



# Climate of Change 2022 Survey

## Second results webinar and workshop

January 23, 2023

 EcoAnalytics

A project of  
 MakeWay

# Plan for today's presentation

- EcoA Members' survey experiments and questions: assigning responsibility to O&G sector, opportunities/barriers facing sue Big Oil campaign, clean energy transition:
  - Which vision of a cleaner energy system do Canadians support most and why?
  - Which frame works best when holding Big Oil responsible for causing climate change?
  - Which Canadians support suing Big Oil (and why)?
- Your questions following December top-line results webinar
  - Which Canadians are most likely to hold false beliefs?

# Methodology

- Quantitative survey (15 minutes)
- From Nov 25 to Dec 2, 2022
- Sample: 1,860 Canadians
- High-quality online sample, designed to be representative of Canadian population.
- Oversample in smaller provinces, weighted to match population stats
- Online, opt-in panel is non-probability but tracks closely to past telephone surveys

Province (% of pop)	Target	Unweighted n
BC (14%)	200	195
AB (11%)	200	203
SK (3%)	100	101
MB (4%)	100	104
ON (38%)	400	406
QC (24%)	300	302
NB (2%)	175	201
NS (3%)	175	201
NL (1%)	70	106
PE (<1%)	30	40
	1750	1860

# Misinformation

# What we did...

- Knowledge gap?
  - Types of misinformation on climate change in Canada
  - Which types of Canadians hold these views
  - How they may be debunked
- 2022 findings: Canadians are generally good at identifying false information BUT...
  - A non-trivial proportion of people hold views that are patently false, and
  - Many others remain confused and unsure what to think.
- Members asked for a deeper dive into who holds false beliefs

# Misinformation about the energy transition

Q: To the best of your knowledge, how accurate are the claims in each of the following statements?  
(Answer options: Completely false, Mostly false, Mostly true, Completely true)

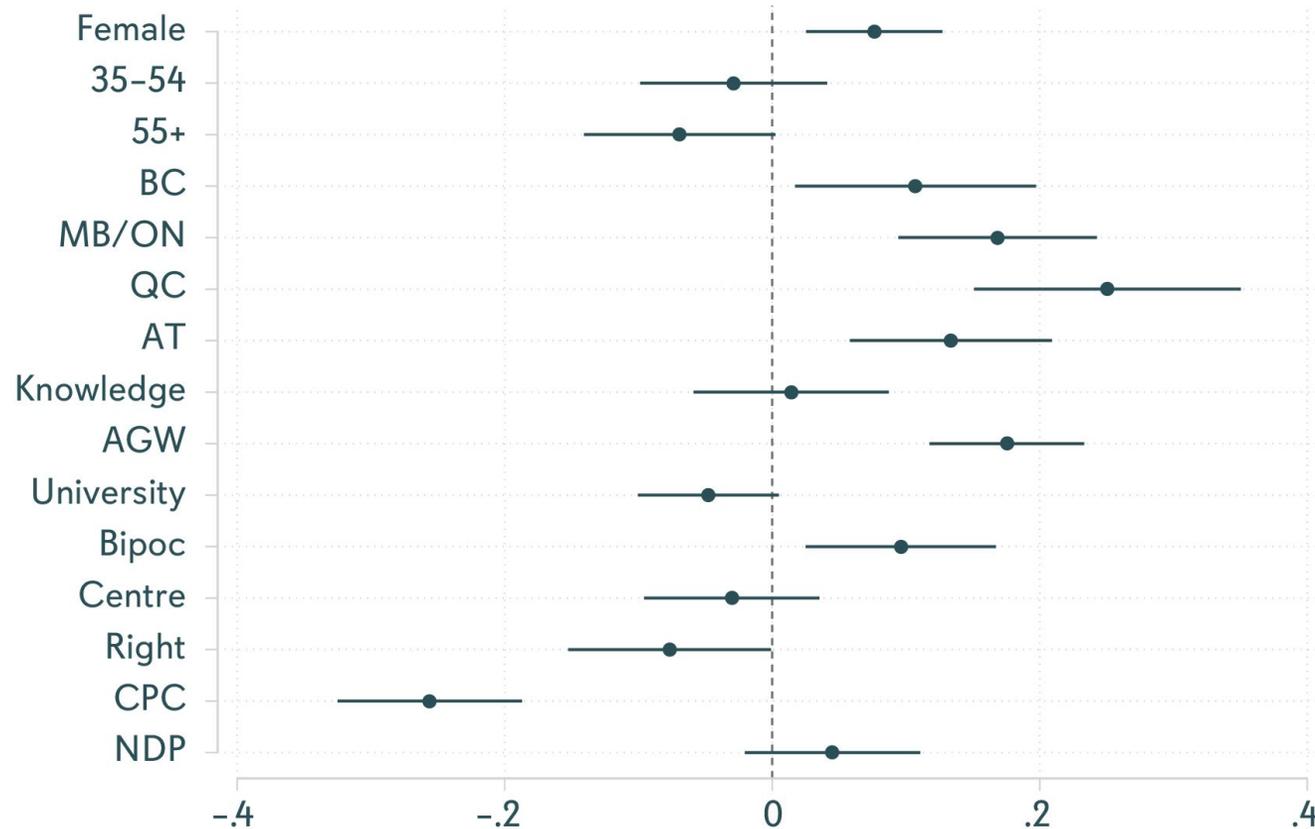
Statement	Correct answer	% Answering correctly
Rising oil and gas prices are a major reason for the surge in cost of living over the past year.	TRUE	78%
Oil companies have hidden evidence of human-caused climate change since the 1970s.	TRUE	55%
If we protect more land through conservation programs the affordability crisis in housing will get worse.	FALSE	44%
Renewable energy prices are more stable and predictable than are prices for oil and gas.	TRUE	42%
We can continue to expand oil and gas production and reach our net zero emissions targets.	FALSE	37%
You cannot power an industrial economy with renewable energy alone.	FALSE	33%
Solar panels emit more greenhouse gases during manufacturing than they end up saving.	FALSE	28%

# Canadians recognize these truths

- *Rising oil and gas prices are a major reason for the surge in the cost of living.*
  - 78% say “mostly” (45%) or “completely” (34%) true.
- *Oil companies have hidden evidence of human caused climate change since the 1970s.*
  - 55% say “mostly” (32%) or “completely” (23%) true.

# Who gets it right?

Relative relationship between respondent characteristics and the likelihood of correctly identifying the statement "Oil companies have hidden evidence of human caused climate change since the 1970s" as true.\*



More likely to get it right:

- Women
- Older cohorts
- ROC vs Prairies
- AGW (believers in human-caused climate change)
- BIPOC
- Left
- LPC

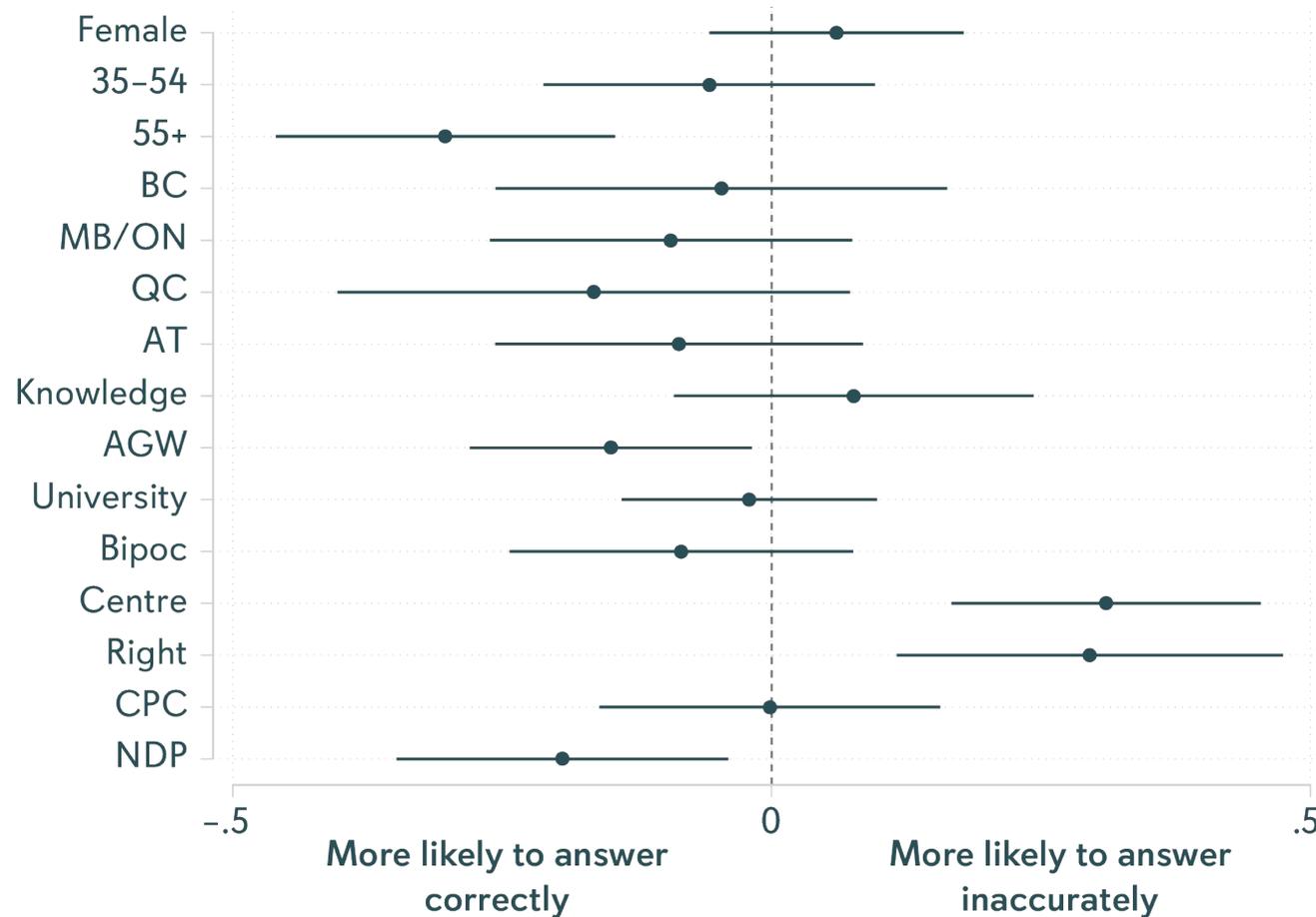
\* Note: The above estimates are relative to different baseline data for reference groups in each category. For example, the female data are relative to those of male respondents; the data for age groups 35-54 and 55+ are relative to those of respondents aged 18-34; and the provincial-regional data are relative to the results for Albertans, etc.

