Polarization of climate change news is no hoax
12 March 2020, by Jared Wadley

Chinn and colleagues analyzed climate change articles from 11 newspapers nationwide, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and Chicago Tribune, between 1985 and 2017. About 62,000 climate change articles were identified using key terms, such as global warming and greenhouse gas.

To capture politicization, the researchers looked at how often those articles mentioned Republicans, Democrats and scientists. This allowed for a comparison over time between different environmental issues. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were more mentions of scientists than politicians in climate change coverage, but this trend changed in the 2000s as politicians were cited more often.

When it came to polarization, the researchers looked at how the words surrounding mentions of partisan actors in climate change articles changed over time. This revealed that the language associated with mentions of Republicans and Democrats has become more distinct over time. This was important because it offered evidence that partisans increasingly talk about climate change in different ways.

The study, which appears in the journal *Science Communication*, was co-authored by P. Sol Hart, associate professor of communication and media, and environment and sustainability, and Stuart Soroka, professor of communication and media.


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