

Climate Change Campaigns: Keep Calm But Don't Carry On

Chris Rose, February 2010

Einstein famously said that to go on doing the same thing and expect a different result, is the definition of insanity. Climate campaigners immersed in rethinking after the 2009 Copenhagen Conference need to keep calm and carry on [1] but not in the same way.

Governments and campaigners both face a common problem: how to generate change and political space for change. The conventional science-UN politics-media process isn't going to get them there - but other strategies could.

This Newsletter suggests that the VBCOP principles published in 2009 [2] can be used to construct a new, bottom-up strategy for driving change, provided that campaigners and governments also defuse the problems they have with the existing climate-science-media process, which is now fundamentally out- dated.

First, how VBCOP could be used. A key starting point is recognizing reality that much more change is possible than the dominant media 'discourse' allows for.

A Reminder of VBCOP

In a VBCOP strategy you utilise motivational values, behaviour and the consistency heuristic to generate opinion which is then used to political effect. This mirrors what actually happens in society only in a planned strategy. It means that campaigners need to think not about winning arguments but about generating or utilising behaviours.

VBCOP stands for Values, Behaviour, Consistency, Opinion, Politics (V>B>C>O>P) and the model is basically this:

Define an action that resonates with the values of a target audience [V]

then

Secure the behaviour [B]

then

Utilise consistency heuristic (ie my opinions adjust to match my behaviour) [C]

then

Reveal the resulting opinion (what I believe in or am in favour of) [O]

then

Deploy that to change politics [P]

By values I mean Maslowian Motivational Values discussed in numerous previous newsletters. These unconscious psychological drivers have a huge effect on whether people undertake and repeat behaviours, and strongly predict 'attitudes' to climate change (eg scepticism) - see for example the study and survey *Who Gives A Stuff About Climate Change and Who's Taking Action ?* [3]. A proposition not matched to values is unlikely to induce someone to do a behaviour, and even less to continue it. An example of design to match actions to behaviour (in the case of Outer Directed, esteem-seeking Prospectors) is the 2007 study *Research Into Motivating Prospectors, Settlers and Pioneers To Change Behaviours That Affect Climate Emissions* [4].

By 'consistency' I mean the 'consistency heuristic' or 'principle' demonstrated by Cialdini and others, in which we adjust our opinions to match our behaviours, in order to retain our self-identity as rational beings [5].

Can Significant Behaviour Change Be Quicker And Bigger Than You Think ?

Many media frames brought out to debate behaviour change, especially in relation to climate, involve a mythical group we might call the 'Never People'. These are the 'people' who we will 'never get out of their cars', and who will 'never' cut down on flights or put solar on their roofs, and so on.

The 'Never- People' can exert a dangerous tyranny over the thinking of anyone concerned with campaigning or policy and behaviour change. Policy makers and decision makers may plan on the basis that these Never-People exist (see recycling case below), and create institutional obstacles that can last decades. Campaigners who cannot imagine how the Never-People can be induced to do the right thing voluntarily, set out to overcome them by sheer weight of force, or to 'change them' as human beings. Such campaigns usually only crystallise differences, and may slow or even stop change.

The Case of Britain and 4 x 4s

Less than a decade ago, 4x4s (SUVs) were riding high on British streets and prominent in the lexicon of aspirational goods. In 2004 [6] an article entitled "The 4x4 is here to stay - on and off-road" appeared at the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders website. It stated:

"Sales of 4x4 vehicles are rising. Last year six per cent of the new car market were 4x4 off-roaders the market for Sports Utility Vehicles and large 4x4s has more than doubled in ten years. Manufacturers are meeting increased demand but some in the anti-car lobby aren't happy".

4 x 4s had become the accessible Demon No 1 for climate campaigners, so they began to campaign against them. In 2004 the tiny but creative British group Alliance Against Urban 4x4s (www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk) copied a tactic from anti-SUV campaigns in New York and began putting what looked just like parking tickets (infringement notices) on the windscreens of 4x4s declaring "Poor Vehicle Choice"[7]. Within a few years a wave of derision hit 4x4s in the UK, and they became déclassé. Sensing a public mood politicians and even motoring correspondents like Jeremy Clarkson denounced 4x4s in urban areas. The government began to hike taxes on such vehicles.

Around this time I tried to buy a second hand VW Caravelle - a relatively low-emission type of people carrier - but friends in the motor trade told me that they were now out of my price range because lots of wealthy mothers had abandoned their 4x4s for the school run, in order to avoid disapproving looks at the school gates, and bought the less obvious Caravelle instead.

The reason for their avoidance behaviour was social opprobrium. Most likely these mothers were a mixture of Pioneers and Prospectors [8], especially the latter as they would have embraced 4x4s as a must-have statement and then been very aware of public criticism.

By 2007 the right-wing *Daily Mail*[9] reported:

Sales of 4x4 'Chelsea Tractors' have plummeted by a fifth as fuel prices soar and motorists are hit by hefty gas-guzzler taxes. New registrations of 4x4s last month dropped by more than 18per cent compared with May 2007, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) reported yesterday.

At the same time, sales of the smallest and most fuel-efficient cars have soared by 120 per cent - with Halfords also reporting this week a boom in bicycle sales that boosted its profits by nearly 12 per cent.

The process was not without debate, even rancour. Newspapers reported fierce shouting matches between ticketing campaigners and school run mothers who insisted that they had an over-riding 'need' to transport their children in a tank-like vehicle, and would no doubt have subscribed to the notion that they would 'never' give up their 4x4. And then they did.

In 2008 I was working with a marketing director from a major car company who remarked in passing that he had just sold his 4x4: "kids were throwing mud at it - I had to get rid of it!" By 2009 Richard Headland, the editor of *Which? Car* stated [10]:

"A previously healthy market for 4x4s has virtually collapsed and some people have finally realised that an off-roader isn't the perfect car for the school run. Expensive, gas-guzzling cars like 4x4s are becoming socially unacceptable – unless you're a farmer".

