

Social norms influence us because of group processes

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Social norms

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Do I ask a question during the presentation?

Social norms

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Perceived norm: Perception of what is typical or desirable in your community, and the extent to which this is changing

Social norms

Do I ask a question during the presentation?

Perceived norm: Perception of what is typical or desirable in your community, and the extent to which this is changing

Changing perceived norms is a time-honored tradition in social psychology for changing behavior

Social Norm messaging for social change

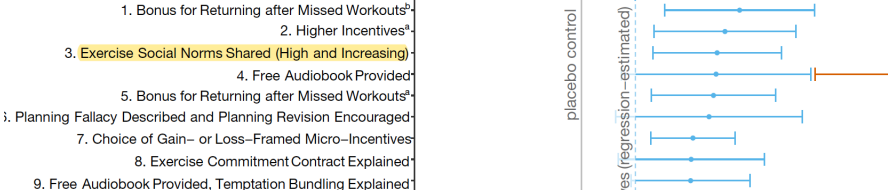
“Research from 2016 found that 73% of surveyed Americans exercised at least three times per week. This has increased from 71% in 2015.”

Nudge megastudy: Milkman et al., 2021

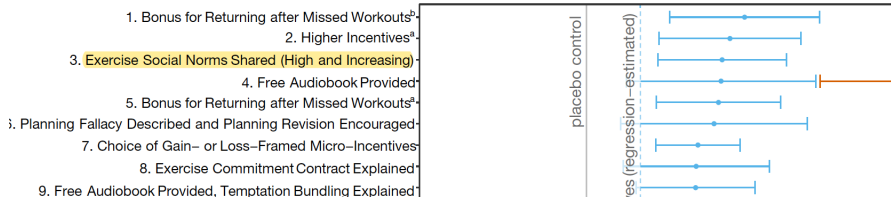
Nudge megastudy: Milkman et al., 2021



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$N=61,293$, $n = 455$ /treatment
 $\text{ate}(\text{norms}) = 0.25$ visits/wk

Nudge megastudy: Milkman et al., 2021

“Research from 2016 found that 73% of surveyed Americans exercised at least three times per week. // This has increased from 71% in 2015.”

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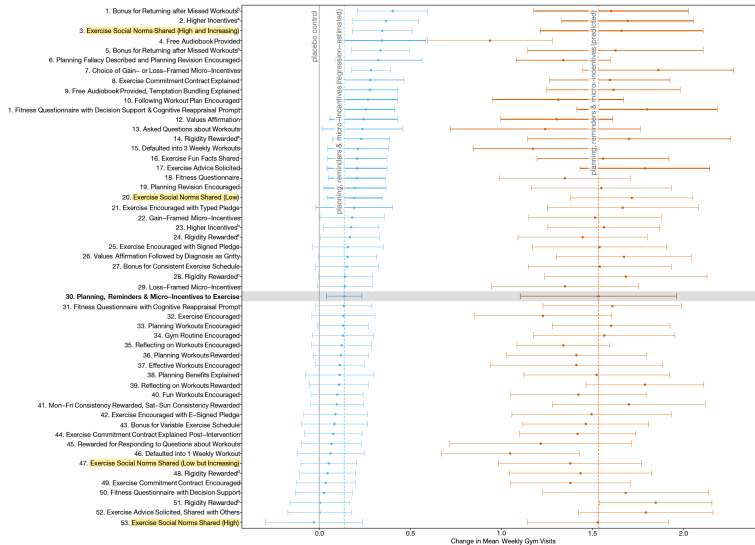
“Research from 2016 found that 73% of surveyed Americans exercised at least three times per week. // This has increased from 71% in 2015.”

“Research from 2016 found that 44% of surveyed Americans exercised at least three times per week. // This has increased from 40% in 2015”

Nudge megastudy: Milkman et al., 2021



Nudge megastudy: Milkman et al., 2021

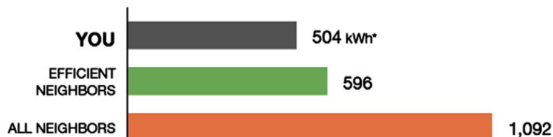


Allcott, 2011 (based on Schultz et al, 2007)

H. Allcott / Journal of Public Economics 95 (2011) 1082–1095

Last Month Neighborhood Comparison

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



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

YOUR EFFICIENCY STANDING:



