Social Influences on Environmental Engagement

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY
NEW ENGLAND

CONSERVATION PSYCHOLOGY INSTITUTE

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

Social Influences on Environmental Engagement

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

norm alignment and impact

- **constructive**
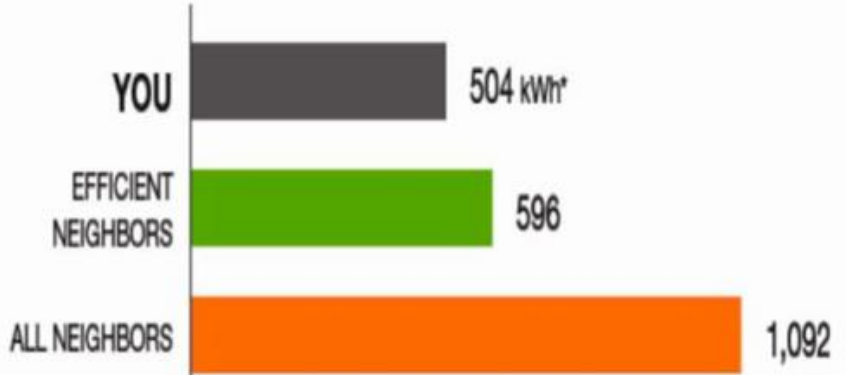 - when **aligned**, manifest prescribed course of action

- **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.

YOUR EFFICIENCY STANDING:

YOU — 504 kWh*
EFFICIENT NEIGHBORS — 596
ALL NEIGHBORS — 1,092

▶ GREAT 😊😊
GOOD 😊
BELOW AVERAGE

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

CURENT

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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

NO GRAFFITI

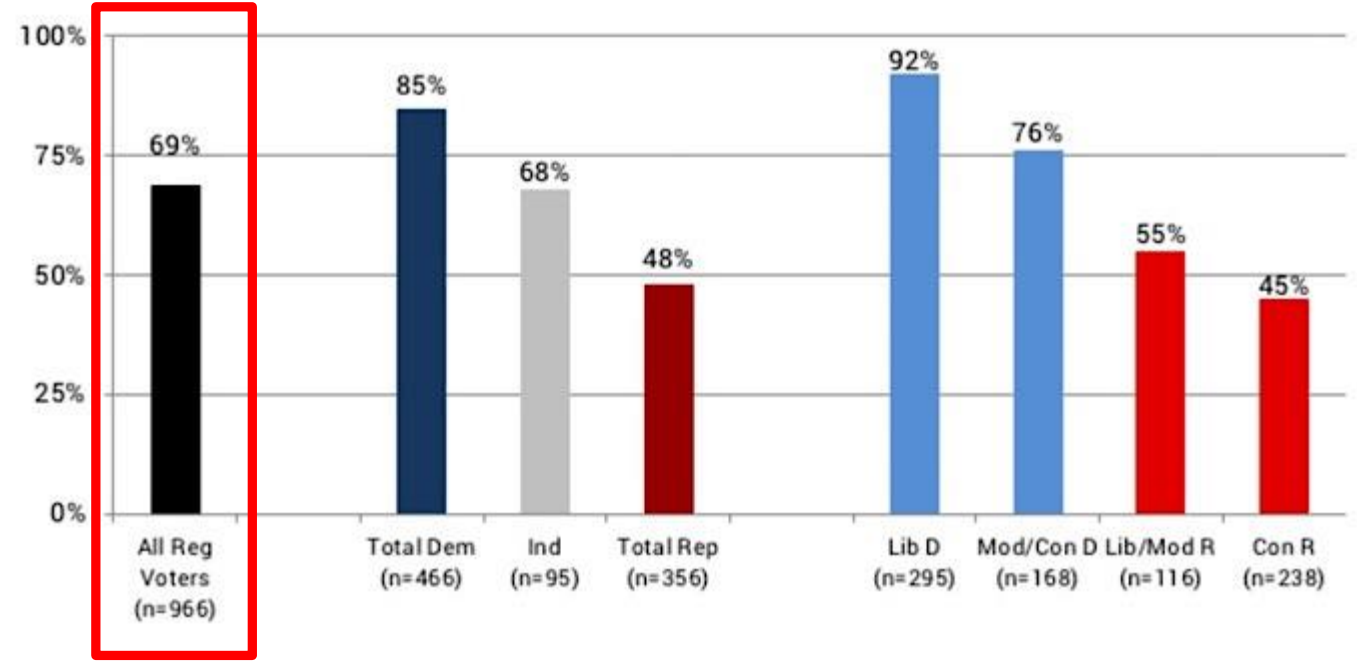# GRAFFITI

(N= 77) →   33%

(N=77) →   68%

placed flyers at handlebar of bicycles → what percent of people litter the flyer?

