

From 'Alarmed' to 'Dismissive': The Six Ways Americans View Global Warming

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Researchers found that 18 percent of Americans believe climate change is a serious threat, while seven percent believe it isn't even happening.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Americans fall into six distinct groups regarding their climate change beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, according to a new report, "Global Warming's Six Americas," by researchers at Yale and George Mason universities.

The researchers, who surveyed 2,129 adult Americans in the fall of 2008, found that these "six Americas" include:

- The Alarmed, (18 percent of the population) are most convinced that global warming is happening, caused by humans, and a serious and urgent threat.

- The Concerned (33 percent) believe global warming is a serious problem and support an active national response, but are less personally involved and have taken fewer actions than the Alarmed.
- The Cautious (19 percent) believe global warming is a problem, but are less certain it is happening. They neither view it as a personal threat nor feel a sense of urgency about it.
- The Disengaged (12 percent) do not know much about global warming or whether it is happening and have not thought much about the issue.
- The Doubtful (11 percent) are not sure whether global warming is happening, but believe that, if it is, it is caused by natural environmental changes and is a distant threat.
- The Dismissive (7 percent) are actively engaged in the issue, but believe that global warming is not happening and does not warrant a national response.

“When we talk about ‘the American public’ and its views on [global warming](#), that’s a misnomer,” said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Project on Climate Change and a co-author of the report. “There is no single American voice on this issue.”

However, the researchers found that the groups sometimes actually behave in similar ways, albeit for different reasons, said Leiserowitz. For instance, all six support actions that save them money, with the Dismissive just as likely to have made energy efficiency improvements to their homes as the Alarmed. Likewise, all six groups support rebates for the purchase of solar panels and fuel-efficient cars, including the Dismissive.

“Too many climate change education and awareness campaigns have

been like throwing darts in a dark room,” said Leiserowitz. “[Climate change](#) is ultimately a human problem. If we want to constructively engage Americans in the solutions, we have to first know our audience.”

The full report can be found at environment.yale.edu/uploads/6Americas2009.pdf

Provided by Yale University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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