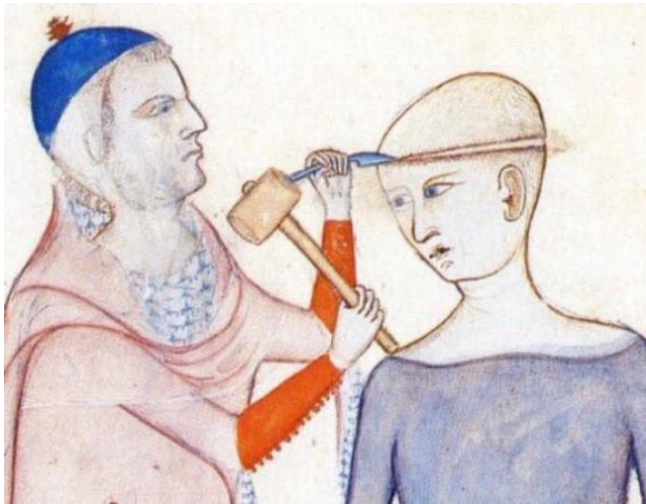


Is your memory hiding the inconvenient truth about climate change?

By *Misia Temler*

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Humans may fail to prioritise climate change because our memories limit our capacity to envision its possible catastrophic effects, writes psychologist [Dr Misia Temler](#).

RECENTLY, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Treaty agreement to fight climate change despite overwhelming evidence of [global warming caused by human activity](#). Some scientists predict that if we do not take action now, within 20 years we will suffer [harm to all sectors of civilisation](#) — food, water, health, land, national security, energy and economic prosperity. Others warn of more dire consequences, such as the [possibility of mass extinction](#) if we continue our present carbon emission.

Yet a [poll](#) from last year found that Democrats rank climate change sixth in importance out of

23 policy issues, trailing after issues such as economy, health care and income inequality. Republicans rank climate change lower, rating it between 21st and 23rd in importance. Similar trends were reflected in a survey from [this month](#), with the majority of Americans not prioritising climate change over other issues for the country.

Considering we are talking about longstanding damage to our planet and possible extinction, one may wonder why fighting climate change is not higher in priority. If the future survival of the human species may be at stake, why is climate change not ranked first in importance across both parties? Examining these questions from a memory perspective may offer some insight. This is because our memories of past experiences may hinder our foresight for the future.

[#Obama](#) Destroys [#Republicans](#) On Climate Change Via [@OccupyDemocrats](#) Common sense isn't so common [#ClimateChangelsReal](#) [#ParisAgreement](#) [#Paris](#) pic.twitter.com/4ZUEYHOAUV

— Victoria... (@Mrs_VictoriaBJ) [June 3, 2017](#)

One of the main talking points of our memory is that the past experiences presented to us are novel situations. However, we may therefore fail to prioritise climate

