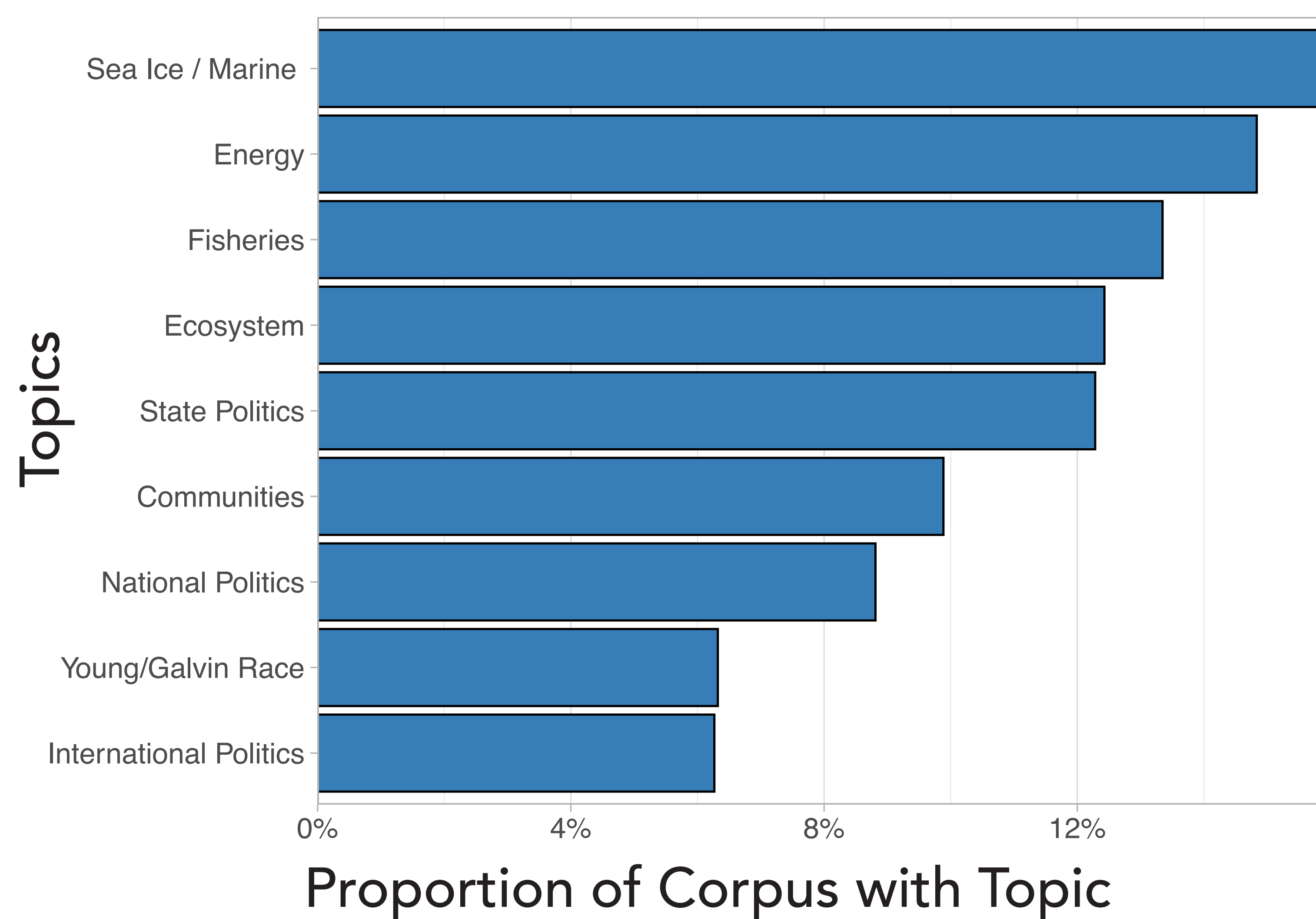


Climate Change in the Eyes of Alaska's Media

For science and policy issues that are contentious, abstract, or otherwise difficult to understand, the media play an important role in mediating how people think about an issue.

Topics in all 2018 Alaska media coverage of "climate change" and "global warming"



Based on sample of 298 news and opinion articles harvested from Lexis Nexis and directly from the news websites. Sample includes primarily print and online news papers, but also text from online TV and radio news.

STM estimated 9 "topics" within the corpus of text. The highest probability words and words most exclusive to each topic (FREX) are shown below.

