

Latin Americans more concerned about climate change than those in U.S., Canada

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Jan. 26 (UPI) -- A new survey suggests people in Latin America and the Caribbean are more concerned about the problem of climate change than people in the United States and Canada.

Roughly half of all American and Canadian adults think climate change is a threat. Eight in ten people in Latin America and the Caribbean consider climate change a pressing concern for their country.

"Climate change is a highly politicized and partisan issue in the United States, and we wanted to examine whether that is a common characteristic of this issue in other countries in the region," Elizabeth Zechmeister, a researcher at Vanderbilt University, said in a news release. "If not politics, then what predicts attitudes about climate change in these other places?"

The survey was conducted as part of Vanderbilt's Latin American Public Opinion Project.

Survey respondents in Mexico and Central America are the most worried. Some 81.5 percent said climate change is a "very serious" problem. Another 10.4 percent rated the issue "somewhat serious."

In the United States and Canada, just 39.6 percent believe climate change is a "very serious" problem. For 35.4 percent, the problem is only "somewhat serious."

For respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean, education and vulnerability to natural disasters are the factors most correlated with concerns about climate change. In the United States, a person's political persuasion is the more important predictive factor.

Survey-takers were asked to respond to the question: "If nothing is done to reduce climate change in the future, how serious of a problem do you think it will be for [country]?"

The question was part of the AmericasBarometer survey conducted in 2016 and 2017.