# Many believe these falsehoods, however...

- *You cannot power an industrial economy with renewable energy alone.*
  - 34% say “mostly” (21%) or “completely” (12%) true.
- *We can continue to expand oil and gas production and reach our net zero emissions target.*
  - 33% say “mostly” (23%) or “completely” (10%) true.

# Who gets it wrong?

Relationship between respondent characteristics and the likelihood of inaccurately evaluating the statement "We can continue to expand oil and gas production and reach our net zero emissions targets" as true.



AGW = agreement with anthropogenic global warming (climate change is real and human caused)

\* Note: The above estimates are relative to different baseline data for reference groups in each category.

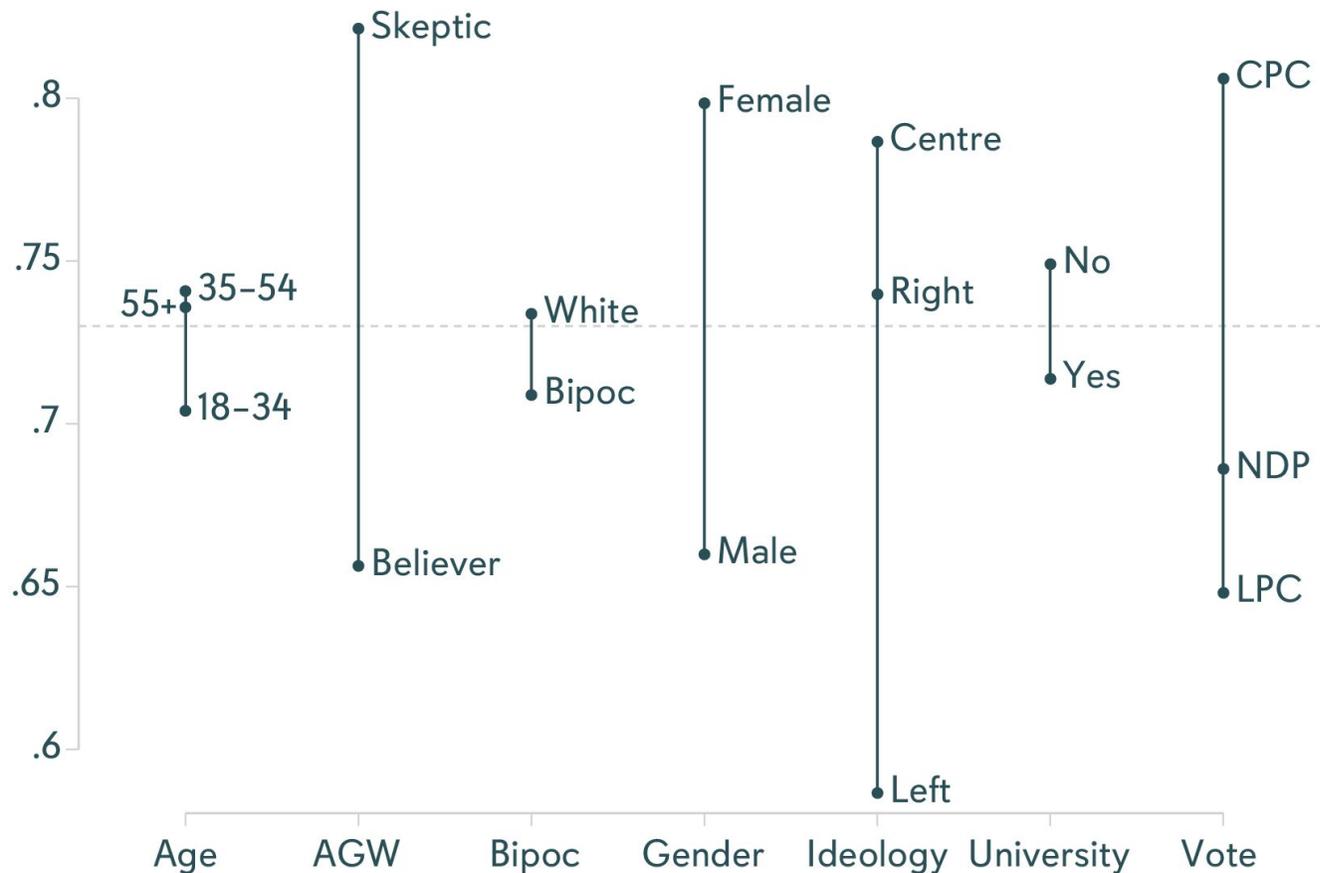
# Many are confused

- *Solar panels emit more GHG during manufacturing than they end up saving.*
  - 23% say “mostly” (17%) or “completely” (6%) true.
  - 49% are unsure what to think
  - Only 28% of Canadians correctly identify this statement as being completely or mostly false.

# Who is confused?

Proportion of respondents unsure about statement:

“Solar panels emit more GHG during manufacturing than they end up saving.”



More likely to say “unsure”:

- Women vs. men
- Self-reported knowledge (high vs. less)
- AGW skeptics (i.e. non-believers in human-caused climate change) vs. believers

# So what?

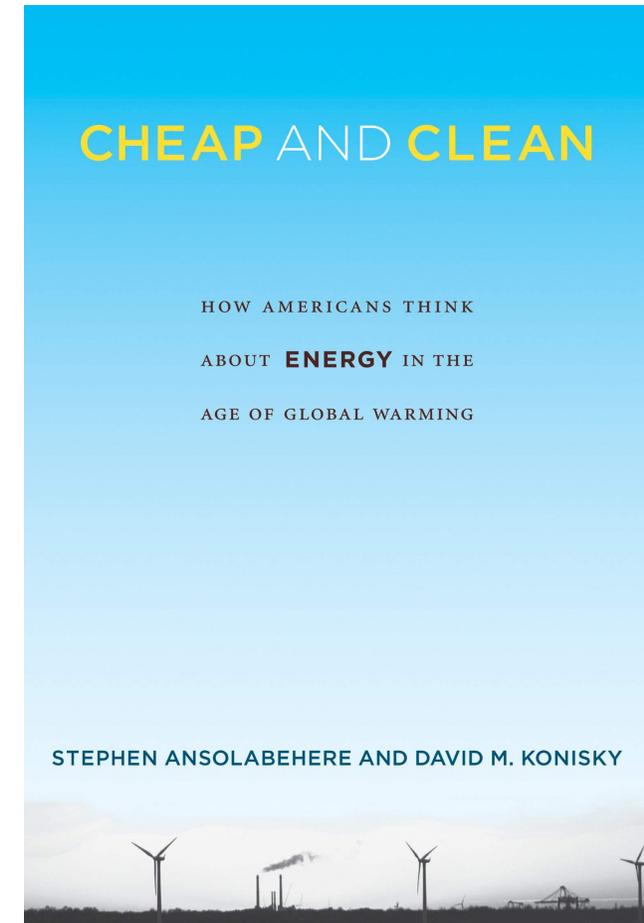
## Why misinformation is important

- False beliefs are a symptom of a contaminated communication environment
  - A barrier to broad collective action on climate change
- Unsure beliefs are indicative of soft, malleable opinions
  - People holding these may potentially be swayed to false beliefs
  - But they may also be moved toward views promoting more climate action
  - The Moveable Middle?
- This kind of confusion, and the misinformation that feeds it, is a vulnerability for the social acceptability of a clean energy transition.
  - Support for RE in Canada is high, but if a statement questioning the environmental effectiveness of clean energy technology generates so much uncertainty, how deep is it?
  - As groups with expertise, ENGOS have a role to play in correcting misperceptions, but more research is required into how (see literature on correcting misperceptions, SSHRC project.)

