

# CLIMATE CHANGE RISK PERCEPTIONS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

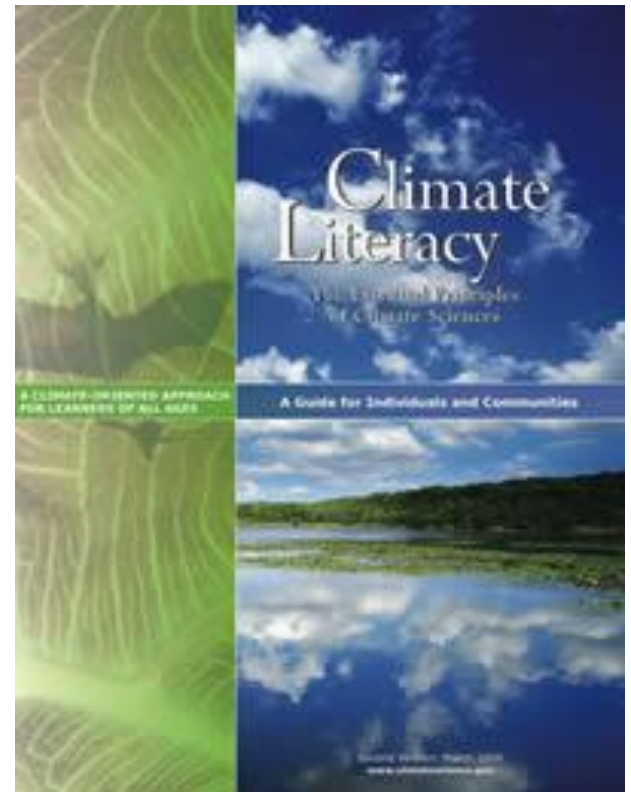
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**The power of climate change knowledge and the  
role of worldviews**

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# Building concern for climate change through education

- Concern for climate change is on the decline
- Worldviews are important
- Knowledge is polarizing
- Role of K-12 education??