GREAT

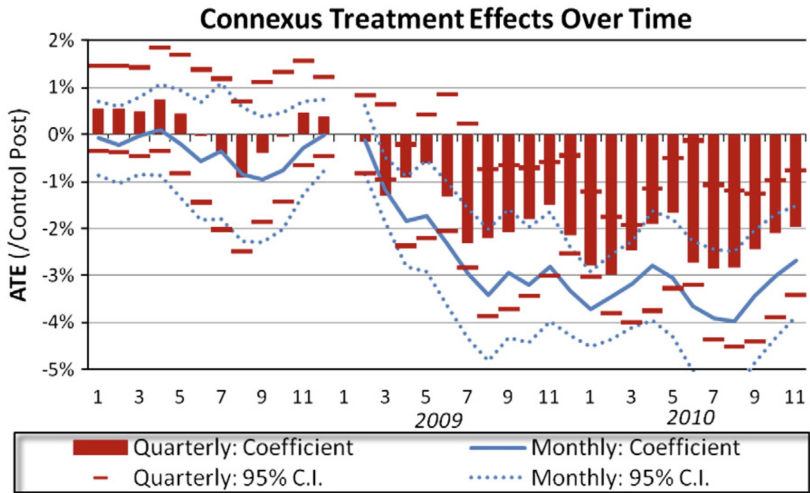


GOOD 😊

BELOW AVERAGE

Allcott, 2011 (based on Schultz et al, 2007)

H. Allcott / Journal of Public Economics 95 (2011) 1082–1095



Social proof

Social proof

- ▶ Individuals will determine appropriate behavior for themselves by examining the behavior of others, especially similar others (Goldstein et al, 2008)
- ▶ Beyond simple mimicry

Norms interventions as nudges

Norms interventions as nudges

Della Vigna and Linos (2022):

THALER AND SUNSTEIN (2008) DEFINED NUDGES AS “*choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.*” These light-touch behavioral interventions—including simplification, personalization, and social-norm comparison—have become common in the literature, spanning hundreds of papers in fields such as economics, political science, public health, decision-making, and marketing.

Nudge meta-analysis: Della Vigna and Linos, 2022

	Nudge Units		
	Freq. (%)	Nudges (Trials)	ATE (pp.)
<i>Mechanism</i>			
Simplification & information	58.51	141 (73)	1.19
Personal motivation	57.26	138 (76)	1.77
Reminders & planning prompts	31.54	76 (49)	2.54
Social cues	36.51	88 (58)	0.87
Framing & formatting	31.95	77 (47)	1.38
Choice design	6.22	15 (12)	7.01
Total	100	241 (126)	1.39

A media experiment in Rwanda

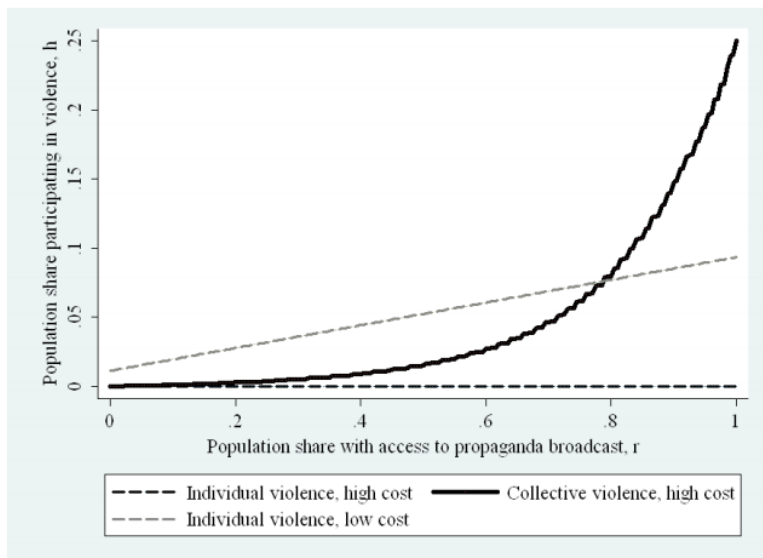


A media experiment in Rwanda



What changed? Norms, and behaviors—not personal opinion

Effects of Rwandan hate radio



Yanagawiza-Drott, 2014

Social proof

Social proof

- ▶ Norms are not static statistics in our heads: they are hypotheses repeatedly tested against observations.

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- ▶ Norms are not static statistics in our heads: they are hypotheses repeatedly tested against observations.
- ▶ **Social reality testing**: an ongoing, dynamic process of observing and generating behavior and opinion in our groups.

Social Reality Testing

- ▶ A rich history of social norm research takes into account social reality testing

Social Reality Testing

- ▶ A rich history of social norm research takes into account social reality testing
- ▶ **Development of interventions accounting for social reality testing has not continued apace**

Beyond norms as information

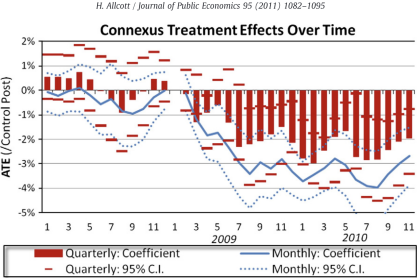
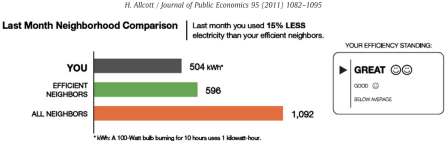
Beyond norms as information

