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The Role of Values and Place in Shaping Climate Change Views of South Carolina Residents

The coastal communities of South Carolina are beginning to face the effects of climate change such as increased flood events and sea-level rise. As the impacts of a changing climate continue to be felt in coastal communities, these communities will need to work with other levels of government to develop approaches to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, such actions will depend on support from the public. This research, which is part of a larger project on stakeholder engagement, explores the importance of values and place in shaping the public's views on climate change including the risks it poses as well as potential adaptation approaches. Using a statewide survey of the residents of South Carolina, we measure values through cultural theory, which posits that core values are shaped by preferred social relationships and societal structure. According to cultural theory, views regarding social relationships and structure combine to provide four distinct worldviews including hierarchy, egalitarianism, individualism, and fatalism. Previous research has shown that adherence to one of these four cultural types informs views on a host of environmental issues, including climate change. In addition to values, we also measure place attachment of the public by whether they live in one of the eight coastal counties in South Carolina as well as how long they have lived in their current county. Finally, we use both cultural theory and place attachment to predict belief in climate change, perceived risk of climate change, concern about sea-level rise, concern about weather hazards (hurricanes, drought, and floods), as well as support for adaptation measures including restricting coastal development, inland retreat, and building sea walls.