Sea Ice/Marine: ice, sea, year, arctic, chang, alaska, ocean

FREX: oyster, reef, whale, studi, pollock, ice, spawn

Energy: climat, chang, energi, state, emiss, alaska, will

FREX: emiss, carbon, youth, greenhous, coal, plaintiff, fossil

Fisheries: alaska, fish, salmon, oil, will, state, develop

FREX: salmon, hatcheri, habitat, oil, ballot, fisheri, drill

Ecosystem: can, one, like, plant, year, tree, will

FREX: tree, beetl, garden, spruce, snow, plant, soil

State Politics: alaska, state, dunleavi, anchorag, governor, school, chang

FREX: noorvik, homeless, dunleavi, mccain, crime, governor, kotzebu

Communities: villag, communiti, alaska, will, citi, year, road

FREX: villag, site, eros, nevada, permafrost, road, highway

National Politics: bag, trump, plastic, nation, presid, one, can

FREX: plastic, zink, bag, ban, murkowski, kavanaugh, pruit

Young/Galvin Race: alaska, young, sitka, galvin, year, one, thank

FREX: tongass, galvin, sitka, kelp, quota, roadless, herring

International Politics: trump, arctic, presid, protest, state, will, year

FREX: macron, griswold-tergi, riot, protest, bison, emmanuel, franc

Media Framing Processes

Media frames define and diagnose conditions, identify causes, evaluate or convey moral judgment, and define or endorse particular solutions (Entman, 1993).

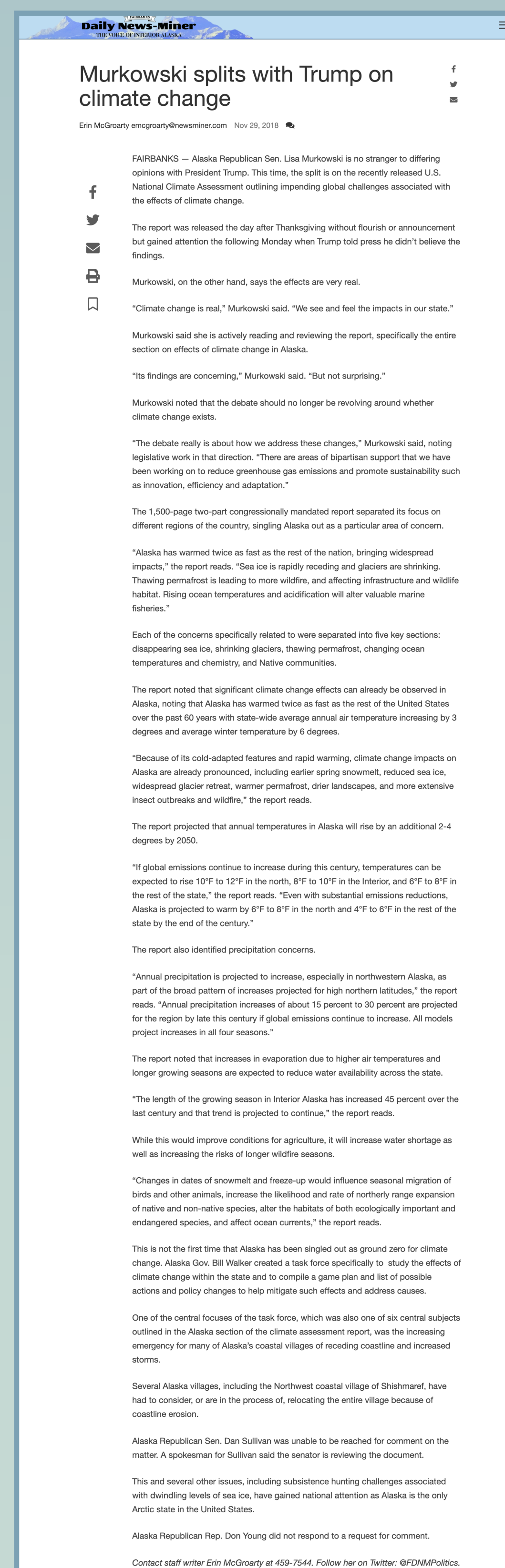
Frames define what is at issue in public debates and the solutions to collective problems, such as climate change.

Highlighting one problem, cause, or solution over another could mean increased benefits or risks for distinct populations; frames are not inherently neutral.

