

Research-based Lessons for Climate Communication

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Introduction

Canada in
international context

National-level climate
communication

Regional-level climate
communication

Conclusion



Introduction

The takeaway: It's important to distinguish more & less consensual climate beliefs & policy orientations in order to strategically frame & build social support for climate action.

**Research
base**

Roadmap



COMPARING CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY NETWORKS (COMPON)







Research focusing on meso-level policy networks sheds light on what organizations exert influence on policy making.

[About Compon](#)

Most Recent Publications

<p>Compon</p> <p>Instagram as an Arena of Climate Change Communication and Mobilization: A Discourse Network Analysis of COP26</p> <p>Environmental Communication</p> <p>Author(s): Ghislain, Mark C.J., Yasmin Kary-Musthika and David D. Trödel</p> <p>Read More</p>	<p>Journal</p> <p>Breaking away from family control? Collaboration among political organizations and social media endorsement among their constituents</p> <p>Policy Sciences</p> <p>Author(s): Paul M. Wiegman, Arttu Makkaniemi and Tuomas Ylä-Antilla</p> <p>Read More</p>	<p>Articles Articles Summary Journal</p> <p>Network ties, institutional roles and advocacy tactics: Exploring explanations for perceptions of influence in climate change policy networks</p> <p>Social Networks</p> <p>Author(s): Paul M. Wiegman, Pirkko Grönkki, Aneli Gronow, Tuomas Ylä-Antilla, Utsava Sankar, and Ana Eriksson</p> <p>Read More</p>
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PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE (WP6)

FOCI's Work Package on 'Perceptions of Climate Change and Social Futures' examines the multiple, and potentially divergent, social perceptions of climate change among the public, experts, media, and policy network actors across Atlantic Canada. It analyses social perceptions of climate change and builds social infrastructure by assessing: i) regional impacts of climate change, ii) responses, in terms of mitigation and adaptation; and iii) capacity to respond to changes. Improving our understanding of the social perceptions of climate change in these different spheres helps innovate governance infrastructures that can better navigate futures of climate change and social-ecological instability. The overall objective is to build citizen engagement and policy network infrastructure to help communities grapple with climate change and rapidly evolving ecosystems.

MEET THE TEAM



Howard Ramos
Co-Lead



Karen Foster
Co-Lead



Mark Stoddart
Co-Investigator



Tuomas Ylä-Antilla
Co-Investigator

Additional resource:



Introduction

The takeaway: It's important to distinguish more & less consensual climate beliefs & policy orientations in order to strategically frame & build social support for climate action.

**Research
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Roadmap

Roadmap: 10 Research-based lessons for climate communication

- Canada in international context (lessons 1-3).
- National level (lessons 4-8).
- Atlantic Canada (lessons 9-10).
- Conclusion: Implications.

Canada in international context



Lesson 1: Canada sees relatively more visibility & attention to climate change as an issue in public discourse than many other countries.

