate saliency is not a stable partisan issue; as the economic hardships increase, self-identified urban Democrats tend to deprioritize climate issues, whereas urban Republicans prioritize the climate issue slightly more. The partisan trend of climate change saliency persists among all three pilot studies and becomes more pronounced and statistically significant in 2022 and 2024.

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