



EPP and Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making Sponsored Seminar

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Research Scientist

Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making

Department of Engineering and Public Policy

Carnegie Mellon University

Presenting on:



“Influences of symbolic and practical cues on climate change decisions”

April 14, 2014

12 noon

(Lunch served at 11:50am)

Baker Hall 129 Conference Room

Department of Engineering and Public Policy

Seminar Abstract:

Adapting to climate change impacts requires people to make more measured decisions, informed by an understanding of the relevant information attendant on their choice. Communicating this information is complicated by the politicization of the topic. In two studies, we ask how symbolic cues, designed to evoke a sense of identity as climate change believers or nonbelievers, affect a hypothetical decision: buying a home in an area subject to coastal flooding exacerbated by climate change using Zillow®. In both studies, we manipulate the frame by focusing on risks due to “elevation,” “global warming,” or both and participants’ access to an interactive decision aid to see how increased immersion in practical details affects the power of symbolic cues. Study 1 asks about climate change beliefs at the end and Study 2 primes those beliefs at the beginning. We found that denotative information overrode connotative symbolic cues evoked by references to global warming.

Speaker Bio:

Gabrielle Wong-Parodi is a research scientist at the Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making in the Department of Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). Dr. Wong-Parodi’s area of expertise is in risk perceptions and communications. More specifically, she applies behavioral decision-making methods to address real world energy and environmental problems to inform policy. Dr. Wong-Parodi has published papers on the risk perceptions of emerging technologies such as carbon capture and sequestration and smart grid technologies. Previously, Dr. Wong-Parodi was a research associate with the Energy Efficiency Standards group at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Her most recent work at the lab was developing a model of the U.S. natural gas and coal system to be used to assess the economic and environmental impact of proposed climate change policies on federal residential appliance standards. Dr. Wong-Parodi received her B.A. in psychology and her M.A. and Ph.D. in energy and resources from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Wong-Parodi holds a B.A. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in Energy and Resources (Risk Theory), both from UC Berkeley.

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