



Pro- and anti-climate activism: The ideological correlates of intentions to engage in collective action for - and *against* - environmental protections

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ABSTRACT

Although the correlates of climate activism are well-known, few studies examine why some protest *against* protecting the environment. We address this oversight by conducting a national survey that investigated the ideological correlates of intentions to engage in pro- and anti-climate activism. We divided participants into two groups based on whether they were in support of ($n = 4530$) or against ($n = 714$) Australia acting to reduce its contribution to climate change. These groups then completed pro- and anti-climate activism intention scales, respectively. We disentangled facets of ideological attitudes to examine the extent that social dominance orientation and the dimensions of right-wing authoritarianism uniquely contribute to activism intentions. We found that while controlling for these other ideological facets, social dominance orientation and authoritarian conservatism (submission) related negatively, and authoritarian traditionalism related positively, with both forms of activist intentions. Authoritarian aggression and free market ideology were associated with lower intentions to engage in pro-climate activism, but not significantly related to anti-climate activism intentions. These results demonstrate both the shared and unique ideological correlates of activism for and against environmental protections.

1. Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022) warns that “further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all” (p. 37). These experts are not alone in demanding immediate action on climate change. School children around the world have initiated thousands of climate strikes, the largest of which attracted an estimated six million participants (Taylor et al., 2019). As a collective problem, collective movements are necessary to address climate change (Fritzsche et al., 2018).

Although these examples illustrate collective efforts to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, a countermovement has emerged that opposes environmental protections and, in some cases, has signed petitions and protested to oppose climate policies (e.g., NZ Herald,

2021). Much of the research on resistance to environmental protections to date has sought to identify who is more likely to deny climate change. This work reveals greater levels of climate change denial among those who endorse a free market ideology (i.e., prefer limited government regulations; Hornsey et al., 2016) or endorse the right-wing ideological attitudes of social dominance orientation (SDO: the tolerance of social inequality) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA: the preference for tradition and strict social control by authority; Stanley & Wilson, 2019).

Theories of motivated cognition suggest SDO and RWA reflect a greater investment in the current socioeconomic system (McCright & Dunlap, 2010). Similarly, and by definition, those who endorse a free market ideology are invested in the free market system (Heath & Gifford, 2006). Right-wing adherents are more likely to fear this system is at risk from pro-climate policy (Campbell & Kay, 2014; Stanley et al., 2024), and so should be less motivated to take part in pro-climate

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activism. While these ideologies have been consistently linked to lower belief and action in climate change, it is not yet known whether they could motivate some people to defend the system through collectively opposing climate action.

There is particular debate about the RWA-activism association. Weiner and Federico (2017) proposed that the authoritarian preferences for conformity and preserving the status quo discourages collective action. Authoritarians should be reluctant to embrace collective action because collective action “almost by definition involves a challenge to established systems of authority and ways of doing things” (Weiner & Federico, 2017, p. 393). However, Choma et al. (2020) found that RWA (and not SDO) was associated with *greater* collective action intentions to help reverse the perceived moral breakdown in society. Saeri et al. (2015) identified that both SDO and RWA were indirectly associated with intentions to take action in support of the government fighting against unruly protestors. This preliminary evidence suggests that right-wing adherents – including those endorsing RWA – *can* be mobilised to participate in collective action for an ideologically-consistent cause.

It is important to clarify that only certain domains of RWA entail avoidance of challenging the status quo (Duckitt et al., 2010). Those high in conservatism (‘RWA-Conservatism’, also sometimes called authoritarian submission) accept the status quo and current social order via uncritical and obedient support for existing societal authorities (with a trait of ‘rebelliousness’). Although RWA as a unitary construct predicts lower environmentalism (Stanley & Wilson, 2019), RWA-Conservatism correlates positively with pro-environmental beliefs within the context of a pro-environmental political system (Reese, 2012), indicating a willingness to follow the environmental proclivities of the nation’s leaders. Those high in authoritarian aggression (‘RWA-Aggression’) favour coercive social control to achieve security, while endorsement of traditionalism (‘RWA-Traditionalism’) entails favouring adherence to old fashioned norms, values, and morality while resisting ‘modern’ lifestyle changes.

