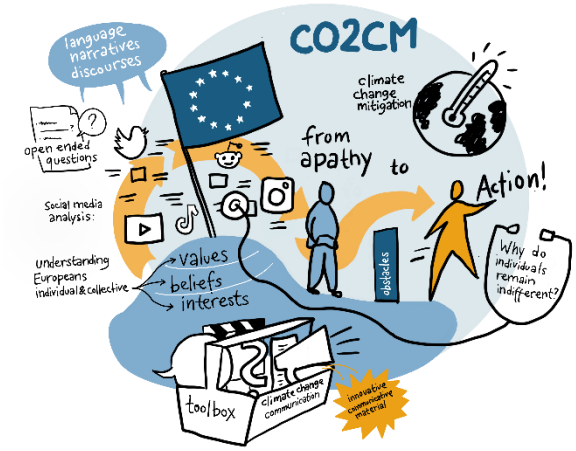
2O2CM

Overcoming Obstacles and Disincentives to Climate Change Mitigation

DURATION
01/12/2020 – 01/03/2024

BUDGET
249 900 €

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Climate change today is undoubtedly a challenge for humanity. The Special IPCC 1,5 °C report highlighted the numerous dramatic consequences of climate change; yet the response of our societies has been slow, contradictory, and elusive. Climate change and its consequences are particularly embedded in culture, making it difficult for individuals and societies to manage these phenomena cognitively. The humanities and social sciences are called on to make a crucial contribution to the understanding of how human beings approach and make sense of climate change, in order to reduce the value-action gap, using innovative forms of communication to identify entry points for climate action.

This research project has the transformative aim to improve the scientific understanding of why societies remain indifferent to the risks of climate change, and to understand how multimodal devices and recommendations can convert apathy into action. We investigate the active and essential role of language, narrative, and discourses in shaping citizens' beliefs and actions, through the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration between linguistics, semiotics, law and governance, anthropology, and social psychological approaches.

The project focuses on Belgium, France, and Norway. Through analyses of survey discourse and answers, and of social media data, the aim of the project is to contribute, through transformational learning, to an innovative understanding of Europeans' individual and collective values, beliefs, and interests as regards obstacles versus opportunities to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and thus to climate change mitigation.

The methods used combine qualitative as well as quantitative surveys and laboratory experiments (including solutions like eye-tracker and face reader evaluations). The project involves close collaboration with non-academic partners.

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The project is articulated into six different working packages (WPs). WP1 (Lead Belgium) focuses on the coordination of the project as a whole. WP2 (Lead Norway) investigates how people perceive and interpret narratives concerning climate change issues and how social actors construct their positions on climate change by mediating different voices in society. WP3 and WP4 (Lead Belgium) are based on a semiotic and rhetoric approach of online discourses about climate change, aimed at identifying (1) skepticism, denial, disagreement, and conflict in Reddit argumentations (Cougnon et al., 2019); (2) ideologically charged policies from public decision-takers on Twitter; and (3) the interaction between image and text that facilitates or complicates dialogue, understandings, and calls for action on YouTube and Instagram. In line with WP2, WP5 and WP6 (Lead France) aim to examine how and why individuals can remain indifferent or skeptical to the risks of climate change, as well as what interventions might be carried out to challenge mindsets and motivations. First, social-psychological factors that determine citizen engagement in environmental behaviors are explored. Second, we analyze the effects of the climate change risk on citizens' perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes.
The objective of the 2O2CM project is to enable societal transformation, mainly through two types of operational contributions: A) specific **recommendations** concerning effective communication, which will take the form of videos, articles, meetings and seminars to popularise the results of the research, notably for the attention of decision-makers; and B) effective **verbal and visual features and prototypes** that can better overcome barriers and indifference in order to accentuate citizens' empowerment.

The scientific results of the research will be published in a series of scientific peer-reviewed journals relevant to each domain, and they will be also presented at international congresses and conferences to the scientific community. In addition to this, some concrete output of the project will consist of an important corpus of European messages related to climate change mitigation and originating from various social media platforms. The dissemination of the theoretical results and of the developments will take place via a website which will offer, on one side, an open-source toolbox, providing recommendations, prototypes and resources, and, on the other side, prototypes and corpora who may serve to citizens, researchers, public decision-takers, and nongovernmental organizations on climate change communication strategies. In addition to the website, there will be emphasis on the dissemination of the results to the news media and the participation in public debates and conferences.

The societal and scientific impact of the project also goes beyond the framework and timescale of the Solstice funding, as we adopt a 5 year-vision along the lines mapped out by the project that would include direct application of our results. The idea behind this vision would be to develop, from our transdisciplinary results, a transformative learning artificial intelligence (AI) tool that would enable to outline citizens' "climate profile" through the automatic processing of their social media discourse and that would adapt, following this profile, visual and textual suggested content in social media.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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LINKS

http://www.jpi-climate.eu/SOLSTICE/202CM

https://uclouvain.be/fr/instituts-recherche/ilc/miil/2o2cm-solstice.html

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