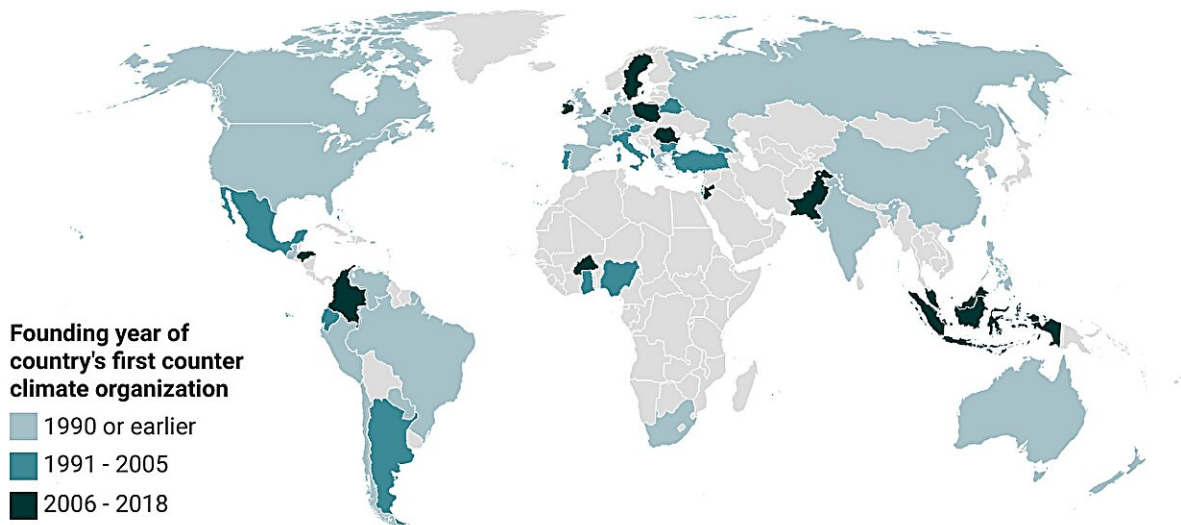


# Anti-climate action groups tend to arise in countries with stronger climate change efforts, study suggests

January 22 2025

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## Countries with at least one counter climate change organization



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Map of countries in the world that have at least one counter climate change organization by 2018, by date the first organization is founded. Credit: Hannah Trillo, Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability, CC-BY 4.0 ([creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))

A new study suggests that countries with stronger commitments to

protect the natural environment—regardless of national oil dependence or other economic interests—are more likely to see the establishment of counter climate change groups that aim to obstruct climate change action.

Jared Furuta and Patricia Bromley of Stanford University, U.S., present these findings in the open-access journal [PLOS One](#) on January 22, 2025.

Prior research has highlighted how the fossil fuel industry and conservative think tanks and philanthropists have stoked climate change skepticism in the U.S. in order to serve their economic and political interests.

However, in the past several decades, the counter climate change movement has become international and now includes eclectic organizations whose views are not straightforwardly tied to economic or political self-interest.

To better understand the factors influencing the growing international counter climate change movement, Furuta and Bromley conducted a statistical analysis of data on more than 160 countries and hundreds of counter climate organizations around the world.

Their analysis suggests that counter climate organizations are more likely to arise in countries that have stronger policies and structures aimed at protecting the natural environment.

Notably, factors related to a country's economic interests—such as greenhouse gas emissions or reliance on oil resources—did not have a significant association with the development of counter climate change organizations. Nor did several other alternative factors also explored by the researchers, such as a country's level of [economic development](#), level of income inequality, its ties to the U.S., or the ideology of its political

leadership.

These findings support the idea that reactionary and oppositional dynamics shape counter climate change movements as part of a process that is intertwined with the evolution of pro-environmental efforts.

On the basis of their findings, the researchers outline potential directions for future research and policymaking, suggesting, for instance, that climate change policymakers and environmental organizations might consider routinely investigating the ways in which their efforts could possibly trigger counterproductive reactionary movements, and adjust their efforts accordingly.

The authors add, "More than 50 countries around the world are now home to at least one counter climate change organization: nonprofits that work to undermine climate science and policy.

"These organizations have long been active in the US, but in recent years they have evolved to form a global movement; they arise especially in countries with the strongest environmental policies and institutions, rather than in countries with the highest levels of [greenhouse gas emissions](#) or industrial activity."

**More information:** Globalizing opposition to pro-environmental institutions: The growth of counter climate change organizations around the world, 1990 to 2018, *PLOS One* (2025). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0315012](#)

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Citation: Anti-climate action groups tend to arise in countries with stronger climate change

efforts, study suggests (2025, January 22) retrieved 30 January 2025 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2025-01-anti-climate-action-groups-tend.html>

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