1.1. Current study

Our research aimed to explore the similarities and differences in the ideological correlates of intentions to take part in collective action both for and against efforts to address climate change. In relation to pro-climate activism, and informed by research that finds these ideologies predict rejection of climate science and solutions (Hornsey et al., 2016; Stanley & Wilson, 2019), we predicted:

H1. SDO, RWA (all dimensions), and free market ideology would predict lower engagement in pro-climate activism.

Our predictions for anti-climate activism intentions were more tentative. Although it is possible that both the authoritarian aggression and conservative (submissive) dimensions of authoritarianism suppress the motivation to engage in civil-disobedient styles of protest if these actions conflict with authorities, those endorsing RWA-Traditionalism might engage in actions to defend the prevailing social conditions. Specifically, our hypotheses were:

H2. SDO, free market ideology, and RWA-Traditionalism would predict higher anti-climate activism intentions.

H3. RWA-Conservatism and RWA-Authoritarian aggression may fail to predict (or predict lower) anti-climate activism intentions.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Between 10 August and 30 September 2021, Qualtrics recruited 5244 respondents to match the Australian adult population on age ($M = 46.50$, $SD = 18.30$), gender (47.2% Male) and location (see Table S2 for a demographic comparison of pro- and anti-climate groups). The

Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committee approved the protocols for both the pilot study and our main study (protocol number 2020/429; approved on 17 August 2020).

2.2. Measures and procedure

2.2.1. Activism intentions

There is already research and measures of pro-climate collective action (e.g., Stanley et al., 2021), but none to our knowledge that capture anti-climate activism intentions. So that our activism intentions measure captured behaviours that are relevant to both pro- and anti-climate activists, we asked people sceptical of climate change what actions they had taken against environmental movements ($n = 74$; see Supplementary Materials for details). We used their responses to inform the set of behaviours we included in pro- and anti-climate collective action intention scales, which was very similar to the list of actions included in Stanley et al.’s (2021) (pro-climate) collective action measure and thus expected to be relevant to both pro- and anti-climate groups. Participants were first asked a screening question to determine which version of the scale they would receive: “Do you support Australia acting to reduce its contribution to climate change?” We used a dichotomous response scale, and participants who answered ‘yes’ (pro-climate group: $n = 4530$) were presented with the pro-climate collective action items and asked, “How likely are you to engage in the following activities **in support of action on climate change**?”, while those who said ‘no’ (anti-climate group: $n = 714$) were asked the following anti-climate collective action items: “How likely are you to engage in the following activities **against action on climate change**?”. This screening method categorised people who are supportive and not supportive of climate action to allow us to capture individual variation in the likelihood of action, while avoiding floor effects that would occur if all groups were asked to complete both scales. All participants rated 12 items (e.g., ‘Join a protest march’, see Table S2) from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 5 (extremely likely). Scale validation results are presented in the Supplementary Materials and resulted in two unidimensional 11-item scales with high internal consistency (pro-climate activism scale $\alpha = 0.93$, anti-climate activism scale $\alpha = 0.92$).

2.2.2. SDO

Participants completed a 4-item scale to measure SDO developed in Stanley et al. (2023) from Ho et al.’s (2015) SDO₇ scale. Items included “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups”, each responded to from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale had acceptable internal consistency in both pro-climate ($\alpha = 0.72$) and anti-climate ($\alpha = 0.71$) groups.

2.2.3. RWA

We used the shortened versions of Duckitt et al.’s (2010) ACT scale described in Stanley et al. (2023) to measure the dimensions of RWA with 3 items per subscale and the same 7-point response scale used for SDO. Internal consistency was acceptable for each subscale in both groups, and example items included: “Being kind to bludgers or criminals will only encourage them to take advantage of your weakness, so it’s best to use a firm, tough hand when dealing with them” (RWA-Aggression: $\alpha_{\text{Pro-climate}} = 0.75$, $\alpha_{\text{anti-climate}} = 0.74$), “Our country will be great if we show respect for authority and obey our leaders” (RWA-Conservatism: $\alpha_{\text{Pro-climate}} = 0.77$, $\alpha_{\text{anti-climate}} = 0.83$), and “God’s laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late” (RWA-Traditionalism: $\alpha_{\text{Pro-climate}} = 0.75$, $\alpha_{\text{anti-climate}} = 0.66$).

