



## INTRODUCTION

- There exists a theoretical basis for believing that individual difference variables (e.g., a person's degree of nationalism, patriotism, authoritarianism, etc.) are at least, in part, responsible for attitudes regarding climate change.
- Stanley, Wilson, and Milfont (2017), in a correlational study, suggest that believing that climate change does not exist may be the result of ideologically based denial. Put simply, in order to maintain our worldview, we may deny evidence that is plainly seen by others.
- In this study, we reasoned that nationalism, "the view that America is superior and should be dominant" (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989, p. 261), may represent a worldview that motivates denial in some situations (e.g., when their country is depicted as in danger and at risk) but not in others (e.g., when a far-off country is depicted as in danger and at risk).

## METHODS

**Participants:** N=218 students from a variety of courses

### Materials and Procedures:

- Students were asked to complete a questionnaire containing several scales that measured Nationalism, Patriotism, Right wing-authoritarianism, Social dominance orientation and Inclusion of nature in self.
- Participants then read a pamphlet depicting climate change in either America or in India. Both pamphlets contained identical pictures and facts but differed in the named locations of the pictures (i.e., India or America).
- They then answered several questions about the pamphlet (designed to increase the likelihood that participants would pay attention to the locations depicted in the pamphlet).
- Lastly, they completed measures of climate change related topics such as climate change related stress, belief in climate change, urgency of climate change, reversibility of climate change and several others.

## RESULTS

- We tested the main hypothesis using a 2 (Pamphlet condition: India vs. America) x 2 (Level of Nationalism: High vs. Low) ANOVA with the 14 item Belief in Climate Change scale entered as the dependent variable.
- The results conveyed a significant interaction of Condition and Nationalism. High Nationalists believed less in climate change after reading the America pamphlet ( $M=3.04$ ) than after reading the India pamphlet ( $M=3.29$ ) while low nationalists' belief in climate change did not differ when reading the America pamphlet ( $M=3.39$ ) and the India pamphlet ( $M=3.35$ ),  $F(1,214)= 5.55, p = .019$ .

## DISCUSSION

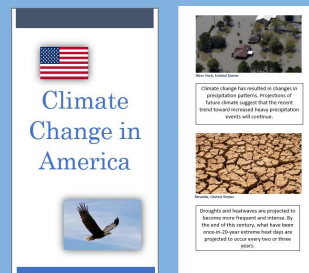
- The results of this study add to the growing literature which seeks to identify the motivations behind climate-change denial. As Gifford (2011) states, "denial remains a particularly troubling barrier . . . because behavior change cannot occur as long as the problem is not seen as a problem" (p. 298). Solutions to this ever-more urgent issue are more likely to emerge with greater understanding of the problem.

# Nationalistic attitudes and the motivated denial of climate change: An experimental study

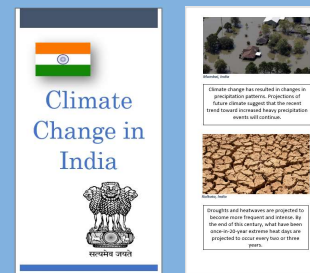
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## Nationalistic attitudes may motivate selective denial of climate change.

Climate change has been called one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in this century (Swim, et al., 2011). Even so, many people do not believe that climate change is occurring. We have found evidence to support the hypothesis that high nationalists are motivated to protect their country from harm and negative outcomes. As a result high nationalists are more likely to deny climate change when it is depicted in America compared to India.



America Version of the Pamphlet



India Version of the Pamphlet



Selected Correlations and Scale Reliabilities

	Nat	Bel	Hum	Nat Phen	Rev	Urg	Stress	Knwl	Bhvr	Pol. Id
Nationalism (Nat)	.84									
C.C Belief (Bel)	-.41	.89								
C.C Human Caused (Hum)	-.42	.68	.87							
C.C Natural Phenomena (Nat Phen)	.37	-.38	-.26	.81						
C.C Reversible (Rev)	-.34	.49	.51	-.38	.60					
C.C Urgency (Urg)	-.42	.82	.72	-.43	.51	.89				
C.C Stress (Stress)	-.29	.74	.57	-.28	.44	.74	.80			
C.C Knowledge (Knwl)	-.20*	.45	.43	-.14**	.31	.45	.37	.58		
Pro-env Behavior (Bhvr)	-.20*	.31	.19*	-.19*	.15**	.28	.27	.18*	.71	
Political Ideology (Pol. Id)	.52	-.58	-.48	.33	-.42	-.64	-.48	-.23	-.28	.82

Cronbach's alphas are listed on the diagonal.

All correlations are significant at .001 except when noted otherwise.

\*  $p$  less than .01

\*\*  $p$  less than .05

Belief in the Reality of Climate Change as a Function of Nationalism and Pamphlet Location

