

The role of news and social pressure in shaping U.S. public opinion on climate change

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Abstract: We explore how news and social pressure affect public opinion on climate change in the USA, based on county-level data over the period 1990–2024. Social pressure turns out to be the key factor that shapes public opinion on climate change, much more so than media. Policies that increase the overall level of educational achievement will create more awareness of climate change, but only if these policies don't change the shape of the education distribution. If only right-wing news is available and republicans have complete control over all media, public opinion about climate in democratic counties will not decrease; in fact, it will increase, although only marginally.

JEL Classification: D72, D83, D91, Q54, C13, C15

Keywords: News coverage, social pressure, demographic diversity, political polarization, dynamics of opinion, climate change, USA

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