# Energy transition

# What we know...

- People generally like energy that is “cheap” and “clean” (Ansolabehere & Konisky 2016)
- Canadians like renewable energy (with some caveats) and this may be related to beliefs about relative costs (Comeau/Conservation Council of New Brunswick)
- Two out of three Canadians believe RE is now more affordable than fossil-fuel energy (Abacus/Clean Energy Canada)
- Unclear how the inclusion or exclusion of nuclear in the transition mix of energy sources affects support (Impact Innovation Unit wave 5)



# What we did:

## Testing two visions of the energy transition

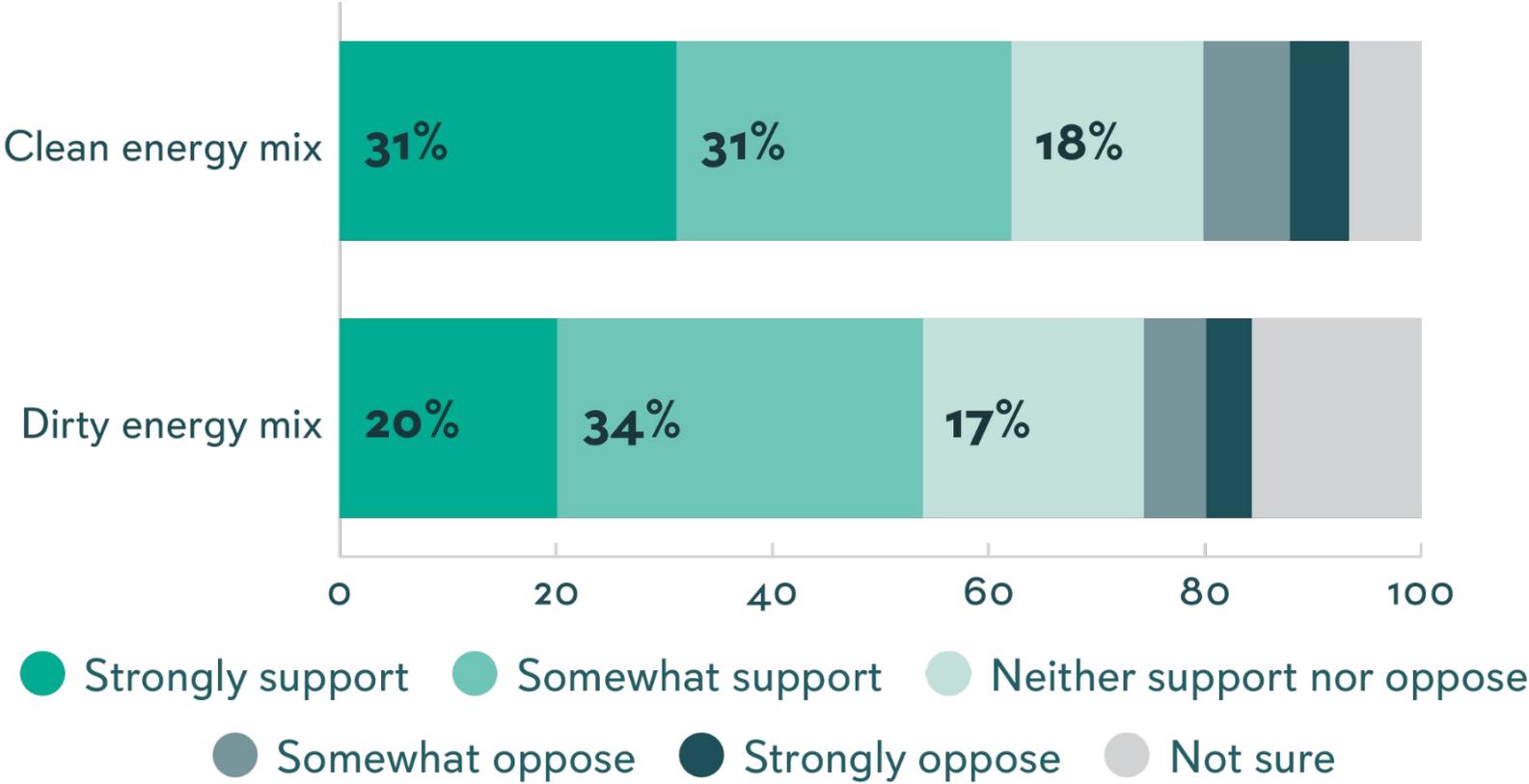
- Governments and utilities in Canada need to make decisions over how to supply growing electricity demand while lowering emissions. One option is to invest heavily in electricity technologies...
  - **Version A:** ...like wind, solar and hydro with storage options ensuring a reliable transition to a 100% renewable electricity system by 2035.
  - **Version B:** ...like small nuclear reactors and fossil fuels like natural gas, along with some renewable energy to ensure a reliable transition to an electricity system with fewer emissions by 2035.
- Experimental design limits bias and allows us to identify causes (how difference in support is caused by inclusion or exclusion of different energy sources)

# Six survey questions following randomization

- To what extent do you think the energy transition will...
  - Increase/Decrease energy affordability
  - Benefit/Harm the environment
  - Increase/Decrease energy security and reliability
  - Succeed/Fail to happen
- In your opinion, will... transitioning to a 100% renewable electricity system [relying on more nuclear and fossil fuels] ...by 2035 make Canada's economy stronger, weaker, or have no impact on the Canadian economy?
- How strongly do you support or oppose investing heavily in electricity technologies like... wind, solar and hydro with storage options ensuring [small nuclear reactors and fossil fuels like natural gas, along with some renewable energy to ensure] ...a reliable transition to a 100% renewable electricity system by 2035?

# More support for transition to 100% clean energy

Support for energy transition, by question framing



# Little difference in expected impacts on economy

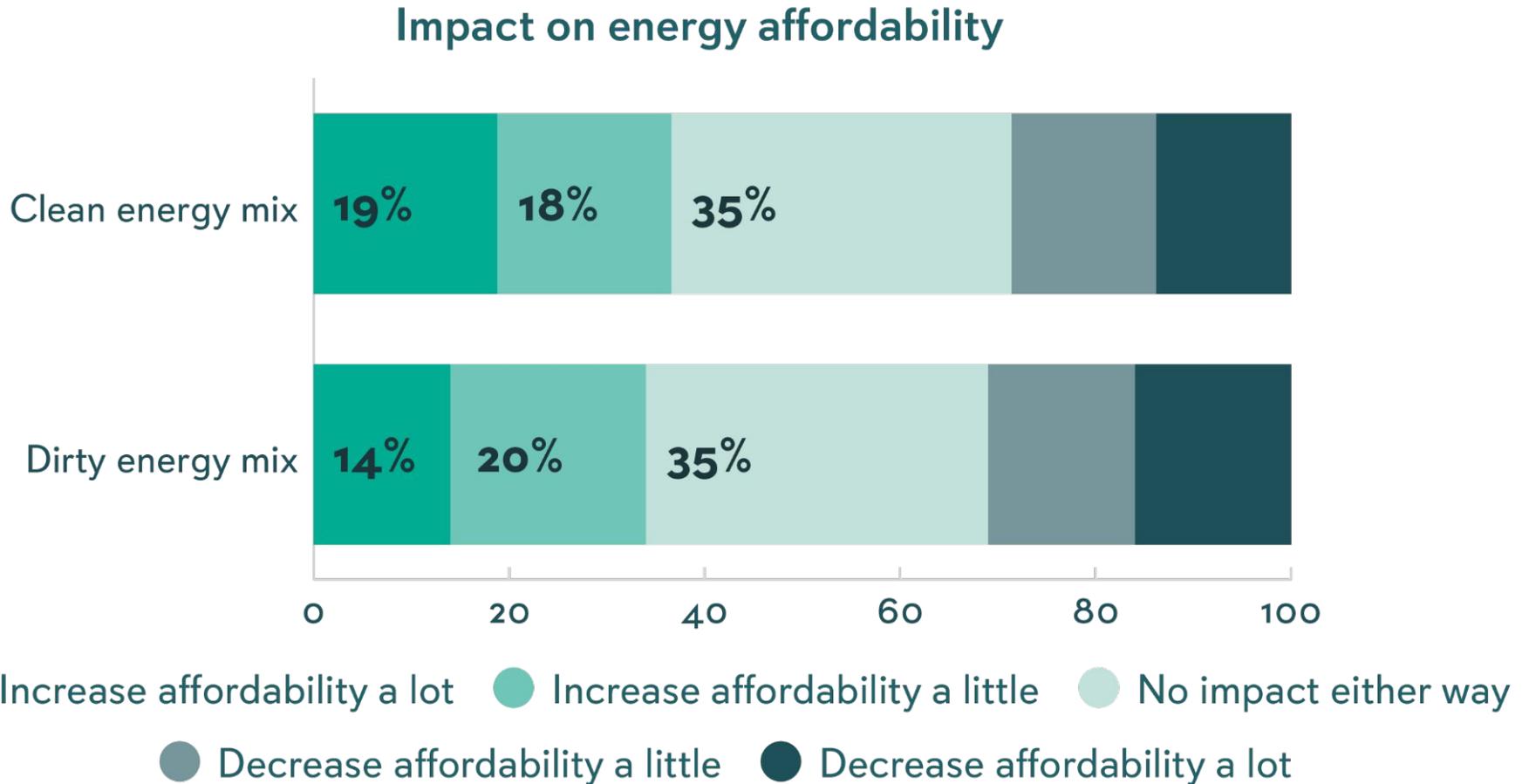
In your opinion, will transitioning to a 100% renewable electricity system [...relying on more nuclear and fossil fuels] by 2035 make Canada's economy stronger, weaker, or have no impact on the Canadian economy?