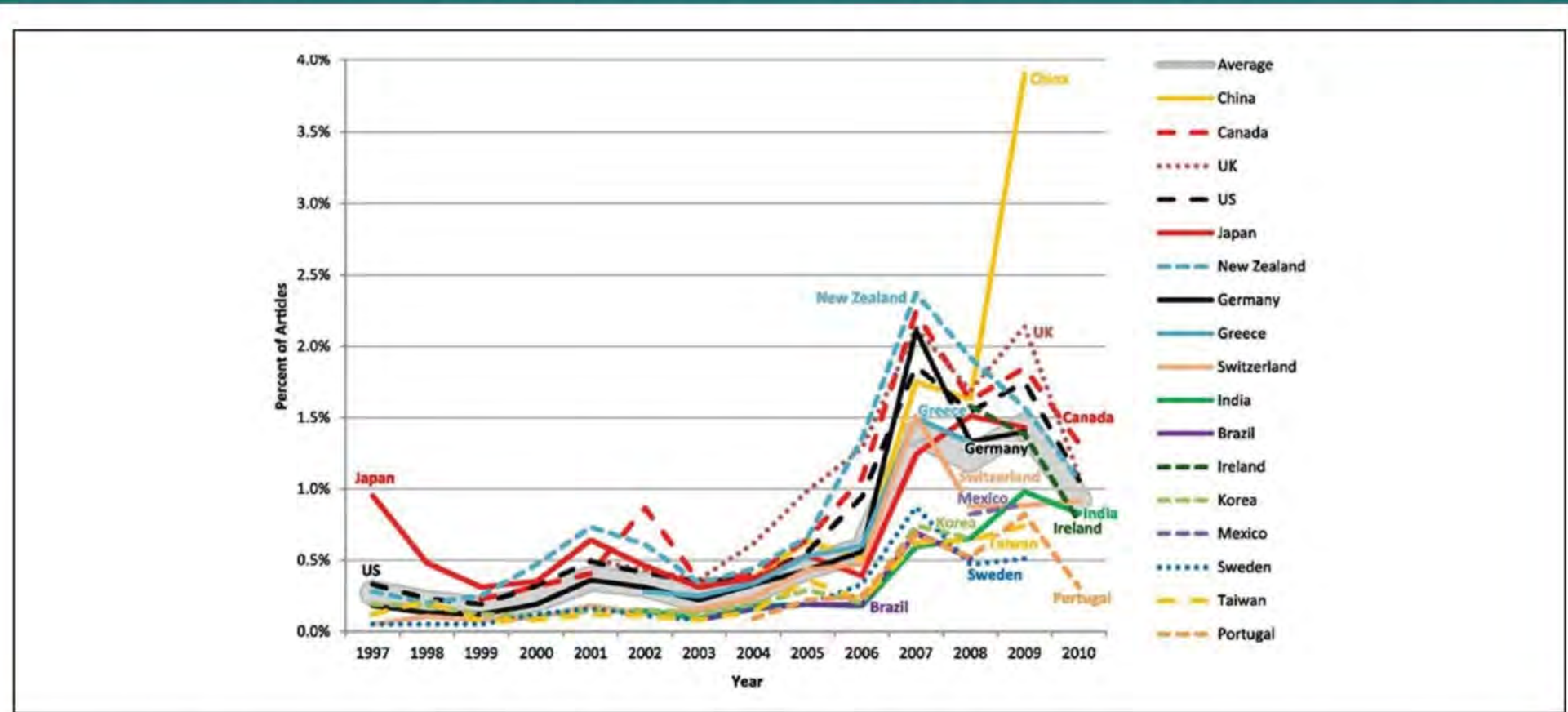


Figure 1. Articles mentioning climate change (percentage of total articles, 17 societies).

Note: Percentage articles for Canada and Greece are derived from two newspapers and for New Zealand from two papers until 2003.

Lesson 2: In terms of 'false balance' framing and visibility of climate skepticism/denialism, Canada is not the US, but ...

Table 1. Clusters of Cases, Framing Sets, and Emissions Outcomes.

Cluster	Case	Accepting Science	Global Impacts	Global/UN Politics	Mitigation Policy-Pro	Kyoto/EU Target	% Change 1990 to 2008–2012	Difference from Target	Attainment with Credits
Global ecopolitics	China	+	+		++	NA	278.2%	NA	NA
	Switzerland	++	+	+	+	-8.0%	-2.2%	5.8%	-8.7%
	Germany	+	+			-21.0% ^a	-21.2%	-0.2%	-24.7%
	Japan	+			+	-6.0%	7.2%	13.2%	-8.4%
	Korea	+			+	NA	116.0%	NA	NA
European ecopolitics	Portugal	++		+	+	27.0% ^a	26.4%	-0.6%	12.3%
	Greece	++		+	+	25.0% ^a	17.1%	-7.9%	16.7%
	Sweden				++	4.0% ^a	-15.5%	-19.5%	-15.9%
	Ireland	+	-	-		13.0% ^a	26.4%	13.4%	11.3%
Domestic ecopolitics	Brazil	+			+	NA	92.7%	NA	NA
	India	+	--		++	NA	180.5%	NA	NA
	Mexico	+	--	-		NA	56.6%	NA	NA
	Taiwan	+	--	--	-	NA	114.5%	NA	NA
Anglo ecopolitics	Canada	-		--		-6.0%	22.8%	28.8%	NA
	United Kingdom	-	-			-12.5% ^a	-16.3%	-3.8%	-22.5%
	New Zealand	-	+	-	-	0.0%	44.5%	44.5%	-20.3%
	United States	--		-	-	-7.0%	7.9%	14.9%	NA

Note: EU = European Union; NA = non-Annex I; UN = United Nations; ++ = strongly in the set; + = weakly in the set; - = weakly out of the set; -- = strongly out of the set.

