

Boise State University

ScholarWorks

2021 Undergraduate Research Showcase

Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
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4-23-2021

Reframing the Conversation: What Climate Stories Can Do to Spur Climate Action

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Abstract

Discussion around climate change has always revolved around the cold, hard facts. But is it time for a change? It's time to focus more on the people that it affects, and decide where to go from there.

Henderson's and Wamsler's paper "New stories for a more conscious, sustainable society: Claiming authorship of the climate story" asserts that humans have always used stories to explain the world around them. It's hard for most people to understand the dire situation at hand. The Climate Stories project seeks to collect first-hand accounts on the effects of climate change to shift how it's understood.

Reframing the Conversation: What Climate Stories Can Do To Spur Climate Action

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ABSTRACT

Discussion around climate change has always revolved around the cold, hard facts. But is it time for a change? It's time to focus more on the people that it affects, and decide where to go from there. The Climate Stories project seeks to collect first-hand accounts on the effects of climate change to shift how it's understood.

“We were banned from going outside of class to get water due to the amount of ash in the air...The adults said life goes on like this with unhealthy air but I didn't want to accept that. That is why I chose the environmental field because I wanted to make it so this wasn't the new normal.”
-Sean Cahill, 2021

LITERATURE REVIEW

Henderson's and Wamsler's “New stories for a more conscious, sustainable society: Claiming authorship of the climate story”

- to reframe how we speak about it climate change
- “This is a problem of story” (Hendersson and Wamsler).
- the way climate change is discussed doesn't reflect the dire situation well enough to have meaningful change enacted.

Matless' “Climate change stories and the anthroposcenic”

- “climate positivism”
 - the assertion that everything has to be explained by science
- climate discussions should include more people with a background in humanities

Kleeman's “Telling stories of a Changed Climate: The LAKI fissure eruption and the Interdisciplinarity of climate history”

- humans need narratives like stories, anecdotes, and legends to contextualize events that happen to them
- helps remove barrier in communication between scientists and the layman

DISCUSSION

- The climate literature available affects people's viewpoints
- How will we measure the success of the Climate Stories Project?
- This project will affect the future of climate change policy in a progressive way
 - More people will be able to understand the effects in their own environments
 - More people will recognize the urgent need for action
 - Know more concrete paths for positive climate action

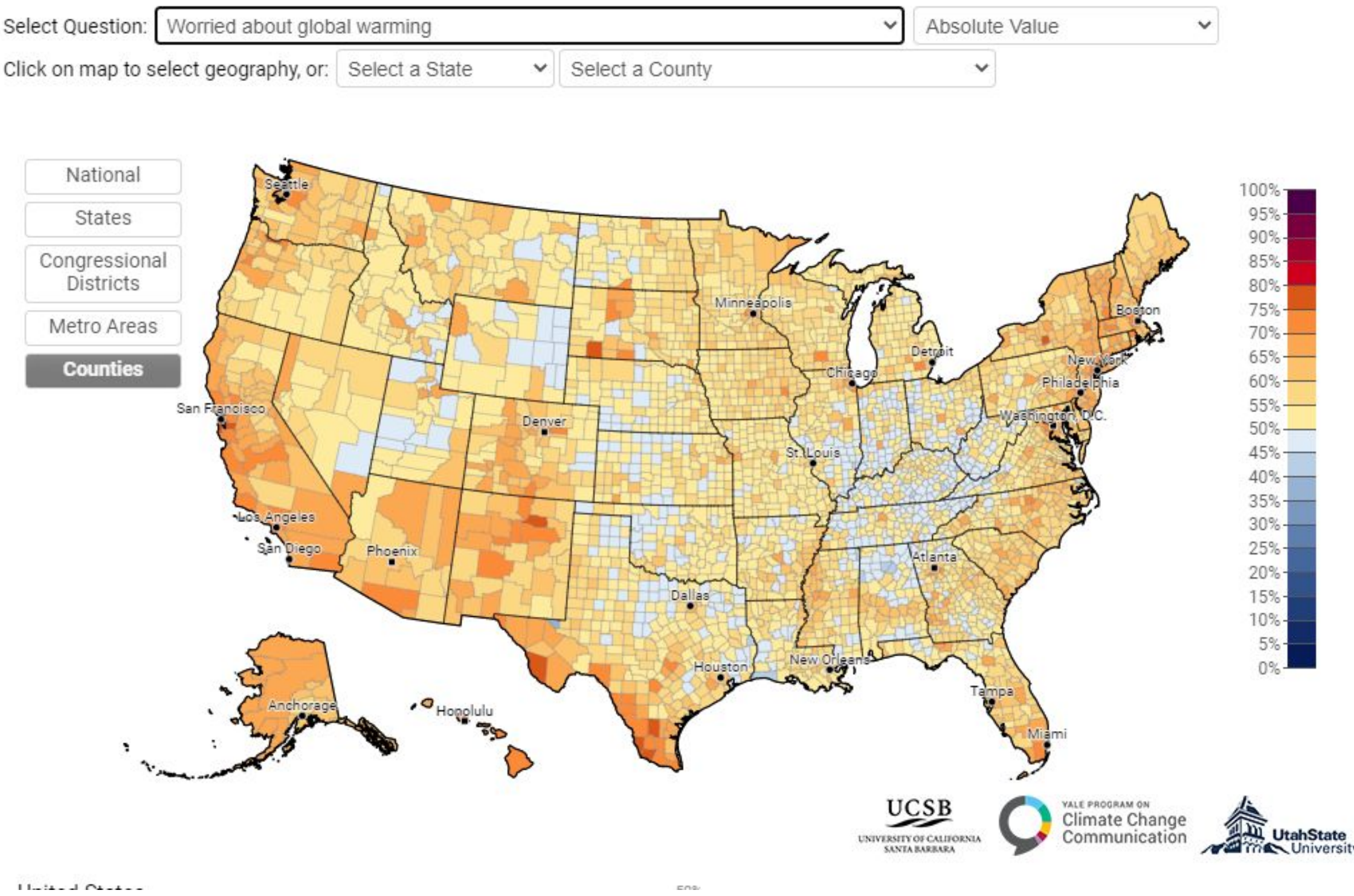
“I went into climate studies because I can't leave Idaho's rangeland the way it is. I want to experience the cool breeze through the sagebrush again.”
-Tabitha Delaney, 2021

“Climate change has created a generation of California kids like me ... traumatized by the impacts of a warming climate.”
-Kenneth Huston, 2021

CONCLUSION

- Yale climate opinion maps
 - % of people worried about climate change
 - % of people who think climate change will harm them personally
- Climate stories will change these percentages positively

Estimated % of adults who are worried about global warming (63%), 2020



Estimated % of adults who think global warming will harm them personally (43%), 2020