As of June 2009 sales of new 4x4s were down by nearly a third on 2008. 4x4 maker Dodge sold 91 per cent fewer vehicles, Jeep 79% less, Chrysler 77% less and Land Rover 50% less.

The desocialisation of 4x4s began well before the UK government hiked taxes on them, before fuel price rises and well before the recession struck but all these factors probably combined to drive down sales. It is the speed with which this happened though, that is remarkable - remarkable because it only took a few years, while many policy makers and almost all pundits seem to assume any significant change in social behaviours is going to take generations.

The Case of England and Recycling

In a country like the UK, household recycling is now utterly 'normal' but it was not always the case [11]. So to save yourself the trouble of a visit to a pre-internet age newspaper library, just imagine the sorts of 'never' and 'people' statements that were once used to reject the idea that it was possible to get people living in a world of modern convenience and consumption to voluntarily start digging through their rubbish, to clean and to sort it, and then to put it into special bins.

Across England there are now cases of Councils finding that recycling rates achieved by householders so far exceed what government assumed possible [12], that waste incinerators planned on those assumptions, are no longer needed. Surrey for example [13] has recently abandoned plans for two such plants, and in other places councils are searching around for waste to import in order to keep existing incinerators in operation [14].

Friends of the Earth, which has long warned of a waste-creating 'lock-in' tied to 'Public-Private Finance' contracts which make it very costly or 'impossible' to escape from the policy, can be permitted a quiet "told you so". Campaigners however should look at the implications for issues such as climate. The case of recycling amply demonstrates the risks of institutions getting it wrong.

Even as late as 2009 the drably named 'Waste Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Programme' of DEFRA (the Environment Department) looked ahead to 2020 and assumed a 1% annual increase in 'waste arisings' (that is 'residual' waste left over after some has been recycled or otherwise dealt with). DEFRA's consultants imagined that recycling rates would not go above 50% [15]: the Never People again. In reality the rates of recycling now often easily exceed 50%, and the total waste arisings are falling, not increasing.

As incineration has long been known to be considerably worse in terms of net climate-changing emissions than recycling [16], the unexpected success of recycling schemes ought to have prompted a wholesale policy change but in England [17] both central and local government are so entangled in the consequences of their past failures of imagination that they have been reluctant to change course.

The official cognitive dissonance comes about because the English Government committed itself to using incineration to burn waste back in 2004. It then erected a policy stockade around its decision under the banner 'Energy from Waste'. The then Environment Minister Elliot Morley urged Councils to "press ahead urgently" with the task of approving planning applications for new facilities [18]. Government produced a study rubbishing concerns that incinerators might be bad for health, and later put out a tender for PR companies to build public support for the 'energy from waste' policy. Companies saw a new market in becoming 'energy from waste' firms [19]. Of course this process can create a powerful lobby of vested interests in favour of keeping the policy.

While careful comparisons were made of the technical capacities of different waste treatment systems, it seems analysis of the human side of the equation was primitive by comparison, perhaps non-existent.

It is not as if there was no evidence that recycling could be much higher than 50%. For years much higher recycling rates had been achieved in parts of mainland Europe - such as Flanders at over 70% - and Councils in England, such as Kesteven had achieved over 50% in 2005. Yet instead of analysing how this had happened and organising themselves to make it happen everywhere, targets were set according to historical rates (and capped at a maximum of 30% with a national target of 25% by 2006). You'd think an alarm bell would have gone off when actual rates jumped from 17% to nearly 27% just in 2005-06 but instead it seems that politicians were living inside a 'frame' which said 'there will always be more waste'. As the Environment Agency still puts it at it the 'Energy from Waste' pages of its website today [20]:

"We live in a throw-away society ... The amount of municipal waste generated by householders and businesses has been increasing by 3-5% every year"

By including 'businesses' in the statement above, the Agency disguises the fact that domestic waste 'arisings' have been falling, thanks partly to recession but also due to the success of recycling schemes. It's simply untrue that 'households' have been 'increasing' the waste problem.

The 'throw away society', populated with Never-People, is the frame. As George Lakoff has shown many times, people will retain the frame in preference to changing it, and simply discount that information which does not fit the frame. Consequently the official

English response to falling 'residual' domestic waste thanks to the success of recycling promotion has been to start channelling commercial waste into the incineration capacity. Keep the incinerators, just use them for something else.

So instead of celebrating the discovery that 'the public' are actually doing more of the right thing (including for climate) than they had expected, and then using that to create political space to push change on other behaviours, the English Government's response has been to try and bury it to hide their mistakes.

Smoking, Plastic Bags and So Forth

There are other cases where change has been dramatic. From 2006 - 2009 for example there was a 48% reduction in the number of plastic bags given out in England, following voluntary action by retailers to make it harder to obtain them, which itself followed campaigns against plastic bags.

Similarly, compliance with smoking bans has been so great that the practice is now almost almost extinct in public places in the UK, after only a few years. The strident debates over 'freedoms' and anticipation that smokers would simply refuse to change their behaviour which for years accompanied any discussion of a ban, have all dispersed like yesterday's smoke.

After the London Congestion Charge covering a small area of Central London was introduced by then Mayor Ken Livingstone in 2003, traffic fell 20% in four years [21]. Before its launch 50% were against the charge, falling to 34% a year afterwards [22]. Similar changes have been recorded in other countries, such as Norway.

How Rapid Change Can Happen

One reason change can happen much more quickly than many can imagine is that new behaviours can spread across values groups much more quickly than people do - indeed behaviours move in the opposite direction to people, from Pioneers, to Prospectors, to Settlers. So people do not themselves need to change, for behaviours to spread.