- ▶ **Interventions based on processes of social reality testing in groups will be more effective (Prentice & Paluck, 2021)**

Beyond norms as information

- ▶ **Interventions based on processes of social reality testing in groups will be more effective (Prentice & Paluck, 2021)**
- ▶ These interventions will be much more varied than informational norms or “norm nudges”

Norms as information



Norm interventions that target social reality testing

Preview:

Norm interventions that target social reality testing

Preview:

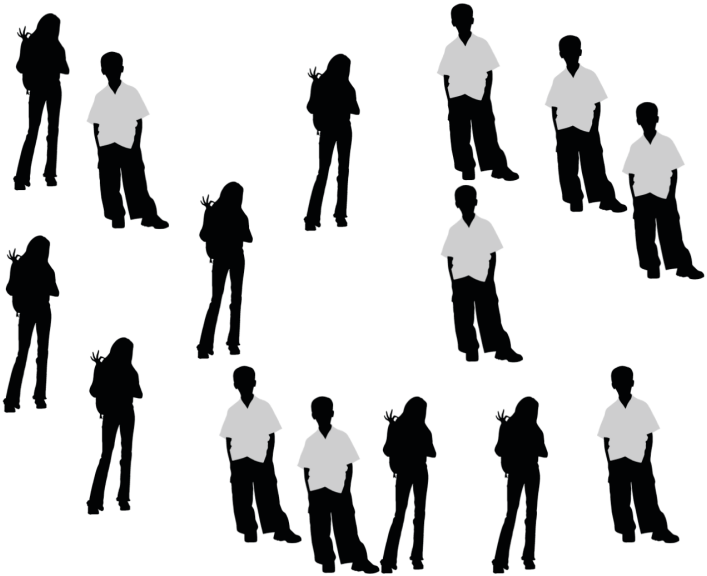
1. Group networks
2. Group discussion
3. Institutional decisions

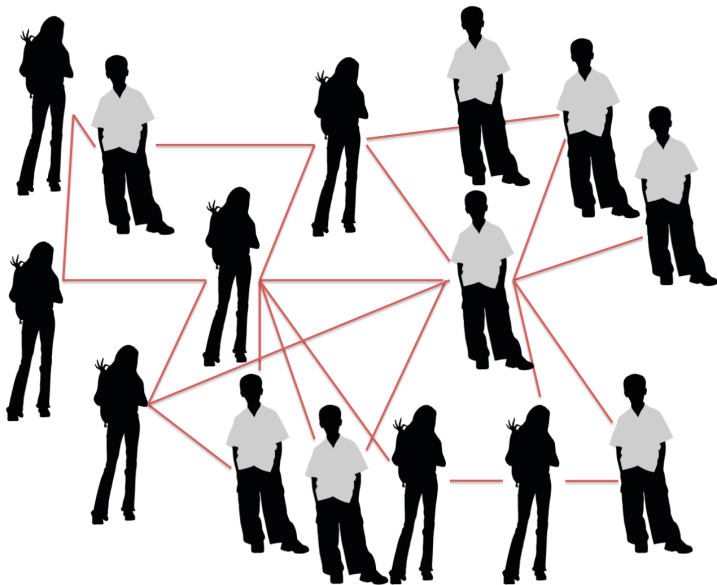
(1) Networks

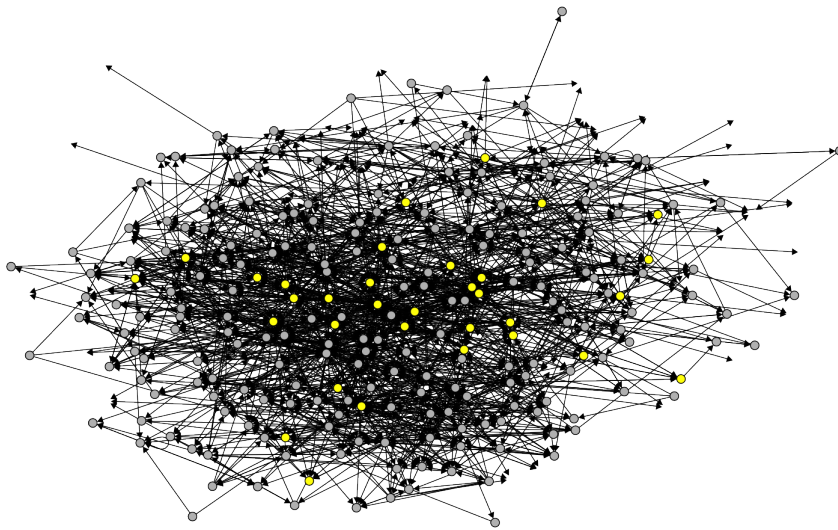
Social reality testing in networks

Social reality testing in networks

Who do we *pay attention to*, when we are learning social norms?





