



THE UNITED STATES ELECTION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATION

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Abstract

The U.S. presidential election is a global event with profound implications for international relations, governance, and global stability. This literature review explores the dynamic interplay between U.S. electoral outcomes and their far-reaching effects on global politics, focusing on key areas such as NATO and transatlantic relations, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, U.S.-China relations, Middle Eastern dynamics, global trade governance, and climate change policies. By analyzing academic literature, policy reports, and scholarly sources, this study highlights the role of shifting U.S. political power in shaping foreign policy, multilateral cooperation, and the international order. The findings underscore the significant influence of U.S. leadership on transatlantic alliances, global trade, security measures, and responses to geopolitical and environmental challenges. Additionally, the paper examines the impact of domestic political ideologies on global governance, with particular attention to the fluctuations in U.S. commitments to global health initiatives and multilateral frameworks. The review emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of U.S. presidential elections as pivotal determinants of international stability and cooperation in an interconnected world.

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1. Introduction

The U.S. presidential election is a global event with far-reaching international consequences that extend well beyond America's borders. International community watches the U.S. elections with keen interest recognizing the profound implications of this democratic process has on global politics and international relations. In the last decades, in particular, the outcome of the elections has been showing significant influences on the U.S. engagement with key international institutions and its approach to global challenges. Additionally, public movements and international campaigns have been seeing significant upsurge in the U.S and western societies (Ortiz et al., 2022). The foreign policy decisions of the United States carry profound implications on public demonstrations and social movements. As such, for global security, economic stability, and the trajectory of international relations (Gethin & Pons, 2024). Understanding the dynamics of shifting power within the U.S. government is essential to analyze how these decisions are shaped. Therefore, a closer examination of these changes can offer valuable insights into their potential effects on the global stage.

Trump's re-election occurs at a critical juncture, with ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, China's assertiveness, and coalitions of autocratic leaders placing unprecedented stress on the rules-based international order (Cha & Szechenyi, 2024). Such developments, coupled with the election outcome, are compelling global leaders to reassess their future relations with the United States. Furthermore, Trump's proposals to restructure federal agencies and reduce foreign aid and diplomatic missions could potentially undermine the infrastructure supporting democratic development abroad.

A comprehensive analysis of these areas will provide a nuanced understanding of how U.S. elections shape the international landscape and global governance in an increasingly interconnected world. In this literature review, we will delve into a comprehensive analysis of academic papers, policy reports, and other scholarly sources that explore the intersection between U.S. presidential elections and international relations. Specifically, the review will focus on how shifting political power in the U.S. influences its foreign policy and engagement with key global institutions. The areas of focus will include NATO and Transatlantic relations, the Russia-Ukraine war, relations with the European Union, Middle Eastern dynamics, U.S.-China relations and the Indo-Pacific strategy, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and global trade governance, and climate change and global environmental policies. By examining these specific areas, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which U.S. elections shape the international landscape and global governance.

Chapter 2 includes ...

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach, focusing on a literature review methodology. This approach is appropriate for synthesizing existing knowledge and understanding the intersections between U.S. presidential elections and international relations. By examining scholarly articles, policy papers, and credible secondary sources, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

The study relies exclusively on secondary sources, including:

- Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles and books that discuss U.S. presidential elections, foreign policy, and international relations.
- Policy Documents: Official government publications and policy statements that outline U.S. foreign policy directions.
- Reports and Analyses: Insights from think tanks, international organizations, and reputable media outlets that address global political dynamics.

2.3 Scope of the Review

The review focuses on five key areas of international relations impacted by U.S. presidential elections:

- NATO and Transatlantic Relations
- The Russia-Ukraine Conflict
- U.S.-European Union Interactions
- U.S.-China Relations
- Global Health Policies

By organizing the review into these thematic areas, the study ensures a structured and targeted examination of relevant issues.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This literature review examines the impact of U.S. presidential elections on various aspects of international relations and global dynamics. The chapter explores how electoral outcomes influence NATO and transatlantic relations, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, U.S.-European Union interactions, U.S.-China relations, and global health policies.