Another is if values-matched signals are given to all three main values groups simultaneously. Then although the first off the blocks will still be the Pioneers, the others may follow almost immediately. A diagram showing this is published online in the report 'Resolving Koo's Paradox' [22] shows how emulation from Prospector to Pioneer may then be followed by norming, as the Settlers finally come into line, and start doing the new thing too. The emulation jump and the norming jump each create 'tipping points'.

Campaign Strategy Newsletter 49 described the 'tipping point' effect which can occur when behaviours started by the Inner Directed Pioneers spread across the Transcender (Inner Directed) - Now Person (Outer Directed) bridge. That is, from just being adopted by Pioneers to being adopted by Pioneers and Prospectors (as the other Prospectors tend to follow Now People). That part is *emulation* - when something becomes aspirational and in the case of 4x4s it happened in reverse, as they became unfashionable.

Issue 53 gave the example of the breaking UK trend for re-using fabrics - as a fashion and as a behaviour, including 'swishing'. Pioneer behaviours on the cusp of spreading to the UK Prospectors may include 'swishing', train rather than air holiday travel, and a range of things that make your home and life 'lower carbon'. The 2008 values based survey referred to earlier [23] shows that Prospectors 'hear the call' on climate - they are prospects for action.

In the case of 'recycling', it was for decades seen as an ethical lifestyle choice - promoted by groups such as Friends of the Earth, mainly adopted by Pioneers and seen by others as 'cranky'. Ultimately the introduction of official rules provided Settlers with what they needed in order to feel happy about seriously taking up the behaviour. The visibility of the behaviour - the separate bins at kerbsides - would have reinforced the need to conform among Prospectors.

The shorthand formula for all these is Pioneer campaigns and initiatives, followed by something becoming desirable and adopted by Prospectors as the thing to do or have (or the reverse), and the introduction of rules, signalling 'time for action' to the Settlers. In a society where the great majority were Settlers, this dynamic would not be nearly as strong but because in the UK (and in many other developed countries), Pioneers and Prospectors together form a majority, they define what is 'normal'. As Settlers are strongly driven by the desire to conform to the norm, they can quickly flip from stubborn denial to total compliance [24].

As reported in a previous 'Newsletter, UK public opinion also shows an increase the the proportion seeing recycling as 'effective'. This is probably the consistency principle - behaviours driving opinion - and may also explain the increased approval of the London Congestion Charge.

Applying VBCOP To Climate Politics

VBCOP offers two possible starting points. One is to initiate new behaviours, the other is to take existing relevant behaviours, and then develop opinions and use them to influence politics.

Groups like Global Cool are working with new behaviours at the cusp of tipping: trying for example to catalyse the desocialisation of over-heated homes (using clothing fashion) and travel by bus or train (using the possibilities for enjoying yourself by socialising that do not exist when travelling by car). But let's consider a major opportunity which now faces the UK government and campaigners where the behaviours are soon likely to exist. Similar opportunities probably exist in many other countries.

As a direct result of years of campaigning by NGOs in the UK Government's Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is now following the German example and plans [25] to introduce a 'Feed in Tariff' for rooftop renewables such as solar pv and wind, this April. Next April it is due to introduce one for renewable heat (solar thermal, heat pumps, biomass etc). Encouragingly - because it is more in line with Settler and Prospector language - they are calling them 'Clean Energy Cash Back Schemes'.

Already there is rapid growth in these technologies albeit from a small base and already you can sell your electricity to the grid or even get a credit for heat from at least one company but it's not a lot. Sending a new signal that you can make much more money from installing domestic renewables will provide Prospectors and Settlers with a reason that translates straight into their terms (getting ahead/ success, and reducing risk/ safety/ resilience respectively). If that is, it is sold and marketed in the right way, as opposed to being promoted in universalist ethical terms (ie in terms only liked by Pioneers [26]). I do not know how much response DECC expect to get but I suspect it will be very large. Let's hope they are not planning for the response to be small, repeating the mistake of DEFRA on recycling.

Similar opportunities will present themselves with the introduction of electric cars and other personal technologies and behaviours.

Then there are those behaviours which already exist. The same DECC plan anticipates that by 2020 'more than 1.2 million people will be in green jobs' in the UK and '7 million homes will have benefited from whole house makeovers, and more than 1.5 million households will be supported to produce their own clean energy'. But we do not have to wait for 2020.

Already millions of people in many countries are engaged in behaviours consistent with helping combat climate change, such as driving less and choosing efficient lightbulbs and appliances, having relevant jobs or doing climate-friendly things at work: spending their working time doing things designed to cut carbon and or produce a low carbon economy. The C part of VBCOP requires them to develop opinions - O - which are consistent with those behaviours.

A simple way to reinforce those behaviours and stimulate the thought that shapes the opinion would be to send messages of approval, for example reports, studies and polls, and endorsements by respected and esteemed figures and brands, which say 'this is a good thing', these people (create a name for them) are doing the right thing (almost heroes but don't overdo it - heroes usually perish in the process), they are winners. Enable them to become visibly successful, to demonstrate visible achievement.

Not 'Winning Arguments'

It's not about changing people into activists, getting them to develop and interest in the 'issue' or winning arguments. You do not need to say to someone working in renewables that they 'have decided' anything about climate change: just make them aware that they are working in an industry which is part of 'solving the problem'. Their choice was not whether to believe in climate change but whether to join the industry. The consistency heuristic means their 'opinion' on climate change will become consistent with climate change being a reality, because their job is a reality. It is the reverse of the problem faced where large numbers of people are engaged in say Tar Sands, oil or coal development. They *have to* believe climate impacts are untrue or not (or not yet) a problem. As the numbers working in 'green' industries or climate-consistent jobs increase, their effect can begin to outweigh the influence of those with jobs or behaviours consistent with denial. If that is, they are put into play.