Impact on the Canadian economy, by question framing



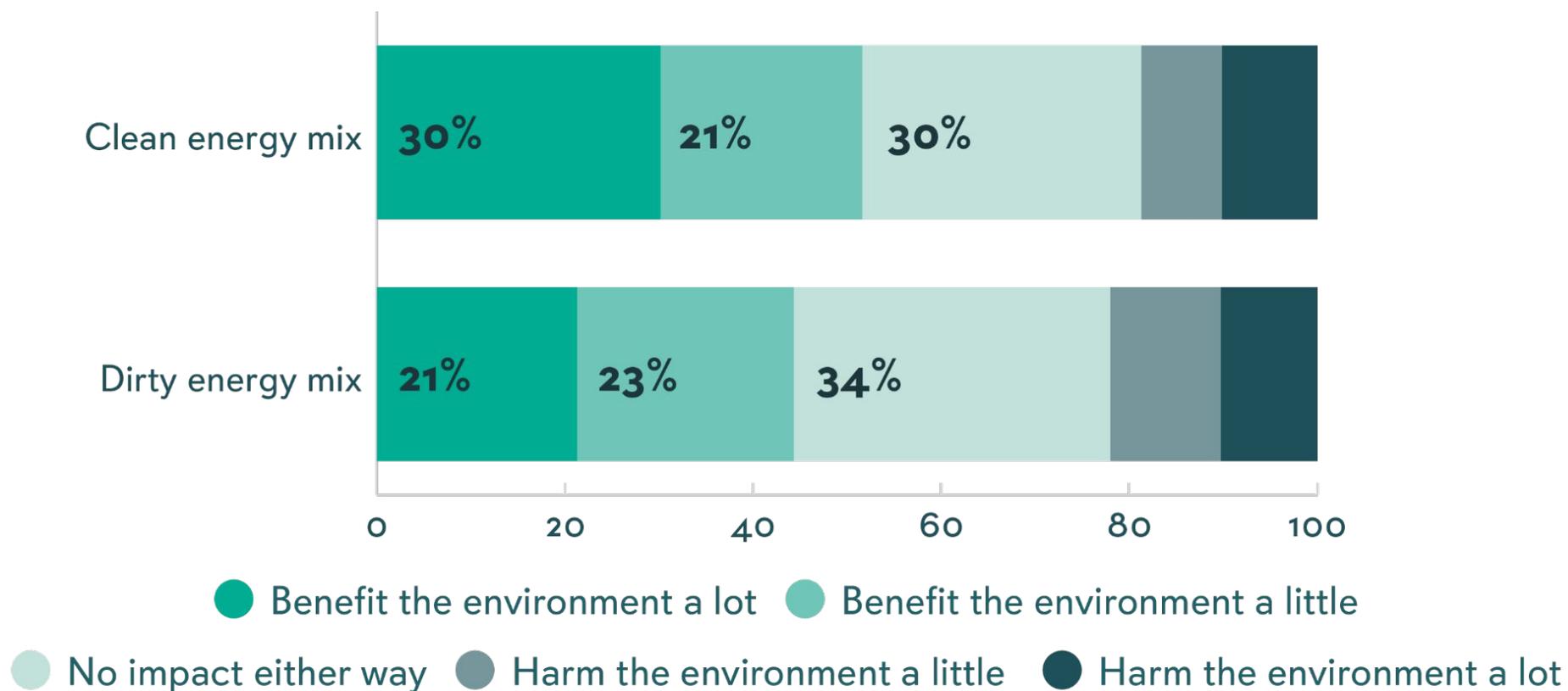
- Strengthen the economy a lot
- Strengthen the economy a little
- No impact
- Weaken the economy a little
- Weaken the economy a lot
- Not sure

# Clean transition is more likely to be perceived as affordable



# More think clean transition is better for environment

Impact on the environment, by question framing

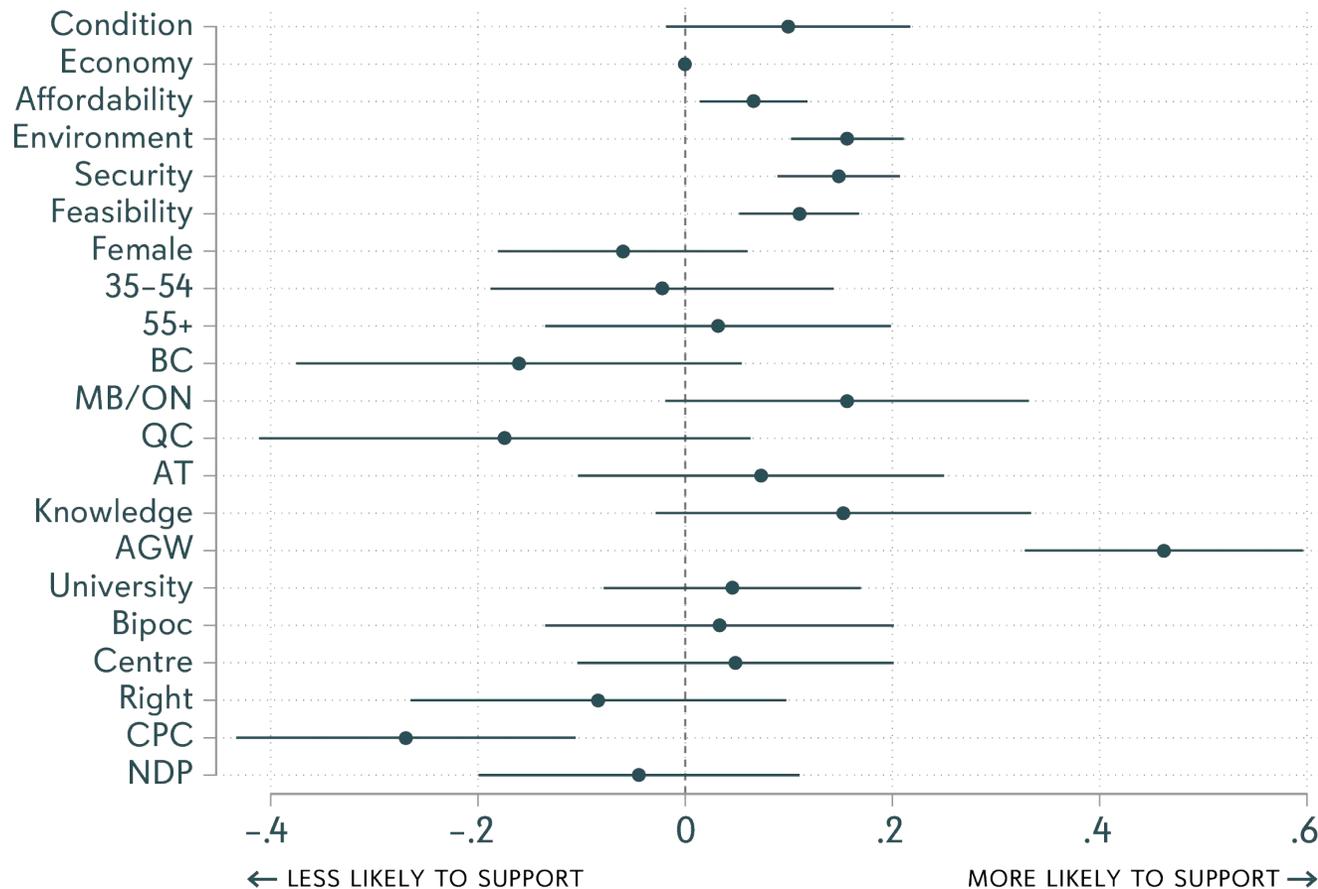


# Clean transition is NOT considered more secure or more feasible than a transition to dirtier mix



# Who supports the energy transition?

Probability of supporting transition to 100% clean energy based on frames and demographic characteristics



