

Researching topic #16 -- SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE-- PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS (pro and con) [last revised 3/14/2021]

This prompt offers two kinds of help:

- A brief overview of the kinds of questions you might wish to explore as you study how climate change is likely to affect the food supply;
- A suggested strategy for how to search the literature as you prepare to write your paper.

OVERVIEW – SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE-- PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS

By “private sector” we mean individual corporations, associations of corporations in the same business (e.g., the US Oil & Gas Association, the American Coal Council), corporate-funded foundations and “think tanks” (Heritage Foundation, Heartland Institute), and traditional pro-business lobbies (US Chamber of Commerce). Also included: politically active wealthy, powerful individuals.

Some private sector actors continue to be firmly in the denialist (con) camp. Those actors are also being studied by fellow student or students who are working on the climate denial counter-movement (# 14), but some overlap is unavoidable.

Perhaps, though, you should devote more of your research effort to elements of the private sector that agree that climate change is real and is serious. The most vocal such actors are from parts of the business world that are directly threatened by climate change and, as a consequence, have spoken out in favor of government adopting strong climate policy:

- The insurance industry
- Tourist industry (skiing, camping, perhaps hunting and fishing?)
- Some sectors of banking/investing
- The auto industry, opposing the rollback of fleet gas consumption targets
- The alternative energy sector, of course: solar, wind turbine
- Certain individual forward-thinking corporations

Back on the “con” side, I would also look at the phenomenon of “greenwashing,” companies that advertise their adoption of greening, ecofriendly efforts, but those efforts are largely hollow claims belied by those companies’ actual practices. (For example, British Petroleum rebranding BP as Beyond Petroleum.)

## SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR SEARCHING THE LITERATURE

I recommend the following sequence for searching the literature:

- 1 Start with a search of the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**;
- 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com);
- 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine;
- 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**.  
(NOTE that I do not suggest using Wikipedia.)

### 1 Search the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**

(NOTE: There are many excellent reports one can consult. You will find a lot of repetition, so you do not need to consult every source. Here I start with a handful of the most recent reports, followed by a more complete list.)

These publications should, in most cases, supply you with all you need:

IPCC's most recent full set of reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

EPA: [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society_.html)

U.S. Global Change Research Program:

<https://science2017.globalchange.gov/> (the science)

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (the impacts)

American Meteorological Society:

[www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017_lowres.pdf)

A more complete list of best scientific and governmental sources:

#### International

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)  
World Meteorological Organization

#### Agencies of the U.S. federal government

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)  
U.S. Global Change Research Program

#### Scientific bodies – U.S.

National Academic of Sciences  
Climate Change at the National Academies (climatechange@nas.edu)  
National Science Foundation

#### Other professional bodies – American Meteorological Society

## 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

(NOTE: Narrow and focus your search by using several phrases in quotes – such as “climate change”. For example, if you are searching for how climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, don’t just enter “climate change,” search, instead for” “climate change” AND “extreme weather events”)

Search terms to use (you may certainly choose others):

“climate change” AND x, where x can be:

Investor activism OR green investing

Insurance industry

Reinsurance industry

Tourist industry

Skiing industry

Hunting and fishing industry

World Bank

Davos OR World Economic Forum

Greenwashing

(NOTE: For some citations you find on Google Scholar, you can directly download the PDF. For other citations, you may be able to find and download PDFs if your University library offers on line access to academic journals.)

## 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine

Use the same search terms to do a general search on Google or another search engine.

This will bring up information more recent than you find on scholar.google.com (it takes several years for research to be published in academic journals).

## 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**

New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian

On line sources

Climate Central

GRIST

Society of Environmental Journalists

The Daily Climate

Climate Nexus

InsideClimate News

DeSmogBlog

Skepticalscience.com

Yale 350

(NOTE about on line sources: You will run into a lot of denialist disinformation on the internet, on websites, on blogs, on youtube. FYI, [skepticalscience.com](https://www.skepticalscience.com) has a comprehensive list of denialist talking points (and refutations of those talking points). See, for example: <https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php> )

Finally, here are some useful news articles, to get you started:

“Investment Funds Worth Trillions Are Dropping Fossil Fuel Stocks,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/science/investment-funds-worth-trillions-are-dropping-fossil-fuel-stocks.html>

“With Government in Retreat, Companies Step Up on Emissions,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/25/climate/with-government-in-retreat-companies-step-up-on-emissions.html>

“Investors worth \$20 trillion call for climate change action,”

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/investors-worth-20-trillion-call-for-climate-change-action-20170507-gvzpk4.html>

“Trump, Oil of Less Concern Than Climate Change for Top Companies,”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-02/amazon-raises-minimum-wage-to-15-for-all-u-s-employees-jmrk3z14>

“These companies are leading the fight against climate change,”

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/09/business/climate-change-companies/index.html>

new sources, March, 2021

finance sector, investors

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/world-economic-forum-global-risks-report-093002610.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/climate/investors-climate-threat-regulators.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/13/top-asset-managers-commit-to-big-carbon-emissions-cuts>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-01-15/world-s-biggest-long-term-risks-are-all-environmental-wef-says?srnd=climate-changed>

<https://www-marketwatch-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/www.marketwatch.com/amp/story/guid/C05676DE-3306-11EA-87D3-2F0DFD5D318B?fbclid=IwAR3g18Odg3p1C6UXzgu61sXyvOYuvYe0aA0Hij-WWctN2NgUhx-3EVPu9Qo>

<https://www.dw.com/en/davos-green-transition-is-50-trillion-investment-opportunity/a-56375018>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/26/business/dealbook/larry-fink-letter-blackrock-climate.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

Fossil fuel industries

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/03/02/api-climate-carbon-tax/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/business/energy-environment/exxon-mobil-darren-woods.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/03/global-oil-companies-have-committed-to-net-zero-emissions-its-a-sham>

other industries

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-industry/heavy-industry-transport-sectors-to-align-on-net-zero-climate-plans-idUSKBN29W0E6>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/03/05/more-than-50-companies-have-vowed-be-carbon-neutral-by-2040/>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/amazon-general-motors-walmart-call-climate-action-business/story?id=74501836>