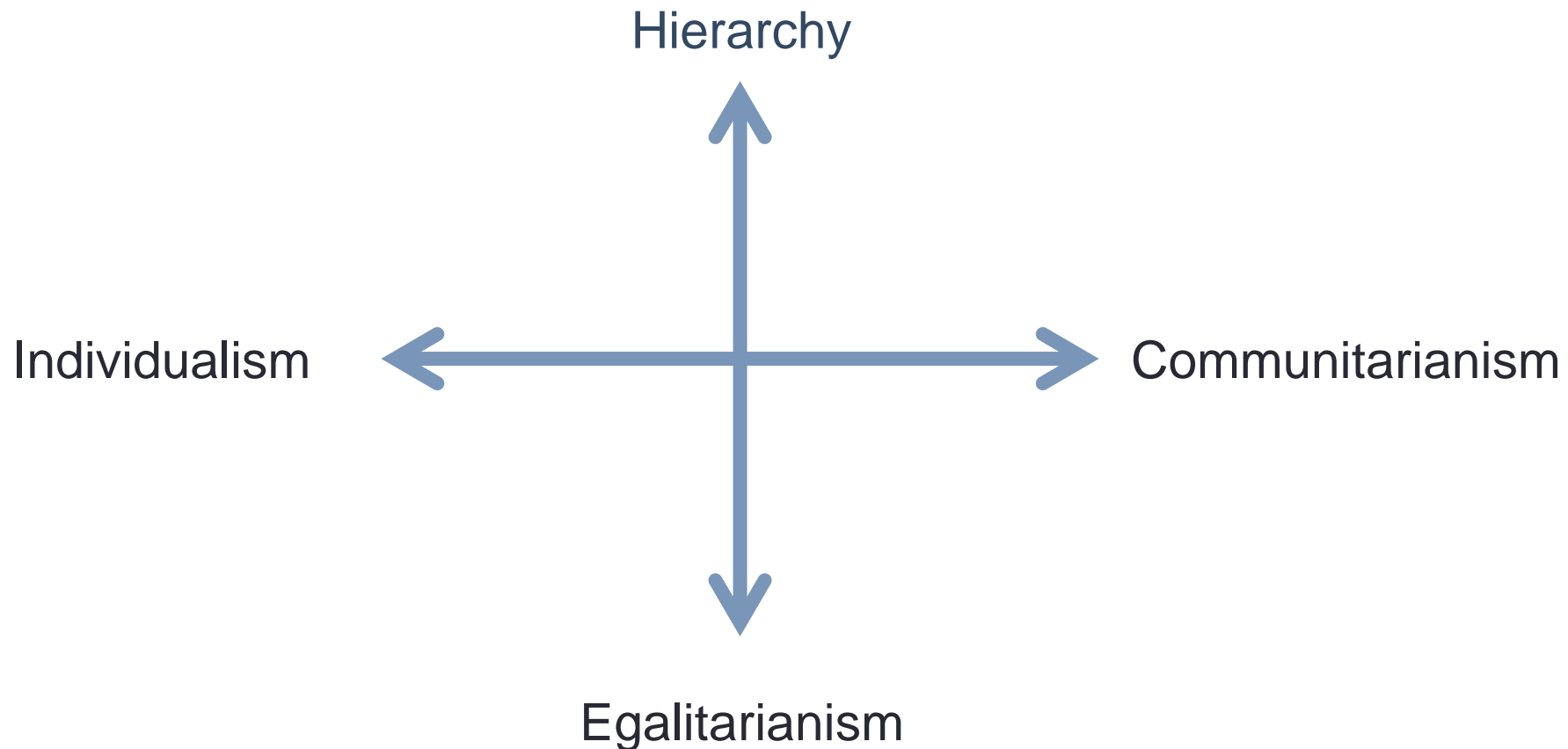


# Research questions

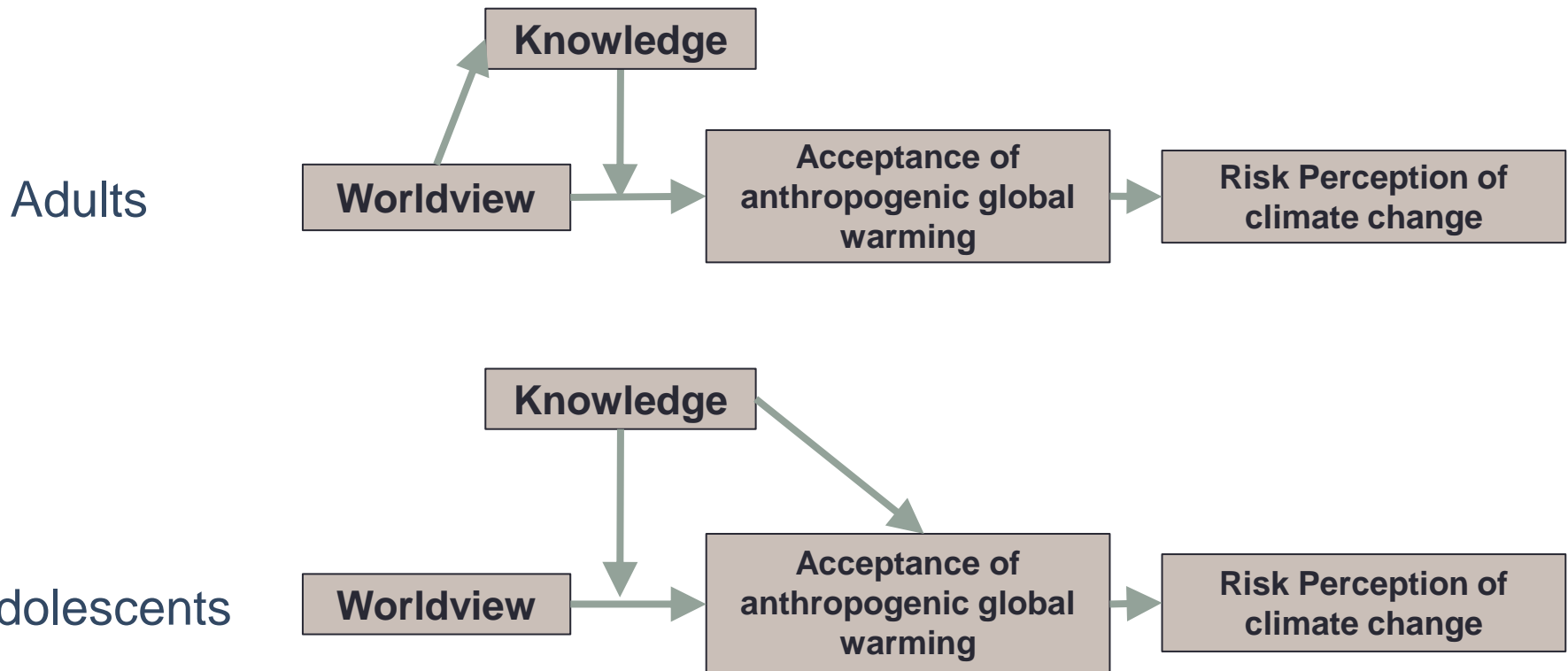
Are children different than adults?

