Developing Narratives and Explaining Carbon Pricing

Carbon Pricing Communications Training

Session 6

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Learning objectives

- Understand the role of framing, narratives and visual images in communicating carbon pricing

- Get insight on how carbon pricing can be explained to different audiences

- Understand core considerations in designing effective messages

Content

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What is a narrative?

- An explanation that contains identifiable actors, actions, threats, rewards or outcomes.

- Complex narratives also include motivations, and morals grounded in shared values.

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What are keywords (frames)?

- Words (or combinations of words) that embody wider meaning, especially related to values and identity.

- Keywords enable people to quickly evaluate the relevance of an issue to their own worldview.

Margaret Thatcher

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Case study: Canada

2008 - Quebec and British Columbia introduce Carbon Taxes

Case study: Canadian Narrative Design 2011 - 2018

Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Attitudes survey	2011, 2014, 2017 n=1,200
Attitudes survey	2018, n=2250
3 Focus Groups	New Brunswick (English, French)
4 Focus Groups	East, Prairies, Quebec, Atlantic
Narrative testing	Ontario n=850
Narratives surveys	2 x National, n=1200, New Brunswick

Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Overall support for carbon pricing (EcoAnalytics, October 2017)

Level of support	%
Strong support	16%
Moderate support	37%
Moderate opposed	21%
Strongly opposed	24%

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Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Support by rural/urban

Level of support	%	Rural	Urban
Strong support	16%	12	20
Moderate support	37%	34	40
Moderate opposed	21%	21	19
Strongly opposed	24%	30	19

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Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Level of support	%	Western	Prairies	Quebec	Atlantic
Strong support	16%	20	15	16	10
Moderate support	37%	42	33	36	38
Moderate opposed	21%	17	19	22	15
Strongly opposed	24%	18	33	25	33

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Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Support by voting preference (Abacus Data, 2018)

Left	33%	28%	25%	7%	6%
Centre	16%	28%	35%	13%	7%
Right	12%	19%	21%	17%	31%
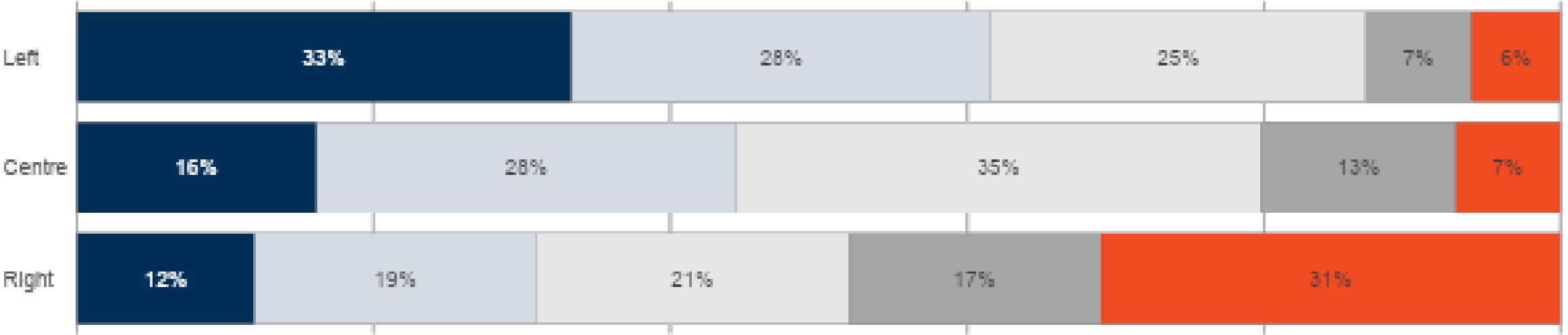
Support carbon pricing ← → Oppose carbon pricing

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Discussion | Audience segmentation refresher

5 minutes

In the Canadian case, what kind of audiences can be identified as:

- Base (support)
- Opposed
- Open
- Disengaged

What would a second phase of qualitative research in Canada look like?