^aMember of the EU.

Broadbent et al. (2016). *Conflicting Climate Change Frames in a Global Field of Media Discourse*. *Socius*, 2, 1-17.

Lesson 3: Even in high climate consensus countries, social media is a sphere for proliferation & normalization of climate denialism & issue polarization - increasingly linked with other polarized issue orientations.

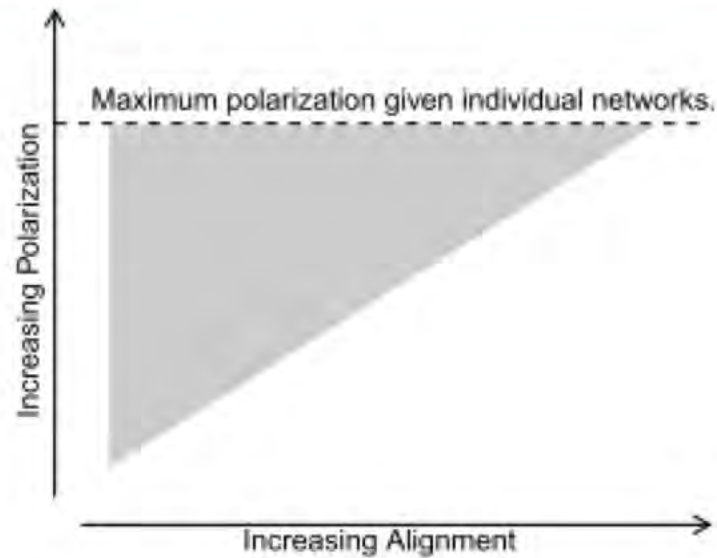


Figure 2: Schematic illustration of the relationship between two networks' alignment and the polarization of their joint network. The horizontal dotted line indicates the maximum polarization possible for the given joint endorsement network.

Chen et al. (2021). Polarization of climate politics results from partisan sorting: Evidence from Finnish Twittersphere. *Global environmental change*, 71, 102348.

National-level climate communication



Lesson 4: Climate communication is characterized by increasing issue complexity over time ...

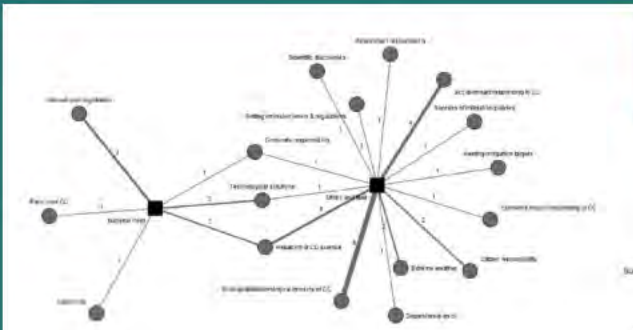


Figure 1. Discourse network linking primary issue categories to news outlet, 1999 (links showing frequency of articles with theme).

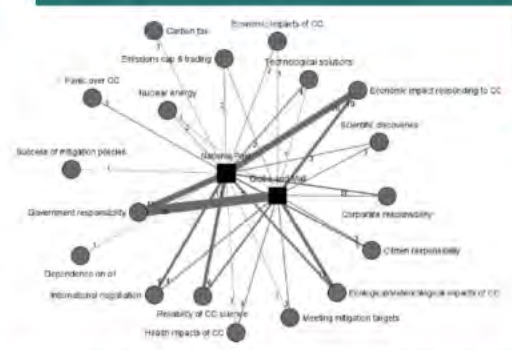


Figure 2. Discourse network linking primary issue categories to news outlet, 2002 (links showing frequency of articles with theme).

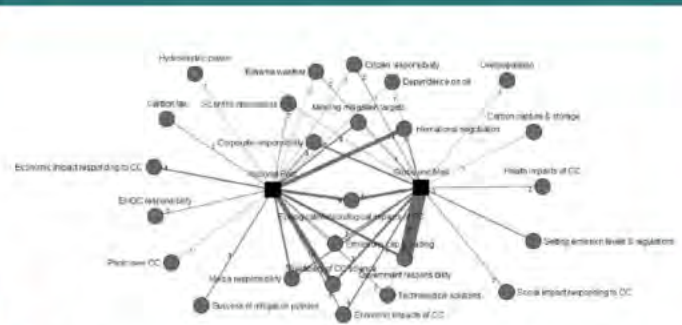


Figure 3. Discourse network linking primary issue categories to news outlet, 2006 (links showing frequency of articles with theme).