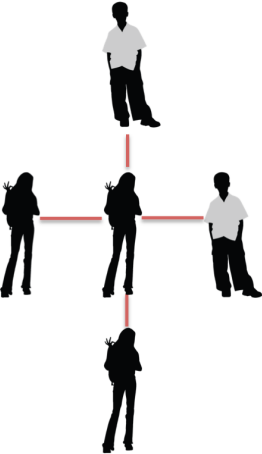


Paluck & Shepherd, 2012

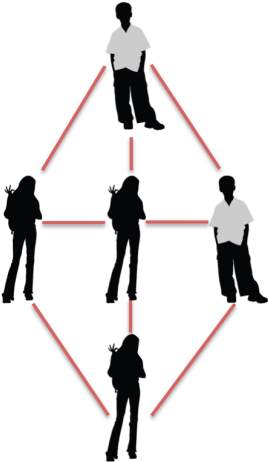
Social Referents

Social Referents

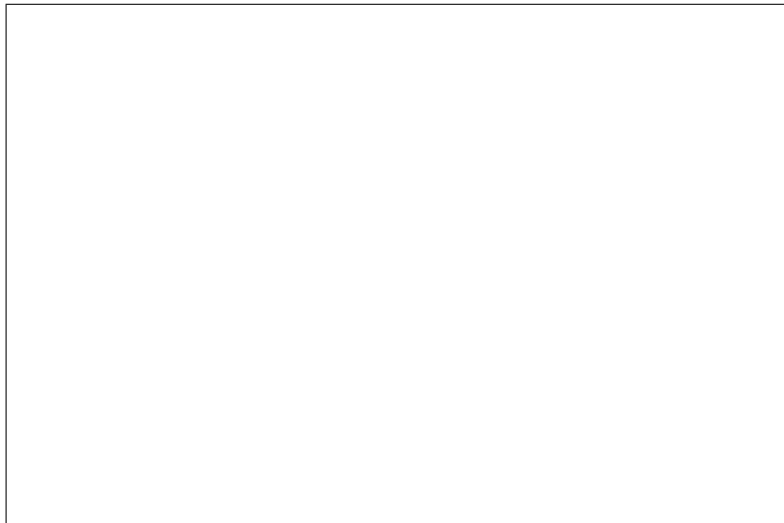
Widely known



Clique leader

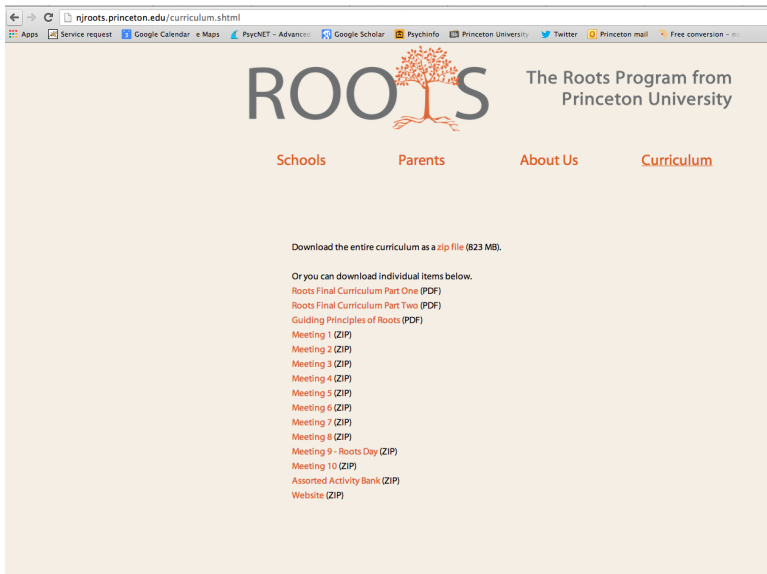


Paluck, Shepherd, & Aronow, 2016



56 middle schools, 24,369 students

Social referent intervention



njroots.princeton.edu/curriculum.shtml

Apps Service request Google Calendar e Maps PsychNET - Advanced Google Scholar Psychinfo Princeton University Twitter Princeton mail Free conversion - m

