

Measuring the potential impact of “Mapping Choices” media coverage on Paris COP21 outcomes

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Foreword

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Question

Could global media coverage from Climate Central's "Mapping Choices" have contributed to the outcome of the COP21 climate summit in Paris?

Foreword

In November of 2015, Climate Central, a non-profit organization that analyzes and reports on climate science, published "Mapping Choices," research and visuals pointing to the dramatically different sea level consequences locked in by different carbon emissions pathways. These images and research, including local maps and quantified threats for every coastal nation and major city, were widely covered in the international media, and a major content theme appeared: limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius would not be enough to prevent major coastal city losses.

On December 12, 2015, at the conclusion of the COP21 climate summit, nearly 200 nations made a pact (which became known as "the Paris agreement") to slow global warming by cutting and then eliminating greenhouse gas pollution.

They committed to keep the increase in global temperatures by the year 2100, compared with pre-industrial times, "well below" 2 degrees Celsius and to work to limit it even more – to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

During and after negotiations, media coverage suggested that the escalating threat of sea level rise may have been a motivator. A piece in *The Washington Post* pointed to the science around how carbon emissions today lock in large, long-term sea level increases – the focus of "Mapping Choices."¹ And *The New York Times* covered the efforts of Tony deBrum, Prime Minister of the Marshall Islands and architect of Paris' "High Ambition Coalition," who advocated with increasing impact as the talks continued, highlighting the sea level threat as a key reason to reach for a 1.5 degrees Celsius goal.²

Yet resistance among some larger nations seemed intractable -- at an earlier convening, as reported in *Rolling Stone*, India's environmental minister replied "So what?" in reference to the existential threat to small and low-lying Pacific islands like deBrum's.³ What were the factors that paved the way for the ultimate ambitious outcome?

The following report analyzes the global media coverage garnered by Climate Central's Mapping Choices sea level rise research and visualizations during this period and explores the extent to which coverage related to the report might have contributed in some measure to the environment that fostered inclusion of this more ambitious 1.5 degree Celsius goal in the final version of the Paris agreement.

1. The troubling science that's pushing the world toward a much tougher climate goal, Chris Mooney, *The Washington Post*, December 10, 2015.

2. The Marshall Islands are Disappearing, Coral Davenport, *The New York Times*, December 2, 2015.

3. Will the Paris Climate Deal Save The World? Jeff Goodell, *Rolling Stone*, January 13, 2016.

Media analysis

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Overview

The methodology and keywords for this analysis are described in the Methods section on p.16.

In 2016, Weber Shandwick performed a traditional print and online media scan across several key markets to determine the volume of coverage related to “Mapping Choices”. The scan did not include television, radio or social media.

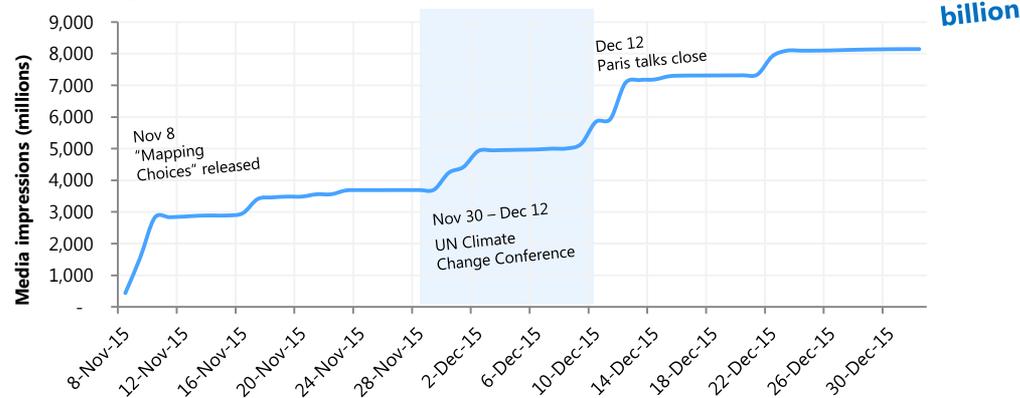
The results of that scan confirm that coverage related to or explicitly mentioning “Mapping Choices” received over 1 billion media impressions across all key markets in three distinct time periods: before, during, and after the December 2015 climate change talks in Paris. In total, over the period between November 12 and December 31, 2015, “Mapping Choices” garnered over 8 billion media impressions.