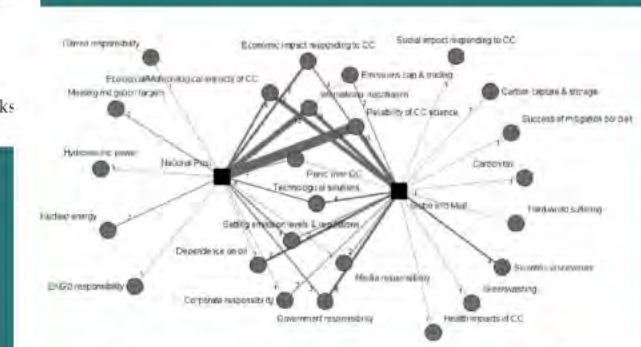


Figure 4. Discourse network linking primary issue categories to news outlet, 2010 (links showing frequency of articles with theme).

Stoddart & Tindall (2015). Canadian news media and the cultural dynamics of multilevel climate governance. *Environmental Politics*, 24(3), 401-422.

Lesson 5: ... BUT, we see increasing divergence of climate communication over time across more centrist & conservative media.

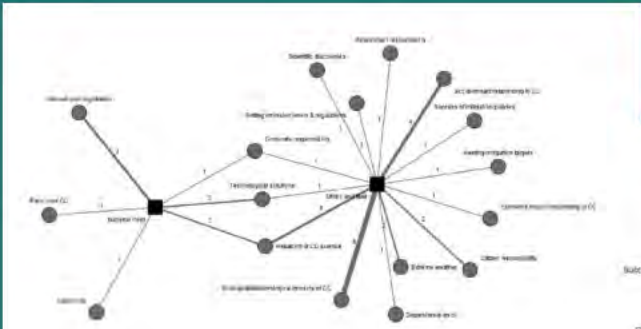


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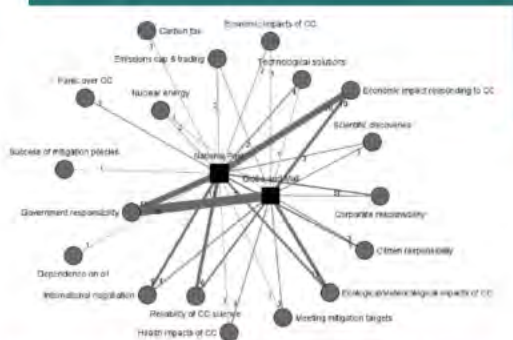


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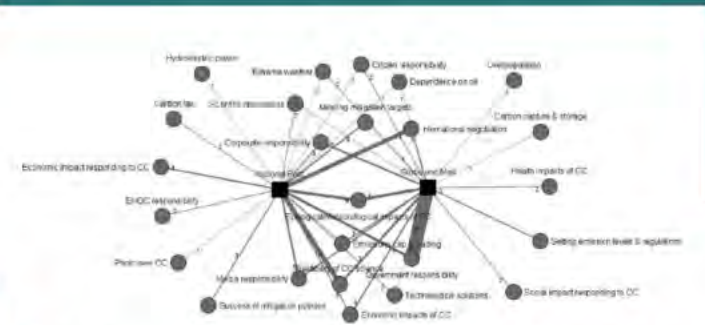