ROOTS

The Roots Program from Princeton University

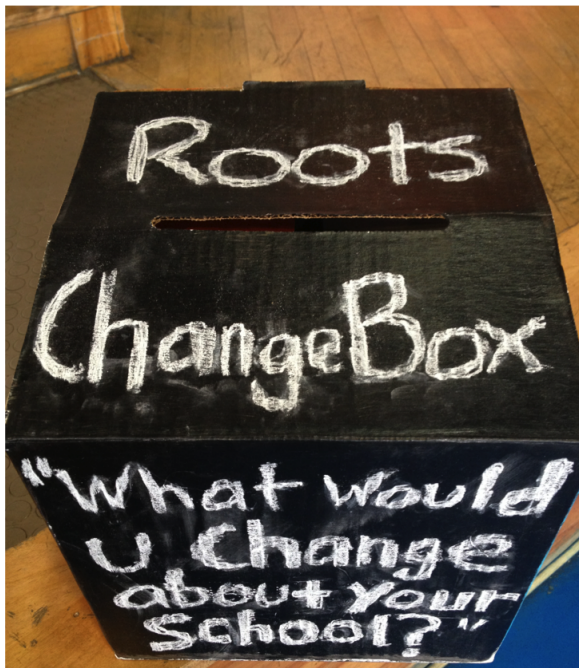
[Schools](#) [Parents](#) [About Us](#) [Curriculum](#)

Download the entire curriculum as a [zip file](#) (823 MB).

Or you can download individual items below.

- [Roots Final Curriculum Part One \(PDF\)](#)
- [Roots Final Curriculum Part Two \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guiding Principles of Roots \(PDF\)](#)
- [Meeting 1 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 2 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 3 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 4 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 5 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 6 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 7 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 8 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 9 - Roots Day \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Meeting 10 \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Assorted Activity Bank \(ZIP\)](#)
- [Website \(ZIP\)](#)

Social referent intervention



Social referent intervention

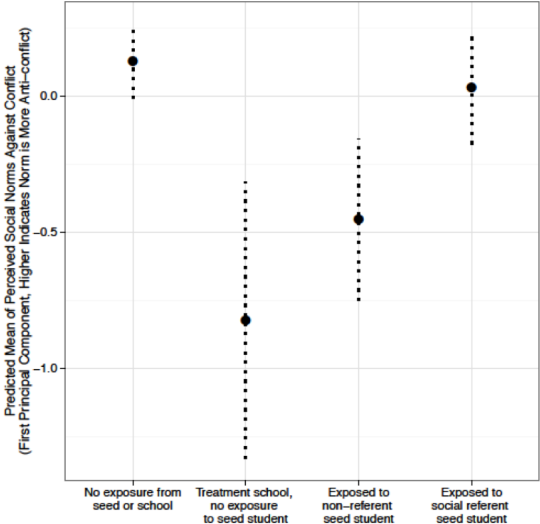


Social referent intervention



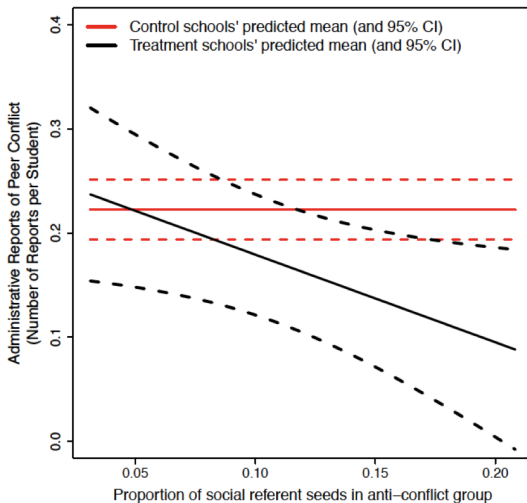
Norms shift

(b) Perceived social norm against conflict



Disciplinary cases fall

(d) Peer conflict (disciplinary records)



Social reality testing in networks

We do social reality testing through observation of group members.

Intervention logic: change what people see in their network (target according to where the most attention goes)

(2) Group discussion

Social reality testing in group discussions

Social reality testing in group discussions

What kind of discussions help people *update their impression of the norm*?

Schroeder & Prentice, 1998

- ▶ Strong perceived norms promoting excessive alcohol consumption on campus
- ▶ Substantial misgivings about excessive drinking expressed by the majority of students

Schroeder & Prentice, 1998

- ▶ Strong perceived norms promoting excessive alcohol consumption on campus
- ▶ Substantial misgivings about excessive drinking expressed by the majority of students
- ▶ **Convene groups of students to discuss: Individual thoughts on drinking vs. Pluralistic ignorance about drinking**

Drinking is reduced among those who discussed pluralistic ignorance

Average Number of Drinks Per Week Reported by Condition

	Condition	
	Peer-oriented	Individual-oriented
Women		
<i>M</i>	2.29	4.02
<i>SD</i>	2.88	5.99
Interquartile range	0-3.5	0-5.5
Men		
<i>M</i>	3.81	5.81
<i>SD</i>	4.95	7.15
Interquartile range	0-6.5	0-10.0
Total		
<i>M</i>	3.10	5.05
<i>SD</i>	4.15	6.70
Interquartile range	0-5.0	0-6.5

Bursztyn, González, & Yanagizawa-Drott, 2020

- ▶ Strong perceived norms prohibiting women from working outside the home in Saudi Arabia
- ▶ Vast majority of young married men privately support women working

