Kevin White

POLS 2306

April 24, 2021

**Texas Current Events Essay: The Texas Freeze**

In the *Forbes* article, it talks about the weak infrastructure of Texas as it was hit by one of the worst natural disasters in its history. “The Freeze” will be a staple talking point for the importance of government intervention during trying times, as well as trying to break down Texas’ independent attitude compared the rest of the United States. Texas’ crumbling infrastructure will start a conversation for Texans and the United States to rebuild and modernize our infrastructure.

The biggest problem during The Freeze was Texas’ independent power grid and local **energy sources (p. 438)**. Texas is the largest energy consumer in the United States as well as the largest energy producer. As Texas’ population has grown over 20% in the past 10 years, the state has invested in multiple forms of energy production, like wind, solar, and natural gas. This means the power grid and infrastructure in many parts of Texas are relatively new. So how was Texas hit so hard by this storm, which caused millions of people to lose power and 200 casualties?

The good news is that Texas almost immediately signed a bill that would require weatherization in power plants across Texas. The fact that the government stepped in so fast, and the bill was supported by many Texans is surprising, especially considering the **Individualistic Political Culture (p. 25)** of the Texas population. This dramatic switch in political mindset shows the desperate nature of the situation. Under normal circumstances, Texans would not support government intervention and instead allow the energy companies to make the upgrades and regulations that would create a competitive market.

Unfortunately, these companies have been slacking on these upgrades for decades and have abused minimal government intervention to see higher profits. This is what ultimately led to the major loss of electricity and deaths that Texans suffered through during the winter storm. Now that Texans are supporting weatherization and upgrades to our infrastructure, these companies are lobbying against these changes. These companies are acting against the interests of Texans to prevent connection to the larger power grid and maintain a monopoly over Texas’ power supply.

Ultimately the Texas Freeze was a historic moment for not only Texas but the United States, as it shows the weakness in its infrastructure as well as the influence power companies have over Texas politics, and how that influence values profit over the safety and lives of Texans. The *Forbs* article highlights many of these problems as well as solutions that are being made to make the infrastructure around us better, while also highlighting Texas history and culture in our textbook.

References

Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2018. *Inside Texas: Power, Policy, and Personality of the Lone Star State*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press: New York.

Blackmon, David. 2021. “Texas Big Freeze: New Reports Show Clear Need For Policymakers To Act.” *Forbes*, April 7. https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidblackmon/2021/04/07/texas-big-freeze-new-reports-show-clear-need-for-policymakers-to-act/?sh=3199bcc63b80