- What is the role of worldview?
- What is the role of knowledge?
- Are climate literacy campaigns polarizing?

# Methods: worldview constructs



# Methods: Theoretical model



# Methods: Constructs

## Knowledge about climate change

Physical Knowledge

Knowledge of Causes

Knowledge of Impacts

## Worldview

Hierarchy

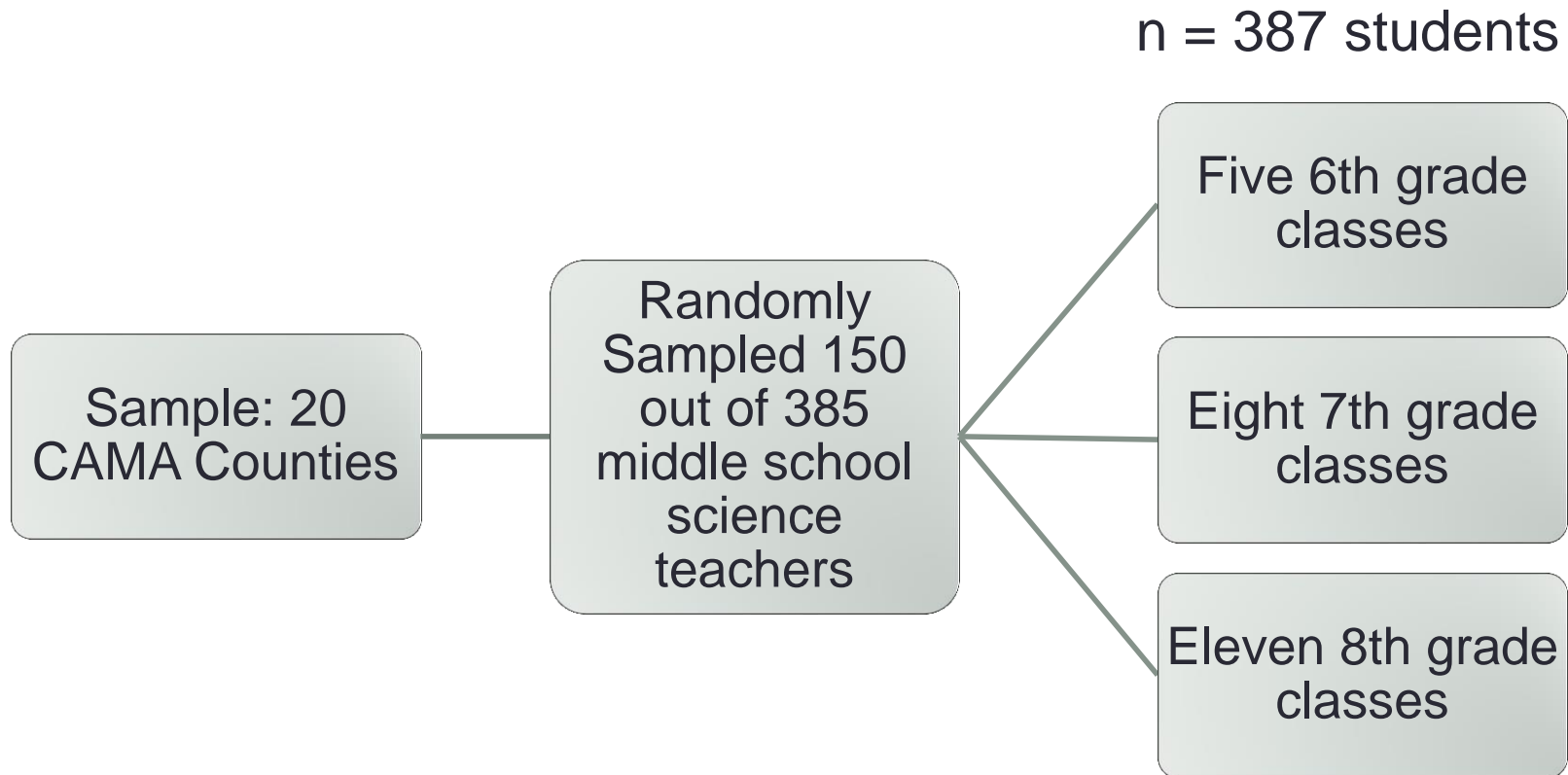
Individualism

**Pretesting:** Cognitive interviews and surveys with 92 middle school students

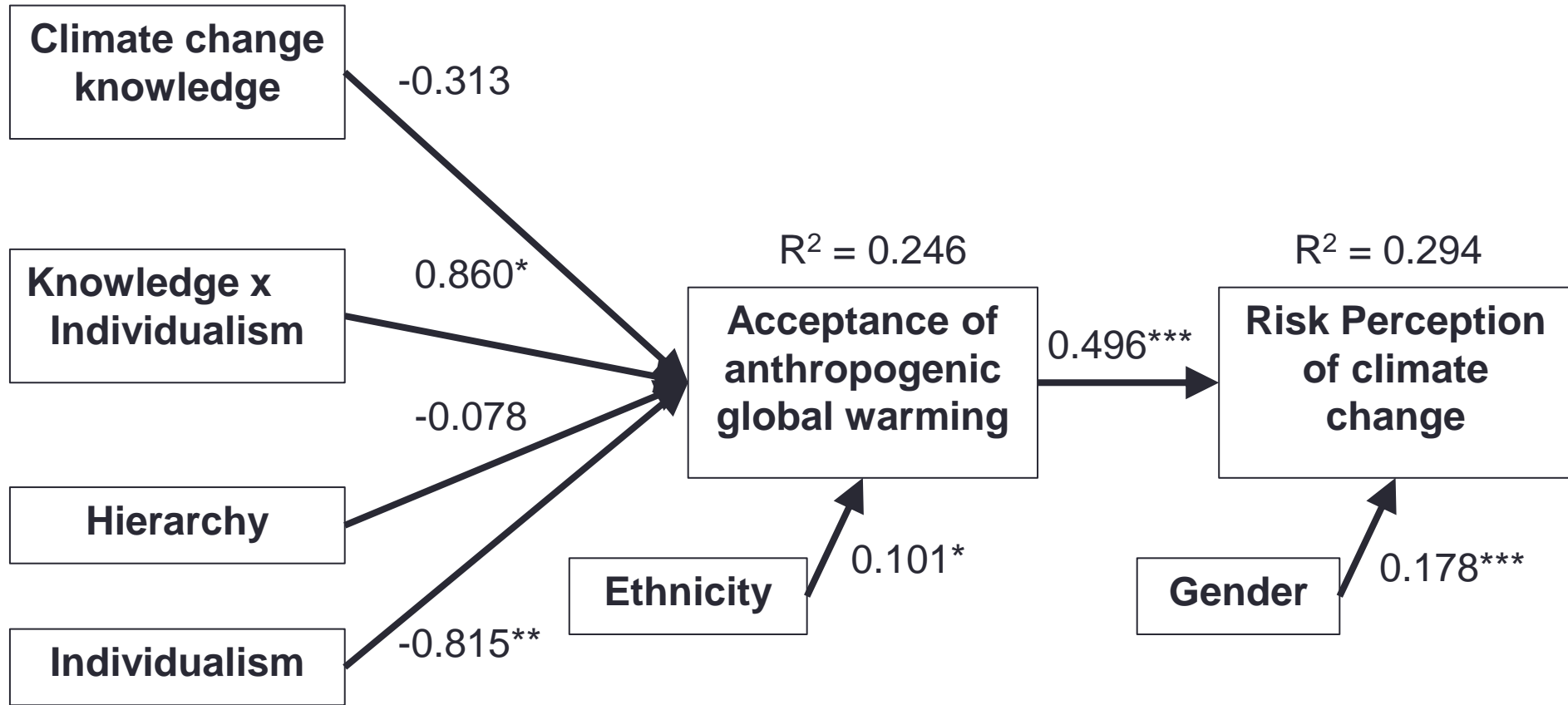
**Acceptance of anthropogenic global warming**

**Risk Perception of climate change**

# Methods: Sampling



# Results



Model goodness of fit statistics:

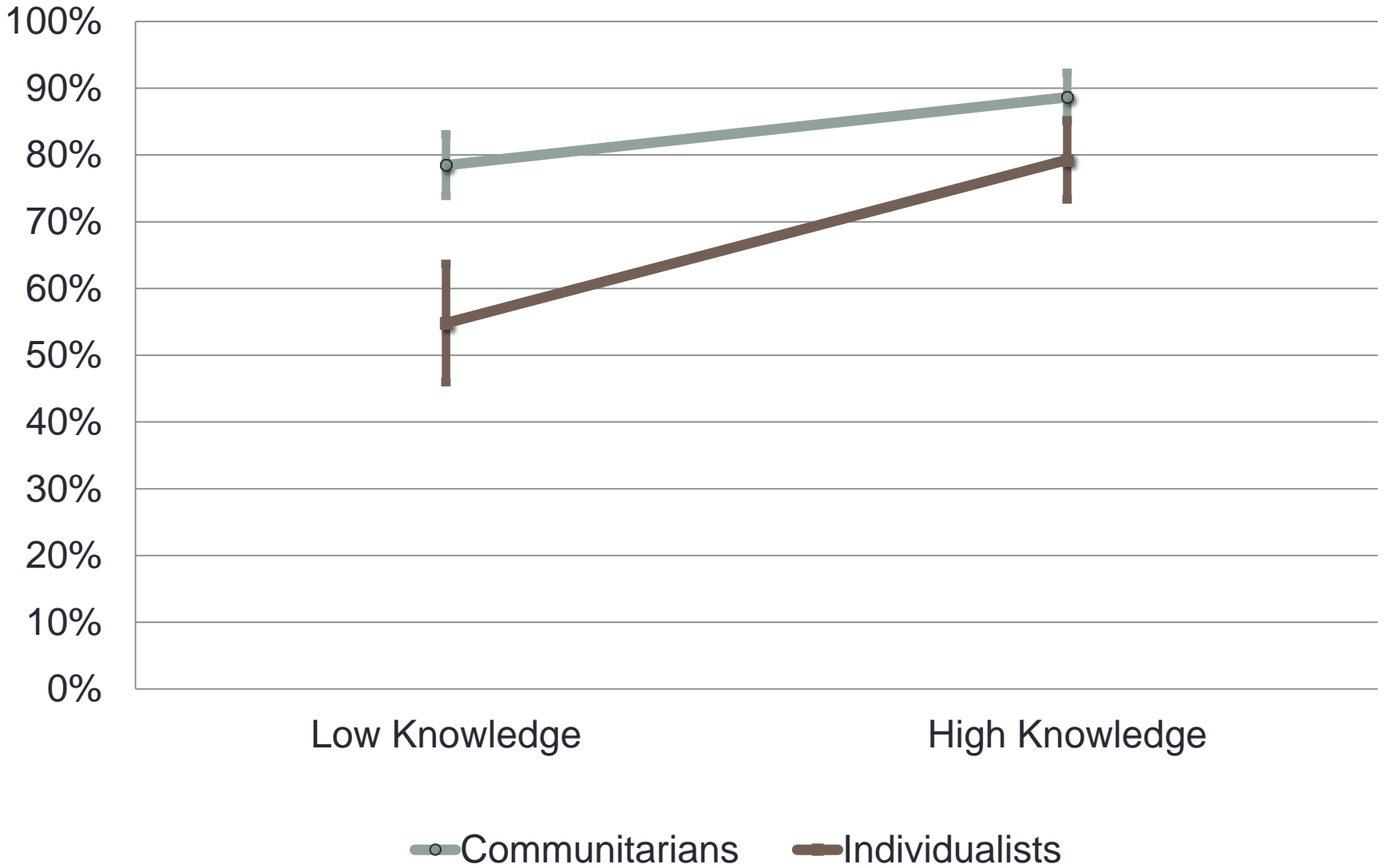
SRMR = 0.009

Overall R<sup>2</sup> = 0.278

\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001



# Acceptance of AGW



# Major Findings

- Climate literacy may help overcome skepticism based on worldview.
- Worldviews are still forming among children, but they do impact risk perceptions at low levels of climate change knowledge.
- White students and boys may be more skeptical than non-white students and girls.

# Discussion

- Climate literacy may overcome worldview-driven skepticism among adolescents.
  - Are kids different than adults?
  - Is climate literacy different than science literacy?
- Worldviews impact risk perceptions at low levels of climate change knowledge.
  - Framing
  - Focus on mitigation and adaptation
  - Address social controversy as part of science instruction
- More research needed to understand role of gender and ethnicity
  - Socialization?
  - Environmental justice?

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