2.2.4. Free market ideology

Participants completed five items from Heath and Gifford’s (2006) free market ideology scale. Items such as “An economic system based on free markets unrestrained by government interference automatically works best to meet human needs” were responded to on 5-point scales

(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Internal consistency was acceptable in both groups ($\alpha_{\text{pro-climate}} = 0.70$, $\alpha_{\text{anti-climate}} = 0.71$).

2.3. Analytic approach

Data are available on the OSF: <https://osf.io/9k7xz/>. The study was not preregistered. Descriptive statistics for activism intentions and ideology (means, standard deviations), independent samples *t*-tests to compare levels across groups, and zero-order correlations between ideology and activism intentions, were conducted in SPSS. We compared the strength of associations among pro- and anti-climate groups using Fischer *r*-to-*z* transformations in R using the *cocor* package (Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015) with an alpha level of 0.05, a two-tailed test, and a null value of 0. *Cocor* also gives Zou's (2007) 95% confidence intervals around the correlation difference. We generated Cohen's *q* values using the *ClinSigMeasures* package (Malek-Ahmadi & Schack, 2025). These associations do not adjust for the overlap between ideological facets, thus we conducted a multigroup path model in R using *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) to test our hypotheses.

We constructed our multigroup path model with the five facets of ideology set to predict activism intentions, using participants' response to the screening question as the grouping variable (i.e., pro-climate vs. anti-climate groups). We first estimated a fully saturated baseline model. We then inspected the individual parameter estimates across groups and constrained to equality the parameter that was most similar in size, and verified with a Chi-Square difference test whether the constraint significantly reduced model fit (in which case, we conclude the strength of associations differ between pro-and anti-climate groups) or not (in which case, we conclude the strength of association is the same across groups). We did this in an iterative process for all five paths to reach a final model. See the Supplementary Materials for robustness checks, including where demographic variables are included as covariates.

3. Results

Means in Table 1 show that the anti-climate group scored significantly higher in all facets of right-wing ideology compared to the pro-climate group. This indicates that those who did not support climate action were more tolerant of inequality, preferred low government intervention in financial markets, preferred traditional norms, submission to strong leaders, and for deviants to be punished. We explore demographic differences in the Supplementary Materials (Table S2), which indicate that the pro-climate group is younger, comprised of more women, and with higher median education compared to the anti-climate group. Groups have the same median income.

Table 2 shows the bivariate correlations between ideological facets and activism intentions. For our pro-climate group, each facet of conservative ideology correlated negatively with collective action intentions. This correlation was weak in the case of RWA-Traditionalism and moderate for all other ideological facets. Anti-climate activism intentions also correlated *negatively* with SDO, RWA-Conservatism, RWA-Aggression, and free market ideology, and were unrelated to traditionalism. The difference in strength of correlations was small but consistent, with Fischer *z*-transformations indicating that all associations were

significantly stronger among the pro-climate group compared to the anti-climate group.

We then examined the unique associations each ideological facet has with activism intentions through testing the path model. In our initial fully saturated model, RWA-Traditionalism correlated positively with activism intentions among both pro-climate ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < .001$) and anti-climate ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = .014$) groups. Because constraining this path to equality across groups did not significantly reduce model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.05$, $p = .818$), the strength of the association between RWA-Traditionalism and activism intentions was the same for pro-climate and anti-climate groups. Thus, a stronger preference for traditional norms was as related to anti-climate activism intentions among those who do not support Australia reducing its contribution to climate change as it was related to pro-climate activism intentions within participants who do support Australia reducing emissions. Applying equality constraints iteratively to the next most similar associations identified that the associations between activism intentions also did not differ between groups with SDO ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.78$, $p = .182$) or with RWA-Conservatism ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.01$, $p = .083$). Both of these ideologies related to lower protest intentions in both groups to the same degree.