3.2 The U.S. presidential election and NATO and Transatlantic relations

The dynamics of NATO and Transatlantic relations are profoundly influenced by the outcomes of U.S. presidential elections, as these elections often shape foreign policy priorities and international commitments. Historically, candidates' stances on NATO have been pivotal in engaging voters who are concerned about national security and global alliances. As suggested by recent efforts to connect with the public outside the typical political discourse, like those made by a small team at CNAS (Smith et al., 2018), understanding the electorate's perspective on international roles is crucial. These interactions can illuminate how American voters perceive the United States' responsibilities toward NATO allies amidst evolving geopolitical challenges. Furthermore, a presidential administration's approach to transatlantic relations can determine the degree of cohesion within NATO, impacting collective security measures and defense spending. Thus, the intersection of domestic electoral politics and international alliances remains a vital consideration in shaping U.S. foreign policy (Shiffrinson et al., 2018).

The European Union and NATO are at an important point following the U.S. presidential election, with the transatlantic alliance facing new uncertainties (Spatafora, 2024). EU leaders have committed to working more closely with NATO and maintaining ties with the United States. While the challenges are significant, there are practical steps to address U.S. isolationist policies and strengthen the EU's role in NATO and European security. One of the main

challenges in this regard is the Russia Ukraine war, in which the role of U.S. is significantly influential for the NATO and the impacts of the war (Spatafora, 2024).

3.2.1 The U.S. presidential election and the Russia-Ukraine war

As the Russia-Ukraine war continues to unfold, its implications for U.S. domestic politics are increasingly pronounced, especially in the lead-up to presidential elections. Candidates often find themselves forced to navigate complex foreign policy dilemmas while addressing the electorate's diverse perspectives on international engagement. This dynamic intensifies as voters scrutinize candidates' positions on military aid, diplomatic strategies, and economic sanctions against Russia, seeking leaders who can demonstrate both resolve and pragmatism. According to Cavan et al., 2000, the conflict has become a litmus test for candidates, with public opinion shaping electoral outcomes. Consequently, the interplay between the ongoing war and electoral politics not only reflects the priorities of an engaged citizenry but also highlights the critical role of international relations in shaping U.S. governance. This convergence underscores the profound influence of global conflicts on domestic electoral landscapes.

Similar to Democrat party in the U.S., the new Trump administration has a formal stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as outlined in official which seemed to be aligned with the approach adopted by the Obama administration (Deyermond, 2023). Accordingly, the consistency in policy approach suggests a deeper institutional continuity in U.S. foreign policy, transcending individual political administrations. Despite potential rhetorical differences, the fundamental strategic objectives remain relatively stable, indicating that U.S. foreign policy toward the Russia-Ukraine conflict is driven more by long-term national interests than by partisan political shifts.

3.3 The U.S. presidential election and the European Union

The relationship between the United States and the European Union is intricately linked to the outcomes of U.S. presidential elections, which can significantly influence transatlantic dynamics. Candidates' foreign policy platforms often reflect varying degrees of commitment to longstanding alliances, shaping perceptions in Europe about American reliability. For instance, during Donald Trump's administration, his approach to traditional alliances and security provisions led to substantial apprehension among European leaders, who questioned America's dedication to collective security frameworks and support for European integration (Waśko-Owsiejczuk et al., 2017). Conversely, the restoration of more collaborative policies under different administrations may lead to renewed investment in shared global challenges such as climate change and trade regulation, strengthening the bond between the two entities. However, the undercurrents of nationalism and differing political ideologies threaten to complicate this relationship further, suggesting that the electoral landscape will remain a crucial factor in transatlantic relations (Bäcklund et al., 2006).