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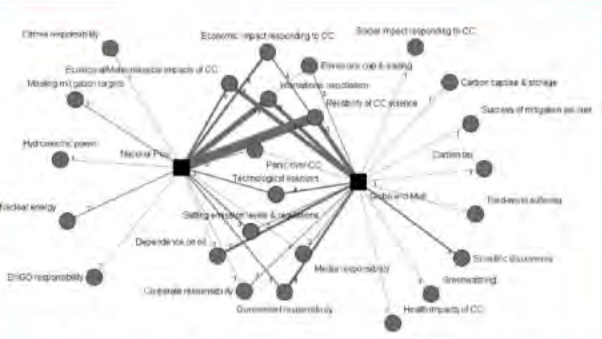
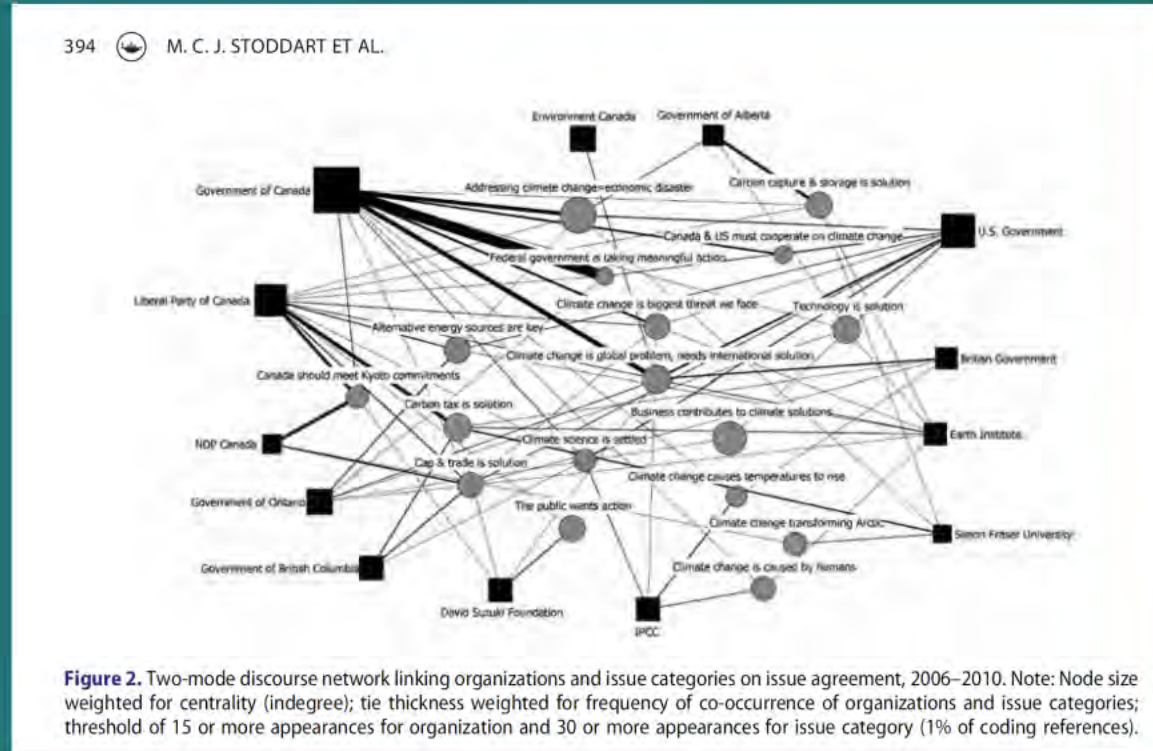


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Stoddart & Tindall (2015). Canadian news media and the cultural dynamics of multilevel climate governance. *Environmental Politics*, 24(3), 401-422.

Lesson 6: Environmental groups & pro-environmental political parties/governments gain media visibility for pro-climate discourse, but this doesn't necessarily translate into policy influence contra fossil fuel interests or pro-business coalitions.



Stoddart et al. (2017). Media Access and Political Efficacy in the Eco-politics of Climate Change: Canadian National News and Mediated Policy Networks. *Environmental Communication*, 11(3), 386–400.

Howe et al. (2020). Media Coverage and Perceived Policy Influence of Environmental Actors: Good Strategy or Pyrrhic Victory? *Politics and Governance*, 8(2), 298–310.

Lesson 7: Canadian climate communication has been caught between contradictory commitments to Paris Agreement & green transitions vs. persistence of support for fossil fuel interests ...

Areas of higher contention that reflect national-provincial tensions:
Curtailing oil & gas development.
Carbon tax.

Tindall et al. (2020). Social Networks and Climate Change Policy Preferences: Structural Location and Policy Actor Support for Fossil Fuel Production. *Society & Natural Resources*, 33(11), 1359-1379.

Lesson 8: ... but is there an emerging consensus around 'green growth' that represents a re-alignment of traditional environment vs. economy framing of climate action?



Ylä-Anttila et al. (2020). Breaking the Treadmill? Climate Change Policy Networks and the Prospects for Low Carbon Futures in Australia and Finland. *Society & Natural Resources*, 33(11), 1380-1398.