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Exercise | Identify narratives and keywords

10 minutes

On the sheet of quotations taken from Canada focus groups delivered in January 2019, highlight narratives and keywords.

What additional insights do we gain from the focus groups?

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Narrative design

- Identify narratives and keywords from interviews and focus groups
- Develop hypotheses for what might and might not work
- Include existing narratives for comparison
- Design short narratives around different concepts containing selected keywords

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Fair/unfair

" Carbon pricing is a **fair** way to **share** responsibility for the carbon pollution that causes climate change and to **reward** the companies that are most efficient and pollute the least. It's not **fair** that heavy energy users can **dump** their carbon pollution in the air **we all breathe**. Polluters should be held accountable and should pay for the pollution that they force all of us to live with. "

Makes sense

"Carbon pricing **makes sense.** It makes businesses that produce the most pollution pay more. It rewards businesses that are efficient and use energy well by paying less. It is **flexible** and allows businesses to invest in the best solutions at the lowest possible cost. And it unleashes the creativity of business to develop new technologies."

Personal responsibility

" We should all take **personal responsibility** for reducing pollution. We try to do the right thing by recycling or buying environmentally friendly products. A carbon tax is one way to make sure we all show the **same level** of responsibility for reducing the pollution we put into our air. "

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Market failure

" There has been a real **market failure** around carbon pollution. We need to put a price on carbon because this sends **a market signal** to consumers and energy users that they should shift to alternatives. "

Hidden costs

" The **prices we pay** for natural gas and gasoline **do not cover all the costs** we pay for: the flooding from extreme weather, the power outages that make our lives inconvenient, and the heat waves making smog worse and people sick. Putting a price on carbon is a way to make sure that these forms of energy reflect their **real costs**. "

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Put Canada first

" Canada is part of a **global transition**, building a low-polluting energy system to fuel our economy. This provides an **opportunity** for us. With a strong cap and trade system in place, Canadian businesses can gain experience and **market advantage** in less polluting technologies. Acting now puts Canada ahead. "

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Discussion | Narrative design

10 minutes

Discuss which of these narratives you think performed best given the research

Place these narratives in a rank with the most successful one at the top

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The "optimal" narrative

" Carbon pricing is a **fair** way to **share** responsibility for the carbon pollution that causes climate change and to **reward** the companies that are most efficient and pollute the least. It's not **fair** that heavy energy users can **dump** their carbon pollution in the air **we all breathe.** Polluters should be held accountable and should pay for the pollution that they force all of us to live with. "

#2 with very concerned

#1 with somewhat concerned

#1 with centre-right

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Case study: Canadian Narrative Design

Survey findings

Fair/unfair	Successful
Makes sense	Successful
Personal responsibility	Successful
Market failure	Only liked by base
Hidden costs	Widely rejected
Put Canada first	Widely rejected

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Group work | Designing narratives

7 minutes

Consider the narrative and keywords that would be appropriate for a national public audience in your own country.

Think about a narrative that speaks to your national culture, values and concerns.

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CARB🌿N T A X

An emission tax designed to get firms to internalize the negative externalities only imposed on society i.e. production of emission from factories using fossil fuels that contribute to extensive droughts, flooding and rising sea levels.

CO₂

Effective carbon tax rate will be between

R6 - R48 /tCO2e

once the tax free allowances are taken into account.

The tax will have no net impact on electricity prices until 2020.

South Africa as a developing economy has ratified the Paris Agreement which requires sizable reductions in energy-greenhouse gas emissions in large emitters, including in developing economies.

WHO WILL BE AFFECTED?
Industry | Business | Citizens

WHY?
It is a cost effective instrument, as part of a package of measures, to nudge our economy onto a more sustainable growth path.

SO WHAT?
The simulations suggest that the introduction of carbon tax would lead to estimated decrease in emissions in South Africa of...

13% TO **14.5%** BY **2025** & **26%** TO **33%** BY 2035.

This will also lead to a reduction in local air pollution and restructuring of the SA economy to being less emissions intensive.

