



# Climate Change

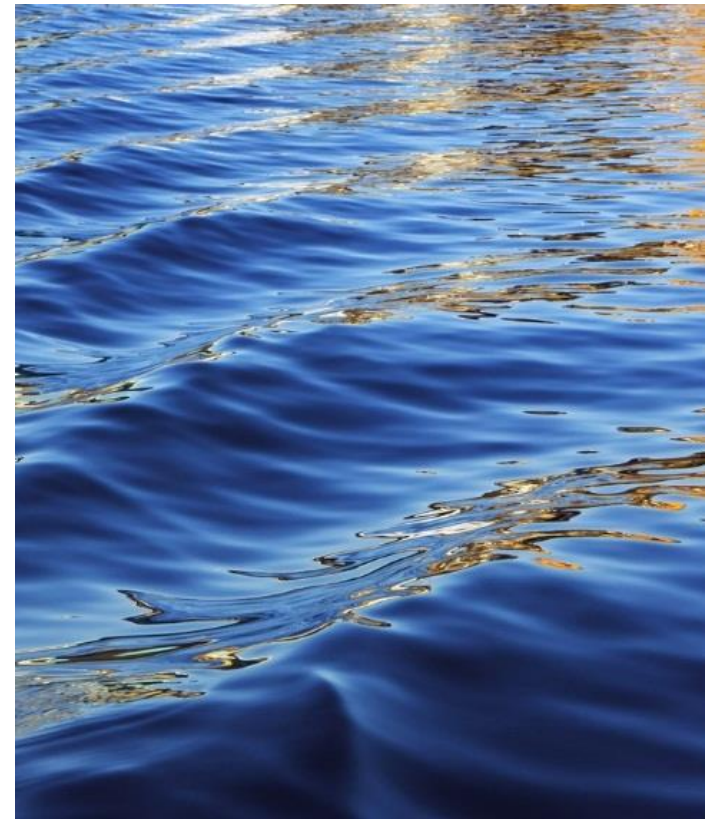
In the *Edmonton Journal*





# Climate Change In the Media

Literature Review





Macleans.ca

# Climate Change in the Media



NationalGeographic.com

## • Frame Valence

- Climate change is overwhelmingly portrayed as negative or harmful (Liu, Vedlitz, & Alston, 2008; Ahchong & Dodds, 2011; Dotson, Jacobson, Kaid, Lee & Carlton, 2012; Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014)
- Most specific examples of *negative frame valence* (see Dotson et al., 2012) include natural disasters or other extreme weather events (Brulle, Carmichael, & Jenkins, 2012; Speck, 2010; Gonzalez-Cortez, 2014)
- Examples of *positive frame valence* (see Dotson et al., 2012) include proposed mitigation and adaptation strategies (Liu et al., 2008; Schmid-Petri, Adam, Schmucki, & Haussler, 2015; Ahchong & Dodds, 2011; Dotson et al., 2012).

# Climate Change in the Media

- **Skepticism**

- Studies indicate that there is still considerable voice given to skeptics (Schmid-Petri et al, 2015; Boykoff, 2013; Speck, 2010; Murphy, 2015; Schmidt, Ivanova, & Schafer, 2013)
- *Fundamental skepticism* consists of a vocal contradiction of scientific evidence of the existence of climate change (Schmidt-Petri et al., 2015, p3).
- *Impact skepticism* is more subtle, implying that climate change could either be beneficial if it were to occur, or that any mitigation strategies to combat it “would be very harmful to the free market” (Rahmstorf, 2004 as cited in Schmidt-Petri et al., 2015).

