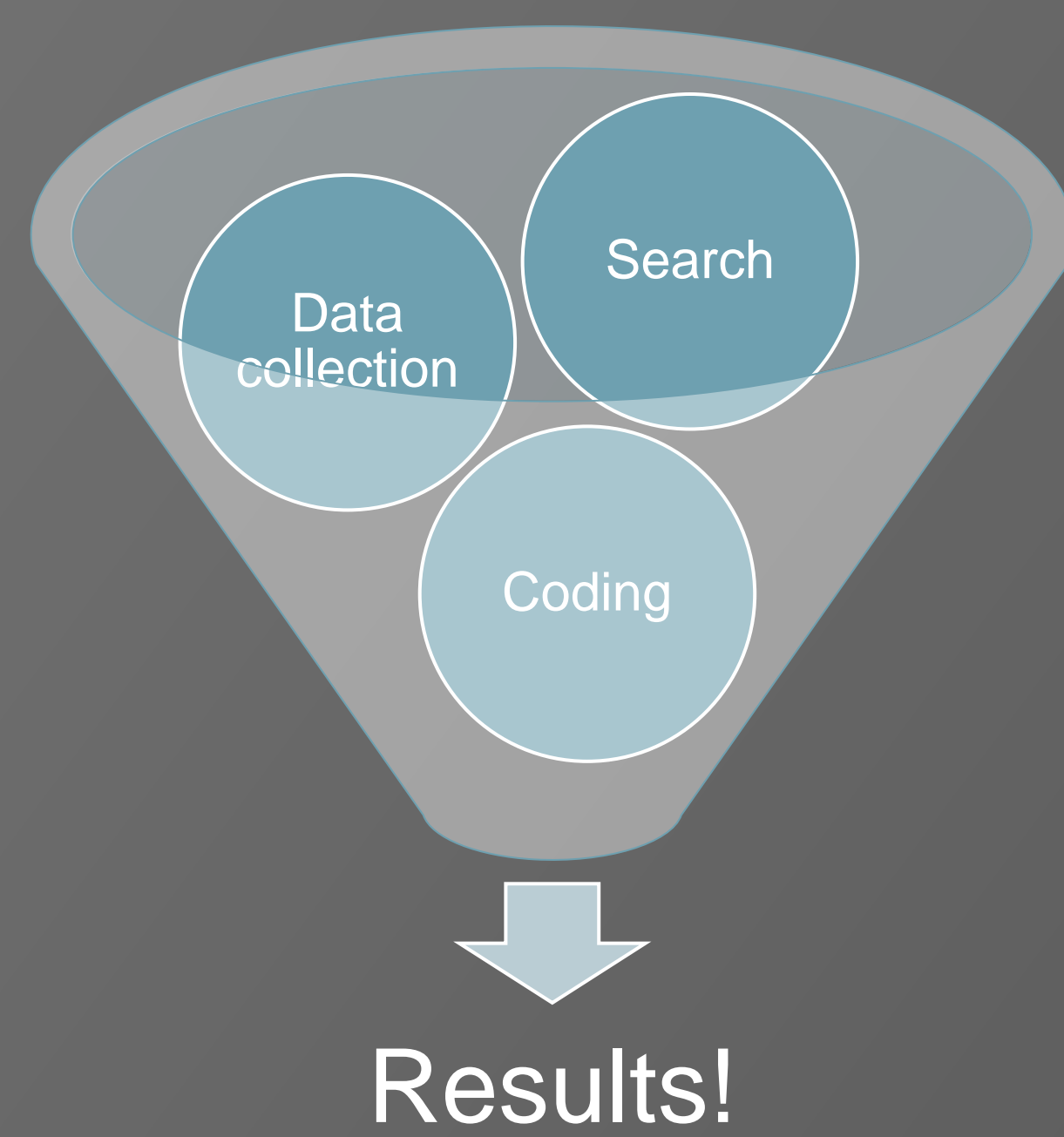


Does the National Post hate clean energy?