More support among:

- AGW believers
- LPC (relative to CPC)
- No diff between LPC and NDP

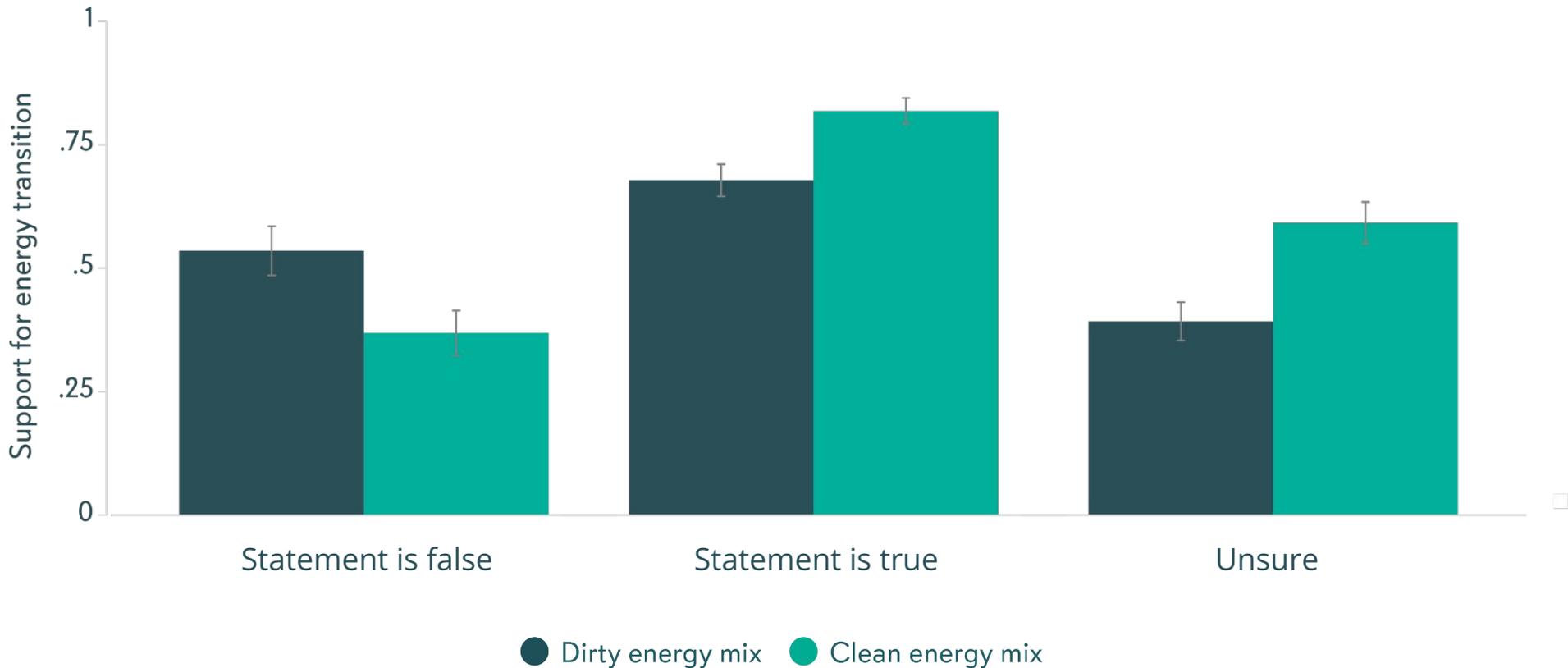
More likely to support when seen as:

- Affordable
- Environmentally beneficial
- Enhancing reliability
- Feasible

\* Note: The above estimates are relative to different baseline data for reference groups in each category.

# A 100% clean energy transition is preferred even among those “unsure” about relative stability of RE prices

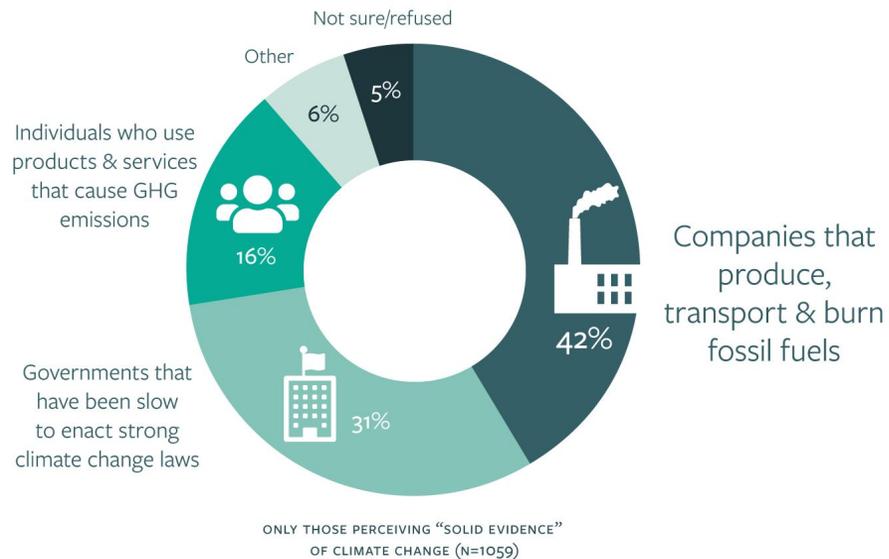
*Renewable energy prices are more stable and predictable than are prices for oil and gas*



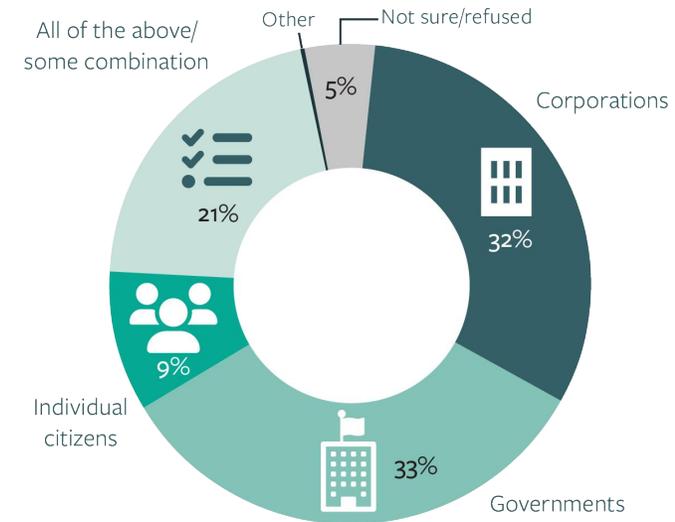
# Assigning responsibility to oil & gas industry

# We know... most Canadians do not hold oil & gas industry solely responsible for climate change

Thinking about the human causes of climate change, who or what group would you say is primarily responsible?



In your opinion, who or which group should be primarily responsible for paying the financial costs associated with climate change?