Model fit significantly deteriorated when we tested equality constraints for RWA-Aggression ($\Delta\chi^2 = 14.25$, $p < .001$) and for free market ideology ($\Delta\chi^2 = 11.87$, $p < .001$). Thus, the associations between these ideologies and activism intentions were significantly stronger in the pro-climate group.

Table 3 and Fig. 1 present results from our final model where the paths from SDO, RWA-Conservatism, and RWA-Traditionalism to activism intentions are constrained to equality between groups and the paths from RWA-Aggression and free market ideology to activism intentions are estimated freely (see Table S5 for all tested models). These associations mean that for both pro-climate and anti-climate groups, endorsement of SDO and RWA-Conservatism were related to lower activism intentions to similar degrees, and endorsement of RWA-Traditionalism was related to greater activism intentions to similar degrees. Differences emerged for RWA-Aggression and free market ideology, where these ideologies correlated negatively with intentions to engage in collective action only for the pro-climate group. Our final model fit these data well ($\chi^2 = 4.85$, $p = .183$, CFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.015 90% CI [0.000, 0.039], SRMR = 0.004, AIC = 14,230.43, BIC = 14,302.65) and explained 18.7% of the variance in intentions to take part in pro-climate activism, and 9.4% of the variance in intentions to take part in anti-climate activism. This difference in explained variance could indicate heteroskedasticity, however the residual variance in activism intentions was similar in the pro-climate ($b = 0.88$, $p < .001$, $\beta = 0.81$) and anti-climate groups ($b = 0.88$, $p < .001$, $\beta = 0.91$).

4. Discussion

We move beyond the predictors of pro-climate activism to add to the small but growing literature on the correlates of engagement in conservative collective action movements (for a special issue devoted to the topic, see Thomas & Osborne, 2022). Our results revealed that people who more strongly preferred intergroup hierarchy and inequality (i.e.,

Table 1
Results of independent *t*-tests comparing pro- and anti-climate groups.

	Scale range	Pro-climate M (SD)	Anti-climate M (SD)	t-test	Cohen's d
Activism intentions	1–5	2.95 (1.04)	2.04 (0.97)	$t(989.79) = 23.03^a$, $p < .001$	0.88
SDO	1–7	2.86 (1.13)	3.49 (1.27)	$t(5242) = -13.51$, $p < .001$	-0.54
RWA - Conservatism	1–7	4.49 (1.40)	5.09 (1.49)	$t(924.22) = -10.05^a$, $p < .001$	-0.42
RWA - Traditionalism	1–7	3.21 (1.53)	3.78 (1.47)	$t(974.59) = -9.44^a$, $p < .001$	-0.37
RWA - Aggression	1–7	4.54 (1.42)	5.26 (1.37)	$t(5242) = -12.69$, $p < .001$	-0.51
Free market ideology	1–5	2.65 (0.63)	3.06 (0.71)	$t(5242) = -15.98$, $p < .001$	-0.64

Note. Sample sizes were $n = 4530$ for the pro-climate group, and $n = 714$ for the anti-climate group.

^a *t*-Tests where equal variances were not assumed due to significant Levene's test.

Table 2

Correlations between activism intentions and ideological attitudes among pro- and anti-climate action groups.

	Pro-climate group	Anti-climate group	Fischer's z-transformation	Cohen's q	95% CI for correlation difference
SDO	-0.23***	-0.12**	$z = -2.82, p = .005$	-0.11	[-0.19, -0.03]
RWA - Conservatism	-0.35***	-0.22***	$z = -3.51, p < .001$	-0.14	[-0.21, -0.06]
RWA - Traditionalism	-0.13***	0.03	$z = -3.98, p < .001$	-0.16	[-0.24, -0.08]
RWA - Aggression	-0.34***	-0.19***	$z = -4.01, p < .001$	-0.16	[-0.23, -0.08]
Free market ideology	-0.27***	-0.11**	$z = -4.13, p < .001$	-0.17	[-0.24, -0.08]

Note. Sample sizes were $n = 4530$ for the pro-climate group, and $n = 714$ for the anti-climate group. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$.**Table 3**

Multigroup path model predicting activism intentions for pro-climate and anti-climate groups as a function of ideologies.