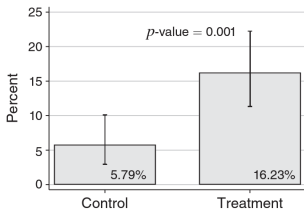
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- ▶ Strong perceived norms prohibiting women from working outside the home in Saudi Arabia
- ▶ Vast majority of young married men privately support women working
- ▶ **Convene groups of young married men from same neighborhoods, reveal true preferences**

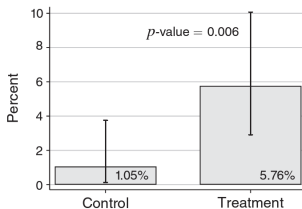
Wives of men who correctly perceive the norm go to work

3-5 months later:

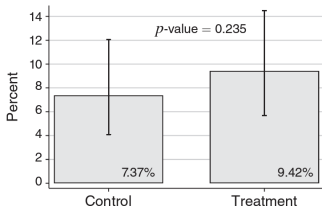
Panel A. Applied for job



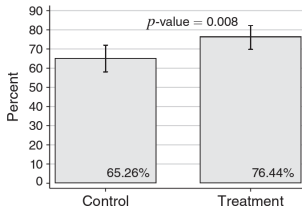
Panel B. Interviewed for job



Panel C. Employed



Panel D. Driving lessons



Social reality testing in group discussion

Group discussion can puncture the illusion that norms have universal support (weaken a norm)

Intervention logic: Discuss with community members affected by the norm, support speaking out against the norm

(3) Institutional decisions

Social reality testing with institutions

Social reality testing with institutions

Do *legitimate, representative institutions* influence social norms for the group through their decisions?

Why would institutions shape norm perception?

Individuals perceive that. . .

- ▶ Institutions represent groups

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Individuals perceive that. . .

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- ▶ Institutions react to groups
- ▶ Institutions are experts

- ▶ Also: Institutions are highly visible

Supreme Court decisions: Tankard & Paluck, 2017

- ▶ US Supreme court decision on same-sex marriage (*Obergefell v. Hodges*)
- ▶ Will ruling change perceived norms of support for gay marriage in the U.S.?
- ▶ Compare to personal attitudes

Panel survey from March to July 2015...

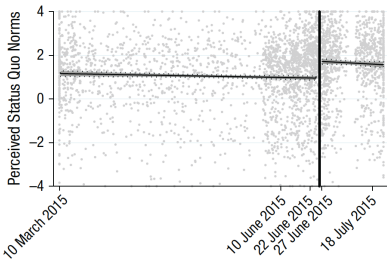
- ▶ Norm: “To what extent do you think Americans oppose or support gay marriage?”
- ▶ Norm: “To what extent do you think that support for gay marriage will or will not increase in the United States in the future?”

Panel survey from March to July 2015...

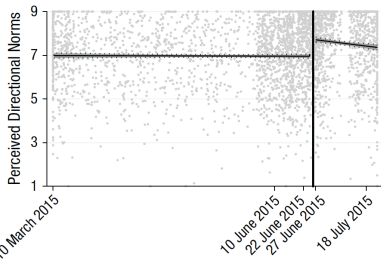
- ▶ Norm: “To what extent do you think Americans oppose or support gay marriage?”
- ▶ Norm: “To what extent do you think that support for gay marriage will or will not increase in the United States in the future?”
- ▶ Personal attitudes: “To what extent do you oppose or support gay marriage?”; Feeling thermometer

Results

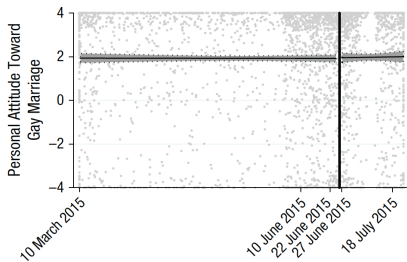
a



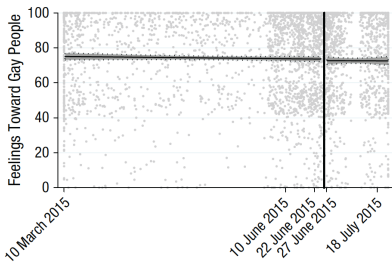
b



c



d



SCOTUS ruling on Abortion: *Dobbs*

What happens when the institution goes against the majority of the public?



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NEWS > LOCAL NEWS



Majority of Americans believe abortion should be legal, research shows

Posted: 1:41 PM, Jun 24, 2022 Updated: 3:48 PM, Jun 24, 2022



By: Blakey Roznowski



SCOTUS ruling on Abortion: *Dobbs*

What happens when the institution goes against the majority of the public?