Source: 2017 Climate of Change Survey

# What we did...

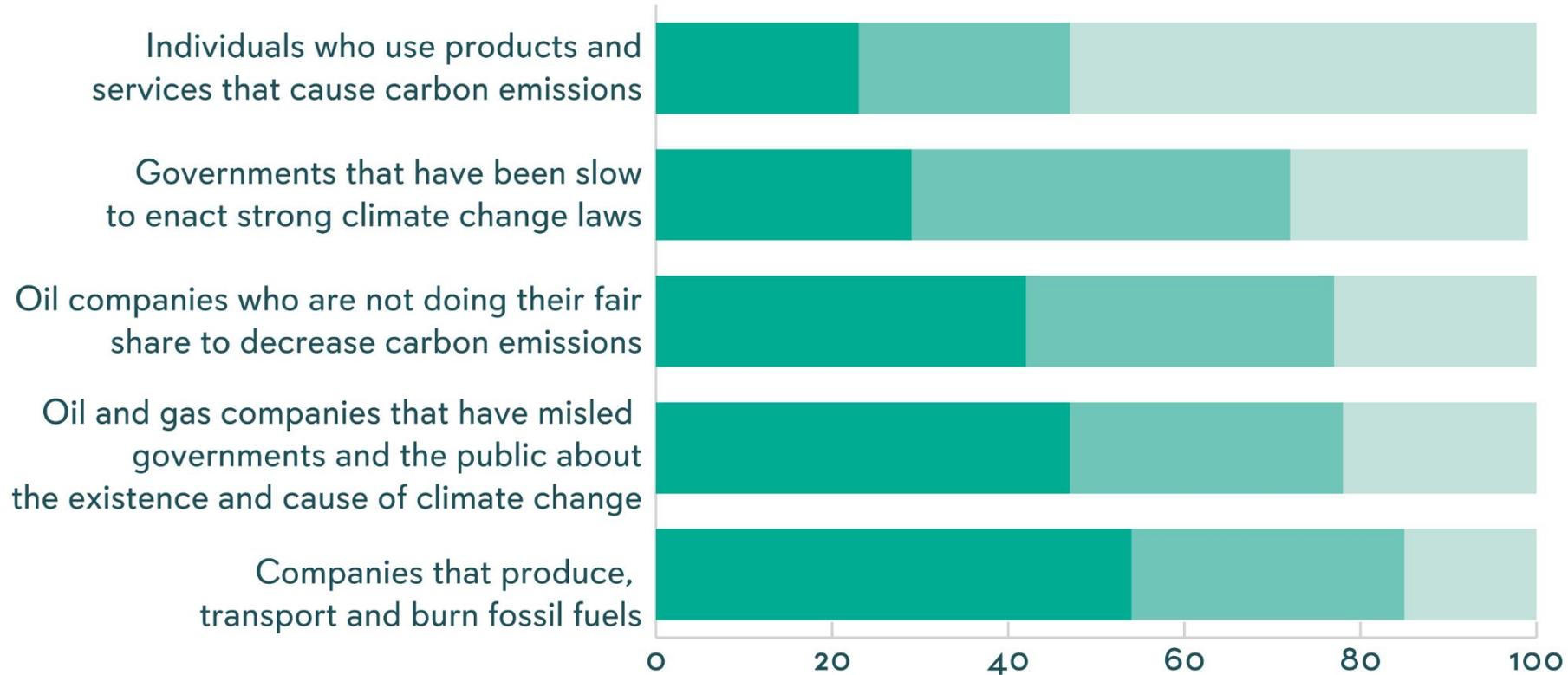
## Two experiments to test ways of assigning blame to oil & gas

- In September, EcoA Members discussed challenging the fossil fuel industry as a strategic priority
- How best to assign responsibility to oil and gas industry and erode its social license?
  - Responsibility for what?
- Two experiments manipulating three ways of approaching oil and gas responsibility:
  - Producing, transporting and burning fossil fuels (cause)
  - Not doing their fair share to decrease carbon emissions (solution)
  - Misleading governments and the public about climate change (misinformation)

# Experiment 1: Ranking

Thinking about the human causes of climate change, who or what group would you say is primarily responsible for causing climate change? Please rank the groups from most (1) to least (3) responsible.

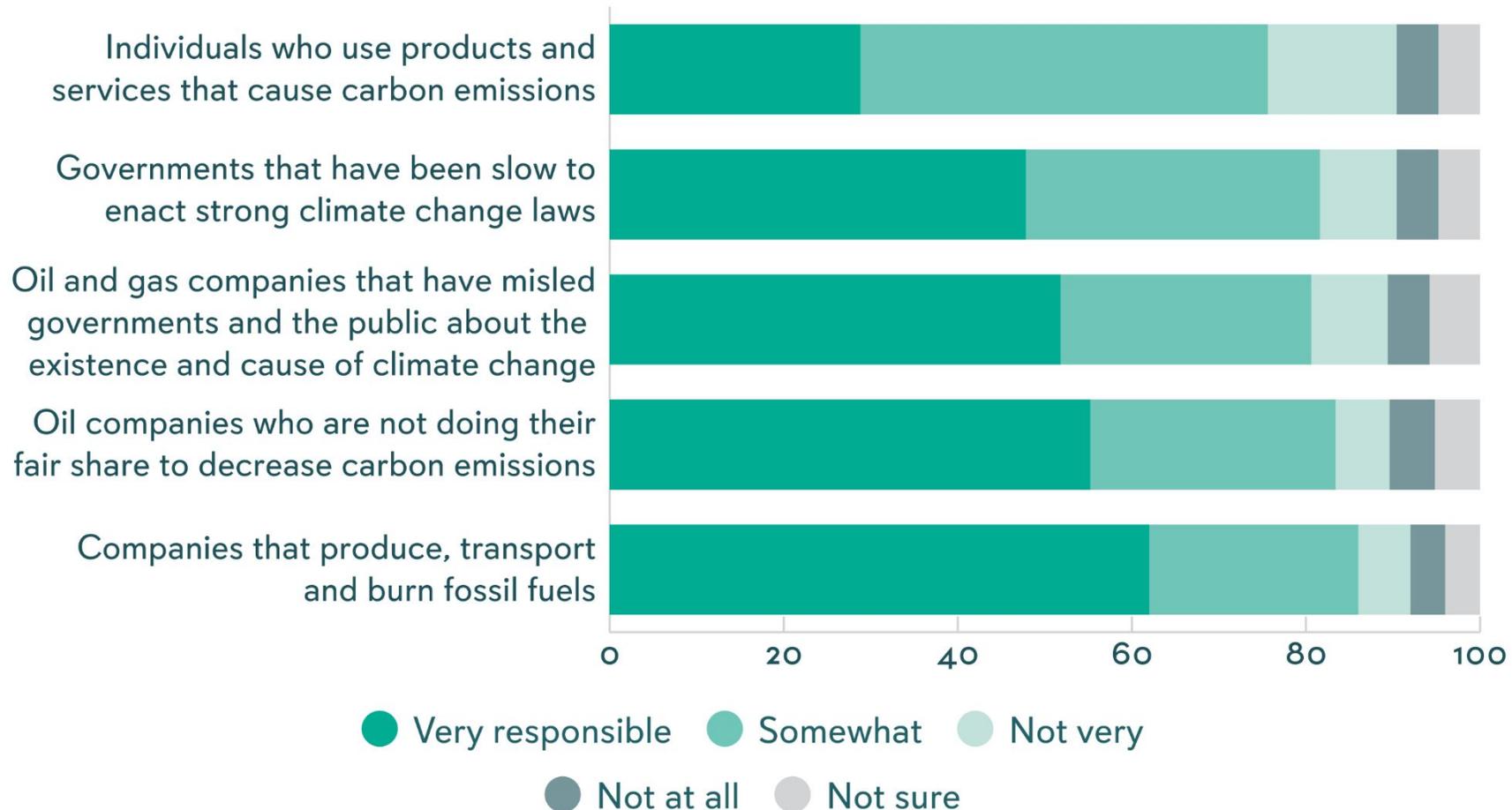
Question frames we tested



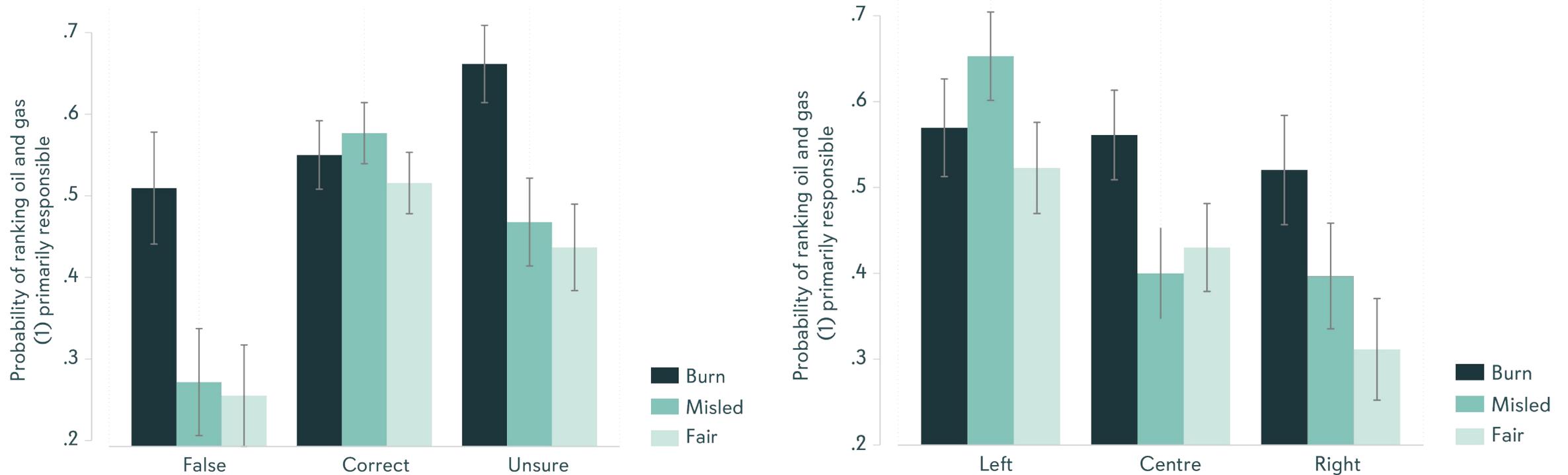
# Experiment 2: Rating

How responsible would you say each group is for causing climate change?

