

CALL FOR ARTICLES

RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences

Climate Hazards and Their Social, Political, and Economic Consequences

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Social scientists have shown that exposure to climate-related hazards such as wildfires, hurricanes, coastal and riverine flooding, tornados, extreme heat, sea level rise, and extreme precipitation, can have both short and long-term impacts on individual- and community-level outcomes and behaviors. The changing climate is leading these events to be increasingly severe and destructive in ways that will have significant social, political, and economic consequences. Exposure to disasters and other hazards can cause downward mobility, contribute to lost wages and changes in employment, negatively affect physical and mental health, lead to lost wealth via damage to property, disrupt social networks, and increase economic insecurity. In addition to directly affecting mortality, climate-related hazards can also alter demographic trends like fertility and mobility. Climate-related hazards can create additional risks, reducing air, water, and food quality and access. Economic disruptions are also common after communities experience climate hazards, with growth slowed in some areas. Finally, responses to hazards, and climate change more broadly, are fundamentally political decisions. Political contexts across geography and across time affect the nature and extent of resources available to address and respond to climate hazards, while at the same time the experience of climate hazards may affect local, state, and national politics and policy priorities.

Moreover, vulnerability to hazards is distributed unequally with less advantaged households and places more likely to be exposed (Cushing et al. 2015; Cutter, Boruff, and Shirley 2012; Tierney 2014; Thomas et al. 2019). Broadly scholars understand vulnerability to be the susceptibility of a community to harm from exposure to hazards, and often encompasses the adaptive capacity to not only prepare for but also respond to and recover from hazards (Cutter et al. 2009). Importantly, vulnerability is not solely a function of physical or geographic factors, but is also

shaped by social, political, and economic factors as well as the policy responses to hazards (Arcaya, Raker, and Waters 2020; Hadden and Prakash 2023; Méndez 2022; Tierney 2019). Recovery also tends to be highly disparate; households' and communities' access to resources after climate-related hazards, for example, is correlated with being advantaged (e.g., socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, political), with recovery policies often failing to account for differing capacities and needs of individuals and communities (FEMA 2020; Raker 2023). We may also be broadly underestimating the fiscal cost of disaster recovery, as non-disaster transfers also increase (Deryugina 2017), but we know less about how these processes may contribute to inequality. Managing risk from climate-related hazards may also shape patterns of emerging inequality in employment and the geographic distribution of economic activity (Acharya, Bhardwaj, and Tomunen 2023). Additionally, the complexity of the U.S. federal system of policy making—while sometimes supporting innovation—can also contribute to highly inconsistent policy results and uneven programmatic implementation (Hernandez-Cortes and Meng 2023; Rabe 2008; Trachtman 2023).

Climate-justice scholarship points to race/ethnicity as key for understanding inequalities in vulnerability, displacement, mobility, and recovery (Fothergill, Maestas, and Darlington 1999; Méndez 2020; Pastor et al. 2006; Thomas et al. 2019). This work highlights how long-standing patterns of segregation and mobility contribute to systematic differences in who experiences climate-related disasters by race/ethnicity (Elliott and Pais 2006; Fussell, Sastry, and VanLandingham 2010). And it shows how navigating bureaucracies and accessing post-disaster resources are shaped by individual- and community-level characteristics including, race/ethnicity, documentation status, gender, disability status, and household composition, among other factors (Bolin and Kurtz 2018; Reid 2013). After disaster strikes or other hazards are experienced, new inequalities can emerge in the labor market (Vigdor 2008; U.S. Department of Treasury 2023), and over time racial wealth disparities are exacerbated often resulting from inequitable aid policies (Howell and Elliott 2019). Finally, mitigation and adaptation efforts are uneven with more advantaged households and places more likely to receive attention, protection, or state resources (Bullard and Wright 2012; FEMA 2020).

In short, understanding the effects of climate hazards is key to understanding patterns of inequality more broadly (Rhodes and Besbris 2022). In an era of climate change, such inequalities are likely to worsen (Klinenberg, Araos, and Koslov 2020). As rising global temperatures increase the intensity and scope of climate-related hazards, we need new research that examines the relationships between displacement and mobility, social stratification, political and economic power, climate-related hazards, and policies for mitigation, adaptation, recovery, and resilience.

In this issue, we invite original research contributions pertaining to the social, political, and economic effects of climate-related hazards in the United States, inequalities exacerbated or

created by hazards, and how federal, state, local and/or private mitigation, recovery, and resilience policies affect inequalities. We are particularly interested in studies that examine how exposure to and effects from climate-related hazards have changed as average temperatures have risen, and studies that focus on how governmental policies or interventions have mitigated or exacerbated these effects. Additionally, we are interested in work that analyzes differential effects of varied types of acute and slower paced climate-related hazards. For example, insurance markets operate in distinct ways across different types of hazards—flooding and fires may have extreme consequences for individual wealth and mobility or displacement, heat waves impact health in immediate and chronic ways, and rising sea levels affect patterns of community mobilization, migration, and economic activity. In addition, policy responses and mitigation strategies vary depending on the type of hazard.

