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Source Evaluation 1

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Authors:

Carol S. Dweck—Carol S. Dweck a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. She is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation, and her research focuses on why people succeed and how to foster success. She has been a professor at Columbia and Harvard University, and has lectured all over the world. She has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her book *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development* was named Book of the Year by the World Education Federation, and her work has been featured in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*, and she has appeared on *Today* and *20/20*.

Susana Claro—Susana Claro received her Masters in Education from Harvard University and is currently an associate Professor in the School of Government at the Universidad Católica de Chile. She was an economics of education doctoral student from Chile, and is currently a Research collaborator at PERTS (Project for Education Research that Scales). Her research interests focus on low income students, teachers, and socio-emotional skills.

Dave Paunesku—Dave Paunesku received his B.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. His work has also been published in top academic journals, including *Psychological Science* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. He is the founding director of PERTS, an applied research center at Stanford University, where he develops and validates scalable tools and services that help educators apply insights from the learning sciences to foster healthy and equitable development. He seeks to empower America's educators to create the conditions that are necessary for all students to develop into passionate, resilient, and successful learners.

Summary of Argument and Methods:

The article, "Growth mindset tempers the effects of poverty on academic achievement" written by Dweck and colleagues explores the relationship between income and mindset.

students from lower-income families were less likely to hold a growth mindset than their wealthier peers but that those who did hold a growth mindset were appreciably buffered against the deleterious effects of poverty on achievement.

The article “Social Norms and Global Environmental Challenges” written by Kinzig and colleagues details how government intervention in a variety of forms impacts social norms on both short and long time frames—specifically to increase proenvironmental behavior. This research contends that social norms and values can be shaped either positively or negatively through different external controls. The authors contend that “policies can become more effective in the long run if they feed back to influence social norms, so that behaviors become self-reinforcing even in the absence of external regulations or penalties” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 165). The paper then goes on to describe four different policy instruments: active norms management through advertising and information appeals, changing architecture of decisions by making desired behavior more convenient and visible, financial interventions through taxes, fines, allowances, and subsidies, as well as regulations via laws and standards. The authors describe how norms are influenced by each policy instrument, and the potential boomerang effects of each policy instrument (how intervention could potentially backfire). For example, activation norm management which involves influencing social norms through advertising and information by reporting averages works because “people want to conform, [and] they use information about peer behaviors as a yardstick against which to measure their own behaviors” (Kinzing et al., 2013, p. 166). However, activation norm management can sometimes backfire in groups who already behave more proenvironmentally than the average, and alter their behavior “either to conform or because they feel that it is unfair that others are not doing their part” (Kinzing et al., 2013, p. 167). The paper ends with a call for a greater degree of interdisciplinary approaches to policy implementation—with specific suggestions as to how life science experts can weigh in on the issues.

Key Terms and Concepts:

Mindset: “the belief that intelligence is not fixed and can be developed” (Dweck et al., 2016)

Academic Achievement: “is influenced by structural factors, such as socioeconomic background, and psychological factors, such as students’ beliefs about their abilities”

Income: “is a strong predictor of achievement”

Inequality

Education Equality

Social Norm: “‘a rule governing an individual’s behavior that third parties other than state agents diffusely enforce by means of social sanction’ ... for those who violate the norm and with rewards for those who follow it” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 165).

Personal Norm: “rules governed by self-sanctioning or reward (feelings of guilt or pleasure) and are followed irrespective of what others might think” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 165-166).

Descriptive Norms: “refers to beliefs about what is actually being done by others (our belief about how often others engage in certain behaviors, such as drinking alcohol or recycling)” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 166).

Injunctive Norms: “refers to the beliefs about what other people think ought to be done” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 166).

Boomerang Effect: “the danger of backfiring” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 165).

Collective Action Problem: “a situation in which sufficient cooperation can benefit everyone, but there is some incentive to cheat or to seek a free ride” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 170).

Quote:

“Initially unpopular or only modestly popular measures may gain wider acceptance if they prompt reinforcing changes in how people define themselves and their society, particularly if the changes are aided by innovations that make their implementation easier or more effective” (Kinzig et al., 2013 p. 172).