# Climate Change in the Media



- **Responsibility**

- Climate change is most often perceived as a problem that the government is responsible for addressing (Ahchong & Dodds, 2011; Calvin & Harris, 2014; Liu et al, 2008; Young & Dugas, 2011 )
- Non-governmental organizations are also expected to find solutions (Liu et al., 2008)
- Academics are instrumental in shaping climate change policies as well (Speck, 2010)





# Research Questions

Regarding climate change in the *Edmonton Journal*



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## We asked:

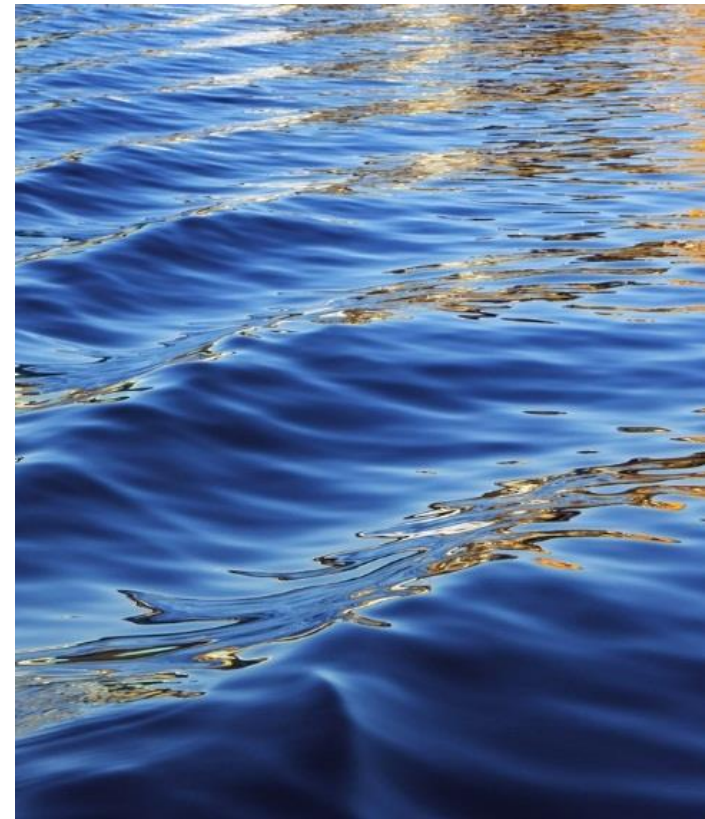
?

- ***Is the frame valence of the article positive or negative?***
  - Negative: which impacts are emphasized? Environment, public health, economy?
  - Positive: are solutions offered mitigation or adaptation strategies?
- ***Is climate change portrayed as a fact, or are skeptics still given a voice?***
  - Fundamental skeptics? Impact skeptics?
- ***Who should take action regarding climate change?***
  - Government officials, academics, scientists, the public, industry, religious figures, or non-profit organizations (IE: environmental organizations)?



# Methods

Content Analysis





# Analyzing the *Edmonton Journal*

- *Sampling*

- Database: Canadian Newsstand
- Stratified by source type (Edmonton Journal), document type (newspaper article), language (English), and limited to “full text”
- 12 articles containing the terms “climate change” or “global warming” were selected from years 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016
- Articles sorted based on relevance with manual analysis

# Analyzing the *Edmonton Journal*

- **Coding**

- **Skepticism** (if present, which type?)

- *Fundamental* (Schmidt-Petri et al., 2015): vocal contradiction of scientific evidence of the existence of global warming (“trend skepticism”, Rahmstorf, 2004) or denial of anthropogenic responsibility (“attribution skepticism” Rahmstorf, 2004)

- *Impact* (Rahmstorf, 2004): Global warming would be beneficial or actions to combat global warming would be damaging to the economy (Capstick & Pidgeon, 2014 as cited in Schmidt-Petri et al., 2015)

# Analyzing the *Edmonton Journal*

- **Coding**

- **Responsibility** (who is responsible for addressing the issue of climate change?)
  - Academic/scientist, celebrity, industry, government official, public, NGO, intergovernmental organizations, media outlets, religious figures

# Analyzing the *Edmonton Journal*

- **Coding**

- **Valence** (how is climate change portrayed?)