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Three big questions

1. How do we talk about climate change?

2. How do we talk about the mechanism?

3. How do we talk about what the revenue does?

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1. How do we talk about climate change?

| Foreground	Background
- Climate change is the reason for the policy - Most people say they are concerned about climate change - We need to increase awareness of climate change and understanding of policy responses	- Other concerns provide stronger narratives - Attitudes to climate change are socially divided - Most people say that cost of living is more important than climate change

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Coffee break
(15 minutes)
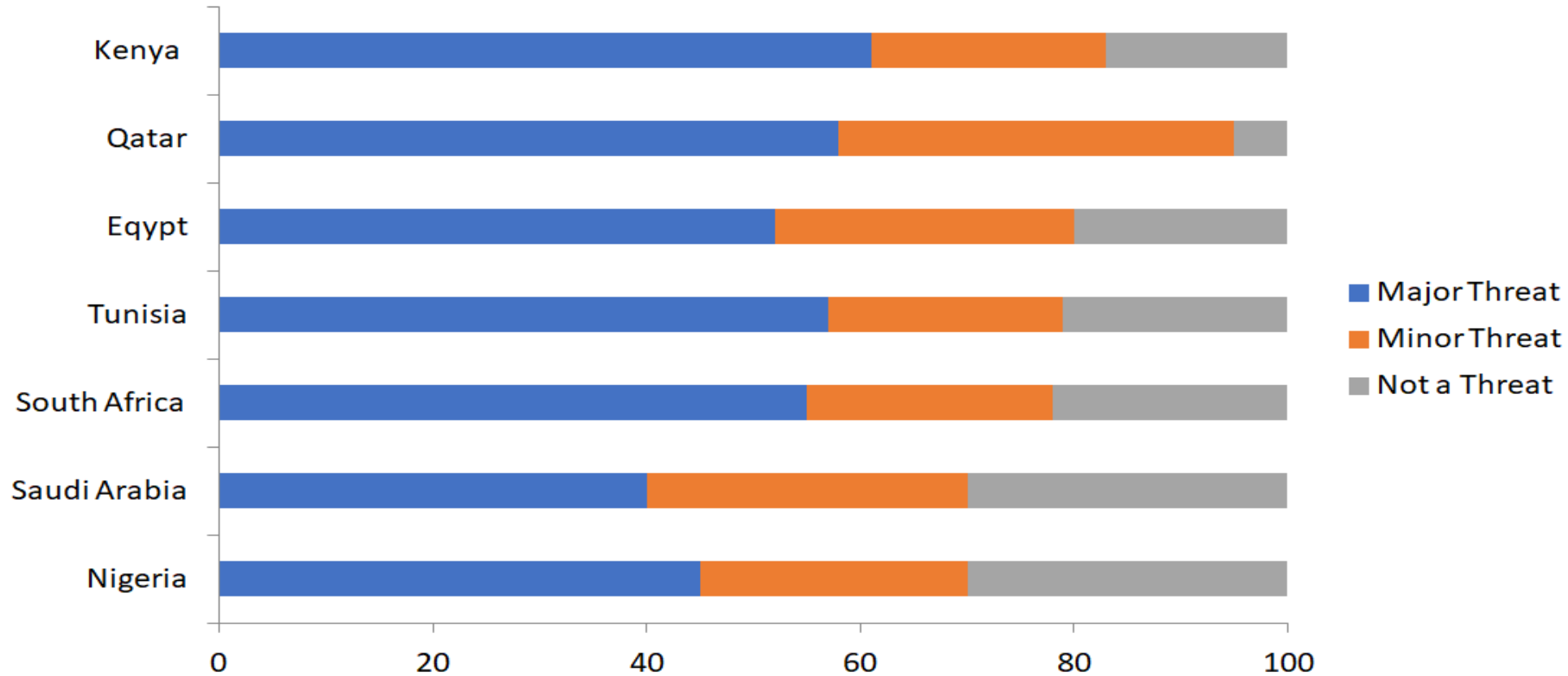
Alternative narratives

Health – especially the impacts of air pollution

Economic opportunities in new energy technologies

Reducing waste

National leadership

Self reliance / independence – reducing dependence on imported fuels

Focus on what revenue will be spent on

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Tunisia: Case Study

Climate Outreach, Climate Action Network International, October 2019

9 focus groups across Tunisia with a wide range of audiences.