This strategy would therefore focus attention on actions that are being taken or have been taken, and use these to generate signs and signals which encourage more action. Such signs include 'captured' opinion (polls, voxpops, blogs etc) but can also be visible signals. For example: when people have undertaken a climate-consistent-action, such as lagging their loft or getting a job at a windfarm, enable them to make it visible, or do so for them. For instance by putting signs on houses or bringing together employees or executives of 'new' green industries for talks or conferences. The out-take from that is that these things *are happening* - they are not a matter of debate or conjecture. Uncertainty does not feature in the way it does in the 'science' debate (see sections below). This way you can build up a narrative of certainties.

The greater the size, frequency, social range (different types of people involved), intensity of activity and frequency of such signals, the more impact they will have in creating a perception that there is political space to respond to climate change. Obviously from the point of view of secondary audiences who are analysing this, or seeing it and mentally processing it unconsciously, it does not matter whether people have consciously undertaken the behaviours because of climate change or for some other reason. If for example the number of people buying solar panels was increasing at 10% a year, then whether they were doing it for energy security/ resilience of supply of heat, or esteem (fashion etc) or ethics (save planet) would not matter, if you were a politician or official wondering how far you could go in proposing that alternative

heating should be phased out, or that solar should be mandated for all homes. The 'art of the possible' often determines political commitments - this shows more is possible.

An Out-Dated Format

The format of many climate campaigns are now fundamentally out of date because like the climate talks themselves, which have remained essentially unaltered for about twenty years, they and have been overtaken by events. When the talks began, action was largely notional and now it is significant. Not only has the global renewables industry expanded enormously but many countries have adopted laws, rules and regulations for increased energy efficiency or cleaner less polluting vehicles. For school children in a country like the UK climate change has become a topic that crops up throughout their curriculum, the IT, ICT and automotive industries, even the chemicals, aviation and shipping industry are investing huge amounts of time, money and effort in moving towards 'zero carbon'. Retailers and food manufacturers in many countries are starting to label food with its carbon footprint, dozens of major cities have joined climate-response initiatives, construction companies and many public institutions face ever tightening energy standards and the carbon trading and carbon risk industries are established in major financial centres. For people doing these things, just as much as for someone working to deal with sea-level rise or water supplies to a town affected by a melting glacier, climate change is real.

Unfortunately such responses still play little part in the politics: they are underutilized. NGOs and government communicators should now change that. (One example of where they are doing is 1010 - below).

That is a strategy - tactically it requires another thing which is to make at least some of it into 'news'. This means finding points of conflict within these developments: are there enough grants for solar rooftop systems for example, and are they going to the right people? Which are the most effective types of response? Which companies are the winners and where are the jobs going, and not going? And so on.

What Campaigners And Governments Have To Stop

The sort of strategy outlined above cannot work if the dominant media-political conversation about climate remains dominated by what goes on in the international UNFCCC negotiations. Of course neither politicians nor NGOs control the media but they feed and enable it. And because the IPCC is umbilically linked to the UNFCCC, 'science' is inextricably linked to the international media-political framing. And because most people, including many politicians and most of the media, do not understand how science works, let alone how the scientific consensus on climate change has developed, this provides a playground for the climate sceptics. They can help make sure the UNFCCC becomes the slowest ship in the convoy. Continued framing of 'climate change' as a question of high level international political negotiation [27] dependent on

eliminating scientific ‘uncertainty’, is the biggest weakness in efforts to secure large-scale climate action. The more important you say these processes are, the more you say hangs upon them, the greater the significance of any flaws.

The de facto strategy of the like-minded (ie NGOs+‘progressive’ governments + UN bodies + EU etc) has been to move political commitments forward behind an ‘artillery barrage’ of science - or if you like a less militaristic analogy, behind a moving scientific curtain. Politicians have often resorted to “the science says” instead of “we have decided”. Many NGO campaigns mirror the role given to science through the IPCC in relation to the UN FCCC and many scientists and institutions have entered the media-public-political arena. The bottom line is that the public debate, often framed by the media, has been that political commitments are made ‘inside’ what the science says.

Because the international politics has lagged behind politics eg in the EU, the ‘science-political-media’ debate has continued around UNFCCC in a way that it has not eg in the EU. Once the EU adopted a target and started acting on it, politicians effectively decided, rather than waiting for ‘more science’. The ideal position would be for all nations to agree “we have enough science to decide to act” (and many have, albeit incoherently and inconsistently). Then the debates in science would still go on but be largely disengaged from the politics.

The Strategy of Sceptics

The strategy of the opposition has been to attack this by attacking not just ‘the science’ but to play on the media’s framing of how this determines decision-making, by exploiting the lack of understanding of science and scientific method. This has been made easier for them by the way the IPCC reports have edged forwards by eliminating or estimating and reducing “uncertainties” (cf for example, clearly saying “these findings are enough - now over to you”) . The IPCC-UNFCCC relationship institutionalised this and ensured the ‘debate’ has continued. The media discourse then becomes ‘science is more certain therefore politicians can go further’ - or, ‘the science is less certain/flawed - we cannot go further/should wait’.

Even governments who are taking significant action suffer as a result of this framing. From the media coverage of Copenhagen, which is the main source of understanding for pundits and commentators and the rest of the media, you might be forgiven for thinking that whether or not to respond to climate change was still an undecided question for all governments.

The most vulnerable link in the strategy of relying on a decisive outcome from the UNFCCC process, comes in the media dialogue about ‘uncertainty’. In science, some things are always uncertain, truth is conditional. To scientists this does not mean politicians (or others) cannot decide. In popular parlance ‘uncertain’ easily translates straight into ‘not enough certainty’ (to act) [28]. Because there will always be

uncertainties somewhere, politicians and scientists who allow themselves to be lured into this trap are doomed to orbit the question in perpetuity.