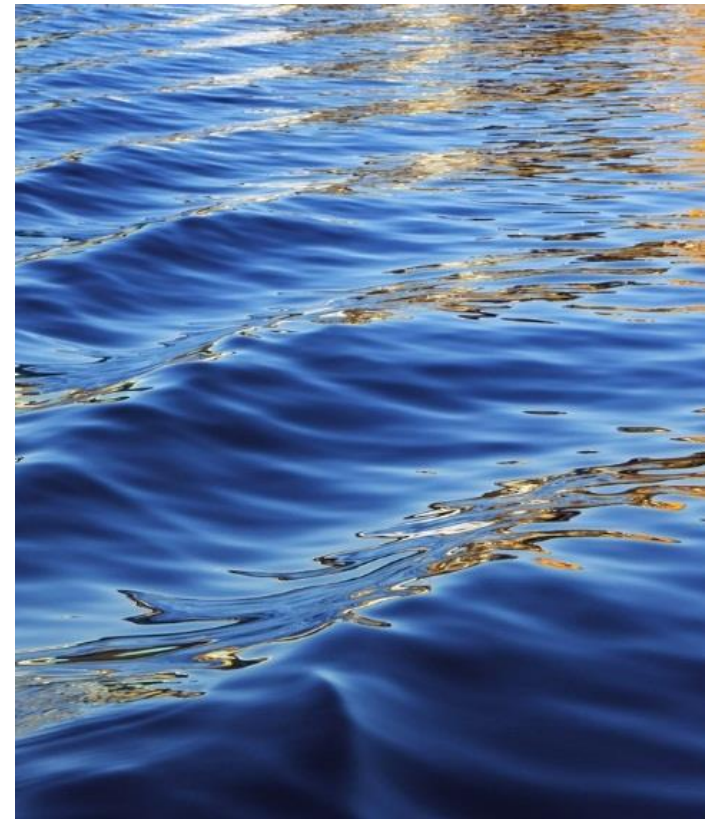
- *Positive*: solutions proposed (mitigation or adaptation strategies)

- *Negative*: harmful issues (natural disasters or extreme weather, environmental, public health related, or economic)