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Tunisia: Case Study

Values: Respect ("respect nature"), helping and harmony, honesty/openness to criticism, positivity and perseverance

Approaches: Tunisia as a leader in the MENA region
Pride in democracy
Don't sound like a politician

Tunisia: Case Study

Attitudes to climate change:

- high awareness of changing weather
- high concern about impacts

- poor understanding of causes (ozone layer, "pollution", mining) and very low mention of role of fossil fuels
- poor understanding of role of personal behaviours

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Tunisia: Narratives

We can see that the weather is changing. Things are out of balance (mīzān). We need to take action to restore the natural balance.

The natural world is a precious gift (Ni'mat), but through our ignorance, arrogance and greed, we have damaged that gift, harmed the Earth and broken our relationship with creation.

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Tunisia: Narratives

It is not fair that the richest people produce the most pollution when the poorest people will be worst affected by climate change.

The sun shines everywhere we can generate power everywhere, in every region, town and village. An independent democracy like Tunisia should have an independent and democratic energy supply- sharing income across all our people not just handing it to the big energy companies and their foreign suppliers.

Tunisia: Case Study

Potential carbon pricing narratives

- Fairness
- Respect for nature
- Public participation, accountable, open.
- Regional leadership
- Employment opportunities of transition
- Use of revenues-

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Economic narratives

Carbon pricing will provide potential new (and more stable and predictable) resources for low-carbon project developers...

...mobilizing new resources to fund renewable and low carbon activities, including to benefit industrial and commercial entities to support less carbon-intensive activities and technologies

Cote d'Ivoire - 2017

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Economic narratives

The proposed carbon tax will will send the necessary policy and price signals to investors and consumers of the need to ensure that future investments are more climate resilient.

It is proposed that the carbon tax be introduced as part of a package of interventions to ensure that the primary objective of greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation is achieved, and to minimise potential adverse impacts on low income households and industry competitiveness

South Africa

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Talking about the cost

There is a tendency to explain carbon pricing in terms of economic theory

Is this effective?

Talking about the cost: prof. Daniel Kahnemann

"Economists think about what people ought to do. Psychologists watch what they actually do."
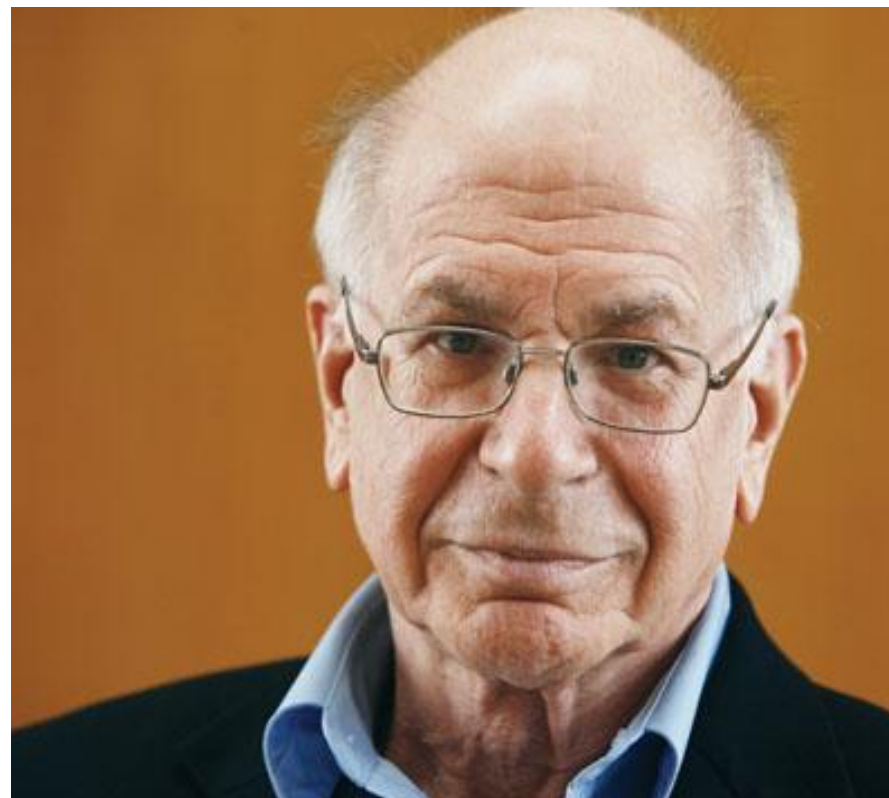
Talking about the cost