[Description of graphs to the right](#)

Fig 1: Cumulative impression timeline for coverage related to “Mapping Choices” in traditional media

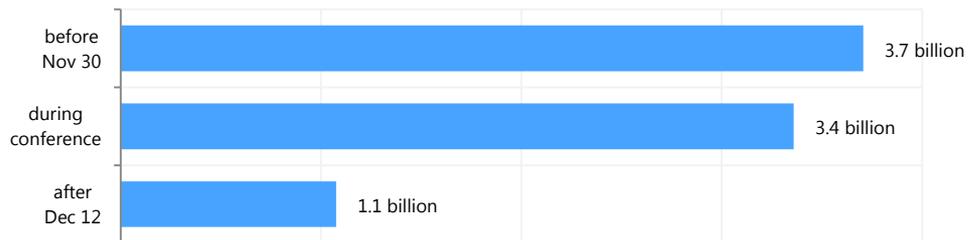
Fig 2: Impression volume overview per time period

Fig 1. Maximum estimated potential media exposure in key markets, cumulative timeline
Relevant coverage related to queries, combined key markets (impressions)



Note: Key markets include Canada, U.S., Australia, South Africa, India, France, China and Brazil

Fig 2. Maximum estimated potential media exposure in key markets
Relevant coverage related to queries, combined key markets (impressions in millions)



Coverage Summary

Table a. Summary of findings in key markets (countries ordered by estimated exposure of coverage, measured in media impressions, except China)

Top Level Metrics	Combined Key Markets	United States	Canada	France	India	South Africa	Australia	Brazil	China
Total Hits ¹	4,118	2,940	318	85	144	79	307	149	93
Total Impressions ^{2,6}	8,142M	5,556M	838.1M	516.9M	415.7M	344.5M	108.7M	101.0M	N/A
Population ³	3,361M	322M	36M	67M	1,276M	55M	24M	205M	1,376M
% of hits containing key message ⁴	65.8%	64.3%	94.3%	80.0%	27.1%	87.3%	45.0%	100.0%	60.2%
% of imps containing key message ^{4,6}	61.4%	54.7%	99.0%	94.7%	30.5%	99.8%	64.2%	100.0%	N/A
% (at least) of hits containing CC local image and/or analysis ⁵	11.8%	3.4%	1.6%	3.5%	35.4%	3.8%	75.2%	22.8%	60.2%
% (at least) of imps containing CC local image and/or analysis ⁵	7.9%	5.9%	0.6%	0.0%	37.1%	0.3%	75.8%	20.8%	19.4%

¹ Hits are the number of articles that hit the keyword group

² Impressions are the maximum potential circulation of the publications that published the articles

³ Population data taken from <http://wikipedia.org> on April 10, 2016

⁴ "Key message" refers to coverage that reflects the "Mapping Choices" implication that 2 degrees is not an aggressive enough goal to protect coastal cities and nations

⁵ "Local" refers to coverage that shows at least one Mapping Choices visualization or analytic result tailored to the coverage market, e.g. sea level imagery or statistics for Shanghai appearing in Chinese coverage

⁶ Impression numbers unavailable for a large fraction of Chinese media outlets

Regional Coverage Summaries



Global Market

- 5,063 media hits globally
- Covered across 89 countries
- Communicated in 29 languages

Combined Key Markets

- 4,118 media hits in key markets
- 8.1 billion impressions in key markets
- 2.4 impressions per capita
- 65.8% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 11.8% of the articles used Climate Central images depicting and/or analytic results assessing possible local, nation-specific futures

