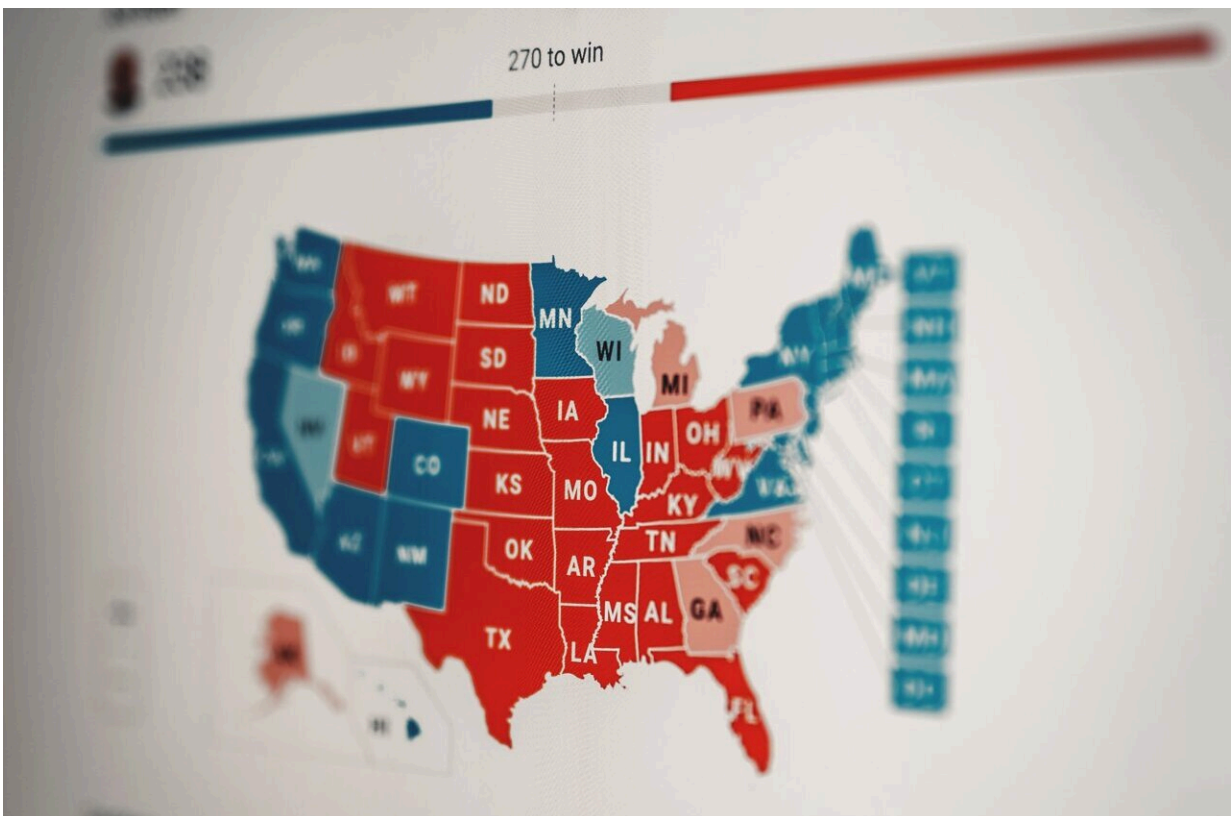


# Climate change belief not split along political divide

December 15 2022, by Pat Whyte

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QUT researchers have found that climate change belief is not uniform in relation to political orientation.

Professor Tan Yigitcanlar from QUT's School of Architecture and Built Environment and City 4.0 Lab his former doctoral student Dr. Md Golam Mortoja—who now works for the Queensland Government's Department of Resources—found that 64 percent of [climate change](#) believing southeast Queensland peri-urban dwellers are made up of people of right and left-wing persuasion.

Professor Yigitcanlar said a survey for their [research paper](#) published in *Land Use Policy* found that on the other hand, [climate](#) change deniers predominantly have right-wing political views and are more likely to be older and relatively less educated.

"Climate change deniers are highly rigid in their denial of '[anthropogenic climate change](#)' which is [environmental changes](#) attributed to [human activity](#)," Professor Yigitcanlar said.

"The survey—conducted in a region experiencing highly destructive impacts of climate change—also found that climate change deniers' views do not generally moderate or change with exposure to climate risk events."

The results are drawn from 659 responses to an April 2021 survey of southeast Queensland peri-urban dwellers (those who live on the outskirts of, or close to major cities) for their study.

"Managers, manufacturers, and [business owners](#) are in fact more skeptical on climate risk beliefs," Professor Yigitcanlar said.

"Climate risk concerns of the 'least concerned/mostly disagreed group' do not influence significantly in guiding their voting decisions."

"Public stances about climate risk knowledge in the case study area are rigid and simply distributed between the two groups—i.e., 'least

concerned/mostly disagreed group' and 'highly concerned/mostly disagreed group'," Professor Yigitcanlar said.

The paper highlights climate change is here, and it is disrupting every country on every continent, and urgent, effective government action is needed to sustain our existence on the planet.

Despite the clear scientific evidence, the paper cites that there are still significant numbers of people who deny the climate change reality.

Dr. Mortoja said it is assumable that concerns about climate change should be dependent upon the level of knowledge someone possesses on the issues that trigger climate risk impacts.

"Thus, a plethora of studies have investigated public perceptions on the climate risk issue," Dr. Mortoja said.

"Against this backdrop, this paper aims to identify distinct groups of respondents based on their level of knowledge concerning climate risk against their [political orientation](#). This in return helps in understanding political bias in forming a climate change belief."

"The findings generated from this study provide [valuable insights](#) to overcome the knowledge gaps between climate risk believers and deniers," Dr. Mortoja said.

The researchers found no significant gender differences in climate change perception.

"But the survey certainly found that climate change believers tend to be younger, highly educated people, who have limited self-motivation for behavior change for climate change mitigation," Dr. Mortoja said.

Further these believers see government policy and action highly inadequate for climate change mitigation.

"The insights generated help in overcoming the knowledge gaps between climate risk believers and deniers, and thereby inform decision-makers in taking adequate measures to address climate risks and develop appropriate land use decisions."

"The recent Federal election results gave hope for positive move towards climate action in Australia," Dr. Mortoja said

However, the political polarization is still a significant issue in Australia, particularly in the context of urban vs. regional Australia according to Dr. Mortoja.

**More information:** Md. Golam Mortoja et al, Understanding political bias in climate change belief: A public perception study from South East Queensland, *Land Use Policy* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106350](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106350)

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

Citation: Climate change belief not split along political divide (2022, December 15) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-12-climate-belief-political.html>

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