	Pro-climate			Anti-climate		
	b	β	p	b	β	p
SDO	-0.09 _c	-0.10	<.001	-0.09 _c	-0.12	<.001
RWA-Conservatism	-0.17 _c	-0.23	<.001	-0.17 _c	-0.25	<.001
RWA-Traditionalism	0.06 _c	0.10	<.001	0.06 _c	0.10	<.001
RWA-Aggression	-0.12	-0.17	<.001	-0.01	-0.02	.601
Free market ideology	-0.27	-0.16	<.001	-0.07	-0.05	.157

Note. Predictors of activism intentions with the c subscript were constrained to equality across pro-climate and anti-climate groups.

SDO) and deference to authority (i.e., RWA-Conservatism) were less likely to intend to take part in either pro-climate or anti-climate activism. Those who were more concerned about preserving traditional norms and values (i.e., RWA-Traditionalism) reported greater collective action intentions for both causes. Stronger endorsement of coercive social control (i.e., RWA-Aggression) and the free market system was associated with lower intention to engage in pro-climate activism, and unrelated to anti-climate activism intentions. These results isolate which of these ideological attitudes are relevant to opposing forms of climate activism and are discussed for each ideology below.

People who more strongly support an unrestrained free market were less likely to intend to use activism to advocate for pro-climate policy, though no more or less likely to intend to do so to agitate against climate policy. The negative association between free market ideology and pro-climate activism is consistent with the idea that pro-climate policy may entail a challenge to the free market system. Campbell and Kay (2014) introduced the concept of 'solution aversion', where the policy response to a problem is so unpalatable that it can drive ideologically motivated denial of the issue. People who defend the free market are unlikely to accept (or in this case, advocate for) system-challenging climate solutions through activism. It follows that the same ideology could increase

intentions to advocate for fewer environmental protections. However, our null result for the relationship between free market ideology and anti-climate activism is novel, and suggests that the preference for unrestricted market conditions may not compel people to protest against environmental progress. One interpretation of these results is that defenders of the free market may feel little need to protest for conservative change.

Thomas and Osborne (2022) argue that collective action movements must be evaluated within their unique context. Accordingly, at the time of data collection, Australia was named among the least ambitious nations on climate reform in the developed world (Burck et al., 2020). Thus, right-wing satisfaction with national inaction on environmental issues in Australia may explain why endorsement of a free market ideology is unrelated to intentions to act against pro-climate action. We therefore cannot rule out the possibility that free market ideology motivates protest for conservative social change in different contexts, such as during the debate or implementation of progressive policy.

To date within the environmental psychology literature, SDO (and RWA, discussed below) has largely been understood as a barrier to pro-environmentalism (Stanley & Wilson, 2019). Our results contribute to this literature by showing that SDO is also correlated with lower intentions to engage in both pro- and anti-climate collective action. While the former result corroborates the conceptualisation of SDO as a negative correlate of pro-environmentalism, its negative association with anti-climate activism is novel. These associations indicate that, although those who more strongly favour unequal social systems are less supportive of pro-climate reform, they are nonetheless *less likely* to take collective action to prevent such reform. Put another way: the negative association implies that among those who oppose climate action, participants with lower SDO reported greater anti-climate activism intentions than those with higher SDO.

We can speculate on several possible reasons for the lower intentions to engage in anti-climate activism among those with higher SDO. First, social dominants may be aware of the inequalities inherent in some climate policies, where lower status groups are disproportionately