Key Market Coverage Summary

Country	Total hits	Coverage in top 10 outlets
United States	2,940	90%
Canada	318	90%
Australia	307	100%
Brazil	149	70%
India	144	70%
China	93	70%
France	85	80%
South Africa	79	30%

Regional Coverage Summaries



United States

- 2,940 media hits
- 5.6 billion impressions
- 17.2 impressions per capita
- 64.3% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 3.4% of the articles used Climate Central's United States-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus is on the global picture for the climate change outcomes
- Emphasis on global mitigation efforts
- Framed the conversation as a global issue of which the United States is just one player among many

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
CNN.com	Yes
MSN.com	Yes
WSJ.com	No
NYTimes.com	Yes
Huffingtonpost.com	Yes
AOL.com	Yes
FOXNews.com	Yes
Washingtonpost.com	Yes
USAtoday.com	Yes
LAtimes.com	Yes
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	90%

Regional Coverage Summaries



Canada

- 318 media hits
- 838.1 million impressions
- 23.3 impressions per capita
- 94.3% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 1.6% of the articles used Climate Central's Canada-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the mitigation efforts at 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21)
- Emphasis on the worst-case scenarios of rising sea levels
- Framed the conversation as a global issue where Canada is a small player

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
MSN.com	Yes
CBC.ca	Yes
TheGlobeandMail.com	Yes
Lapresse.ca	No
TheStar.com	Yes
CTVnews.ca	Yes
HuffingtonPost.ca	Yes
Globalnews.ca	Yes
Radio-canada.ca	Yes
NationalPost.com	Yes
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	90%

Regional Coverage Summaries



Australia

- 308 media hits
- 108.7 million impressions
- 4.5 impressions per capita
- 45% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 75% of the articles used Climate Central's Australia-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the consequences for rising sea levels
- Emphasis on rising sea levels impacting Australian cities
- Framed the mitigation efforts at 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21)

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
Abc.net.au	Yes
News.com.au	Yes
Theage.com.au	Yes
9news.com.au	Yes
Heraldsun.com.au	Yes
Sbs.com.au	Yes
TheAustralian.com.au	Yes
Dailytelegraph.com.au	Yes
Businessinsider.com.au	Yes
HuffingtonPost.com.au	Yes
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	100%

Regional Coverage Summaries



Brazil

- 149 media hits
- 101 million impressions
- 0.5 impressions per capita
- 100% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 22.8% of the articles used Climate Central's Brazil-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on global warming creating "climate refugees"
- Emphasis on rising sea levels impacting Brazilian cities
- Framed global warming in its regional consequences

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
Globo.com	Yes
MSN.com	No
Noticias.uol.com.br	Yes
Abril.com.br	No
Isto E	Yes
Epoca	Yes
Folha de Sao Paulo	Yes
R7	Yes
Elpais.com	Yes
iG.com.br	No
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	70%

Regional Coverage Summaries



India

- 144 media hits
- 415.7 million impressions
- 0.3 impressions per capita
- 27.1% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 35.4% of the articles used Climate Central's India-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the harm to 55 million people on India's coastal areas
- Emphasis on how climate change affects India
- Framed the conversation about global warming as a regional or Indian issue

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
IndiaTimes.com	Yes
Indianexpress.com	Yes
Thehindu.com	Yes
Ndtv.com	Yes
Hindustantimes.com	Yes
Amarujala.com	No
Business-standard.com	Yes
Bhaskar.com	Yes
India.com	No
Jagran.com	No
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	70%

Regional Coverage Summaries



China

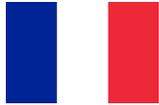
- 93 media hits
- 60.2% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 60.2% of the articles used Climate Central's China-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the consequences of global warming for Shanghai and Hong Kong
- Emphasis was on potential population displacement and worse-case scenario outcomes
- Framed the conversation about global warming as a regional or Chinese issue