1. People are somewhat willing to pay a short-term cost for an uncertain short-term benefit.

2. They are less willing to pay a short-term cost for a certain long-term benefit.

3. They are still less willing to pay a short-term cost to avoid a certain long-term cost.

4. They are least willing to pay a certain short-term cost to avoid an uncertain long-term cost.

From: Kahneman, Tversky, Slovic: "Judgement Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases" (1982)

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2. How do we talk about the mechanism?

Foreground	Background
- People need to know how it works - The mechanism is the point of the policy - People can see that it is a simple and effective policy	- People care most about what it does - Talking about pricing and tax makes people think of "costs" not benefits - People don't trust economists or finance

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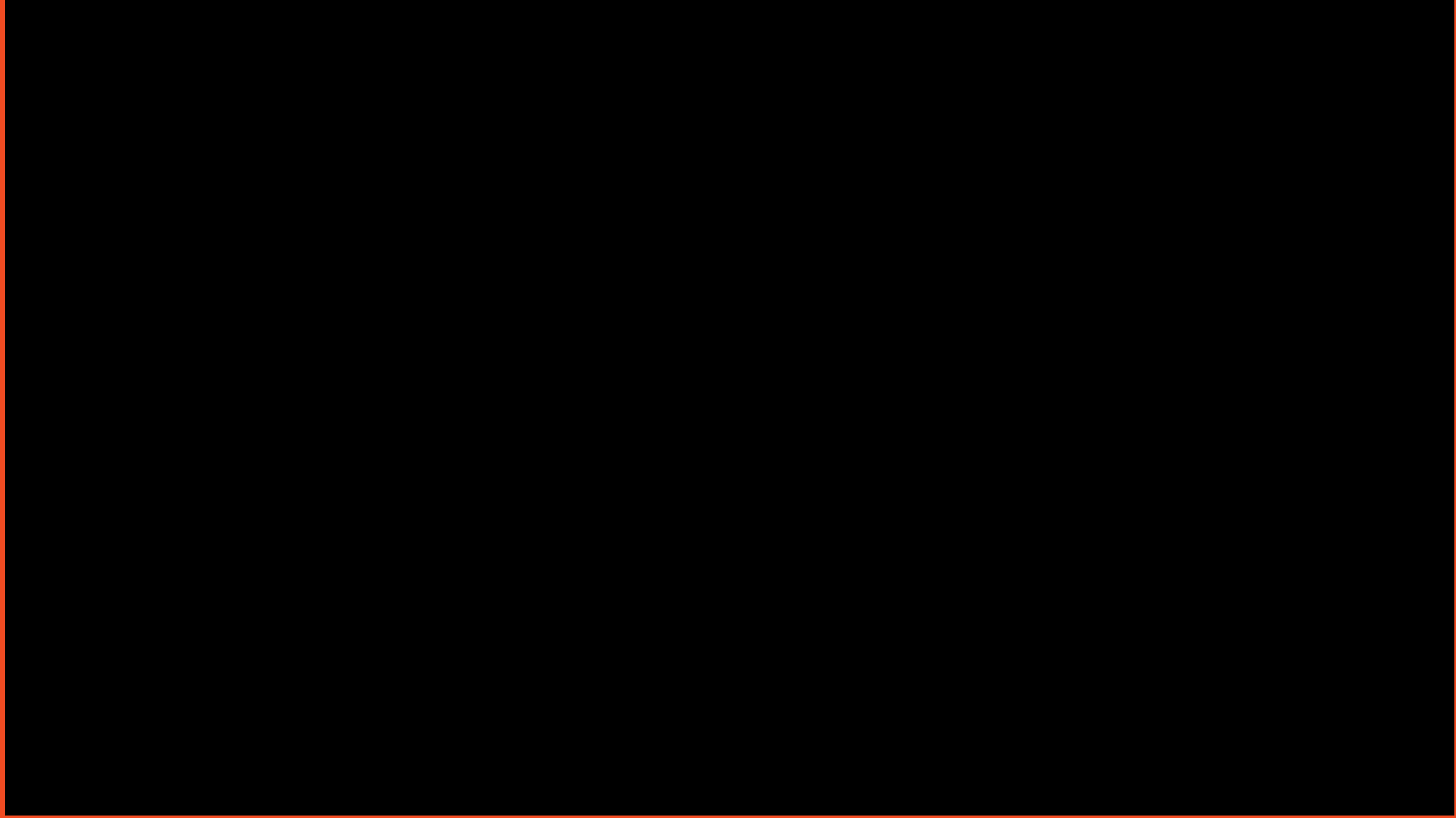# How do we label the mechanism (in the case of a carbon tax)?

