

Resarching topic #15 -- SOCIETAL RESPONSES – CLIMATE DENIAL AS A COUNTER-MOVEMENT

[last revised 3/12/2021]

This prompt offers two kinds of help:

- A brief overview of the kinds of questions you might wish to explore as you study how climate change is likely to affect the food supply;
- A suggested strategy for how to search the literature as you prepare to write your paper.

OVERVIEW – SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE – ANTI-ACTIVISM; CLIMATE DENIAL

In some countries (only some; climate denial seems to mostly be an Anglophone phenomenon, with strong presence in the U.S., England and Australia), observation of, confirmation of, and subsequent alarm about climate change has been met with an organized counter-movement dedicated to persuading citizens and policy makers that climate change:

Is not happening

Or, if it is happening,

it is not caused by CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rising, but other, “natural” causes

it is not serious; it may even be beneficial

And the science of climate change is

Wrong

Or is still controversial (there is no consensus)

Or the scientists are dishonest, opportunists who hunger after big research \$\$

Research questions:

Who are the climate deniers?

What are their claims, their rhetorical “moves”?

What are their strategies and tactics?

How are they organized?

“Think tanks”

On the internet

In the formal political process (parties, Congress, climate denying Administrations)

Who funds them?

## SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR SEARCHING THE LITERATURE

I recommend the following sequence for searching the literature:

- 1 Start with a search of the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**;
- 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com);
- 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine;
- 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**.  
(NOTE that I do not suggest using Wikipedia.)

### 1 Search the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**

(NOTE: There are many excellent reports one can consult. You will find a lot of repetition, so you do not need to consult every source. Here I start with a handful of the most recent reports, followed by a more complete list.)

These publications should, in most cases, supply you with all you need:

IPCC's most recent full set of reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

EPA: [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society_.html)

U.S. Global Change Research Program:

<https://science2017.globalchange.gov/> (the science)

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (the impacts)

American Meteorological Society:

[www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017_lowres.pdf)

A more complete list of best scientific and governmental sources:

#### International

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)  
World Meteorological Organization

#### Agencies of the U.S. federal government

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)  
U.S. Global Change Research Program

#### Scientific bodies – U.S.

National Academic of Sciences  
Climate Change at the National Academies (climatechange@nas.edu)  
National Science Foundation

#### Other professional bodies – American Meteorological Society

## 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

(NOTE: Narrow and focus your search by using several phrases in quotes – such as “climate change”. For example, if you are searching for how climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, don’t just enter “climate change,” search, instead for” “climate change” AND “extreme weather events”)

Search terms to use (you may certainly choose others):

“climate change” AND x, where x can be:

denial

skepticism

(NOTE: For some citations you find on Google Scholar, you can directly download the PDF. For other citations, you may be able to find and download PDFs if your University library offers on line access to academic journals.)

## 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine

Use the same search terms to do a general search on Google or another search engine.

This will bring up information more recent than you find on scholar.google.com (it takes several years for research to be published in academic journals).

## 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**

New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian

On line sources

Climate Central

GRIST

Society of Environmental Journalists

The Daily Climate

Climate Nexus

InsideClimate News

DeSmogBlog

Skepticalscience.com

Yale 350

(NOTE about on line sources: You will run into a lot of denialist disinformation on the internet, on websites, on blogs, on youtube. FYI, skepticalscience.com has a comprehensive list of denialist talking points (and refutations of those talking points).

See, for example: <https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php> )

Some more suggestions to help you get started:

To see directly what climate deniers on the internet say, you can go to some prominent websites: climatedepot.com; wattsupwiththat.com. You can see who the top deniers are at sites such as <https://www.beforetheflood.com/explore/the-deniers/top-10-climate-deniers/> (or similar lists found on the internet). Look at the websites of climate denier organizations. You can find a pretty good list at: [https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/solutions/fight-misinformation/global-warming-skeptic.html#.W7uruf1Rf\\_8](https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/solutions/fight-misinformation/global-warming-skeptic.html#.W7uruf1Rf_8)

Search for the rhetoric and actions of the fossil fuel industry: ExxonMobil, BP, big coal companies, Koch Industries.