This is where the 'science' gets 'weighed' - it is where your chips are cashed in. Given that very few people are abreast of the real science, or know how to assess the significance of uncertainties, and even if politicians or media are, that they cannot explain it in the space available in the media-political-public dialogue, people have to make up their minds about what it means not so much on facts and information as on signs and signals which they assign meaning to. For example: visibly changing seasons, visibly shrinking glaciers, the number or proportion of scientists saying something, the messengers involved (and trust of them etc). In other words, by unconsciously using 'heuristics' or 'rules of thumb' to decide, when one cannot decide by being analytical. This process is highly susceptible to influence by campaigning *against* action as well as for it.

George Lakoff has argued [29] that this process poisons democracy in America (and, he says, is well understood and used by the 'Right') and has called for a 'New Enlightenment' so that we all become aware of how we make decisions 'emotionally' rather than analytically, based on reflexive rather than reflective thinking. Getting politicians, their advisers and climate scientists to understand this, would be a start.

The sceptics strategy is essentially the same as that pursued by anti-evolutionists in the US: to rely on a lack of understanding of science amongst most of its audience and to present climate change, like evolution, as something you simply can decide whether to 'believe' in or not. Every time this frame is repeated, such as in media reports which state x% of the public does/not 'believe' in climate change, or indeed in polls which ask that question, the frame is reinforced [30]. Every time a scientist then responds to the media story framed this way [31], they help reinforce it.

The consequences of this problem are everywhere to be seen in the media and the blogosphere. Sceptics do not use science to challenge the scientific consensus on climate change, mainly because there really isn't any but use framing, spin and media debate, often pegged to polls. Most campaigners have learnt that engaging with these media plays only feeds them but politicians and even more so scientists, are less likely to ignore them, leaving the campaigners in something of a cleft stick. Although there are many things that politicians and scientists can do to improve their communications (the IPCC being an obvious case in point), the only strategic answer is to shift things elsewhere, such as to the realities described above.

Consequences

To take one example, the consequences of remaining with the present focus were illustrated by an event I attended a short while ago. It was the launch of a booklet by the London-based Green Alliance [32] *'From Hot Air To Happy Endings'* in which

arguments were advanced by a range of authors about how government could produce an effective 'narrative' on climate change. Meaning one which gained the political space to take necessary actions. The panel of intellectuals assembled to discuss this report included Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the Royal Society of Arts, and was chaired by Fiona Harvey who had reported extensively on Copenhagen for the *Financial Times*.

Fiona Harvey opened by saying that the main task now was to find an effective way to 'sell' a low carbon economy to the public, echoing the strap line on the Green Alliance report. Matthew Taylor spoke for the despairing tendency, arguing that we now needed a 'moment' to recapture public sentiment from the sceptics, who had gained ground in the aftermath of the debacle at Copenhagen and the 'climategate' emails about science. Political leaders needed to bury differences to stand together and tell the public that what was coming was going to be difficult but necessary.

Admittedly another panellist, PR man Charles Lewington who had previously served as communications chief to a Prime Minister, suggested that in a few months 'climategate' would be largely forgotten - and I think he is more likely to be right than wrong but the general Harvey-Taylor framing about sums up most chattering class comment on the subject, at least in the UK. Typical is Peter Wilby, a columnist in the left-wing magazine *New Statesman*, who wrote [33] definitively if completely wrongly on 15 February: 'The global warming deniers, I fear, have won'.

Why Campaigners And Governments Should Not Panic About Polls

Wilby and Taylor and others in the London commentariat were much exercised about the confusion and failures of politics at Copenhagen and the climategate emails and admissions of errors in the IPCC's reports. Almost certainly not understanding the basic construction of the scientific consensus, they and the media put great importance on what effect these reports had on public opinion, which is much easier to talk about. A BBC poll story for example connected the emails, and IPCC error with a 10% increase people saying they did not believe human made climate change existed [34]. This generated countless headlines about a 'rise in scepticism' but none about the other findings of the polls in question, which showed no significant difference in belief in the science before and after the 'climategate' email story broke [35], and, bizarrely, there were more people who said that these stories had made them more concerned about climate, than there were who said they had made them less concerned.

The spin put on this is largely up to the media, and whether they want to run a glass-half-full or glass-half-empty story. For example, the BBC headlined a 2007 story "Man causing climate change - poll" when it found 'an average of 79% of respondents to an international survey agreed that "human activity, including industry and transportation, is a significant cause of climate change"'. However when in 2010 it found 75% believed 'climate change was a reality', it headed the story (about the UK poll) "Climate scepticism 'on the rise'". The number of 'believers' had fallen, it said, from 83% to 75%.

You could of course say 75% is still a very large majority. Indeed that was the slant the BBC put on a 2009 story "Climate fears on rise: BBC poll" when a poll by GlobeScan for the BBC found " Nearly two-thirds of 24,071 people polled in 23 countries said climate change was a "very serious" problem - up from 44% in a GlobeScan 1998 poll". The 2010 story could have been headed 'Despite "Climategate" Large Majority Remain Convinced' but that complies less well to news values.

As ever, it is more instructive to look at what people do, rather than what they say. Take 1010 (www.1010uk.org) for example. At the time of writing 56,859 People, 2,166 Businesses, 1,156 Schools, Universities and Colleges and 1,456 other organisations in the UK have signed up to 1010 since its launch in www.1010uk.org. Recent sign-ups include the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office, HMRC (the taxman), and the Department for Children schools and Families, as well as the Confederation of British Industries and Virgin Media. 17 out of the 20 biggest cities in the country (excluding London) now have 1010 councils. This is hardly evidence that the 'deniers' 'have won', and by no stretch of the imagination can all these be described as the 'usual suspects'.

In fact many surveys have shown that depending how you put choices and ask questions, a hard core of around 10% out and out deniers of climate change can easily be enlarged to 20%, 30% or more being in some way 'sceptical'.

The paper [36] *Sustaining Disbelief: Media Pollism and Climate Change*, attempted to separate out the various forms of 'scepticism' which the media commonly conflates to run glass-half-empty or glass-emptying stories about climate change. These are 'scepticism' about: existence, consequence, detection, attribution, response, feasibility and efficacy. All these are highly affected by values. For instance the low sense of self-agency of Settlers is likely to lead them to agree that any new initiative is likely to fail (feasibility and efficacy), whether it's 'about' climate or not.