Not a "tax"	A tax
• Taxes are not popular • The "tax" frame is damaging for support	• Be honest and authentic • Opponents will call it a tax and control the framing

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Justin Trudeau

Simple terminology

Technical term	Simplified form
Prescriptive regulations	
Aggregate outcomes	
Revenue recycling	
Social cost of carbon	

Exercise | Describing carbon pricing

5 minutes

- What are the key elements in a description of carbon pricing?

- In pairs, write-up an explanation of carbon pricing in three sentences

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Exercise | Describing carbon tax and ETS

6 minutes

Explain the carbon tax or the ETS in a maximum of three sentences.

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3. How do we explain how the revenue is used?

Foreground	Background
- People care most about what the revenue does. - Talking about spending reduces concerns about what it costs - People do not trust government to spend it wisely	- The price is the real point of the policy, not the revenue - Government should have flexibility to allocate the revenue as they need

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Visible use of revenues

"Clear evidence of how the money was spent ensured the political future of cap-and-trade, so the face of cap and trade was clean buses and trucks, electric cars, low carbon transit – solutions that made a visible difference especially in low-income communities"

- Stanley Young, Communications Director, California Air Resources Board

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Getting revenue use right – Ukraine case study

Communications on revenue use may resonate better than communication on the carbon price itself