# Findings

Climate change in the *Edmonton Journal*





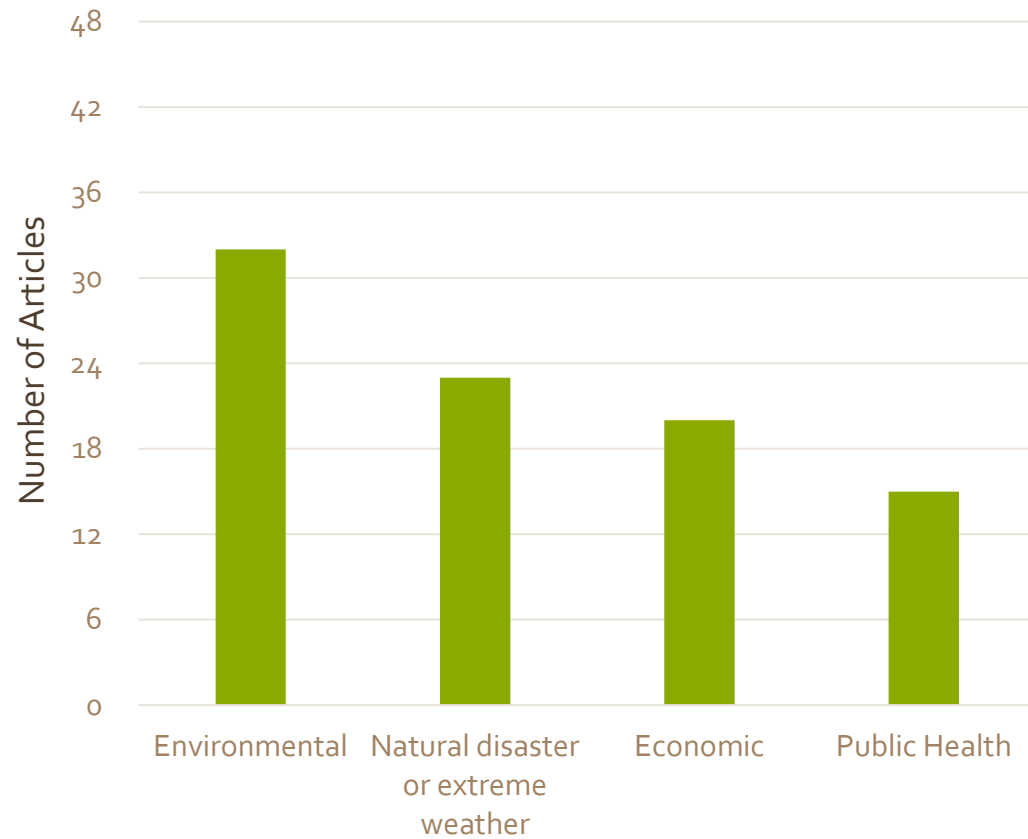
# Findings: Skepticism

- *Skepticism*

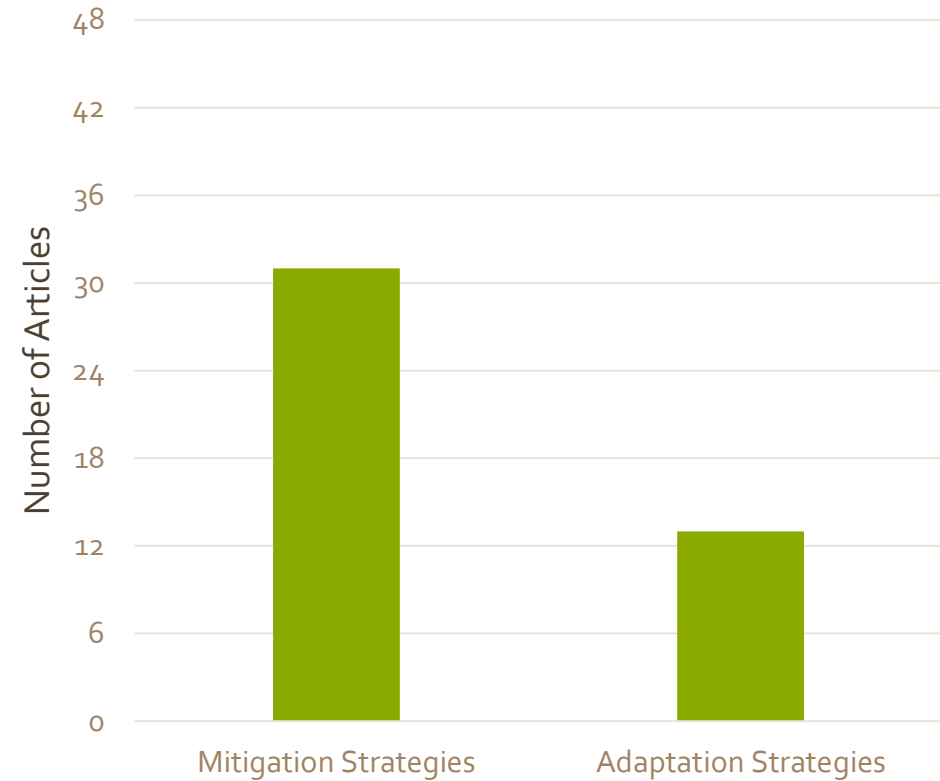
- 46/48 articles were coded as “skepticism absent” due to some affirmation of the existence in climate change
- Fundamental (trend) was coded in 12 articles
- Impact (mitigation harmful) was coded in 10 articles