Climate Communication at the Regional Level: Atlantic Canada



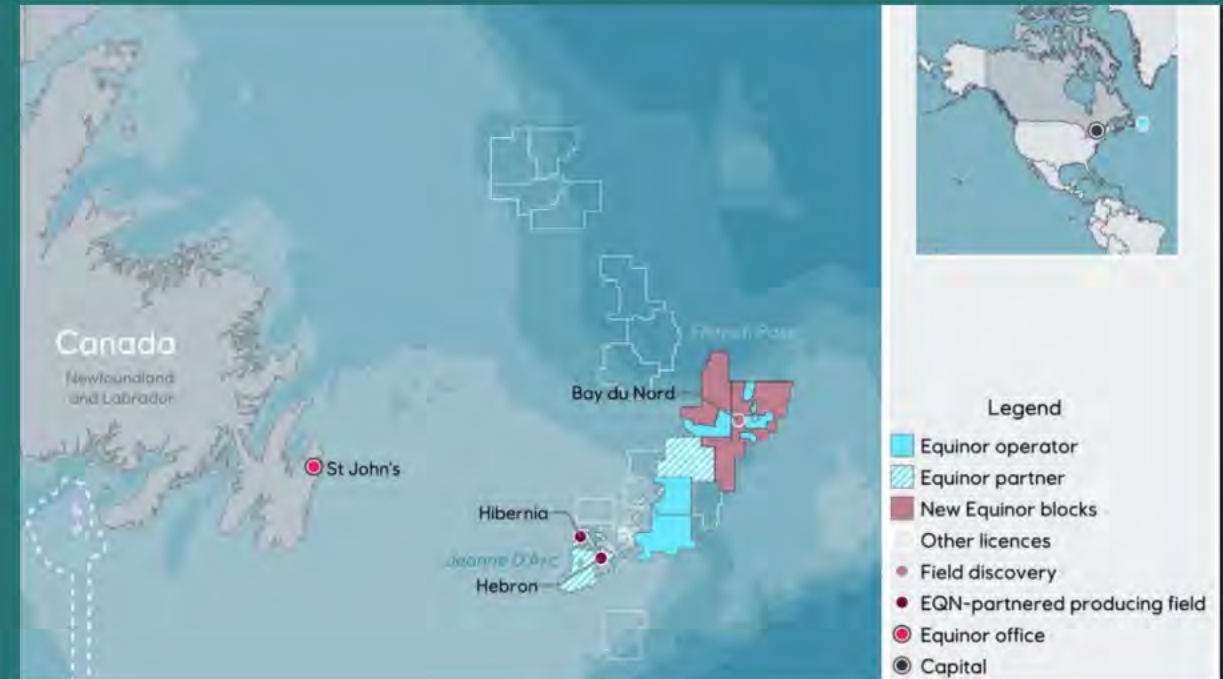
Lesson 9: There are relatively broad areas of consensus around ...

- Climate change is happening, is a substantial risk & requires a response.
- Support for renewables development & idea that climate action can be supportive of economic growth (e.g., green growth orientation).
- Important role for provincial governments in climate action.

Stoddart & Yang (2023). What are the roles of regional and local climate governance discourse and actors? Mediated climate change policy networks in Atlantic Canada. *Review of Policy Research*, 40(6), 1144-1168.

Lesson 10: There are also areas of less consensus/more conflict ...

- Carbon tax.
- Limiting oil exploration & extraction.



Stoddart & Yang (2023). What are the roles of regional and local climate governance discourse and actors? Mediated climate change policy networks in Atlantic Canada. *Review of Policy Research*, 40(6), 1144-1168.

Conclusion: Implications

Research-based lessons on climate communication from COMPON & FOCI research experience can inform climate communication & action.

How so?

Emphasizing consensual climate beliefs & policy actions are a foundation for social buy-in & advocacy coalitions around climate action.

- Climate change is real, serious, & requires action.
- Renewables transition.
- Green growth orientation: economic-environmental co-benefits, not opposition.

Advancing less consensual - **but still important** - climate policy orientations requires different strategies:

- Growing advocacy coalitions & partnerships - brokerage & making allies.
- Acknowledging & addressing the anxieties and barriers to social buy-in & support - especially equity impacts.
 - e.g., Carbon tax/carbon pricing; limiting oil and gas exploration & extraction.

Otherwise, opposition to **specific** climate policy orientations risk being linked to broader politics of climate obstruction or denial.

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