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"

	All Reg Voters (n=966)	Total Dem (n=466)	Ind (n=95)	Total Rep (n=356)	Lib D (n=295)	Mod/Con D (n=168)	Lib/Mod R (n=116)	Con R (n=238)
%	69%	85%	68%	48%	92%	76%	55%	45%

The United States should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions...(a) regardless of what other counties 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.

December 2018. Base: Registered American Voters.

YALE PROGRAM ON Climate Change Communication

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION
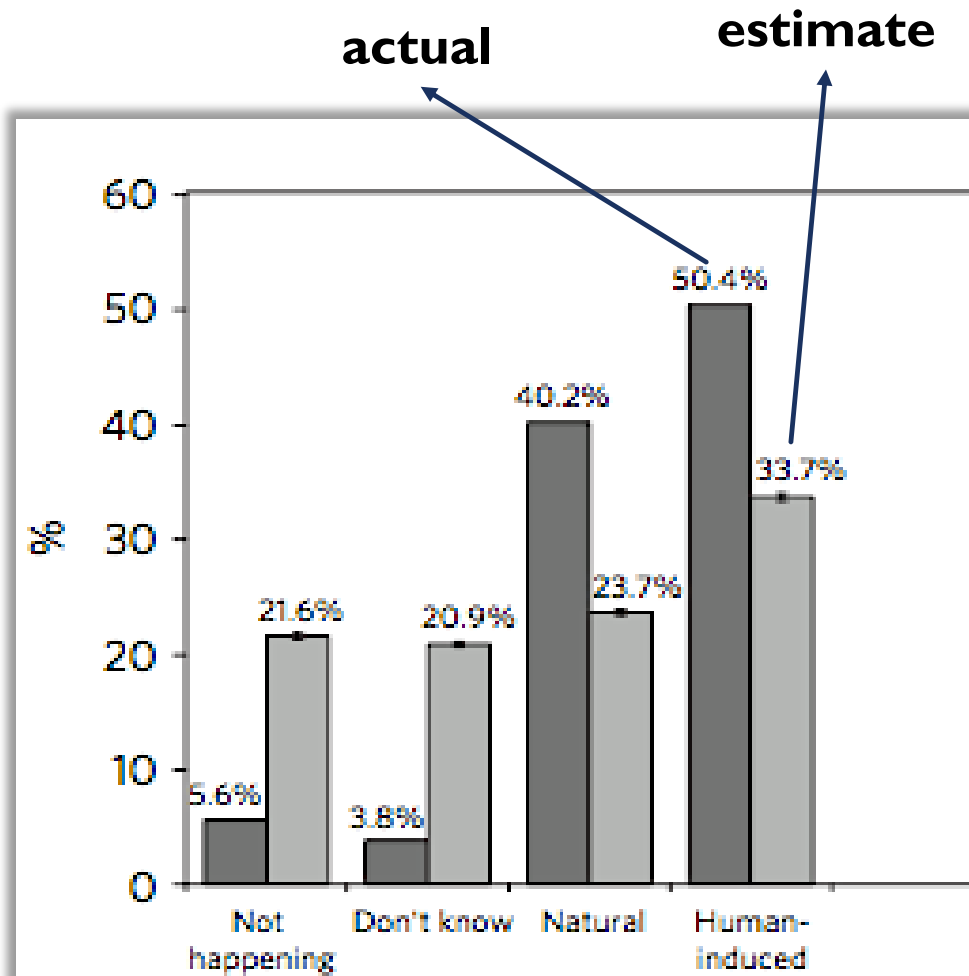
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issue of visibility

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

actual

estimate

- **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)

   1. evidence-based best practices (e.g., brownscombe et al., 2016)