Question frames we tested



# More confrontational language (e.g. “they lied/misled”) resonates *less* with some audiences



*Oil companies have hidden evidence of human-caused climate change since the 1970s*

*Ideology*

# Takeaways on responsibility of oil and gas industry

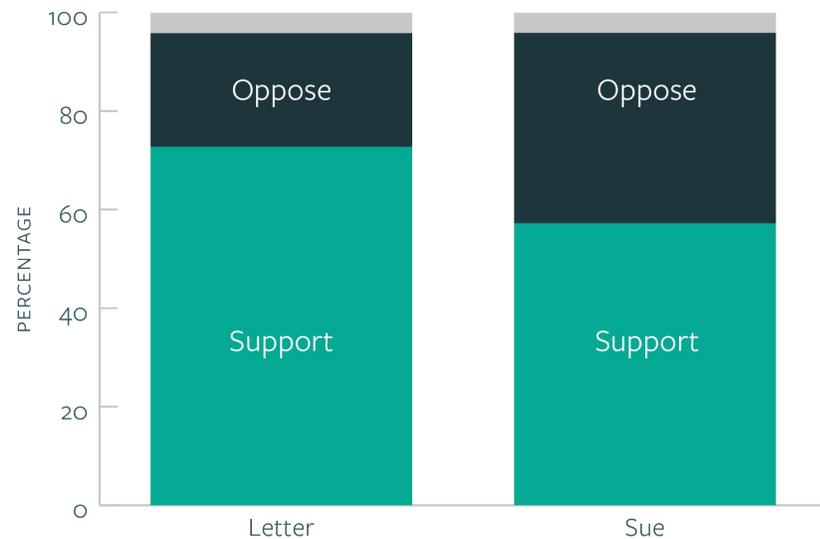
- There is a general resistance to placing blame squarely on oil and gas
  - Some of the language tested exacerbates this general resistance (e.g. they lied!)
    - Especially when people are unsure of or reject the notion that big oil intentionally misled governments and the public (45% of Canadians)
- “Boys will be boys”
  - More loaded language pushes some groups to blame government
  - Relative to “produce, transport and burn” condition, probability of ranking government as primarily responsible (1) increases by 10 pp under “Oil and gas not doing their fair share” condition
- Less confrontational language is safer bet among some audiences
  - Significantly increases blame assigned to oil and gas industry for causing climate change overall
  - Particularly among political moderates, conservatives and residents of Atlantic Canada
  - Also better when speaking to people who reject or are unsure about oil and gas companies spreading false information
  - Only instance where alternative blame frame works better is among the left (they respond positively to frame about oil companies lying about climate change)

# Sue Big Oil

# What we know...

## Substantial support for suing oil & gas

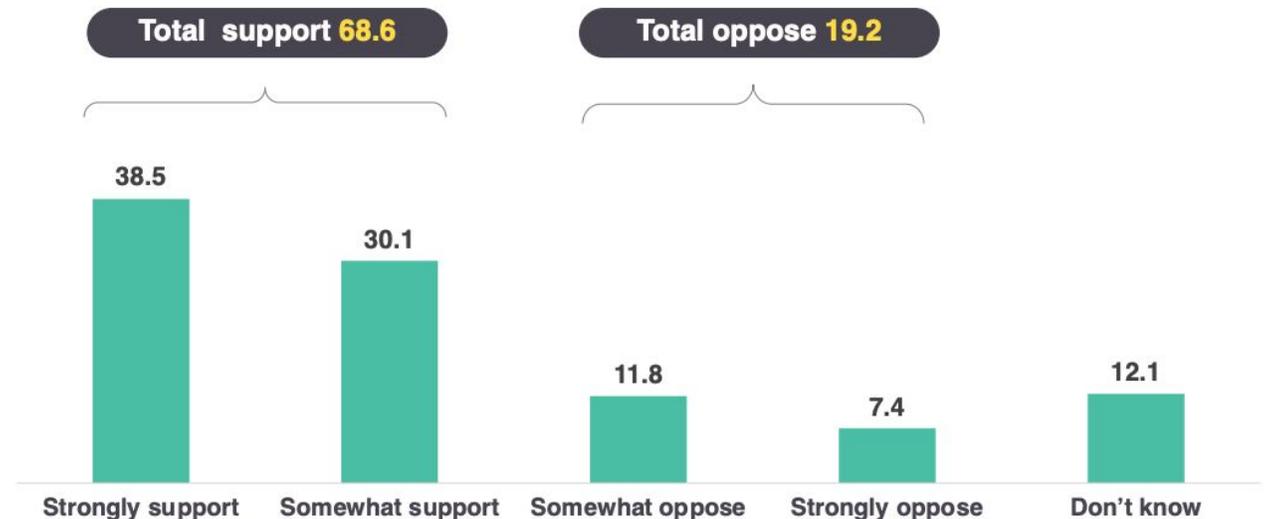
Would you support or oppose the government ... sending a legal letter to [suing] fossil fuels companies demanding they [...to make them pay...] a share of the local financial costs of climate change?



● Not sure/refused

Source: 2017 Climate of Change Survey

**Local governments in BC should work together to sue the world's most polluting oil companies to make them pay for a share of climate change costs**



STRATCOM

**Q2. Some people say that instead of local communities and taxpayers paying all of the increasing costs of climate change, local governments in BC should work together to sue the world's most polluting oil companies to make them pay for a share of these costs. Do you support or oppose this idea?**

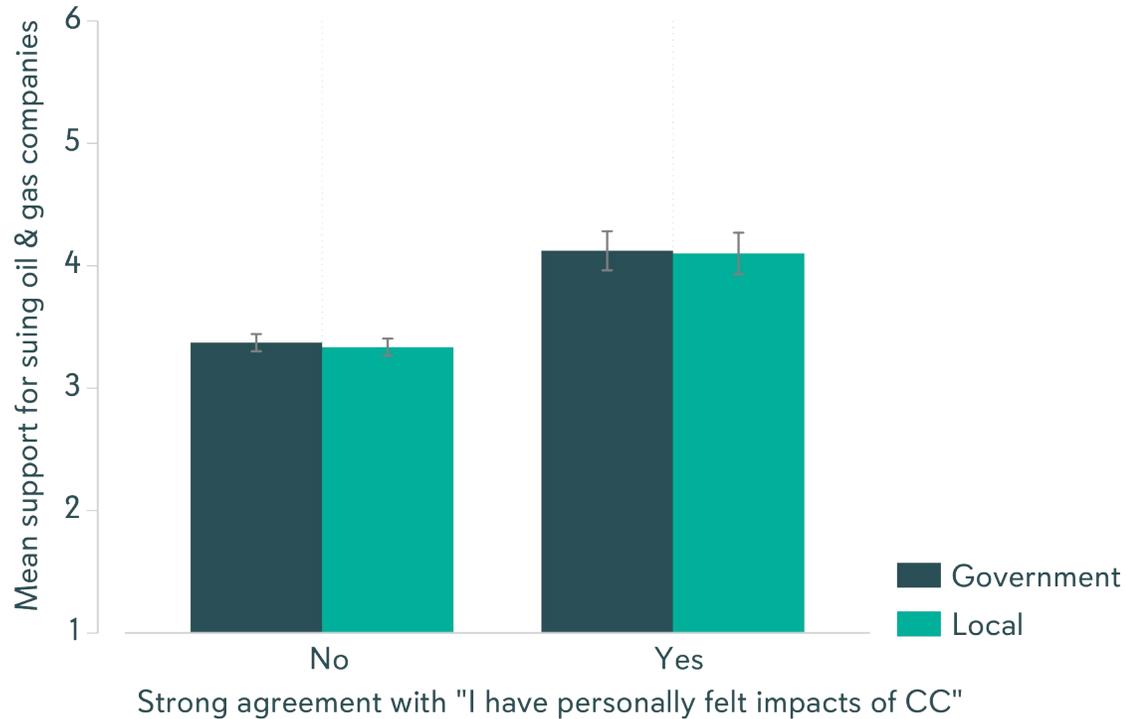
# What we did...