Several surveys by CSL and CDSM have shown [37] with data from 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008] that these differences are largely values driven - the disinclination to 'believe' in, take action on or talk about global climate change is consistent with the Settler dislike of change, aversion to complexity, and preference for things being small, contained and local. The aversion of the Prospectors seeking esteem of others to 'global climate change' is consistent with their desire to acquire material wealth, and be visibly successful - both of which they feel are threatened by universalist campaign propositions about 'changing society', forgoing material benefits and acting to benefit others (eg in foreign countries).

For example in the 2007 survey [38] a very few people agreed with the statement about the state of the global environment 'I'm not concerned, it doesn't worry me' but against population 'average' of 100, the Inner Directed (ID) Pioneers scored 46, Outer Directed (OD) Prospectors 104, and Security Driven (SD) Settlers, a whopping 156. A lot more agreed 'it's not as dangerous as it's made out to be' but we saw the same weighting: ID: 67, OD: 88, SD: 150. In the 2008 survey [39] we mapped similar patterns of response but in much more detail. For example Settlers were significantly more likely agree that they weren't worried about the state of the environment, were hugely opposed to a climate tax and strongly denied that their actions were responsible for climate change. Pioneers showed many opposite skews. Settlers and Golden Dreamers (the 'entry' group of OD Prospectors) were the home of strong agreement 'that the situation was not as dangerous as it's made out to be'. (A 2010 re-survey is now in the field). These unconscious values explain so much of the responses to questions about 'climate change' because of the way the 'issue' has been framed and presented.

There are countervailing drives which could be consistent with Settlers embracing the idea, such as domestic or local energy security, or getting a job - and for Prospectors, such as getting the latest must-have green lifestyle, houses and gadgets or being a winner, but these are not how polls are framed, and not yet how politicians and the media talk about it, or how the vast majority of campaigns are run.

There are many such polls and press coverage can affect poll results, by equipping people whose values already tended to make them want to believe something (eg for many Settlers and for Golden Dreamers, 'this climate stuff is untrue'), with nuggets of evidence to do so. Press coverage of polls can affect the results of the next polls because of the 'social proof' heuristic - if most people are doing/ saying it, 'they must be right'. Again, the people most swayed by this are the Settlers.

So although 73% in the February 2010 BBC poll said that despite being aware of the "science flaws" stories the media coverage had not changed their views about the risks of climate change, such results probably reflect underlying values and psychology rather than any analysis of the evidence. In the UK, 70% is about the proportion who are not Settlers (although you can find some 'sceptics' throughout the other Groups). Furthermore, any question "has your opinion been affected by press coverage" is as much about your self identity as a rational independently minded person as it is about the subject of the press coverage in question. Many people who have bought a product will nevertheless deny that they were affected by advertising.

The Argument-Behaviour Paradox

Perhaps most important though, is that during a process of change Prospectors and Settlers in particular will undertake behaviours which appear to be at variance with

their 'opinions', if the 'opinion'-measuring has a different frame or predicate from the behaviour as perceived by the 'respondent'. For example, asking a Settler if they think we should change the way we live to help solve global climate change, might sound to a Pioneer like a reasonable test of accepting a shift to renewable energy. But to a Settler it's all about change and globalness, so they they would tend to say no, even if they were actually putting in solar panels on their own home or taking a job in a windfarm. To a Pioneer, because they always try to make connections, these positions might seem paradoxical but to a Settler they are not.

Similarly, in recent years I've been involved in several focus group studies with KSBR (www.ksbr.co.uk) in which we've seen examples of Prospectors undertaking 'green lifestyle' behaviours. But if you press these people about its relevance to say 'climate change', they tend to recoil. That's because to them their lifestyle is one thing and 'climate' is another: it is 'political' and controversial, both things they like to avoid. At least in the UK, 'green' is less political, so long as it's attached to products or services.

So isn't this contradicting the 'consistency' effect in which people adopt opinions that chime with their behaviours ? No because for Settlers and most Prospectors, the behaviours are very specific and not much connected to any 'big picture'. So if the opinion *questions* are all about the big picture, the opinions driven by behaviour may not affect their answers. The underlying flaw here is often that Pioneers are assuming connections are being made, which are not.

The net result of all this is that the Pioneer assumption that the way to achieve change is to win a big-picture argument about an 'issue', creates expectations about opinion which can then lead them to think they are not succeeding, or cannot succeed, when in fact they are, or could. There is, for Pioneers, an 'argument-behaviour-paradox'. The overall way to resolve this is to stop trying to achieve change just by 'winning arguments'.

Steps In A New Strategy

Government and non government campaigns and communications strategies could involve the following.

1. Create political space for necessary practical changes (eg renewables, efficiency, waste, different transport or food) by matching asks and offers to values, and then capturing and utilising the consequent supportive opinions (VBCOP).
2. Create 'discourses' and dialogues around those changes - distributive, efficacy and risk issues for example - to make news

3. Do not try to sell 'big picture' Pioneer conceptions to Prospector and Settlers eg 'a low carbon society': nobody was ever 'sold' a high carbon consumer society, it just happened and we embraced the benefits [40].
4. Focus much less attention on the international climate talks, and much more to making changes 'at home' (eg domestic renewables, electric cars, green fashions), and demonstrating that these are happening
5. Educate the media about science and uncertainty and the basis of the construction of the consensus on climate change - best done as a peer to peer exercise
6. Educate relevant scientists (and politicians and campaigners) about the basics of reflexive communications [41] - framing, heuristics and values for example - so for example, they stop interpreting their progress or lack of through what the media says about opinion polling
7. Government bodies and science institutions should give more scientific-policy attention to responses to impacts which are already happening (eg sea level rise, season change, acidification of the seas, melting glaciers) and explain these in terms which resonate with values, rather than publicising the results of scenarios and models which are trying to push the outer limits of 'climate prediction' (where uncertainties are greatest).
8. Within the UN science-politics system, disengage the outer limits of science from the politics and stop politicians from using the elimination of uncertainty as a metric for taking political action.
9. Campaigners and politicians, and in particular their communications planners and social marketers, need to understand the dynamics of change in terms of values groups.
10. When talking about the 'big picture' of climate change to mixed audiences is unavoidable, use frames that are universal in terms of values. For example 'being a parent' (see Campaign Strategy Newsletter No 50 - 'It's The Children Stupid').

