

IC - (21107) - MOTIVATIONS CROWDING ACROSS FORMS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM: EVIDENCE FROM THE UK AND OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

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Background and objectives

Support for and participation in pro-environmental collective action may be undermined by views of climate change as abstract and distant. According to construal level theory, the presence of social issues perceived as psychologically closer leads to reallocation of cognitive resources to them at the cost of more distant issues. This crowding effect may occur across different settings, for instance in conflict environments or in the presence of highly salient social-political issues competing for limited cognitive capacity of people. Despite its relevance, e.g. for social movements' outreach strategies, motivation crowding has not been sufficiently tested empirically and across regions.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Study 1: In a randomised controlled trial (N=433) in the UK we measure pro-environmental activism intentions following completion of a text review exercise manipulating salience of immediate, but non-environmental issues (humanitarian crises and cost of living crisis). A separate treatment condition featured equivalent messages but highlighted direct causal links between environmental impact and the social-political issues.

Study 2: Semi-structured interviews conducted with Palestinian activists in the West Bank provide qualitative evidence with regard to motivation crowding between political action in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and pro-environmental action. Comparative findings and implications are discussed.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Study 1: The hypothesised crowding-out effect of lower pro-environmental activism intentions relative to baseline levels and/or other forms of activism occurred for the main treatment (salience of non-environmental issues). No statistically significant "crowding-in" effect was observed for the secondary treatments that highlighted environmental impact.

Study 2: Interview responses confirm trade-offs in activists' decisions on which cause to invest their effort in. Despite overall high environmental concern among the sample, this motivation translated into relatively little involvement primarily due to dominance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Previous studies have linked construal level to climate action, however the potential for motivation crowding (trade-offs) between competing socio-political causes has so far not been investigated robustly. This research provides novel data from the UK and exploratory findings from the Palestinian Territory in this context, and provides several opportunities to expand on in future research.

Palavras-chave : Collective action, motivation crowding, pro-environmental behaviour, political activism