## One (A/B) experiment and two questions

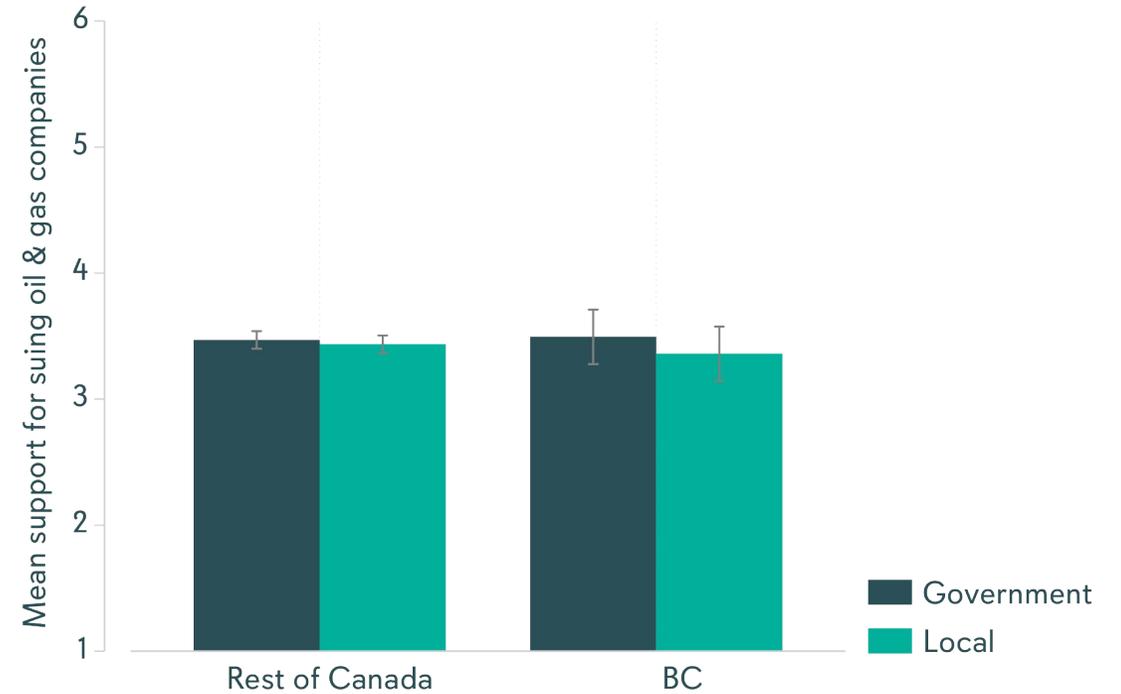
- To what extent do you support or oppose... the government [local governments] suing oil and gas companies to make them pay a share of the... costs [local costs] of climate change impacts?
  - Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly support (5) with option for "Not sure"
  - Support for suing oil and gas does not vary by question wording (support for all levels of government)
  - Overall, 50% support (24% strongly); 20% oppose (11% strongly); 21% neither; 9% unsure what to think
- In a few sentences, please explain why you support [oppose]... the government [local governments] suing oil and gas companies for damages caused by climate change?
  - Open ended (covered in later slide)

# Experience of climate impacts boosts support for suing oil and gas

## Respondents equally supportive of legal action by all levels of government

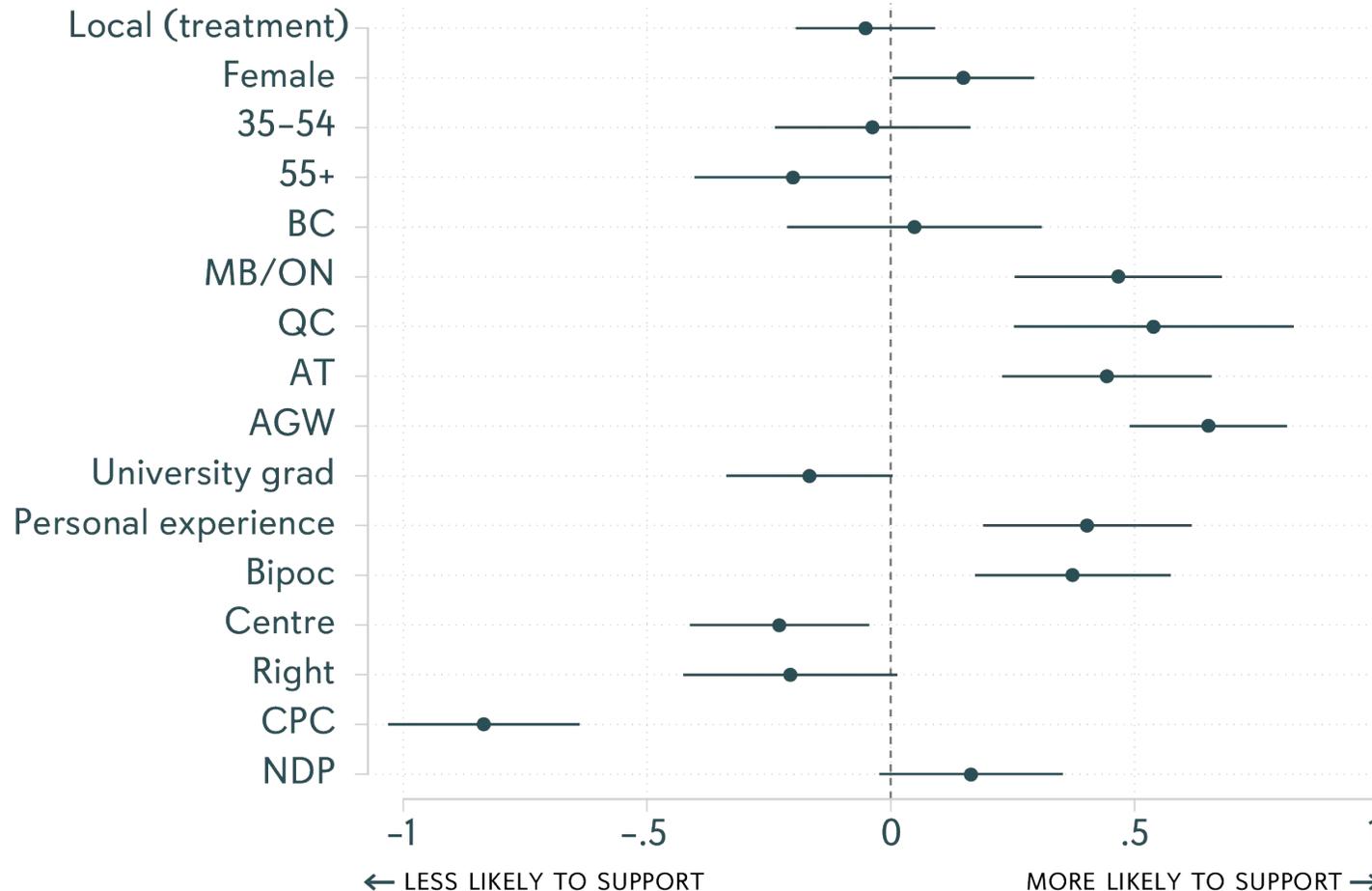


Experience with climate change impacts



Resident of BC vs. ROC

# Who supports suing Big Oil?



## More support for SBO:

- Central and Eastern Canada vs. West
- BC no different than AB
- Personal experience vs. none
- BIPOC vs. white

## Less support for SBO:

- Political moderates vs. Left
- Conservatives vs. left

\* Note: The above estimates are relative to different baseline data for reference groups in each category.

# Reasons given for support and opposition

- Most frequently given reasons to support suing Big Oil (50% of respondents overall)
  - High profits / Profit-driven / Wealthy companies (22% overall; 23% in BC)
  - They need to pay for the damage caused/pay for their mistakes (18%; 23% in BC)
  - They're responsible to contribute to green energy solutions/fight CC (13% overall; 20% in BC but less prominent in local government frame)
  - As polluters, they caused harm to the environment (14% overall; 18% in BC but less prominent in local government frame)
  - Noticeably absent - they have spent money denying/downplaying climate change (2-5% depending on question framing)
- Most frequently given reasons to oppose suing Big Oil (20% of respondents overall)
  - They are not solely responsible/Governments allowed them in first place (19% overall; up to 25% in BC)
  - Would harm the economy (loss of jobs, tax income, economic freedom) (19% overall, up to 26% in BC)
  - It's the wrong approach (e.g. negotiation, legislation, etc.) (10% overall; up to 22% in BC)
  - Up to 22% of opponents in BC say there is no anthropogenic climate change

# Breakout Group Guiding Questions

## 1/ Tackling misinformation

- Is misinformation affecting your work? Which subjects are most problematic? How is it affecting your comms?
- How/where is this misinformation mostly coming from?
- What are the specific knowledge barriers you are addressing in your energy/oil/conservation campaigns?
- Is there a difference in how you tackle misinformation and information gaps?

## 2/ Clean energy transition

- What messages and frames are having success in terms of *affordability/feasibility/reliability*? Who are they working with?
- How are you targeting and framing affordability messaging for which affordability means different things to different people?
- How do you apply this differently at the municipal, provincial and federal level?

## 3/ Responsibility and blame

- Blame is not squarely on big oil, how does this affect our communication campaigns against big oil?
- How does it affect those campaigns aimed at government?
- To what extent have your organizations seen or experimented with the “Oil companies have misled Canadians” frame? Is it something you were thinking of doing or no? What challenges/opportunities do you see for this frame?
- What is the significance of personal culpability in the problem? Is this an opportunity or a challenge?
- What do you think resonates best for your campaigns: the damage, the lies or not doing their fair share to clean up?

## 4/Open-ended discussion

- Other related topics of interest

# Questions?