# Findings: Frame Valence

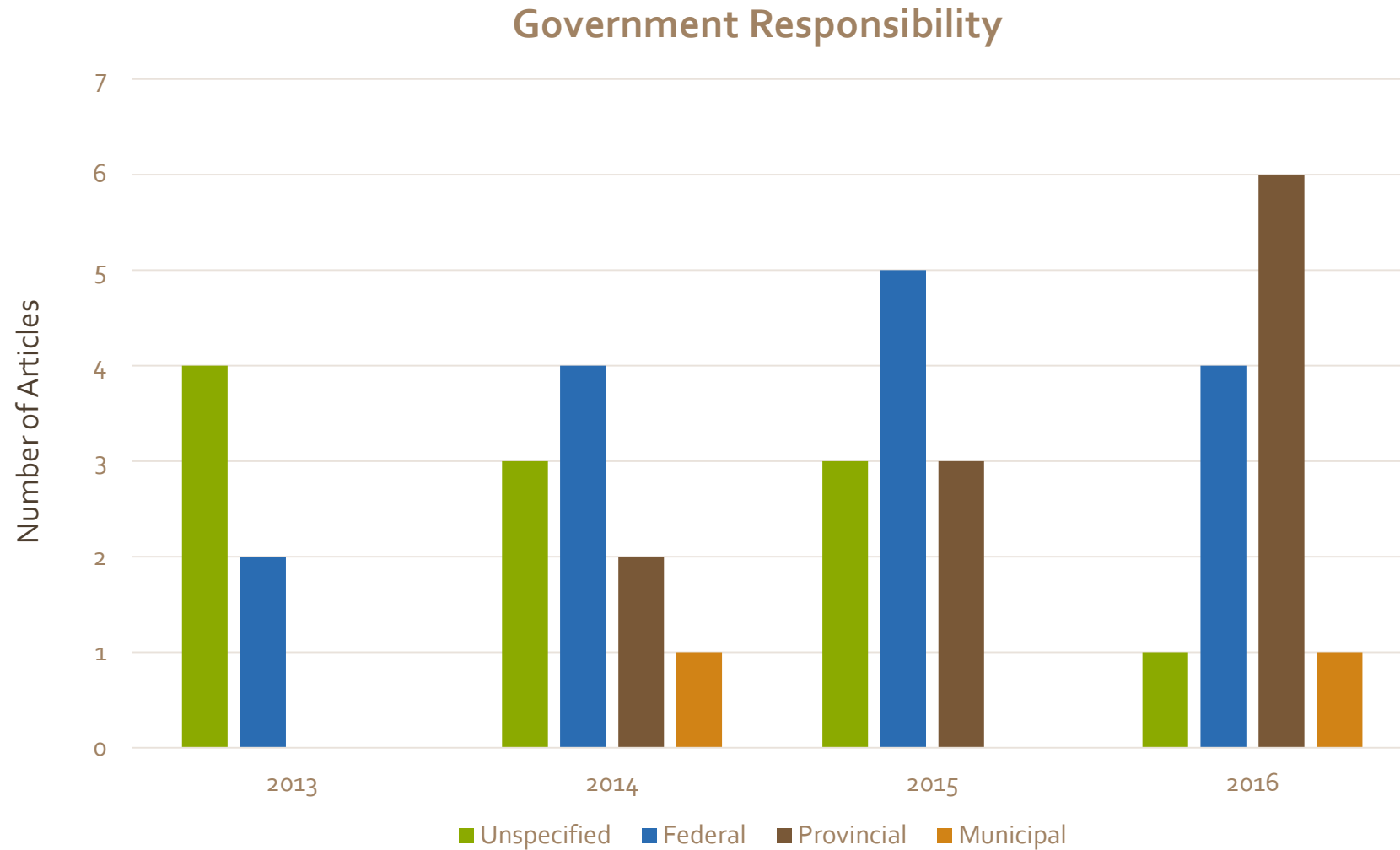
## Negative Valence



## Positive Valence



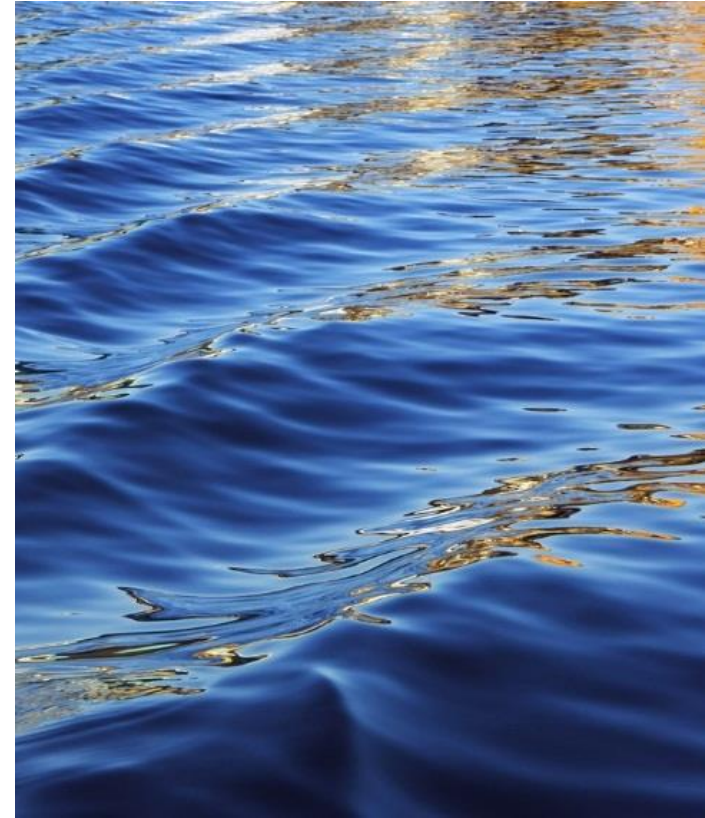
# Findings: Responsibility





# Discussion

What does it all mean?



# Discussion: Valence

- *In the Edmonton Journal, climate change is most often framed negatively, consistent with other research findings (Liu et al., 2008; Ahchong & Dodds, 2011)*
- *Mitigation strategies were coded more often than adaptation strategies, as in Liu et al., 2008 & Ahchong and Dodds, 2011.*
- *Young & Dugas (2012) found that French Canadian publications more often discussed environmental issues than English publications, though these were coded in 29 of 48 Edmonton Journal articles.*



# Findings: Responsibility

- *Government parties were named most responsible in Liu et al. (2008), Young and Dugas (2012), and Ahchong and Dodds (2011) but not to the same extent as in the Edmonton Journal.*
- *Shift towards Municipal government?*

# Responsibility – shift toward Municipal?

## Edmonton Mayor Iveson tells UN conference cities can fight climate change alone

By Bob Weber The Canadian Press

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Mayors, including Don Iveson, and experts from around the world gather in Edmonton for a summit on climate change, Sunday, March 4, 2018.

Edmonton Mayor's Office, Credit

Cities can do a lot to fight climate change on their own even if the levels of government they answer to aren't interested, the mayor of Alberta's capital told an international conference on Monday.

Don Iveson said when President Donald Trump announced his intention last June to pull the United States from the Paris climate accord, more than 90 American mayors stated their cities would still work to meet the targets.

"Today, that number is 400 American mayors," Iveson told the cities and climate change conference in Edmonton.

**READ MORE:** [Edmonton hosts international climate change conference](#)

The meeting is sponsored by the United Nations [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), which compiles worldwide science on the evidence for and impacts of global warming. The event has attracted hundreds of delegates from around the world.

Iveson said Canadian municipalities have influence over half of Canada's total [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

