**Just-World Beliefs Moderate the Association between Identification with Nature and Pro-Environmental Behaviour**

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**Introduction**

Prior research has found that a sense of identification with nature predicts engagement in pro-environmental behaviour (PEB; Mackay, 2018).

Holding just-world beliefs can inhibit people from acknowledging environmental problems and engaging in PEB (Feinberg & Willer, 2010).

We hypothesized an interaction between these two variables—specifically, that perceiving the world as just would weaken the relationship between identification with nature and PEB.

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**Procedure**

1. Undergraduate participants first completed a measure of identification with nature (e.g. “I think of myself as a part of a larger ecosystem” adapted from Cameron, 2004).
2. Randomly assigned to be primed with just or unjust world beliefs through a sentence unscrambling task (Feinberg & Willer, 2010).
   - e.g., people bad patio bad things deserve; people good patio bad things deserve
3. Participants were offered a button to keep, two with pro-environmental messages and one neutral. DV is whether or not participants chose a pro-environmental button.
   - Participants were excluded if they did not complete the manipulation (fewer than 6 of 8 sentences unscrambled).

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**Results**

**Study 1**

- **Participants**: 157. Participants chose from the 3 buttons below. The DV was whether participants chose at least one of the pro-environmental buttons.

**Study 2**

- **Participants**: 160. Study 2 was a pre-registered replication of Study 1. The only difference was in the buttons used in the DV.

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**Conclusions**

Across studies, identification with nature predicted PEB for participants in the injustice condition, but not in the justice condition.

The predicted 2-way interaction was only significant in Study 1. However, the pattern of findings does offer some evidence for the attenuating effect of just-world beliefs on the relationship between identification with nature and pro-environmental behavior.

More generally, results point to the possibility that people’s pro-environmental behavior is not just a function of how they relate to nature, but also depends on how people understand and appraise human social relations.

Future studies would benefit from increased power, achieved either by increasing sample size or by using a continuous measure of PEB.

Similarly, future research could benefit from a stronger, less subtle manipulation of just-world beliefs.

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**References**

