Key EcoA Research Summary, 2023

[Environmental policy and efficacy: Communications strategies](#) (May 2023)

Goal: better understand Canadians' support for three key federal government policy initiatives: a cap on carbon emissions from the oil-and-gas sector (emissions cap), biodiversity conservation targets and a national clean electricity grid.
Format: Quantitative: 15-min online national survey, April 13-26, 2023, N=2,294
Researcher: Environics

Key Survey Findings
- Simple, optimistic messaging in all areas seem to perform better
- No clear winning message in any policy area for all audiences
- Three clear segments emerge with distinct message frames that resonate best with them
  - Rational change-makers: usually make up most of current ENGO audiences
    - Current narratives are working pretty well for these people
  - High-energy hedonists: want to know what it means for them, personally
    - Messaging about personal benefits and FOMO resonate better
  - Community driven conformists: want to know community/economic implications
    - Messaging that highlights economic security and community benefits resonate
- Emissions cap top frames (for building support for policies across all segments)
  - Better future
  - Right thing to do
- Clean electricity top frames (for building support for policies across all segments)
  - World leader
  - Quality of life
  - Affordability
  - Less energy poverty
- Biodiversity top frames (for building support for policies across all segments: what respondents would want to know about a potential area to be protected)
  - Animal and plant species to be protected
  - Benefits to their health/health of family members
  - Access to green space in the protected area
  - What threats the area needs to be protected from
  - How the protected area absorbs/stores carbon to reduce climate change

Note: this was the second of two studies we did on policy and efficacy. For details on the first *qualitative* round (September 2022) see this [summary.](#)

[Environmental justice/racism exploratory research](#) (Fall 2023)

*Goal***:** This first round of customized research aimed to better grasp what Canadians understand and think about the concepts of environmental racism and justice. Environmental NGOs felt this would help them improve communications on these topics. The study also sought to learn more about perspectives on these issues among Canadians who identify as black or people of colour (POC).
*Format***:** Eight focus groups—four with Canadians who identified as black or POC, including four in-person (Vancouver and Toronto), and four online (Quebec, and Atlantic provinces)
*Researcher***:** Environics

Key findings:
- **Environmental vulnerability is tied to socioeconomic factors (more than racial identity)**
  - The concept of unequal impacts and environmental vulnerability makes sense to Canadians, but they link it mainly to socioeconomic status (low incomes) rather than race. Other vulnerable groups mentioned were remote/rural households, the elderly, those with medical issues, Indigenous communities, homeless people, refugees and single parents.
- **Environmental justice connects; environmental racism divides**
  - The frame "environmental racism" does not resonate well because of the tendency to think of racism at the individual rather than the systemic level. "Environmental justice" resonates more because it is solutions-oriented and linked to holding our institutions (justice system, governments, corporations) accountable.
  - Participants felt environmental racism might apply however to Indigenous people and beyond Canada's borders, globally
- **People attuned to social justice concerns were most accepting of the concepts**
  - Reactions ranged from positive to negative among both BPOC and non-BPOC, suggesting their views are not solely influenced by race/ethnicity.
- **Need to amplify affected parties**
  - Build understanding through direct, empathetic and inclusive messages and give those directly affected the opportunity and means to have their say.
- Most BPOC participants did not see themselves being differently impacted due to their racial identity.
- Barriers to the use of environmental racism include misconceptions:
  - Role of intent: it's not about race it's coincidental
  - Role of diversity: it doesn't affect all racialized Canadians
  - Role of inclusivity: exclusion of non-BIPOC people facing these issues

CA-MAP National Climate of Change Segmentation Survey (Fall 2023)

The CA-MAP results were presented in three stages: a [National segmentation](#), Regional segmentation and Specific segmentation

Goal: Values-based segmentation focused on middle- and working-class Canadians to improve understanding of Canadian population at national and regional levels, identify value predispositions across segments and develop messages and messengers to test in focus groups, identify patterns

that emerge across regions, develop short battery of questions for segmentation in future research and members' campaigns and aid in get out the vote campaigns for coming elections.

Format: online, with a sample of 6,142, at least 1,000 each from BC, AB, SK/MB, ON, QC and Atlantic provinces. Researchers had an *education quota* to ensure they recruited a large sample from among middle- and working-class Canadians (1,175 with high school or less; 1,135 with some college; 1,387 with college or technical degree)

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Key Findings (National Segmentation)

The five segments revealed by the survey and their *most likely* characteristics are:

Progressive activists (15% of respondents)

- Younger, female, university educated, higher income, urban, politically engaged, environmentally conscious, egalitarian
- Concerned about health, climate, inflation, social justice, hate/misinformation
- Federally, vote New Democratic Party followed by Liberal Party of Canada; or vote strategically
- Frames to try: fairness, equity, systems change, challenging the status quo

Civic nationals (21%)

- Mostly in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic provinces
- Older, female, lower incomes and high-school education, community-minded and value service to others, enjoy outdoor activities
- Concerned about affordability/inflation, health, hate/misinformation, climate change/extreme weather, high immigration levels
- Egalitarian and nativist (prefer established Canadians over newer immigrants)
- Politically centrist, but low opinion of all parties
- Frames to try: community values, need for strong leadership, damage done by unregulated markets, accountability for corporations that break the rules

Centrist liberals (20%)

- Equally likely to be male or female, more likely to live in Quebec
- Lower income, progressive, optimistic, solutions-oriented, less likely than PAs to want to disrupt the economic system
- Concerns: health, inflation, civil liberties, discrimination and inequality, hate and misinformation online, climate change
- Politically, slightly left of centre, favour free markets and immigration, more likely to vote for the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) or the New Democratic Party (NDP)
- Frames to try; stay optimistic, innovation and clean-tech solutions fuelled by free markets and competition. Avoid system change.

Disengaged middle (30%)

- Mostly in Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan
- Gender-balanced, younger, non-white, with high school or technical training, more likely to be

parents

- Concerned about health, inflation, hate/misinformation, conspiracy theories, artificial intelligence.
- Centre-right, less likely than Civic nationals to have authoritarian and nativist opinions, only half would bother to vote, and, if voting, more likely to vote for the Conservative Party of Canada federally or, to much lesser extent, the Liberal Party of Canada.
- Frames to try: talk about lived experience, disproportionate impacts on working-class people, health of future generations, moral obligation to invest in a future for their children.

Fossil fuel conservatives (14%)

- One-in-five live in a rural area, Alberta and Ontario mostly
- More likely to identify as male and white, high-school or college educated, higher income than Disengaged middle, most religious.
- Car-dependent, unsympathetic or actively opposed to environmental protection
- Strong predispositions toward authoritarianism and hierarchism
- Least concerned with climate change, much greater concern about perceived threats posed by cosmopolitan elites (World Economic Forum), socialism and Artificial Intelligence.
- Politically, on the right, vote Conservative federally
- Frame to try (if you wish to engage this hard-to-reach group): Need for strong leadership to *repatriate* Canada's resources and boost Canadian-led mining and manufacturing for 21st-century technologies."