

# The Influence of Priming, Nudging, and Information Provision on Pro-Environmental Behavior

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## Research Question

Can psychologically based interventions influence people to engage in pro-environmental behaviors?

## Background

- Not all persuasive attempts result in behavioral changes.
- Presenting information on climate change scientific consensus can help to change the attitudes of people who were skeptical of its validity, but this does not often translate into proactive behavior such as donating to an environmental organization.<sup>1</sup>
- The purpose of this study is to determine what strategy of persuasion results in more pro-environmental behavior regarding the problem of coastal erosion in Louisiana.
- The five interventions tested can be categorized by their use of information provision, priming, and nudging.

## Hypotheses

- All experimental conditions will outperform the control condition.
- Within the experimental conditions, techniques that utilize priming or nudging will outperform techniques that focus mainly on information provision.

## Project Overview

This experiment will be completed online by approximately 200 participants. All participants will read several paragraphs providing information about Louisiana erosion, the final paragraph(s) of which varies by condition.

## Independent Variable

- Persuasion technique (control + 5 interventions)

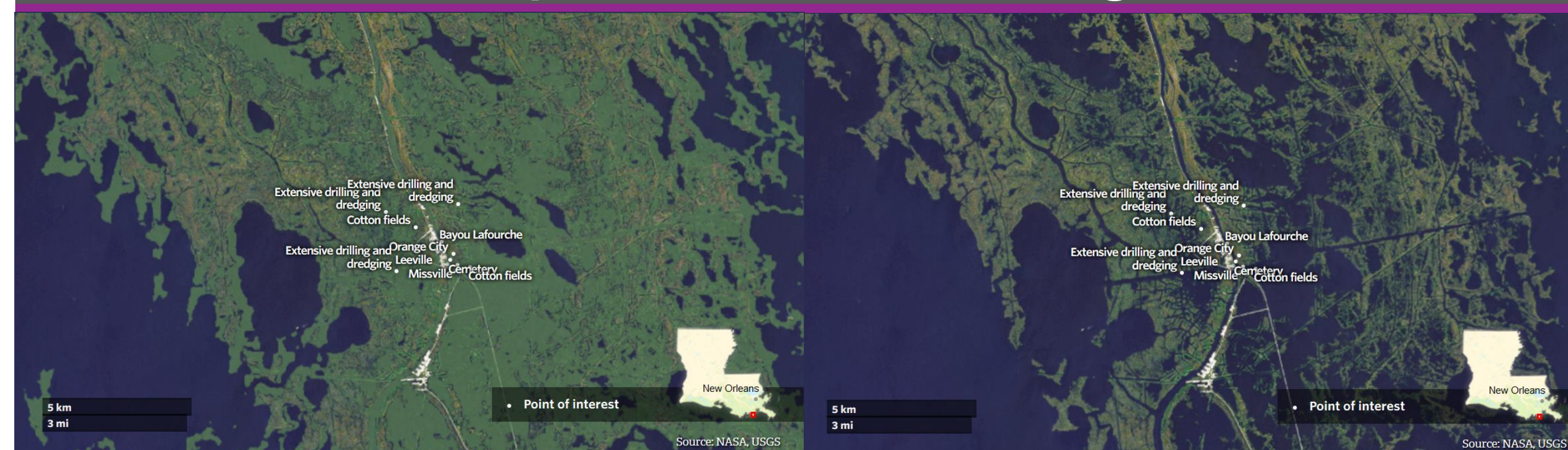
## Dependent Variables

- Instances of pro-environmental behavior measured through donation and engaging with elected officials.
- Attitudinal changes on coastal erosion and climate change (pre-intervention, post-intervention, and two week follow-up).

## Independent Variable: Interventions

Intervention	Description
State Age	Establishes that Louisiana is an old, well-established state that has the capability and responsibility to protect its landscape
Legacy	Asks participants to consider the legacy they would like to leave for future generations
Social Norms	Informs participants that most Louisianans value coastal protection and restoration and support additional funding to such effects
Maps	Presents land loss maps to participants
Numbers	Frames commonly used land loss statistics in the context of participants' lives

## Maps Condition Images



Leeville, LA, in 1932 (left) and 2009 (right). The Maps condition presents these images to participants to illustrate land loss in three disappearing communities.

## Dependent Variables: Behavior Measurement

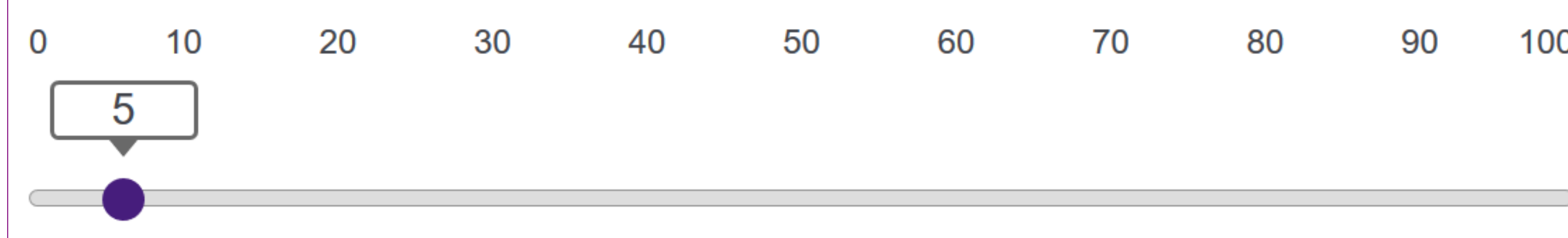
### Donation

- One participant will be randomly selected to win \$100, and all participants are told this and given the opportunity to donate to an organization that works to protect the coast (see below).

### Letter

- Participants are given the opportunity to go to Audubon Hall to sign a pre-written letter to Senator Cassidy and address an envelope for the letter.

Using the slider tool below, please indicate the amount in dollars you would like to donate from your winnings. If you win the raffle, this amount will be subtracted from your winnings and donated to CRCL, and the remaining money will be given to you.



## Dependent Variables: Attitude Measurement

- Participant attitudes and beliefs about coastal erosion and climate change will be measured through a series of seven-point Likert scale items that range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

### Attitudes towards coastal erosion

Example items:

- Louisiana coastal erosion is a problem that will negatively affect me during my lifetime.
- The state government should be involved in the fight against coastal erosion and take measures towards coastal restoration and protection.

### Attitudes towards climate change

Example items:

- The scientific community is uncertain of the existence of man-made climate change; consensus among scientists is very low.
- Climate change is an urgent problem that requires immediate action.

## Conclusion

- The main limitations of the current research are the characteristics of the sample.
- While similar past studies often collected a sample of approximately 1,500 participants, the current study will be run on approximately 400.
- The current study will be ran only on undergraduate psychology students at Louisiana State University, which is not a representative sample of the Louisiana population.
- If this study identifies an intervention that is particularly effective at promoting behavioral changes, future research should further explore that technique with a larger and more representative sample.
- If reliable methods of behavior-inducing persuasion are identified, their employment could result in increased activism among Americans and, consequently, meaningful changes in policy that benefit our citizens as well as our environment.

## References

- 1. Deryugina, T., consensus & Shurchkov, O. (2016). The effect of information provision on public about climate change. *Plos ONE*, 11(4).