GREEN HOUSE CONFERENCE
14th September 2019
CLIMATE EMERGENCY - RAISING THE AMBITION
WIDENING THE COALITION: DEMOCRACY AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY - CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLIES AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Centre for Understanding Sustainable Prosperity
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Photos: I Christie unless other source given
What I’ll cover

- The Two Emergencies
- The hypercomplex cluster of CAPs
- Fixing Climate via Fixing Democracy?
- The promise of Deliberative Democracy and Citizens’ Engagement
- Problems and preconditions for wider engagement in a damaged political ecology
- Widening participation: citizens’ forums and beyond

Deliberating at the Surrey Climate Commission, June 2019
“We’re winning too slowly. If we can only achieve incremental progress when large-scale change is needed, we lose. If we set large-scale action in motion, but only after such a prolonged fight that it’s no longer possible to meet the curve ahead of us, we fail. Indeed, winning too slowly is the same thing as losing.”


“Either we choose to go on as a civilisation or we don’t. That is as black or white as it gets. There are no grey areas when it comes to survival. We all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations. Or we can continue with our business as usual and fail.”


“Like it or not, we live in an age of stubbornly unsustainable policies pursued by stubbornly interest-bound political and economic institutions underwritten by stubbornly private-market fundamentalists who stubbornly privilege wealth over equality and profit over sustainability”.

Ben Barber, Cool Cities (2017)

“We all know what to do, but we don’t know how to get re-elected once we have done it.”

Jean-Claude Juncker, on the Eurozone crisis.
There’s a CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Net Zero
The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming

Committee on Climate Change
May 2019

ZERO CARBON SOONER
TIM JACKSON
The Heat Is On

**CO₂ mitigation curves: 1.5°C**

- **Constant emissions for nine years will use up the remaining carbon budget**
- **Starting mitigation in 2019 will require a mitigation rate of about 18%/yr**
- **Starting mitigation in 2000 would have required a mitigation rate of about 4%/yr**

For a >66% chance of staying below 1.5°C.

Remaining budget: ~420 GtCO₂.

Mitigation curves after Raupach et al. 2014.

Since 18%/yr mitigation is impossible, the only way to achieve this budget is with very large "negative" emissions: pulling CO₂ out of the atmosphere.

Source: Global Carbon Project, 2018
Tim Jackson in *Zero Carbon Sooner* (CUSP, 2019):

“Policy must specify both a target date and an emissions pathway. **For a linear reduction pathway not to exceed the carbon budget the target year would have to be 2025.** Nonlinear pathways, such as those with constant percentage reduction rates, have a higher chance of remaining within the available budget provided that the reduction starts early enough and the reduction rate is high enough. It is notable that reduction rates high enough both to lead to zero carbon (on a consumption basis) by 2050 and to remain within the carbon budget require **absolute reductions of more than 95% of carbon emissions as early as 2030.** On this basis, the paper argues in favour of setting a **UK target for net zero carbon emissions by 2030 or earlier,** with a maximum of 5% emissions addressed through negative emission technologies.” (My emphasis.)
There’s a DEMOCRACY EMERGENCY

Divided Britain?
Polarisation and fragmentation trends in the UK

Bobby Duffy
Kirstie Hewlett
Julian McCrae
John Hall

September 2019
"The upsurge of economic nationalism and anti-scientific populism have created an unsettling context in which climate change must be thought about and acted on. So while for most people who study the subject, the science of climate change is complex but clear enough not to paralyse us, and the economics of the great energy transformation away from fossil fuels is compelling, the politics remain painfully and perilously difficult: we have the technology of the gods and the politics of narcissistic children."

Where right-wing populists stand on climate change science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>**Denialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Dansk Folkeparti / Danish People’s Party (DF)</td>
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<td>Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond / Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (EKRE)</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>**Disengaged</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Svoboda a přímá demokracie – Tomio Okamura / Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>National Rally [former National Front] (RN)</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>Chrysi Avgi / Golden Dawn (XA)</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>Lega Nord (Lega)</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Tvarka ir teisingumas / Order and Justice (TT)</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Progress Party (PP)</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Vlaams Belang / Flemish Interest (VB)</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie / Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO)</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość / Law and Justice (PiS)</td>
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<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Slovenská národná strana / Slovak National Party (SNS)</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Schweizerische Volkspartei / Swiss People’s Party (SVP)</td>
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<td><strong>Affirmative</strong></td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>Perussuomalaiset / Finns Party (PS)</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Fidesz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Nacionālā Apvienība / National Alliance (NA)</td>
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© adelphi 2019. Based on an analysis of 21 official political party programmes, statements from party leaders, spokespersons, press releases, and other news sources.