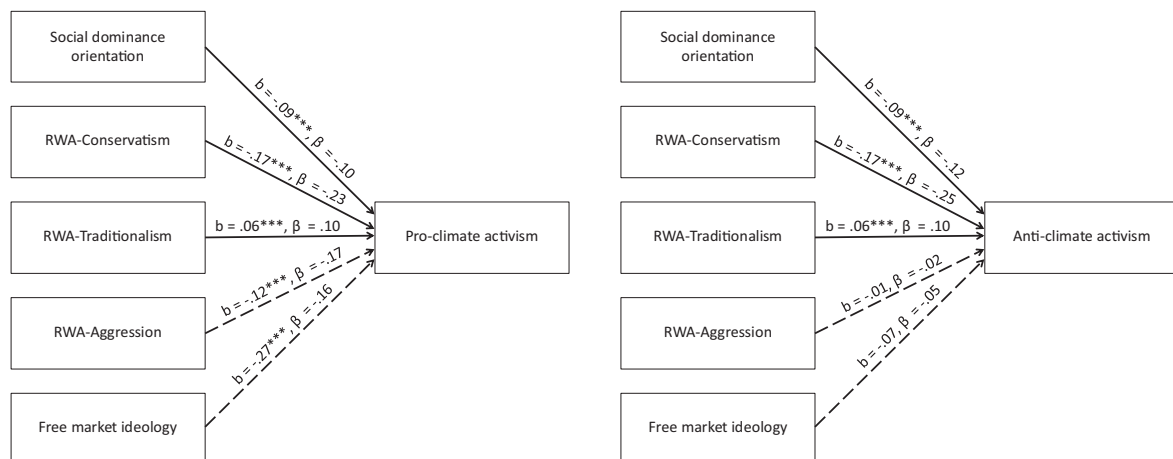


Fig. 1. Associations between ideology and activism intentions among pro- and anti-climate groups. Note. Solid lines identify paths that are equal in strength between pro- and anti-climate groups; dashed lines identify paths that differ in strength between groups. Both unstandardised b and standardised β are shown. *** $p < .001$.

affected by policy changes such as job losses in the transition away from emission-intensive industries (Green & Gambhir, 2020). Given their greater tolerance for inequality, people who endorse SDO may be more permissive of these hierarchy-entrenching reforms and therefore less moved to protest against them. By contrast, those opposed to climate action and opposed to intergroup inequality (i.e., lower SDO participants in our anti-climate group) may be more moved to act to protect lower status groups from such reforms. Another possibility is that those endorsing SDO would be supportive of *others* protesting against environmental protections, but they are not moved to engage in these actions themselves (i.e., a free-rider problem). Participating in a collective movement to disrupt pro-climate reform requires some personal sacrifice in terms of effort and time, and those lower in SDO may be comparatively more willing to engage in costly advocacy for what they think is right. These possibilities warrant further research.

As with free-market ideology, a changing context could reveal different SDO-driven protest intentions (e.g., Stanley et al., 2024). For example, if proposed climate policy is perceived as unfair and illegitimate, those invested in inequality and social stability may be motivated to restore their preferred system (as in the protests against carbon pricing in 2011). Together with the findings for free-market ideology, these results may indicate that Australia has yet to reach a tipping point where right-wing reactionary action stemming from these ideologies is needed to stop or reverse successes from the pro-climate movement.

There were some reasons to expect the distinct facets of RWA would predict diverging pathways to action. Indeed, while Weiner and Federico (2017) reasoned that authoritarians ought to shy away from collective action, only one of the three subdimensions of RWA has obedience and deference to authority at its core. As hypothesised, this conservatism dimension (authoritarian submission) correlated negatively with collective action intentions for both groups. These results likely reflect that participation in actions that disrupt the system conflict with the preference for social order. But deference to authority should not be conceptualised as an inherent ideological barrier to climate-supportive attitudes and behaviours, as it may promote environmentalism within aligned political systems. Indeed, Reese (2012) found that RWA-Conservatism related to greater environmental attitudes in Germany due to the nation's proliferation of pro-environmental policies. Nevertheless, our results imply that this aspect of RWA suppresses protest activity, regardless of the cause.