- In **Ukraine,** Industry has called for government to spend a larger share of the carbon tax revenues on local environmental programs
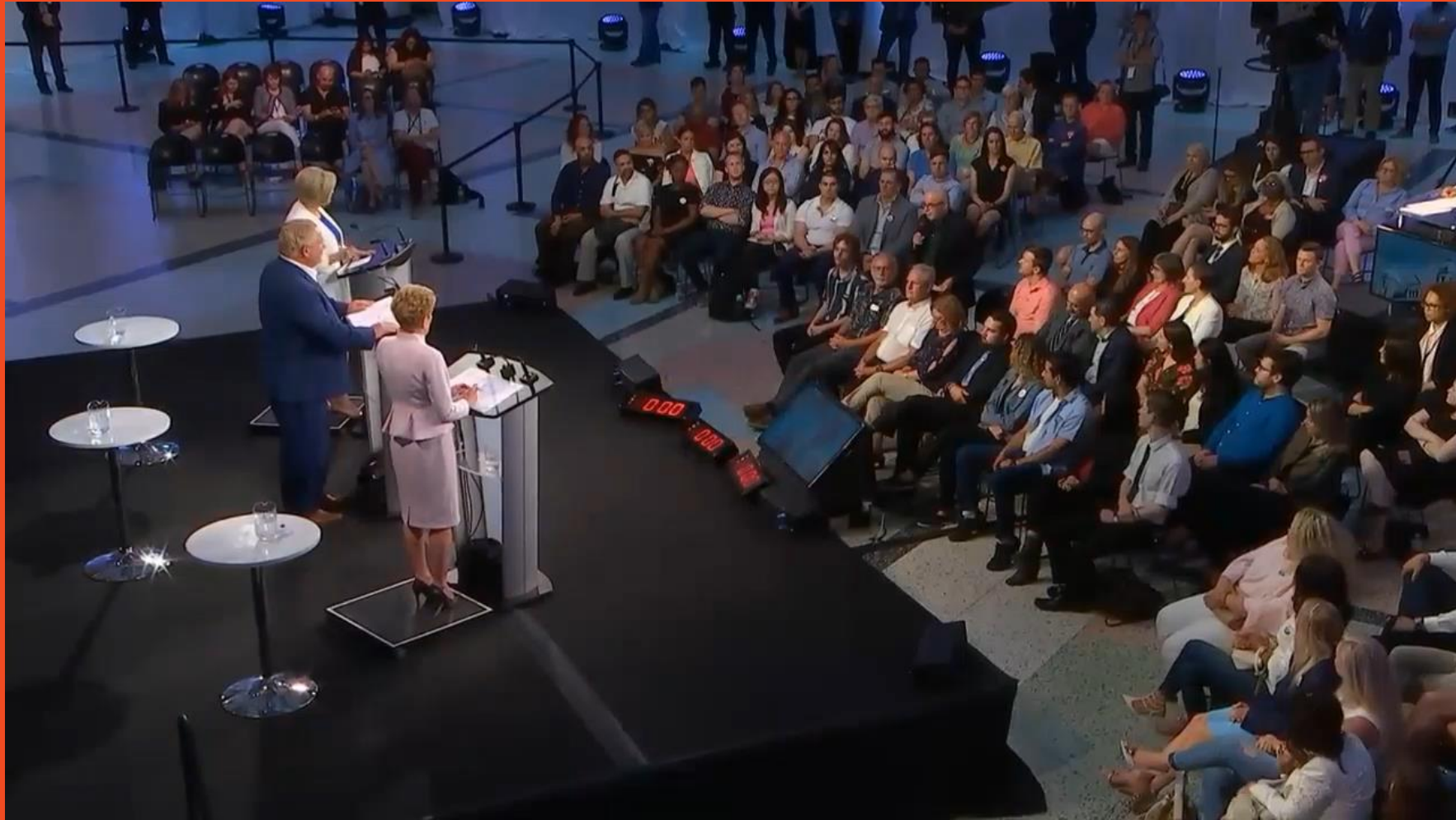

350 миллионов гривен перечислит ГМК в госбюджет 2019 года

13 млн грн сбора за выбросы CO_2 платили ежегодно компании ГМК

GMK Center

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Case study: Ontario Premiers Debate 2018

Public attitudes to carbon tax in Ontario (data from the Ecofiscal Commission)

Level of support	%
Strong support	18%
Slightly support	38%
Slightly oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	21%

Liberal premier Kathleen Wynne supports the tax

Conservative opposition Doug Ford opposes the tax

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Ontario Premiers Debate

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Exercise | Analyzing a speech

5 minutes

- What are the keywords and narratives?
- Which position is most likely to succeed gain public support?
- If you were advising Kathleen Wynne, what you would have asked her to say when defending the tax against Doug Ford.
- What would be a positive narrative for this situation.

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What happened next?

- *"Upon the swearing in of my new cabinet, at the top of our agenda the very first item will be to pass an order to cancel the Liberal cap-and-trade carbon tax."*

- He is currently spending $30million challenging the federal carbon tax in court and on a tv advertising campaign

Questions?

Group photo & Lunch
(1 hour)