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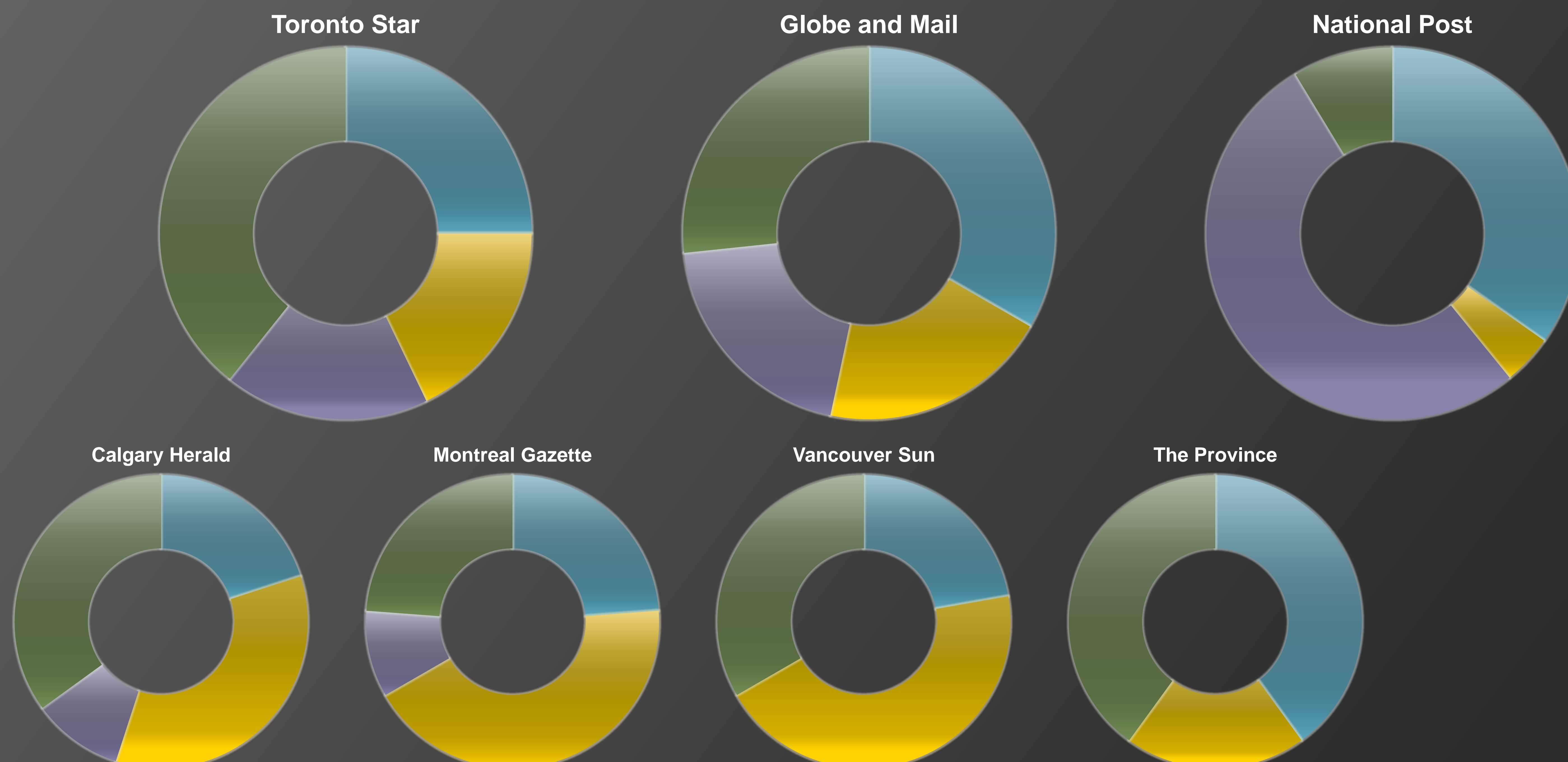
1) Introduction

A casual glance at Canada's media landscape and public discourse suggests a sceptical attitude towards clean energy and to climate change more generally. Curious as to the media's role in promoting this attitude, we set out to discover which newspapers portrayed clean energy in a negative light and which portrayed it in a positive light while focusing on solar in order to narrow results.



2) Methodology

We took 320 articles from Canada's 7 largest daily newspapers (excluding the Toronto Sun, which was not available on the NewsDesk database) covering January 2011 to June 2011 that came up in a Newsdesk search for "Clean energy," "Green energy" and "Solar energy." After entering each article into a spreadsheet, we analyzed those with headlines relating to clean energy. We then coded for four indicators of how clean energy was portrayed: "technologically cutting-edge," "a luxury the public cannot afford," "morally good" and "economically beneficial." Many articles yielded multiple indicators.



3) Results

The *Toronto Star* scored highest on the "morally good" indicator in its portrayal of solar energy, with 39% of its articles showing clean energy in a morally positive light. The *National Post* had the greatest instances of portraying clean energy as "a luxury the public cannot afford," with 52% of its articles activating that indicator. It also had the lowest percentage of articles portraying clean energy as "morally good" with 9% activating that indicator. However, the *National Post* also scored highest amongst large newspapers for portraying clean energy as "economically beneficial," with 35% of its articles activating that indicator. The *Globe and Mail* scored in between the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star* on the "economically beneficial," "a luxury the public cannot afford" and "morally good" indicators, while surpassing both on the "technologically cutting edge" indicator. Meanwhile, the *Vancouver Sun* had the greatest percentage of articles highlighting clean energy as "technologically cutting-edge," with 44% of its articles corresponding to that indicator. The 4 smaller daily papers scored 10% or less on the "a luxury the public cannot afford" indicator, and varied between 20-40% for "economically beneficial," between 20-44% for "technologically cutting-edge" and between 24-40% for "morally good."



4) Conclusions

These results point towards numerous conclusions. The *Toronto Star* upholds its reputation as a progressive-leaning newspaper in actively portraying clean energy as morally good. The *National Post* meanwhile upholds its reputation as a conservative paper that sees little moral worth in clean energy. Nonetheless, its strong score on the "economically beneficial" indicator coupled with its very high score on the "luxury the public cannot afford" indicator suggests that the paper's qualms are not with clean energies per se, but rather with attempts to fund them publically. The *Globe and Mail*, largely understood to be a centrist paper, unsurprisingly stood in the middle between the *National Post* and *Toronto Star*. However, for both the *Globe and Mail* and the four smaller daily papers the "technologically cutting edge" indicator never falls below 20% and mostly ranges between 35-40%. This suggests that if newspapers are unwilling or unable to write complex editorials or columns on clean energy, they may focus on simply reporting technological developments instead.