We hypothesised and found that RWA-Traditionalism related to stronger intentions to take part in anti-climate activism to defend hierarchy and tradition threatened by climate reform. This association was similarly positive and of equivalent strength among pro-climate actors. Thus, favouring traditional norms and values may compel people to pursue collective action on the climate consistent with their preference, whether that be to advocate for or against climate policy. We had not anticipated a positive association with RWA and activism among the pro-climate group. One possible explanation for this link is that those preferring tradition may take collective action to return to the better environmental conditions of the past, or to avoid the societal change brought about by a climate-altered future. At the same time, those who endorse this ideology but oppose climate action may be motivated to protest to prevent perceived detrimental effects to the prevailing social conditions and way of life potentially caused by climate policy (Stanley et al., 2024). This interpretation is consistent with Duckitt et al.'s (2010) conceptualisation of RWA-Traditionalism as an expression of the motivation to preserve the traditional morals and norms and resist progressive changes. Thus, participants endorsing this ideology are resistant to change, but may be threatened by different forms of change: with the changes threatened by a climate-altered future potentially motivating collective action among pro-climate traditionalists, and the changes threatened by strong climate reform potentially motivating those

endorsing traditionalism within the anti-climate group.

We found the expected negative association between RWA-Aggression (favouring punitive measures to maintain social control) and pro-climate activism, and that RWA-Aggression was unrelated to anti-climate activism. These results highlight an important distinction in the ideological predictors of pro- and anti-climate collective action. Based on Duckitt et al.'s (2010) model, our results suggest that anti-climate actors are unlikely to engage in conservative protest movements for the climate to satisfy motivational goals for safety and security. For pro-climate actors, activists are more likely to endorse a permissive approach to the violation of social norms and traditional values.

Together, our results on RWA reinforce our argument that authoritarianism is not inherently antithetical to collective action (e.g., Weiner & Federico, 2017). Choma et al. (2020) similarly showed that endorsement of RWA related to stronger intentions to take collective action to address societal moral breakdown. Our research shows that the tripartite model of RWA (Duckitt et al., 2010) can add nuance to this literature by helping to locate which aspects of this ideological attitude underlie conservative collective action.

Our research was limited by its correlational design. Future research should use experimental and longitudinal methods to investigate the assumed causal direction of the associations identified here. This could include assessing the impact that inducing or reducing these ideologies has on pro- and anti-climate activism intentions (e.g., Zhao et al., 2018), or how within-person variation in these ideologies over time impacts activism behaviour (e.g., González et al., 2022). We were also limited in testing our model with intentions, and not actual participation in collective action, which could be assessed in the future. Examining differences in specific pro- and anti-climate protest actions would also be informative, including those actions with a direct counterprotest equivalent (e.g., pro- and anti- carbon pricing protestors), or actions centring on discrete environmental issues (e.g., repealing a disliked legislation, or blocking a particular drilling site) or a suite of environmental reforms.

Our analysis was also limited to these five ideological attitudes and there are other likely predictors of collective action intentions, such as group-based emotions (e.g., anger) and perceived efficacy (Van Zomeren et al., 2008), and a wider variety of ideological attitudes, including left-wing authoritarianism (Milfont & Osborne, 2024). Given that our model explained almost half as much variance in anti-climate versus pro-climate activism intentions, there is a particular need for further research on the most relevant predictors of anti-climate activism. This may include satisfaction with the current status quo of climate (in)action, which future research ought to measure to directly test the explanation we proposed above. Additional dimensions may also be relevant in direct counterprotest scenarios, such as where authoritarian aggression is channelled towards punitive actions towards groups perceived to be taking part in unlawful action (such as the blocking of roads), consistent with an authoritarian aggression tendency to punish 'deviants'.

5. Conclusion

Progressive reforms to welfare, health care, and immigration policies depend on both the success of efforts to shape public support for such reforms, and the ability to counter the persuasive attempts from groups that aim to undermine policy reform (Nisbet, 2009). Collective movements to address climate change must also overcome resistance behaviours. Although those who endorse right-wing ideological attitudes can be motivated to engage in protest to defend or change the status quo (e.g., Liekefett & Becker, 2022), our results reveal that right-wing ideologies generally predicted lower collective action intentions in the context

of both pro- and anti-climate activism in Australia. Thus, although the ideological propensity to act may be similar across pro- and anti-climate actors, the consequences for the climate could not be further apart.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Samantha K. Stanley: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Danny Osborne:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Zoe Leviston:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Iain Walker:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization.

Ethics approval statement

The Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committee approved the ethical aspects of the study (Protocol number 2020/429).

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2025.113387>.

Data availability

Data are available on the Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/9k7xz/>

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