

Provincial Differences in Environmental Cognitive Alternatives and Activist Behaviour

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Presentation Description:

This project compares residents of BC and Alberta on their ability to imagine a future in which we have a sustainable relationship with nature. I further compare provinces on whether being able to imagine this future affects how likely one is to engage in environmental activist behaviour.

Abstract:

Previous research has found that access to environmental cognitive alternatives (the ability to imagine a sustainable relationship with nature) predicts activist behaviour in a representative Canadian sample. Canada is a place with considerable variations in social norms, however, which affect the ability to engage in cognitive alternatives. Using a sample of residents of BC (N = 149), and residents of Alberta (N = 110), I compare scores on a measure of environmental cognitive alternatives between the two provinces. Additionally, I look at the relationship between these cognitive alternative scores, and scores on measures of environmental activist identification, willingness to engage in environmental activist behaviour, and willingness to engage in pro-environmental consumption. Results show that there is no significant difference in ability to engage in environmental cognitive alternatives between provinces, but that there is a strong relationship between engaging in cognitive alternatives and activist behaviours. When comparing both provinces, access to cognitive alternatives more strongly predicts activist identification and activist behaviour in Alberta than in BC. A further exploratory analysis using residents of Ontario (N = 467) and Quebec (N = 138) again found that there was a strong relationship between cognitive alternatives and activist identity and behaviour in these two provinces, but that the relationship remained strongest for residents of Alberta.