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
Tencent (qq.com)	No
Sina (sina.com)	Yes
Sohu (sohu.com)	Yes
Chinadaily.com.cn	Yes
Xinhuanet.com	Yes
Cntv.cn	No
China.com.cn	Yes
Ifeng (ifeng.com)	Yes
Rednet.cn	No
Reference News	Yes
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	70%

Regional Coverage Summaries



France

- 85 media hits
- 516.9 million impressions
- 7.8 impressions per capita
- 80% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 3.5% of the articles used Climate Central's France-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on limiting global warming to 2 °C
- Emphasis was on the mitigation efforts at 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21)
- Framed climate change outcomes in relation to the action of global leaders at COP21

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
Le Monde	Yes
Le Figaro	Yes
Tfi.fr	No
Le Parisien/Aujourd'hui en France	Yes
Ouest-france.fr	Yes
L'Express	Yes
Lepoint.fr	Yes
Huffingtonpost.fr	Yes
LesEchos.fr (Les Echos)	No
Liberation	Yes
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	80%

Regional Coverage Summaries



South Africa

- 79 media hits
- 344.5 million impressions
- 6.3 impressions per capita
- 87% of the articles picked up the key messages from the report
- At least 3.8% of the articles used Climate Central's South Africa-specific images and/or analysis

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the threat global warming and climate change has on South Africa's future
- Emphasis is on mitigation efforts in limiting global warming to 2°C
- Framed in worst case scenario outcomes

Top 10 regional outlets	Did coverage appear?
News24.com (City Press)	Yes
Timeslive.co.za (Sunday Times)	Yes
IOL.co.za (The Independent)	Yes
Bdlive.co.za	No
Dailymaverick.co.za (Daily Maverick)	No
Daily Sun	No
Sunday Sun	No
Rapport	No
Sunday World	No
SowetanLive.co.za (The Sowetan)	No
% of top 10 regional outlets that covered "Mapping Choices"	30%

Methods

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Search queries

General key terms

Global search only, excluding key markets

(Nov. 8 to 14, 2015)

"Climate Central"

Key market searches

("PNAS" or "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences") AND ("Ben Strauss" or "Benjamin Strauss" or "Benjamin H. Strauss") AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"Climate Central" AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"Mapping Choices"

("Ben Strauss" or "Benjamin Strauss" or "Benjamin H. Strauss") AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

("2C" or "2 C" or "2°C" or "2 °C" or "2 degrees C" or "2 degrees Celsius") AND ("280 million" or "130 million" or "458 million") AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

("4C" or "4 C" or "4°C" or "4 °C" or "4 degrees C" or "4 degrees Celsius") AND ("627 million" or "470 million" or "760 million") AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND "half a billion" AND "China" AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

Translations

Climate Central

जलवायु केंद्रीय (Hindi)

气候中心 (Chinese)

Benjamin Strauss

बेंजामिन स्ट्राँस (Hindi)

本杰明 斯特劳斯 (Chinese)

Ocean

सागर (Hindi)

海洋 (Chinese)

Osean (Afrikaans)

Oceano (Portuguese)

Océan (French)

Sea

समुद्र (Hindi)

海 (Chinese)

See (Afrikaans)

Mar (Portuguese)

Mer (French)

Mapping Choices

मानचित्रण विकल्प (Hindi)

映射选择 (Chinese)

kartering keuses (Afrikaans)

opções de mapeamento (Portuguese)

Des choix de cartographie (French)

France (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("1.3 million" or "2 million" or "2.7 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("2.4 million" or "3 million" or "3.5 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

Australia (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("200,000" or "700,000" or "1.2 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("1.3 million" or "1.9 million" or "2.5 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

Brazil (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("5 million" or "9 million" or "13 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("13 million" or "16 million" or "19 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

US (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("6 million" or "12 million" or "19 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("18 million" or "25 million" and "30 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

China (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("26 million" or "64 million" or "107 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("113 million" or "145 million" or "170 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