The screenshot shows a news article from DENVER 7. The header includes the station logo and navigation links for Local News, National, Coronavirus, Politics, Crime, Education, 360 In-Depth, Contact Denver7, and Digital Originals. The article title is "Majority of Americans believe abortion should be legal, research shows". It is dated "Posted: 1:41 PM, Jun 24, 2022" and "Updated: 3:48 PM, Jun 24, 2022". The author is listed as "By: Blayke Roznowski". Below the text is a photograph of the United States Supreme Court building.



Chelsey Clark

SCOTUS ruling on Abortion: *Dobbs*

Los Angeles Times

SUPREME COURT REJECTS ROE VS. WADE

5-4 RULING ENDS HALF-CENTURY OF NATIONWIDE ABORTION RIGHTS



PROTESTERS GATHER

Thousands of protesters gathered in front of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, June 24, 2022, to celebrate the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. The protesters held signs and banners, some of which read "ON DEMAND & WITHOUT APOLOGY" and "I AM THE PRO-BOB DOBBS".

'Never thought I'd see this day'
Inside a Texas clinic, doctors and staff cheer as they learn the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.



Newsom is out in front with his blue shield
California's governor, Gavin Newsom, is seen in front of a computer monitor, celebrating the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

In red states, chaos will hamper access
Pro-life activists in red states are expected to face significant challenges in accessing abortion services following the Supreme Court's decision.



PRO-BOB DOBBS
Pro-life activists are celebrating the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. Some are holding signs that say "I AM THE PRO-BOB DOBBS" and "PRO-BOB DOBBS".

The Times-Picayune

NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

BOOLA.COM SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2022 \$1.00

ROE V. WADE OVERTURNED

SUPREME COURT DECISION PUTS ABORTION RIGHTS IN HANDS OF STATES
Louisiana's trigger law makes it illegal immediately



THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE SUPREME COURT BUILDING IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ON SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2022, TO CELEBRATE THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION TO OVERTURN ROE V. WADE.

Ruling likely to lead to bans in many states
The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade is expected to lead to the implementation of abortion bans in many states.

How the court ruled on abortion
The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to overturn Roe v. Wade, with Chief Justice John Roberts writing the majority opinion.

Across Louisiana, celebrations and protests erupt
Louisiana is experiencing a mix of celebrations and protests in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

BY JOHN HENNING
The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade is a landmark moment in American history. It ends a half-century of nationwide abortion rights and puts the issue back in the hands of the states.

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The Washington Post

WASHINGTON POST SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2022 \$1.00

Roe v. Wade struck down



THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE SUPREME COURT BUILDING IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ON SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2022, TO CELEBRATE THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION TO OVERTURN ROE V. WADE.

A right is taken back, and an angry mob is further divided
The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade is a landmark moment in American history. It ends a half-century of nationwide abortion rights and puts the issue back in the hands of the states.

CHAINS AND KEYS AS A TEXAS CLINIC ALREADY SHUTS DOWN
A Texas clinic has already shut down its operations in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

IN MANY STATES, MOBILIZATION WILL BE SCAFFOLDING AND SUFFICIENT
Pro-life activists in many states are expected to face significant challenges in accessing abortion services following the Supreme Court's decision.

IN THE NEWS
A list of news items related to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

REUTERS
A list of news items related to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

AP NEWS
A list of news items related to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
A list of news items related to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

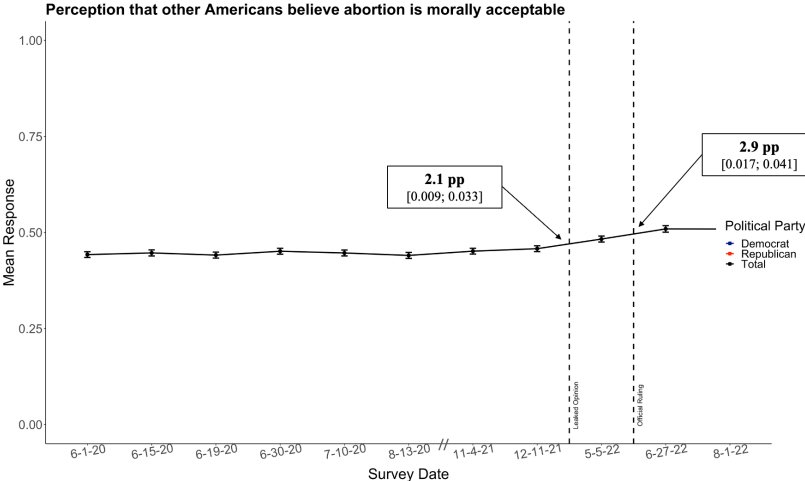
Perception of Norms

Morality: “To what extent do you think that people in America are morally opposed to abortion?”

