The politics of meat consumption and climate change

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Introduction

- Meat consumption is one of the leading causes of climate crisis (production of Methane), water pollution, providing just 18% of calories but takes up 83% of farmland.
- Avoiding and reducing meat consumption is the best way to reduce environmental impact on the planet.
- In this study, we investigated RWA and SDO as predictors of red meat consumption attitudes, trust in organisations regarding the impact of red meat on the environment, the impact of agriculture on the environment, and willingness to pay more for red meat to protect the environment

Methods

➤486 US participants recruited from Mturk completed the study.

➤Participants completed the following measures

    ➤Ideological belief (RWA/SDO, Duckitt et al, 2011)

    ➤Red meat attitude (based on Choma et al., 2016 work)

    ➤Attitudes towards red meat consumption (Hayley et al, 2015)

    ➤Impact of agriculture on the environment (Boston et al., 2011; European Commission, 2010)

    ➤Distrust in authorities (Modified version of Krause et al., 2013: see Choma et al., 2016).

    ➤Willingness to pay more for red meat

    ➤Willingness to reduce red meat consumption

    ➤Demographic variables: Age gender, ethnicity, income, education, urban/rural, and political affiliation, frequency of meat consumption, climate change scepticism, knowledge about meat impact, identification as a meat eater.

	RMA		RMC		Impact	
Step:	1	2	1	2	1	2
Age	-.00 [-.00,.00]	-.02 [-.00,.00]	-.10*[-.02,-.00]	-.11**[-.02,-.00]	-.15**[-.02,-.01]	-.14**[-.02,-.00]
Gender	-.04 [-.11,.03]	-.03 [-.11,.03]	-.02 [-.28,.15]	-.02 [-.28,.14]	.07*[.00,.22]	.07*[.00,.22]
Religion	-.10**[-.03,-.01]	-.06 [-.02,.00]	.01 [-.03,.04]	.05 [-.02,.07]	.00 [-.02,.02]	-.03 [-.03,.01]
Ethnicity	-.01 [-.02,.01]	-.00 [-.02,.01]	.15**[.04,.12]	.16**[.04,.13]	-.08*[-.05,-.00]	-.09*[-.05,-.01]
Income	-.01 [-.03,.02]	-.02 [-.03,.02]	.03 [-.05,.09]	.02 [-.05,.09]	-.09*[-.08,-.01]	-.08*[-.08,-.01]
Education	.01 [-.03,.04]	.01 [-.03,.04]	.06 [-.03,.20]	.06 [-.03,.20]	.04 [-.02,.09]	.04 [-.02,.09]
Urban/Rural	-.01 [-.04,.03]	.00 [-.04,.04]	-.04 [-.18,.05]	-.04 [-.16,.06]	.04 [-.02,.09]	.03 [-.03,.08]
Political Ori	.04 [-.01,.08]	.02 [-.03,.06]	.07 [-.02,.25]	.05 [-.05,.23]	-.04 [-.11,.03]	-.03 [-.10,.04]
Frequency	.10*[.03,.12]	.10**[.02,.11]	.14**[.10,.37]	.14**[.09,.36]	.01 [-.06,.08]	.02 [-.05,.09]
Skepticism	-.32**[.10, .15]	.21**[.05,.11]	.16**[.07,.23]	.09 [-.01,.18]	-.40**[-.26,-.18]	-.32**[-.23,-.13]
Knowledge	-.33**[-.12,-.08]	-.32**[-.12,-.08]	-.22**[-.23,-.10]	-.21**[-.22,-.10]	.39**[.14,.20]	.38**[.13,.20]
Meat ID	.31**[.15,.24]	.30**[.15,.23]	.33**[.37,.63]	.32**[.35,.61]	-.08*[-.14,-.01]	-.07 [-.13,.00]
RWA		.16**[.04,.12]		.14*[.04,.29]		-.12*[-.15,-.02]
SDO		.06 [-.00,.04]		.02 [-.05,.08]		-.03 [-.05,.02]
R^2	.61	.63**	.41	.43*	.56	.57*

Discussion

- Eating more red meat predicted favourable red meat attitudes, opposition to reducing red meat consumption, and unwillingness to reduce red meat consumption. Climate change skepticism significantly predicted less favourable red meat attitudes, opposition to reducing consumption, disbelief that agriculture is implicated in climate change, unwillingness to pay or reduce red meat consumption, and more distrust of environmental agencies, CPOs, universities, and government.
- Greater knowledge significantly predicted *less* favourable red meat attitudes, support for reducing consumption, belief that meat production negatively impacts the environment, greater willingness to reduce consumption, and greater trust of environmental organizations.
- Higher RWA predicted: favourable red meat attitudes, opposition to reducing red meat consumption, disbelief about the impact of red meat, and great trust of information from industry/trade agencies and government agencies.
- Stronger endorsement of SDO predicted: less willingness to pay more for beef, less willingness to reduce red meat consumption, and more distrust of environmental agencies, consumer protection agencies, and universities/colleges.