Psychological Obstacles to Climate Change Mitigation

Extensive scientific evidence supports the claim that human actions are causing changes in the global climate system. Despite the widespread concern regarding this issue, sufficient climate change mitigation efforts are delayed. I have received funding for a postdoc project that aims at investigating two barriers to climate action: 1) Climate change denial, which is still occurring at varying levels among policy-makers and the public, and 2) Resistance to making behavioral changes that would substantially decrease personal greenhouse gas emissions. My aim is to collect data, in international cooperation, simultaneously in at least four countries (Sweden, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the US). Cross-cultural investigations into the psychological underpinnings of climate-related beliefs and attitudes are needed, since environmentalism varies across the nations. Furthermore, this project aims at developing and experimentally testing communication frames that would increase engagement in climate action.