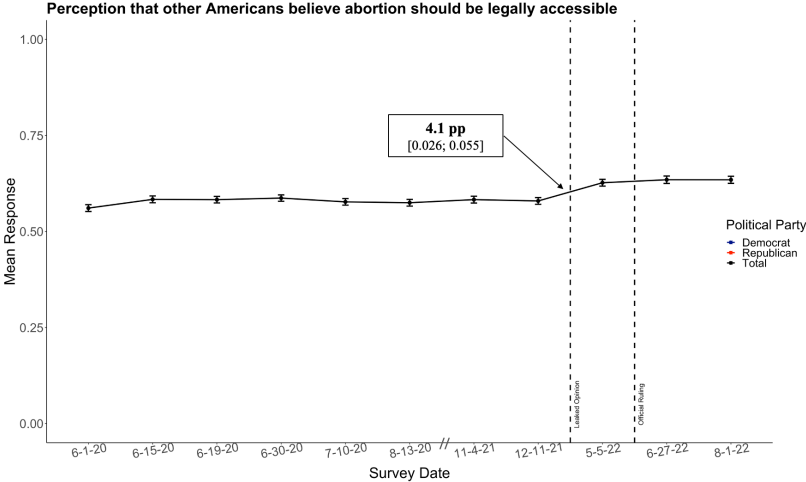
Accessibility: “To what extent do you believe that people in America disagree or agree that a woman should continue to be able to have an abortion legally?”

Clark & Paluck, 2022; Clark et al., 2023

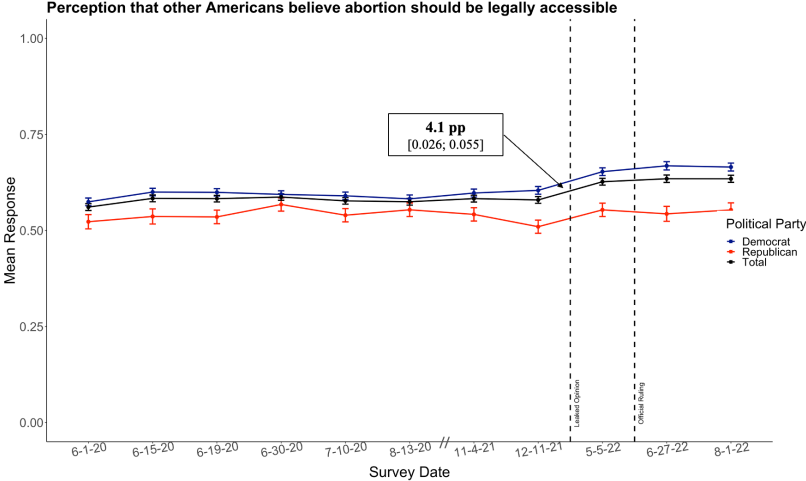
Perception of Norms - Morality



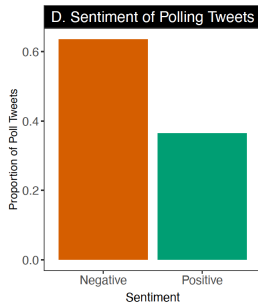
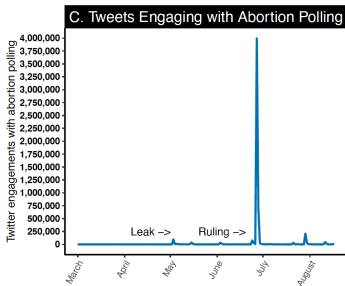
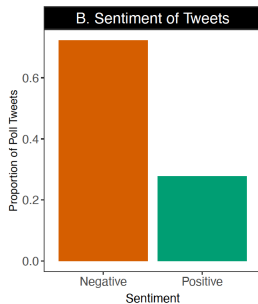
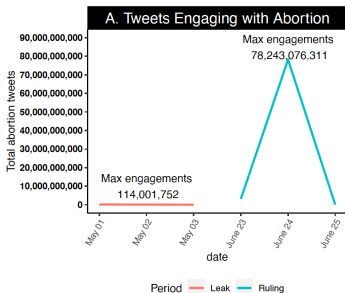
Perception of Norms - Accessibility



Perception of Norms - Accessibility



Social reality testing: Public reactions to SCOTUS



Social reality testing with institutions

Institutions can directly influence norms. . .

Social reality testing with institutions

Institutions can directly influence norms. . .

Institutions also trigger attention to group reactions (face to face and over media)

Recovering the group foundations of social norms

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- ▶ Social reality testing: Norms are hypotheses repeatedly tested against our observations of our groups.

Recovering the group foundations of social norms

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Recovering the group foundations of social norms

- ▶ Social reality testing: Norms are hypotheses repeatedly tested against our observations of our groups.
- ▶ There are many interventions that capitalize on social reality testing—they involve group networks, discussions, and institutions
- ▶ **Interventions accounting for social reality testing will be more complex than informational norm treatments—but more effective**