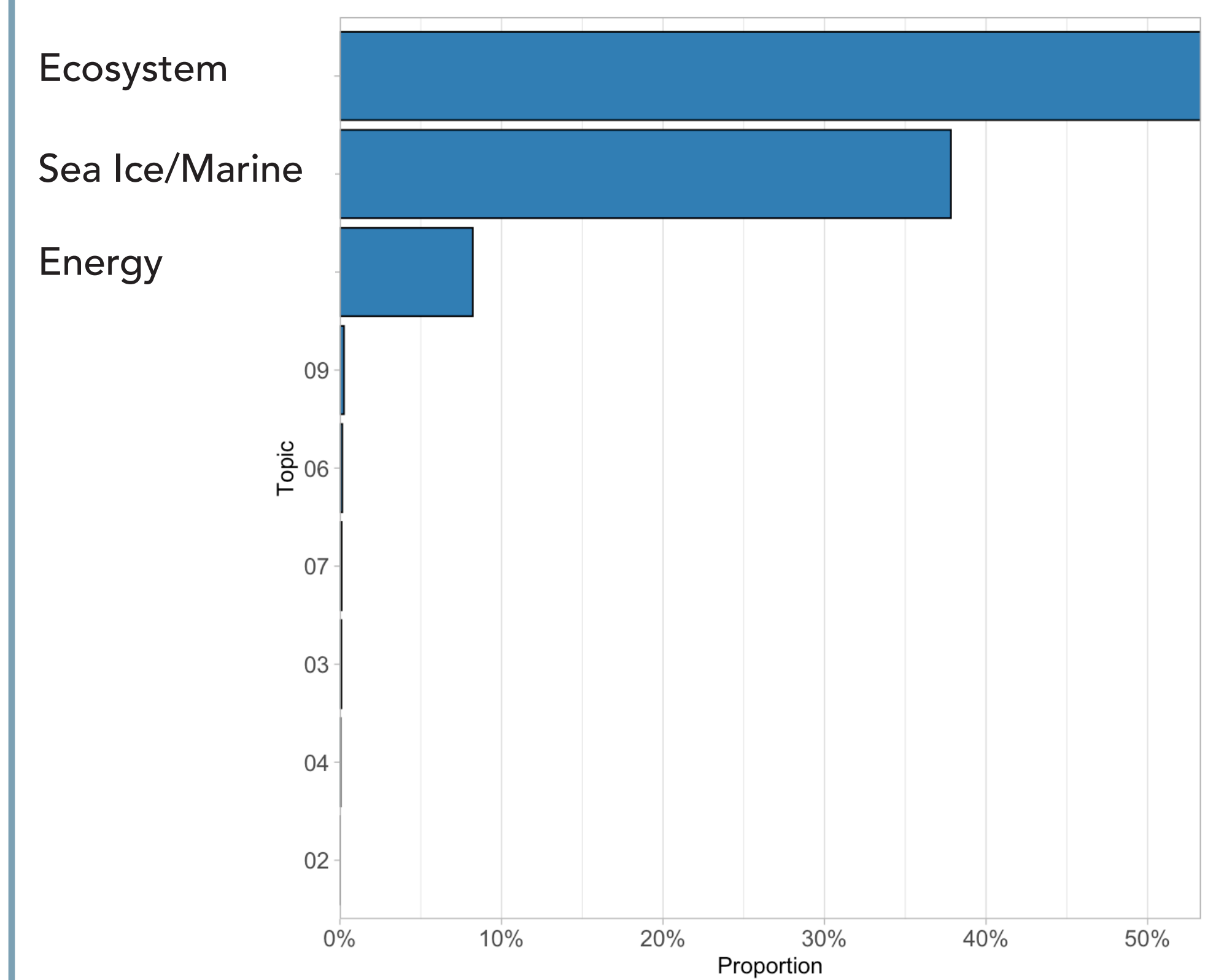
By selecting what aspects of issues to present over others, the media play an important role in defining issues within the complex social and political information system (McQuail, 2010).

Climate change has been called a contested framing space, because there is a lot of competition amongst political elites, industry, NGOs, and other stakeholders to define what it is at issue and set the frame (Schäfer & O'Neill, 2016).

The implication of framing is that audiences "see" climate change a particular way in the news they digest. Frames can increase/reduce polarization or cause people to distance themselves from the issue (Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018).



Example: Topics present in one article about Senator Murkowski's statements about the November 2018 National Climate Assessment.



Analysis was conducted using stm: R Package for Structural Topic Models by Margaret E. Roberts, Brandon M. Stewart, and Dustin Tingley. More information available at <https://www.structuraltopicmodel.com/>.

Kristin Timm
PhD Candidate, Science Communication
George Mason University
kmf.timm@gmail.com
@kmftimm