“The sane choice must surely to be to preserve the planet we have. Yet doing that...requires co-operative effort on a planetary scale...This is a scale of challenge human beings have historically only met in times of war, and then only against each other.”
Risk of tragedy of commons in absence of cooperation in a rule-based system
Tragedy of the horizon - short-term vs long-term perspective
Collective Action Problems at every scale, global to local
CAPs and silence
A quiet Emergency

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT
WHY OUR BRAINS ARE WIRED TO IGNORE CLIMATE CHANGE
GEORGE MARSHALL

Living in Denial
Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life

Kari Marie Norgaard
CUSP Fellow Rebecca Willis on UK parliamentarians

• PhD research on why MPs don’t act urgently on climate or even discuss it...

• “…one message has emerged with striking clarity: the electorate are not asking their representatives to act. In the words of one of my interviewees, ‘Voters don’t ask about it. We go out and knock on doors, and we speak to people, and I don’t know if I’ve ever been asked about climate change, ever.’

• “This is a pretty fundamental dilemma for politicians. Most of them know what needs to be done. Yet they get their mandate from voters, who are not asking them to do anything at all. How can they square this circle?”

• Source: https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2018/02/09/theres-no-political-pressure-to-act-on-climate-so-how-are-mps-responding/
**But - are we at a Tipping Point?**

- **Unignorability:** the pile-up of scientific evidence and the arrival of widespread experience of extreme weather linked to global heating
- **New political coalitions for action:** cities, states, pro-sustainability businesses and networks, Green New Deal...and including parts of the Right
- **Business perception of systemic risk:** insurance, supply chains, lawsuits
- **The new wave of protest and mobilisation:**
  - Greta Thunberg and the school strikes
  - Extinction Rebellion
  - Sunrise
- **Emergency declarations:** UK, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, cities and regions
Recognising Democratic Emergency - are we at a Tipping Point? :
- Unignorability: the pile-up of evidence of public disaffection and disengagement from parties and voting
- Unignorability: the development of polarisation and nativist populism
- Unignorability: corrosion of democratic norms and institutions in USA, UK, rest of EU
- ‘Sophisticated state failure’: inability to discuss, let alone take action, on long-range risks (climate, biodiversity, ageing and care etc)
The convergence of Emergencies

We need to face up to the Climate Emergency via democratic means...
But our democracies have a hard time dealing with Collective Action Problems...
Climate Disruption is a planetary CAP...
Democracies are struggling with climate politics...
Have we time to fix democracy so that we create a political culture equipped for climate action?
Can we tackle the 2 Emergencies together?
The hope in deliberation - towards ecological democracy? See CUSP’s work

A Cultural Account of Ecological Democracy

Journal paper by Marit Hammond
Environmental Values (Vol. 28, No. 1)
February 2019

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND DEMOCRACY
—A RESEARCH AGENDA
Marit Hammond and Graham Smith
with Joost de Moor, Philip Catney, and Brian Doherty

More jaw, less culture war—the case for citizens’ assemblies

If climate is becoming the latest battleground in the ‘culture wars’, should we just refuse to fight? Instead of facing off against massed armies in ranged battle driven by deep pockets, Lucy Stone argues, perhaps we should throw down our arms and look to see not just the white of each other’s eyes, but the person behind them.—A plea for deliberative democracy.

Comment by LUCY STONE
“...we explore new institutional and societal spaces that can revitalise democracy, ameliorating existing constraints and infusing sustainability politics with new ways of thinking. In particular we highlight the potential promise of participatory and deliberative innovations, prefigurative politics, reform of established structures and institutions, and deliberative systems and cultural change.”

https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/p/no08/
“My argument in this essay has been that existing political systems are resolutely focused on the short-term and that this both harms current generations and is leading us to bequeath a deeply unfair and dysfunctional world to our descendants. To address this, we need to re-imagine ways of organising our political life to make the ‘future’ salient and visible, to jolt us out of our fixation on the present, and to induce us to look ahead and give the ‘future’ its due. Only in this way do we stand a chance of protecting our long-term interests and honouring our responsibilities to future generations.”

