Webinar Logistics

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Social Influences on Environmental Engagement

A Conservation Psychology webinar
Social Influences on Environmental Engagement

• Overview & Introductions
• Presentation
• Q&A

Moderator: Dr. Kayla Cranston, Faculty and Director of Conservation Psychology Strategy and Integration at Antioch University New England
Presenter: Meaghan Guckian

Meaghan Guckian, PhD is Core Faculty in the Department of Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England.

Working at the intersection of conservation psychology, communications, judgment and decision-making, and environmental conservation, Meaghan’s research examines the behavioral underpinnings of the multifaceted social-ecological dilemmas facing society.

She received her PhD in Environmental Conservation from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, studying how intentional social interactions can act as both barriers and conduits to environmental progress.
social influences on environmental engagement

meaghan guckian, phd
antioch university new england
today

- social influence + misperceptions
- e.g., catch-and-release angling
- channeling social influence
- questions
scales + approaches to change
people are social creatures

- people’s *understanding of and responses to* environmental issues have become deeply embedded in social meanings/relations
  - cultural cognition + identity protection (e.g., Kahan et al., 2011)
  - social + group identity effects (e.g., Parks et al., 2013)
  - social influence (e.g., Cialdini, 2011)
social norms

- unwritten rules that guide behavior, which are tied to contexts, cultures, groups, behavioral settings
- can have powerful influence on behavior:
  - when associated with an in-group (vs. out-group)
  - in novel situations (or conditions of uncertainty)
  - among those less interested in the behavior
types of norms

- **descriptive**
  - what most people do or is typical

- **injunctive**
  - what is socially accepted or appropriate
  - influence behavior when salient and activated in decision-making context
- **constructive**
  - when *aligned*, manifest prescribed course of action

- **destructive**
  - when *misaligned*, we tend to favor the majority
Social Norms Approach: Opower

Last Month Neighborhood Comparison

Last month you used 15% LESS electricity than your efficient neighbors.

YOU 504 kWh*

EFFICIENT NEIGHBORS 596

ALL NEIGHBORS 1,092

*KWh: A 100-Watt bulb burning for 10 hours uses 1 kilowatt-hour.

YOUR EFFICIENCY STANDING:

GREAT ☺☺

GOOD ☺

BELOW AVERAGE
what impacts normative perceptions?

- passive
  - observation
  - environmental cues
- active
  - interpersonal conversation
how people project their underlying beliefs and behaviors to others (modeling, signaling, talking), whether intentionally or unintentionally

can influence others’ behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs
placed flyers at handlebar of bicycles → what percent of people litter the flyer?

(NO GRAFFITI) → 33%  
(GRAFFITI) → 68%
Most Registered Voters Say the U.S. Should Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Regardless of What Other Countries Do

“The U.S. should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions...regardless of what other countries do”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Reg Voters (n=966)</th>
<th>Total Dem (n=466)</th>
<th>Ind (n=95)</th>
<th>Total Rep (n=356)</th>
<th>Lib D (n=295)</th>
<th>Mod/Con D (n=168)</th>
<th>Lib/Mod R (n=118)</th>
<th>Con R (n=238)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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</table>

The United States should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions... (a) regardless of what other countries do; (b) only if other industrialized countries reduce their emissions; (c) only if other industrialized and developing countries reduce their emissions; (d) The U.S. should not reduce its emissions; (e) don’t know.

issue of visibility

lack clear social signals demonstrating commitment to environment

most behaviors occur in confines of one’s own home (e.g., household energy consumption) –or– out of the view of others (e.g., recreational fishing)
social misperceptions

- pluralistic ignorance:
  - occurs when people in the majority incorrectly perceive that the majority of others share dissimilar beliefs

- false consensus:
  - occurs when people in the minority of opinion overestimate the number of others who share similar beliefs to their own

- misperceptions can have behavioral implications
normative beliefs + catch-and-release angling

1. Variability in angler behavior influences biological fitness and survival of angled and released fish (e.g., Cooke et al., 2013)
2. Evidence-based best practices (e.g., Brownscombe et al., 2016)

Increase in social media engagement + the emergence of ‘trophy shot’ images

What are anglers’ personal and normative perceptions concerning whether and how a fish should be held and exposed to air post-catch?
**descriptive norm assessment:**
what handling positions (and images) do anglers perceive as the most common?

**injunctive norm assessment:**
what are anglers’ personal beliefs about the appropriateness of handling and social media sharing practices?

what are anglers’ norm estimation for other anglers’ agreement with the appropriateness of handling and social media sharing practices?
holding a fish fully submerged in water

holding a fish vertically above the water

holding a fish partially submerged in water

holding a fish horizontally above the water
descriptive norm
‘It is ok to handle fish in the way demonstrated in the photo’
## perceived norm estimation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>handling: mean perceived norm estimate</th>
<th>partially submerged</th>
<th>horizontal hold</th>
<th>vertical hold</th>
<th>under-water hold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.31%</td>
<td>75.54%</td>
<td>59.69%</td>
<td>90.63%</td>
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</table>

What percentage of recreational anglers do you think agree with each of the following statements? “It is ok to handle fish like the way demonstrated in this photograph.”
Perceived Norm Estimate of Agreement with Handling Practice by Personal Agreement

- Partially Submerged
- Horizontal Hold
- Vertical Hold
- Underwater Hold

Estimated Agreement %

- Agree: 75, Disagree: 25 (n=1355, n=48)
- Agree: 75, Disagree: 25 (n=956, n=44)
- Agree: 75, Disagree: 25 (n=327, n=1076)
- Agree: 75, Disagree: 25 (n=1384, n=19)

Personal agreement
themes from catch-and-release research

- norms appear to be misaligned
- meaningful differences between angling subgroups
- correct misperceptions and communicate prevailing norms
  - particularly around vertical hold position
channeling social influence

- correct misperceptions
- make pro-env. behavior socially visible + encourage social signals
- remind people of shared values and beliefs
- emphasize the prevalence of good behaviors
- attach norms + pro-env. behaviors to relevant, socially desirable identities
questions
5 Principles of Co-Designing Conservation with (not for) the Community

Save the date for our next webinar:

Tuesday, March 24, 2020
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

Presenters: Daria Keys and Kayla Cranston

Registration: https://conta.cc/2STYH8m
Navigating the U.S. Presidential Candidate Climate Plans Webinar

Antioch University Environmental Studies graduate students have assessed all U.S. presidential candidates’ climate plans against 20 benchmarks, including priorities ranging from modernizing the transportation sector, to ending subsidies for fossil fuel companies, to holding the fossil fuel industry financially accountable. Their research findings are summarized in a table as a tool for voters to see how their favorite candidate measures up against the climate crisis.

This webinar will explore what policies need to be emphasized, and what support needs to be leveraged, to strengthen our greater collective capacity to effectively respond to the growing challenges of the present climate crisis.

Monday, March 2, Noon-1:00 PM, ET

https://conta.cc/2T3sNoK
Contact Us

We are here for you!

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