Below is a set of topics of interest, but they are not an exhaustive list.

How Climate Hazards Affect Inequalities

- What are the mechanisms that precipitate downward mobility for certain individuals or households in the wake of disaster or as a result of climate hazards?
- What factors contribute to uneven recovery, development, and growth post-disaster or in the context of chronic climate hazards? What kinds of places experience outflows and influxes of capital or higher-SES residents? We are interested in work that focuses on disparate economic outcomes across communities by race/ethnicity.
- What role do local organizations, as well as state and federal practices and policies, play in mitigating or exacerbating economic and racial/ethnic inequalities in response to climate hazards?
- To what extent do climate-related hazards increase racial/ethnic disparities in mobility, wealth, income, employment, or other socio-economic indicators?
- To what extent do physical and mental health inequalities after disaster or in the context of climate-related hazards contribute to patterns of material inequalities over time?

Measuring the Heterogeneous Effects of Different Climate-Related Hazards

- To what extent do shifts in processes like mortality, fertility, and especially displacement or mobility lead to changes in the long-term demographic character of affected places? How do these changes vary by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status?
- What are the benefits and potential drawbacks of social network connections for different kinds of individuals and communities after disaster or in the face of other hazards?
- How do the effects of various types of climate hazards—those that have acute effects and slower ecological/environmental changes—differ?
- How can we better measure the cumulative effects of exposure to multiple hazards over time?

- How can we better distinguish between individual- and community-level consequences of varied hazards?
- How do firms respond to different types of climate hazards, and manage reopening after acute impacts? How do these responses affect the broader distribution of economic activity?

Politics, Policy, Insurance, and Justice

- To what extent do federal, state, and local political contexts (e.g., party control of executive and legislature, dominant political and economic elites) affect the scale and nature of response to disaster or other hazards?
- To what extent do climate-related disasters or other acute climate effects change political attitudes, voting behaviors, or policy preferences about mitigation, resilience, adaptation initiatives, and social safety net programs more generally over the short- and long-terms?
- What communities and/or individuals have mobilized and effectively advocated for mitigation, recovery, and resilience resources? How have they done so? How has their work affected subsequent policy formation?
- What evidence is there of local or state policy diffusion to reduce vulnerability to and displacement from climate hazards and/or support recovery, adaptation, and resilience? What have been the pathways of diffusion and the factors facilitating or inhibiting it? To what extent are these patterns transferable to other jurisdictions and, if so, under what conditions? How do race-ethnicity or other facets of inequality come into play?
- To what extent do the structure and implementation of mitigation, recovery, and resilience policies and programs lead to differential access to and utilization of resources?
- Has recent federal legislation for climate-related purposes (the IRA, BIL) altered the political dynamics of states or localities as more conservative and more rural jurisdictions take advantage of their funding opportunities? Has this been reflected in political attitudes about climate change, or about support for climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience? If so (or not), in what ways, and what are contributing factors?
- Are there differential administrative burdens to accessing resources for return after displacement, residential mobility, mitigation, recovery, and adaptation to climate hazards? How do they vary by race/ethnicity, socio-economic status?
- Does new information and adjusted predictions about risk shape the responses of households and communities? If so, how? Do these changes affect who is deemed responsible for organizing and funding mitigation, adaptation, and recovery efforts?
- In the case of disaster, how do inequalities in insurance lead to post-disaster changes in levels and distribution of wealth? To what extent do changes in insurance markets affect not only disaster recovery but also residential stability/mobility and racial inequality across vulnerable places?

We invite papers using diverse methodological approaches—quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, historical—as well as cross-disciplinary work that uncovers heterogeneous effects of climate-related hazards. Analyses that add to our understanding of the mechanisms linking hazard exposure and subsequent outcomes are welcome as are papers that examine the potentially heterogeneous effects of hazards on mitigation, recovery, and resilience processes over multiple years. We will consider papers that address the effects of climate-related hazards outside of the United States only if they offer comparisons to such hazards and their effects in the United States.

Anticipated Timeline

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST on April 2, 2024, to:

<https://rsf.fluxx.io>

NOTE that if you wish to submit an abstract and do not yet have an account with us, it can take up to 48 hours to get credentials, so please start your application at least two days before the deadline. All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to <https://rsf.fluxx.io> will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at journal@rsage.org. **Do not email the editors of the issue.**

A conference will take place at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City on **October 25, 2024** (with a group dinner the night before). The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due a month prior to the conference **on 9/27/24**) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging for one author per paper will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their revised drafts by 3/1/25. The papers will then be sent out to three additional scholars for formal peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers by 10/14/25. The full and final issue will be published in the spring of 2026. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR and UPCC/Muse.

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