The most frequently repeated talking point of denialism are listed, and refuted, on the left side of the <https://skepticalscience.com/> web page.

The sociologists who have done the most to study the organization of climate denial are Aaron McCright and Riley Dunlap. You can download several of their papers from scholar.google.com

The rhetoric of denialism is analyzed by psychologist Stephen Lewandowsky, et al, “NASA Faked the Moon Landing—Therefore, (Climate) Science Is a Hoax: An Anatomy of the Motivated Rejection of Science,” *Psychological Science* 24(5) 622–633, 2013.

-- PDF can be downloaded from scholar.google.com

Some stories from 2018:

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/410871-gop-shrugs-off-dire-study-warning-of-global-warming>

[https://grist.org/article/tom-steyer-trump-and-the-link-between-hate-groups-and-climate-denial/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=daily](https://grist.org/article/tom-steyer-trump-and-the-link-between-hate-groups-and-climate-denial/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily)

A deeper look at polarization in American politics: <https://hiddentribes.us/>

## New useful links, March 2021

### Companies knew

John Cook, *et al*, “America Misled: How the fossil fuel industry deliberately misled Americans about climate change,” <https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/america-misled/>

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coal-industry-climate-change\\_n\\_5dd6bbebe4b0e29d7280984f?fbclid=IwAR0\\_Tdu8ZLu4xfG5-n55uOXO9AO-p0RU2y9iLu7HFVhBlubyUKxJcsFz32g](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coal-industry-climate-change_n_5dd6bbebe4b0e29d7280984f?fbclid=IwAR0_Tdu8ZLu4xfG5-n55uOXO9AO-p0RU2y9iLu7HFVhBlubyUKxJcsFz32g)

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/23102019/exxon-scientists-climate-research-testify-congress-denial>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/01/10/how-fossil-fuel-industry-got-media-think-climate-change-was-debatable/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.01ab3d6ccc49](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/01/10/how-fossil-fuel-industry-got-media-think-climate-change-was-debatable/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.01ab3d6ccc49)

[https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063717035?utm\\_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm\\_campaign=a5000a8e7d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_05\\_11\\_11\\_46\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_724b1f01f5-a5000a8e7d-89254691](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063717035?utm_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm_campaign=a5000a8e7d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_11_11_46_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_724b1f01f5-a5000a8e7d-89254691)

[https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/we-knew-ex-oil-boss-says-climate-change-with-us-forevermore-20191101-p536fb.html?fbclid=IwAR15co1xYeURig\\_P-iQT84UCQBBpdwasGkLg4n2CBNDcc5KouPr\\_9lyBHo0](https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/we-knew-ex-oil-boss-says-climate-change-with-us-forevermore-20191101-p536fb.html?fbclid=IwAR15co1xYeURig_P-iQT84UCQBBpdwasGkLg4n2CBNDcc5KouPr_9lyBHo0)

### Video about funding for climate denial

<https://www.cNBC.com/2020/12/20/the-big-business-of-climate-change-denial-.html>

### New documents allow deeper view into the corporate organization of denial

<https://climateinvestigations.org/global-climate-coalition-industry-climate-denial/>

<https://www.desmogblog.com/2019/04/25/global-climate-coalition-documents-secretive-fossil-fuel-lobby-un-programs>

<https://www.climateliabilitynews.org/2019/04/25/gcc-global-climate-coalition-un-fossil-fuels/>

### Trump Administration

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/01/climate/trump-national-climate-assessment.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/02/14/she-pushed-trump-exit-paris-climate-agreement-rollback-environmental-rules-shes-returning-epa-chief-staff/>

<http://columbiaclimatelaw.com/resources/silencing-science-tracker/>