Canada (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("500,000" or "700,000" or "1 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("900,000" or "1.1 million" and "1.3 million")

AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

India (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("8 million" or "20 million" or "36 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("37 million" or "55 million" or "73 million") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

South Africa (in addition to general key terms)

"2C" AND ("100,000" or "300,000" or "600,000") AND

("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

"4C" AND ("600,000" or "1 million" or "one million" or "1.2

million") AND ("sea" or "seas" or "ocean" or "oceans")

Methodology

For its analysis of traditional print and online coverage, Weber Shandwick collected media coverage of Climate Central's "Mapping Choices: Carbon, Climate and Rising Seas, Our Global Legacy".

Coverage was scanned in English across all key markets, in addition to the primary language of each region, between the dates of November 8 and December 31, 2015.

Key markets analyzed: Australia, Brazil (Portuguese), Canada, China (Chinese), France (French), India (Hindi), South Africa (Afrikaans), and the United States.

Weber Shandwick employed search terms provided by Climate Central, which focused on the organization's name, "Mapping Choices", variations of Dr. Ben Strauss' name, and the 2 degree and 4 degree impact population impact figures from the research findings, in English and the primary language of each respective nation. These terms were shared with Weber Shandwick offices in key markets to conduct scans manually and key terms were translated and provided to a third-party monitoring service for further scanning in key markets. Finally, a global markets search (outside of key markets) was conducted based on the term 'Climate Central' from November 8 to 14, 2015 – the week following launch. False positives were manually removed.

Various steps were taken to ensure the retroactive media coverage scan provided a database for analysis that was representative of all potential coverage.

1. Weber Shandwick local offices in each key market conducted initial scans with local media monitoring tools.
2. Regional Weber Shandwick data was cross-referenced against a list collected by Climate Central to determine its exhaustiveness and to design stronger keywords.
3. Meltwater (a third-party media monitoring service) was used to fill the potential gaps between the regional scans and Climate Central's informal list with a widespread scan that was cross-referenced again with the aforementioned data sources.
4. Throughout the process, a variety of queries were tested to capture the greatest amount of relevant media coverage possible while minimizing false positives that would be removed later in a manual scan.

During its scan for false positives, Weber Shandwick also manually coded different qualitative measures, including key message pickup.

The key message evaluated throughout the report was that limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius would not be enough to prevent major coastal city losses.

Key message coverage was further qualified based on whether the article author shared climate change population impact numbers that were specific to the publishing region. For example, did media outlets in India use impact numbers specific to India, or did the reporter use the global impact numbers in his/her piece?

In each key market, we further evaluated how media in each nation was handling the story by identifying its focus, emphasis and framing. The focus referred to what the reporters were zeroing in on, the emphasis outlined what it was that was being emphasized within the focus and framing was how the media framed the issue/story.

In addition, Weber Shandwick scans confirmed whether Climate Central's images and videos were used to illustrate the impact of 2 and 4 degree Celsius rises in temperature. In practice, image attribution became difficult to exhaustively verify due to inconsistency in image availability (broken links; subscription paywalls), so the reported numbers are minimums.

Weber Shandwick identified whether Climate Central and the 'Mapping Choices' report were covered in the top 10 outlets of each key market. These top 10 outlets were identified using Alexa, an analytics tool that ranks websites. The rank is calculated using a proprietary methodology that combines a site's estimated average of daily unique visitors and its estimated number of pageviews over the past three months. Alexa provides a similar country-specific ranking, which is a measurement of how a website ranks in a particular country relative to other sites over the past month.

Methodology

These approaches ensured that analysis was conducted on a representative sample and Weber Shandwick is confident the coverage collected allows for an accurate and fulsome analysis and inference regarding the impact of Climate Central's Mapping Choices sea level rise research.

Measuring the potential impact of “Mapping Choices” media coverage on Paris COP21 outcomes

Study by Weber Shandwick Toronto