Analysis:

This quote describes policy instruments’ abilities as tools to change both societal and personal norms through their implementation. A new policy measure prompts both individuals and aggregate societies to react to a new stimulus. This new stimulus forces individuals to decide how they will act individually, and how they will act as a community. If people choose to adhere to the new policy, they will internalize their actions and establish new social and personal norms. This is why proenvironmental societal and personal norms are more likely to become established if the desired behavior is easier to complete—because individuals will be more likely to engage in the behavior, which will prompt them to internalized their actions into their beliefs and values. This is important to my research because in describing how new personal and social norms can be adopted, more suggestions for proenvironmental behavior motivation might be offered. The stipulation of the provision being easy to complete and effective is especially important to my research, because it specifically describes how behavior can better be internalized by individuals.

Quote:

“In some cases, imposing financial penalties can actually increase the undesirable behaviors, because what had been controlled by personal or social norms now becomes primarily economic concern” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 169).

Analysis:

This quote defines a caveat and potential boomerang effect of financial policy measures. A financial penalty on a certain behavior shifts the focus of concern away from the environment and towards economic conditions. This causes the desired proenvironmental behavior to lose significance in its intrinsic value, and makes it more difficult for individuals to internalize proenvironmental behavior into their value set. In doing so, some individuals feel it is acceptable to behave undesirably towards the environment if they have paid the sanction involved. The article gives the example of pollution licenses— “once they have been paid for, the payer has secured the right to pollute, with no moral sanction attached to the activity” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 169).

Quote:

“A fundamental requirement for an effective social norm is that people are able to ascertain (either directly or through inference) when the norm is being violated” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 167).

Analysis:

Social norms are effective when the behavior in question occurs in a public setting, because all of the motivation to behave in a certain desirable way (if it does not align with personal norms) is to avoid any social shunning or judgement. Due to the nature in which social norms motivate proenvironmental behavior, it is therefore important that indications of proenvironmental behavior is more visible to the community. This is important to my research, in which the academic controversy debates social norms versus personal values influence over motivating proenvironmental behavior. This information adds an interesting new layer to the debate, because it implies that social norms are better at motivating proenvironmental behavior when the behavior is visible, but personal values are better at motivating proenvironmental behavior when the behavior is private.

SYNTHESIS:

In the Article “I Am What I Am, by Looking Past the Present: The Influence of Biospheric Values and Past Behavior on Environmental Self-Identity”, authors Werff, Steg and Keizer posit that there is such a thing as an environmental self-identity, which is defined as “the extent to which you see yourself as a person whose actions are environmentally friendly” (Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2014, p. 627). A strong environmental self-identity is thought to motivate individuals to behave proenvironmentally in the future (Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2014). Throughout this article, Kinzig and colleagues posit that “people’s identities can be influenced by their own behaviors and those of the people around them. People can also learn to value something through their experience” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 165). This serves as the backbone for a large portion of the reasoning as to why policy instruments result in a change of norms. By prompting people to behave in certain proenvironmental ways through policy tools, “personal experience activate[s] a

norm and increase[s] the future frequency of that behavior” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 169). Kinzig and colleagues offer a rationale behind this which complements Werff, Steg, and Keizer’s concept of environmental self-identity. Through repeated behavior, individuals “may come to believe (through cognitive dissonance) that they are doing it because they value that behavior” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 167).

OVERALL EVALUATION OF SOURCE:

Additionally, this article contributes significantly to layering the complications of my academic controversy. The authors of this article contend that “norms of conformity and cooperation are far more universal than are proenvironment norms and are therefore far more powerful in inducing proenvironment behaviors that do not conflict with preexisting values or preferences” (Kinzig et al., 2013, p. 170). While this is what the authors of this paper outwardly contend, they concede that social norms are most effective when the behavior in question is visible (Kinzig et al., 2013). This is exactly what Maki and Rotham found in their case study which examined which types of behaviors are performed more often in public versus private settings. Maki and Rotham concluded that “social norms might be a key determinant of intentions to engage in proenvironmental behaviors in public settings whereas attitudes may be a more important determinant of intentions to perform proenvironmental behaviors in private settings” (2016, p. 3). By contending that the type of privacy involved in a setting places differing importance on social norms versus personal values, I will mediate between the two opposing sides and find an interesting balance between the two.

Questions:

- What other case studies/supports are there for my standing that social norms predict proenvironmental behavior in public settings, but personal values predict for proenvironmental behavior in private settings?
- How do people internalize repeated behavior? Is there a set point at which an individual must evaluate what they are doing and incorporate it into their identity?
- How can policies that have had a boomerang effect be ameliorated in disgruntled communities?

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