3.4 The U.S. presidential election and the U.S. – China relation

The interplay between U.S. elections and U.S.-China relations significantly influences global geopolitical dynamics. As presidential candidates typically adopt distinct stances on foreign policy, their electoral platforms often reflect varying degrees of assertiveness towards China. A candidate advocating for a tougher stance may prioritize trade tariffs, human rights issues, or military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, aiming to counter China's growing influence.

Conversely, a candidate promoting diplomatic engagement may emphasize collaboration on global challenges, such as climate change and public health, seeking to soften tensions.

The relationship between the U.S. and China is critically important and influential on world trade. In recent years, this relationship has been significantly affected by the trade war, driven by shifts in the U.S. governmental policies, as well as the profound changes and impacts introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic (Boylan et al. 2021). This relationship has experienced significant strain since 2016, following Donald Trump's first presidency. He specifically criticized China for alleged unfair trade practices, including currency manipulation, export subsidies, and intellectual property theft, and he vowed to implement a tough stance against the country (Boylan et al., 2021). In early 2018, Trump administration-imposed tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines (Lynch, 2018), followed by tariffs on steel and aluminum (Donnan, 2018). While these measures targeted multiple countries, Chinese goods were the primary focus. China retaliated with its own tariffs on U.S. products, leading to an escalating tit-for-tat trade conflict throughout 2018 and 2019. By mid-2019, the U.S. increased tariffs to 25% on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods (Bryan, 2019), prompting further retaliation from China. Although a trade deal was signed in January 2020, which included commitments from China to purchase more U.S. agricultural products, these targets were not met due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Birmingham, 2020). As these dynamics continue to unfold in subsequent administrations, they remain pivotal in shaping the trajectory of global economic and political stability.

3.5 The U.S. presidential election and the U.S. – China relation

Lastly, the U.S. presidential election significantly influences global health policies, as the country's leadership plays a critical role in shaping international health initiatives. Although the U.S. government has historically been quite supportive of global health organizations, recent years have seen a rise in political polarization due to the shifts of power in their political system. This polarization has led to stark differences in approach between administrations, particularly on issues such as funding for international health initiatives and participation in global health governance (Liu et al., 2024). The contrast is especially evident when comparing the policies of Democratic administrations, which tend to favor international cooperation, with those of recent Republican administrations, particularly under Trump, which have leaned towards more isolationist stances. It was initially during the presidency of Reagan in 1980 that the U.S. government marked an increased politicization of global health, as demonstrated by his administration's decision to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its hesitancy to endorse multilateral initiatives led by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Messing, 1984). The U.S. global health policy has witnessed many fluctuations with the shifts in the power. According to Meier et al., (2024), republican parties have been reestablishing Global Gag Rule (GGR) while decreasing their involvement in the global health institutions, but the democrats are more likely to decrease the GGR and reestablish their involvement in global institutions. Despite these fluctuations, according to Liu et al., 2024, republicans are more likely to take initiatives and have larger and more active involvements in global health institutions.

4. Conclusion

This literature review underscores the profound influence of U.S. presidential elections on global dynamics and international relations. The policies and priorities of U.S. administrations significantly shape transatlantic alliances, particularly NATO and European Union relations, influencing collective security measures and the global response to evolving geopolitical challenges such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Similarly, the intersection of electoral politics and U.S.-China relations highlights the delicate balance between assertiveness and diplomacy, with ramifications for global trade, economic stability, and strategic positioning.

The analysis also reveals the critical role of U.S. leadership in addressing international health challenges. Shifts in political power and policy orientation between Democratic and Republican administrations demonstrate a persistent fluctuation in the United States' commitment to global health governance, funding, and multilateral cooperation. These shifts underline the broader trend of how domestic political ideologies shape America's role on the international stage.

By examining the interconnectedness of domestic electoral outcomes and global challenges, this review emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of U.S. presidential elections as not only domestic political milestones but also pivotal determinants of international stability and cooperation. As global issues continue to intersect with U.S. governance, the implications of these elections will remain a central focus for policymakers, scholars, and international stakeholders alike.

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