Why We May Overlook Change

Because different values groups tend to pay attention more to people like themselves than each other, we can easily under-estimate change in a variety of ways. Because campaigners and government communicators tend to be Pioneers one of the most important is Pioneers not seeing change amongst Prospectors.

Caroline Fiennes at Global Cool (www.globalcool.org), the NGO which focuses on inciting the uber-Prospector Outer Directed 'Now People' to take climate-friendly actions, plays a recognition game in her presentations. These presentations are usually given to audiences of decision makers and ethical campaigners, amongst whom there is a high proportion of Inner Directed Pioneers.

Fiennes shows her audience a range of faces, magazines and clothes. Do they recognize them? The faces are mainly from tv soaps and the clothes are the latest fashions. The magazines are those favoured by Now People. She also shows them faces of politicians and current affairs journalists. Most campaigners, officials, policy wonks and issue experts can recognize the political journalists and government ministers but few have any idea what the latest shape of womens trousers are called, or who many of the soap stars are, and the magazines, they have rarely even heard of.

This tactic usually works in making the point to the audience that the people Global Cool targets are not like them in terms of what media they consume, which things they are interested in, and who they know about. Indeed, CDSM (www.cultdyn.co.uk) which maps people according to these Maslowian Groups, asks dozens of questions about hobbies, past-times and media consumption. The differences it finds between the psychological groups are stark.

For example Settlers in the UK score significantly higher than the other groups on 'doing nothing in particular'. Perhaps this explains why they tend to dominate in on-the-street media vox pops.

The esteem-driven Prospectors in contrast score significantly higher than the other Maslow Groups on the options: go to a wine bar or club, visit a comedy club, pamper myself with personal products, wild party, drinks and dancing, dancing at night clubs, go to a pop concert, dancing to live music, have a 'happy hour' drink, have friends round to watch sport on tv, attend a formal party or dinner party.

Pioneers significantly opt for: discuss social, political or economic issues, go to exhibitions or museums, send or receive social emails, attend a meeting of any kind, visit a church, mosque, synagogue or temple, go to the theatre, ballet or concert, meet new people, go to the cinema, have friends around for a meal.

All this means the Maslow Groups tend to spend more time with themselves than with each other.

When it comes to what they look for in a newspaper, the differences are just as pronounced. For Settlers the top choices are 'outrageous headlines and unbelievable stories'. They also rank significantly higher than the population average in selecting material such as: regular competitions and prizes, private lives of Royalty, cartoons, puzzles, emotional stories which pull at the heart-strings, stories about ordinary people, crosswords, letters, and local news.

For Prospectors the equivalent results are: beauty and personal appearance, lifestyles of the rich and famous, fashion/clothes, homes and interiors, private lives of Royalty, property, scandals in high places, your stars and problem pages. Pioneers on the other

hand, significantly over-score on: features on theatre, art or classical music, in depth comment on cultural affairs, features on books, British politics, editorial opinion, features on modern music or musicians, science and new technology, social issues, and 'the environment'.

So I suspect the Fiennes game is less good at is making Pioneer audiences realise that these 'different' Now People not only consume media and live in a world very different from that of the 'political' classes but that they also largely ignore the ideas-driven Inner Directed world altogether. That is they don't only consume additional media, or simply do more shopping, are a bit more fashion conscious and rather more socially active than the Inner Directed Pioneers but they hardly follow issues, current affairs and politics at all.

So what seems incredibly important to campaigners, news journalists and the political classes therefore, is really only of great interest to the Pioneers. 'Issues' exist mostly in a Pioneer bubble.

It seems quite likely that this massively skews the perspective of campaigners about what is going on in society, and is even causing them to overlook the potential of change they have initiated themselves.

Finally, if campaigners exist mostly inside a Pioneer bubble then the news media and particularly political commentators exist in a bubble inside a bubble, one which feeds on opinion polls rather than measures of behaviour, and treats political debate as if it writes the route-plan for society.

In reality, politics as reported in the news is not most people's reality. BBC's Radio 5 demonstrated this recently when it despatched reporter Stephen Chittenden to spend a week without papers, TV, radio or website news. Here is his report [42]:

'Like a prisoner shuffling into freedom from his dark cell, I am back into the sunlit world of news, sport and of course entertainment. For one week I've been deprived of all media save social networks to see if the news could find me.

5 live's Richard Bacon correctly predicted I was guaranteed to get interesting stories via Twitter. But even though facebook is rapidly growing as a source of news, it proved that one man's news is another's gossip.

It's actually quite refreshing to listen to music instead of news all day, but so very draining to trawl through the bizarre worlds of digg, newsvine or reddit in search of the odd nugget. My winner of the week - twitter. Follow the right people, and you'll know what's going on. So simple too. One to watch - Google Buzz Waste of my space - Facebook. How can 400 million users be so wrong?'