2. increase in <u>social media</u> 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
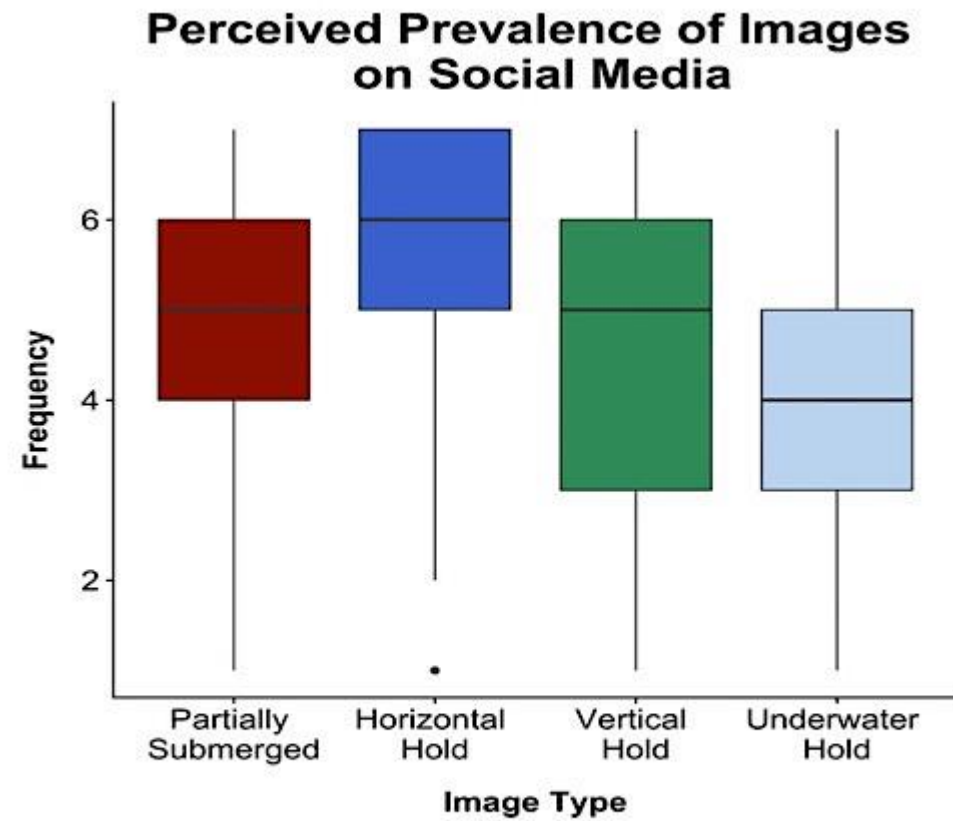
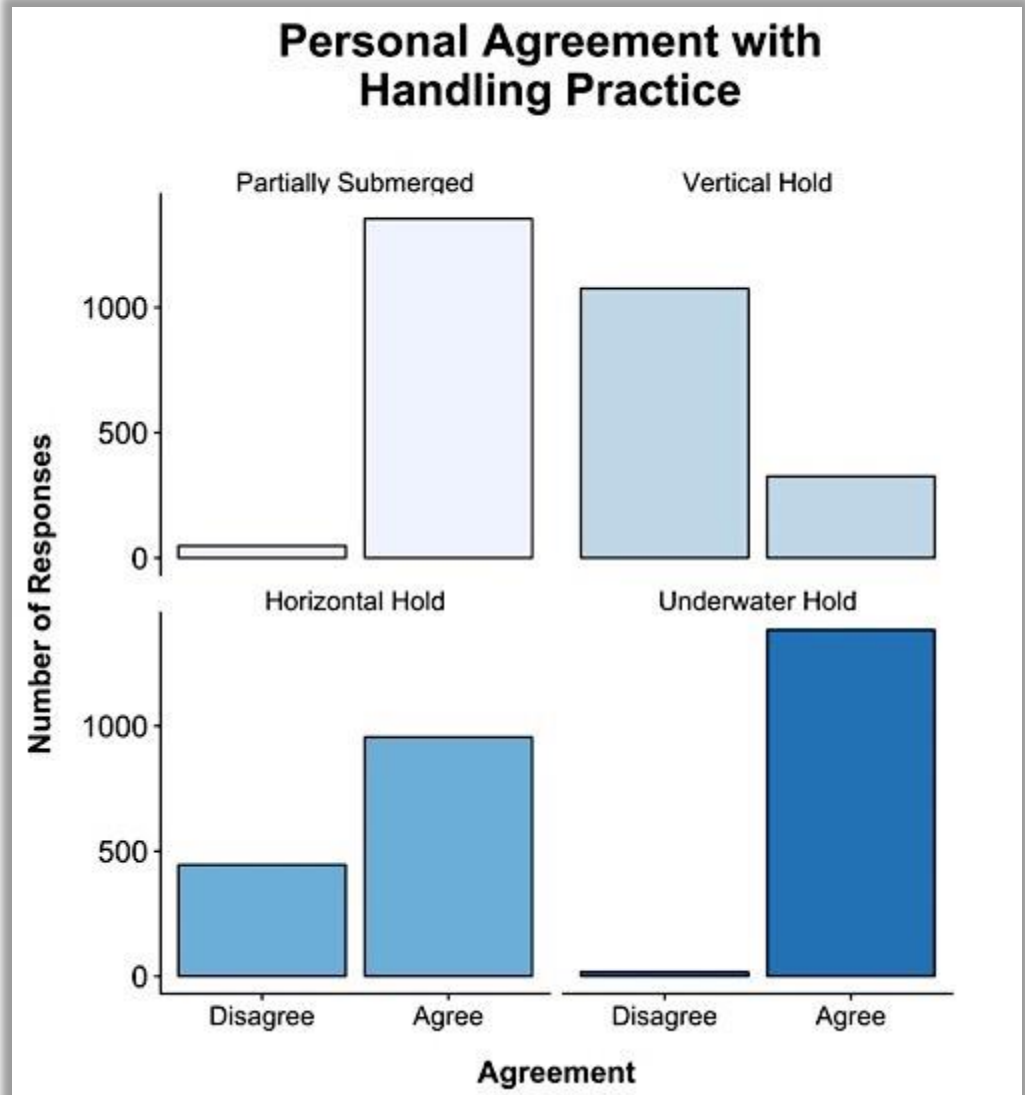holding a fish vertically above the water