https://www.cusp.ac.uk/themes/m/m1-11/
The hope in Deliberative Democracy

- Renewal of democracy via institutional and cultural change
- Re-engaging people in debate and decision-making
- Widening access and engagement
- Appropriate to generating a culture of attention to the longer term?
- Potential to reduce polarisation and increase awareness of complexities of decisions
- Potential to enhance legitimacy of and trust in democratic institutions
- Potential to increase public engagement in civic activities
- Permission to lead: building consensus behind tough policy choices
The hope in Deliberative Democracy

- UK plan for a Citizens’ Assembly on Climate Action, coordinated by Parliamentary Select Committees
- Examples of Citizens’ Assemblies across the UK in wake of XR and school strikes
- Signs of a new movement for radical constitutional reform in UK
- Experiments in deliberative democracy linked to sustainability and intergenerational justice
- See Welsh Government, *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*
- See *Our Future Wales* process
- See Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development [www.fdsd.org.uk](http://www.fdsd.org.uk)
The hope in Deliberative Democracy

- Leeds Climate Commission: Big Climate Conversation process
- Camden Council
- New Surrey Climate Commission: plans for Citizens’ Forum process
- Stockholm Environmental Institute (2019):
  - “Increased public participation builds a more engaged citizenry, increases the legitimacy of decisions, and helps ensure that policy-makers have valuable local knowledge.”

• But...
Renewal also has to take into account how new institutions are related to existing ones and the wider political ecology:

- media
- representative systems
- direct democracy
- political culture: the web of assumptions, habits, prejudices, information sources, associations and myths we live with
- trust, confidence in other institutions
- conflict and divisive interests
“Like it or not, we live in an age of stubbornly unsustainable policies pursued by stubbornly interest-bound political and economic institutions underwritten by stubbornly private-market fundamentalists who stubbornly privilege wealth over equality and profit over sustainability”.
Benjamin Barber, Cool Cities (2017)

Photo source: http://benjaminbarber.org/
See him on TED http://benjaminbarber.org/ted-talk-with-dr-benjamin-barber/
Media vs deliberation

2.3. Political-class versus electorate polarisation

In addition to distinguishing between issue and affective polarisation, it is important to recognise that both can act at different levels of society, with a particularly important distinction made between polarisation at a political-class or general-electorate level. The main focus for analysis of the former tends to be political leaders. Given that the majority of this literature comes from the US, political-class polarisation is often measured through the attitudes and behaviours of members of the Senate or House of Representatives. However, researchers such as Morris Fiorina also extend this analysis to donors and activists.

These distinctions are important because, as we'll see in the evidence from the US, polarisation can exist independently at each of these levels – and, more than that, one can influence the other, even though the direction and nature of these influences are often disputed.

![FIGURE 3: ELEMENTS OF AFFECTIVE POLARISATION](image)

Preconditions for effective processes such as Citizens’ Juries / Assemblies:

Care in selection of membership - random selection or targeted?

Clarity about purpose

Clarity about question(s) to be tackled

Payment for engagement

Time - enough time to explore the complexity of the issues at stake

Time - be mindful of parenting/caring demands, household timetables

Experts should be involved in deliberation: time and resources to enable good dialogue between citizen participants and experts.

Professional facilitation

A governing or steering body for advice and oversight?

Budgets for participative processes

Training for facilitators and process designers

Standard-setting

Evaluation and learning
Challenges for widening engagement via Deliberative Processes:
How does deliberative democracy relate to representative democracy?
Grafting DP on to unreformed representative system is a sticking plaster
Councillors and MPs’ perceptions and support
Arnstein’s Ladder: align expectations
Avoid disappointed expectations: Neighbourhood Planning (see University of Reading research programme)
Avoid disappointed expectations: citizens need to see supportive action from Government, business and other authorities - and evidence of the importance of the issue in everyday life
Learning to be Citizens in the C21st- Deliberative processes need to be normalised and engagement in them widened:
- local and regional planning
- local Climate Commissions
- schools, universities
- healthcare (NHS SD Unit)
- faith communities (new SPIRE initiative by Prof. Chris Rapley)
- consumption (see IKEA’s Live Lagom programme of engagement with consumers as citizens)
Worth reading


Involve’s knowledge base on how to do effective public engagement: https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base


Thank you for your engagement and interest!
Good luck and keep in touch: i.christie@surrey.ac.uk

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