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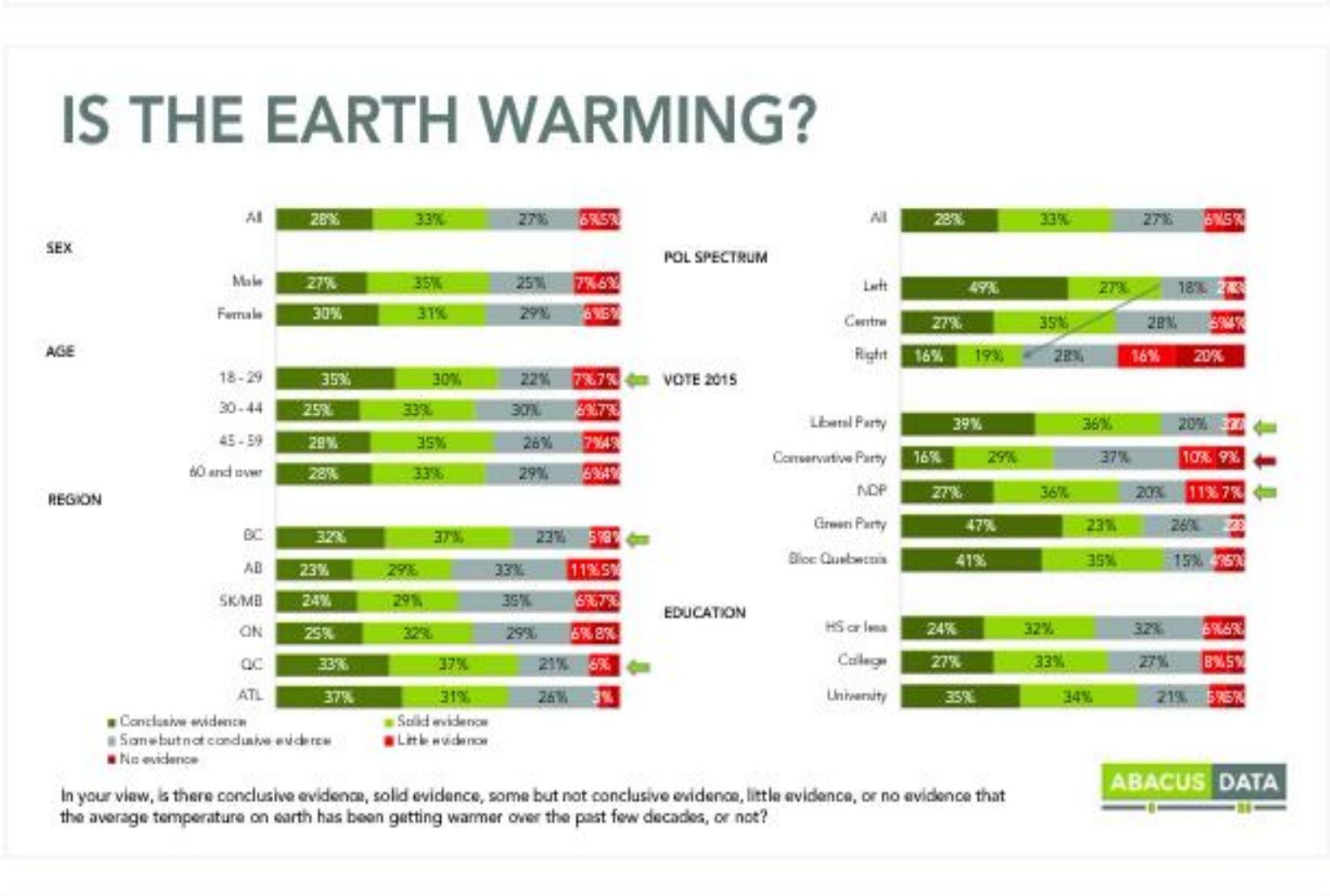
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# Findings: Skepticism

- *The lack of “balance” is consistent with Young & Dugas’ (2011) findings; many authors state that this is more of an issue in US media (Boykoff, 2004; Young & Dugas, 2011)*
- *Young & Dugas (2011) found that impact (mitigation harmful) skepticism (Capstick & Pidgeon, 2014) is increasing.*

# Climate Change Skepticism in Alberta



# Limitations: Sampling

## Gary Lamphier: Oilsands emissions cap could cut growth by \$250 billion: Fraser Institute

That's the stark message of a new Fraser Institute report, titled How Alberta's Carbon Emission Cap Will Reduce Oil Sands Growth.



GARY LAMPHER, EDMONTON JOURNAL

Published on: August 16, 2016 | Last Updated: August 16, 2016 6:34 AM MDT

Let's be frank. Alberta's climate change policies are almost entirely about symbolism. Whatever we choose to do will have almost no measurable impact on global temperatures, although we seem intent on wrecking our own economy in the process.

That's the stark message of a new Fraser Institute report, titled How Alberta's Carbon Emission Cap Will Reduce Oil Sands Growth.

## Graham Thomson: Jason Kenney quick to attack NDP's climate plan, slow to show his own

UCP Leader Jason Kenney is great with a quip on the carbon tax. We have yet to see if he's great with a policy on climate change.



GRAHAM THOMSON, EDMONTON JOURNAL

Published on: March 14, 2018 | Last Updated: March 14, 2018 6:41 PM MDT

During question period Monday and Tuesday, Premier Rachel Notley slammed the official Opposition MLAs as climate change deniers.

United Conservative Party Leader Jason Kenney's response: "We're not climate deniers, we're climate tax deniers."



Thank you!