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

	handling type			
	partially submerged	horizontal hold	vertical hold	under-water hold
handling: mean perceived norm estimate	87.31%	75.54%	59.69%	90.63%

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

Personal agreement
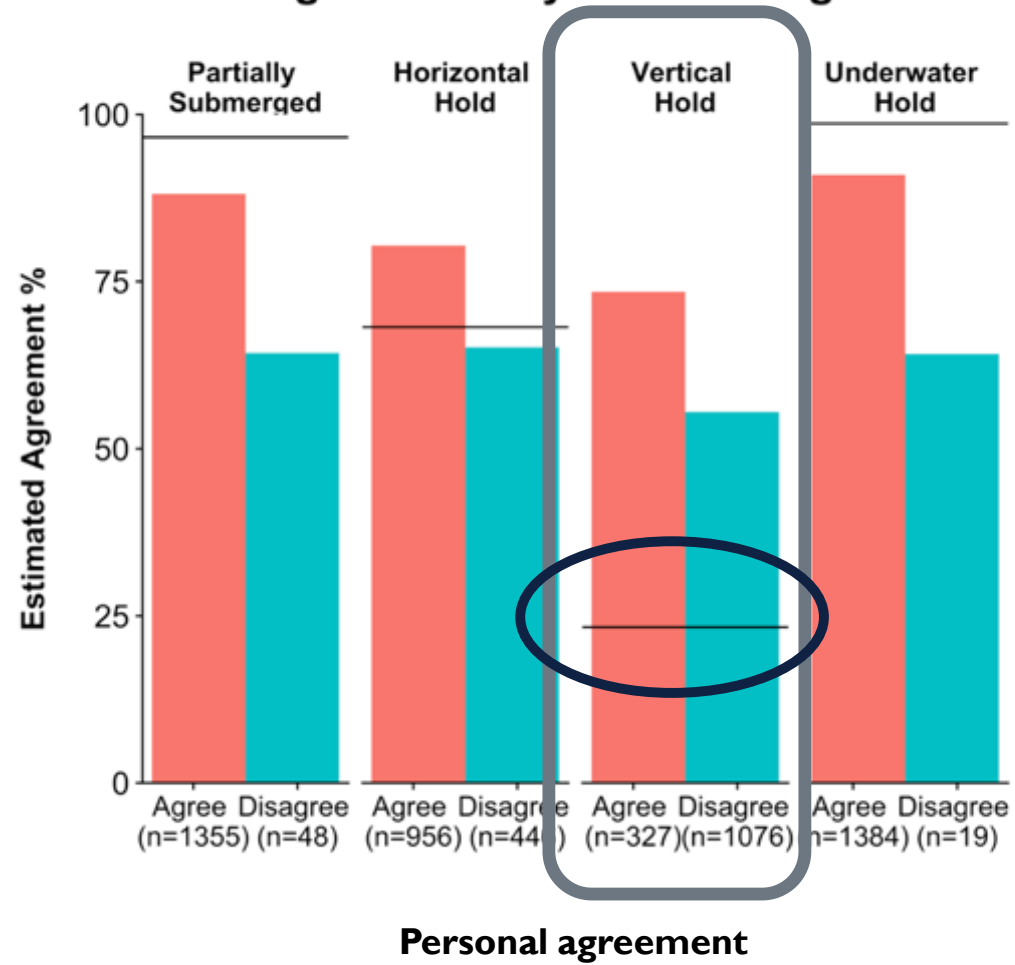
themes from catch-and-release research

- norms appear to be misaligned

- meaningful differences between angling subgroups

- correct misperceptions and communicate prevailing norms

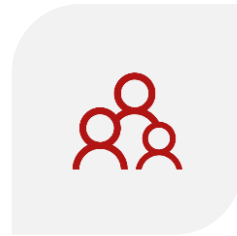 - particularly around vertical hold position
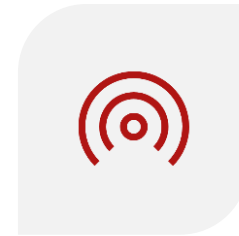
channeling social influence

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

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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

Monday, March 2, Noon-1:00 PM, ET
https://conta.cc/2T3sN0K

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.

Contact Us

We are here for you!

Dr. Kayla Cranston

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