



Productive Public Debate, Not Just Science, Is Urgently Needed to Tackle the Issue of Climate Change

What is this research about?

Climate change happens partly because of increases of greenhouse gases like Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere. These increases may be potentially devastating to humans and many ecosystems. Climate change has been recognized as a serious issue in public debates over the past few decades. Discussions on climate change involve several groups. These groups include scientists, politicians, special interest groups, and the general public. The groups tend to view the subject of climate change differently. Because of competing views on climate change, there is no unified approach to solving it as a global issue.

What did the researchers do?

Researchers looked at various factors that shape views on climate change in society. They analyzed the general public's perceptions of climate change by studying risk profiles. The researchers also studied cultural and other assumptions of all various groups involved in the climate change debate. The researchers compared opposing views of groups like the environmentalists versus the economists on the issue of climate change and what needs to

What you need to know:

There is a need for urgent action on the issue of climate change. Developing a way to deal with the risk of climate change requires more than just science, but also requires society to collectively make decisions about the future of the planet.

be done about it. The researchers traced the underlying reasons for these differing views to a series of myths, with each group using their own myths to draw their conclusions about climate change.

What did the researchers find?

The researchers found that views on climate change are strongly affected by cultural models. These models lead to misunderstandings about the nature and scope of climate change. For example, researchers pointed out that the public may confuse others environmental problems like ozone depletion as being a cause of climate change. Because of cultural models, the public is more confused than divided on the issue of climate change. Other groups in the climate change debate rely on various myths to defend

their position. For instance, environmentalists rely on the myth that nature is fragile. On the other hand, economists rely on the myth that nature is bountiful and stable. These groups strongly influence society's perception of the climate change issue. Therefore, the overall perception of climate change and its risks becomes framed within a series of competing myths, fantasies, and cultural models. Society at large is unsure of what exactly needs to be done about climate change and how they can participate. The public is also unmotivated to act on climate change. This is because they see the risks of climate change as only harmful later on in the future. Therefore, the public feels that reducing the harmful risks of climate change now will mostly benefit the future generations. This makes seriously combating climate change unattractive.

How can you use this research?

Policymakers and community groups can use this research to improve environmental awareness and education. This may include improving educational curriculums, organizing public community workshops, and various other events that can help the public explore the topic of climate change and its risks more objectively. Policies are needed to help steer public debates towards a more balanced view on climate change and one that is less affected by myths, fantasies, and competing cultural models.

About the Researchers

David Etkin is an Assistant Professor of Emergency Management and Director, of the MADEM Graduate Program at the Atkinson School of Administrative Studies, York University. Elise Ho is a Social Scientist, Environment, AECOM at the Department of Geography, University of Toronto.

etkin@yorku.ca

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kmbunit@yorku.ca

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