I don't know but would lay money that Facebook is used by huge numbers of Prospectors and Settlers. They like face-to-face and Facebook can be all about me, me, me. These are the people who campaigners and commentators talk about as the people who are not interested, and who 'won't change': the 'Never People'. To quote Wendy in Peter Pan, "never is an awfully long time". We don't have that long to wait while we go on doing the same things and expect a different result.

references

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- [2] *Campaign Strategy Newsletter* No 49, March 2009, A New Campaign Strategy - VBCOP, and VBCOP – A Unifying Campaign Strategy Model, Chris Rose, at www.campaignstrategy.org
- [3] Chris Rose with Pat Dade and Les Higgins, 2009, *Who Gives A Stuff About Climate Change and Who's Taking Action?* at www.campaignstrategy.org/whogivesastuff.pdf
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- [7] <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/motoring/features/aint-nothing-but-a-road-hog-485349.html>
- [8] see *Using Values Modes* at www.campaignstrategy.org
- [9] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1024482/Chelsea-tractors-abandoned-green-car-sales-rise-120pc.html#ixzz0fdqJQSET>
- [10] <http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/Sales-go-into-reverse-as.5000295.jp>
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- [12] *ENDS Report* 416, September 2009, pp 17-18, Leading English councils hit 70% recycling rate, and, *ENDS Report* 420, January 2010, pp 28-31 Should England up its recycling target ?
- [13] *ENDS Report* 419, December 2009, pp 20-21, Surrey ditches plans for two new incinerators as waste arisings decline
- [14] *ENDS Report* 420, January 2010, pp 17-18, Hampshire broadens its incinerator inputs
- [15] *ENDS Report* 409, February 2009, p 16, DEFRA urges caution on 2020 landfill forecasts
- [16] something admitted even by the government in the past and emphasised by numerous analyses by Friends of the Earth, the Royal Society and others - see eg *ENDS Report* 394, November 2007, pp 28-31; *ENDS Report* 352, May 2004, pp 14-15 Morley uses health study to urge building of new waste facilities
- [17] With higher targets (70%) in Scotland and Wales, the English government has faced criticism from the House of Commons Environment Committee that the current national English target rate for 2020 should be raised from 50% to 60% yet even this clearly lags behind what the public are prepared to do. As the Committee points out commercial waste remains relatively untouched by the sort of policies and campaigns that have encouraged domestic

recycling rates to rise so there is little reason to think that they also could not be greatly increased.

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[19] *ENDS Report* 408, January 2009, pp 20-21, Biffa plans future as energy-from-waste firm
[20] see

http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/wasteincin_319013.pdf

[21] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6368957.stm>

[22] www.ibtta.org/files/PDFs/Standard%20&%20Poors%20Congestion%20Charging.pdf

[22] http://documents.campaignstrategy.org/uploads/resolving_koo.pdf

[23] Chris Rose with Pat Dade and Les Higgins, 2009, *Who Gives A Stuff About Climate Change and Who's Taking Action?* at www.campaignstrategy.org/whogivesastuff.pdf

[24] I have no evidence for it but it is also possible that a widespread Pioneer behaviour could be flipped to become one adopted by Pioneers and Settlers if rules were introduced, and, if they together formed a large majority (also the case in the UK). This may be part of what happened with recycling, an activity which appeals to the austerity and scrimp and save tendencies of the Settlers. Then Prospectors are left with the prospect of social disapproval

[25] *The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan*, DECC

www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/publications/lc_trans_plan/lc_trans_plan.aspx

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[27] See for example our 2005 report *Climate Change Communications – Dipping A Toe Into Public Motivation*, Chris Rose, Pat Dade, Nick Gallie and John Scott,

May 2005 at www.campaignstrategy.org/valuesvoters/climatechangecommunications.pdf

[28] It was this process which frustrated Swedish medic Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt in the 1980s.

read his story at <http://www.naturalstep.org/en/our-story> - it led to 'The Natural Step' process in the 1990s.

[29] George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist's Guide To Your Brain and its Politics*, Penguin Books, 2008

[30] George Lakoff has suggested in *The Political Mind*, that this is a brain chemistry process, that is the brain physically creates a frame and reinforces it

[31] eg Bob Watson in the BBC Populus poll story Climate scepticism 'on the rise', Story news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/sci/tech/8500443.stm 2010/02/07 12:02:29 GMT

[32] *From Hot Air To Happy Landings*, Sylvia Rowley and Rebekah Phillips, Eds, Green Alliance, 2010 www.green-alliance.org.uk

[33] Peter Wilby, First Thoughts, *New Statesman* www.newstatesman.com 15 February

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[35] see for example comparison of two polls at <http://climatesafety.org/public-opinion-after-climategate/>

[36] http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/sustaining_disbelief.pdf

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http://www.campaignstrategy.org/maslow_campaign.pdf; 2005 report *Climate Change*

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Chris Rose with Pat Dade and Les Higgins, 2009, *Who Gives A Stuff About Climate Change and Who's Taking Action?* at www.campaignstrategy.org/whogivesastuff.pdf - 2008 data

[38] http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/sustaining_disbelief.pdf

[39] Chris Rose with Pat Dade and Les Higgins, 2009, *Who Gives A Stuff About Climate Change and Who's Taking Action?* at www.campaignstrategy.org/whogivesastuff.pdf

[40] In a micro example Matthew Taylor at the RSA himself pointed to the way the London 'Oyster Card' had been introduced. Initially this electronic 'travel card' gave little advantage over buying a conventional ticket. Over time, the advantage was slowly increased until now it is

vastly more expensive to buy a ticket from a machine and the card is becoming universal. Yet if the card had been proposed on the present terms at the start, there would have been a revolt against it.

[41] As blogger Jamie Young wrote at

<http://designandbehaviour.rsablogs.org.uk/2010/02/17/is-superfreakonomics-your-bible/> :

“there’s a rapidly growing amount of theory in the public sector around social marketing (and behavioural economics etc.) – but (speaking from the outside) all this knowledge doesn’t seem to be breaking into the planning of communications ... The UK’s government has been good at creative comms in the past ... but we don’t seem to be doing very well with climate change. It’s superfrustrating“.

[42] <http://www.facebook.com/notes.php?id=8251776107> Today at 04:39

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