Environmental activism and climate change strategies

Researching attitudes to CCS at Climate Camps and Green Party gatherings

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E&E Seminar
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www.eprg.group.cam.ac.uk
Plan of the presentation

- Research design and method
- Subjects: climate camp
- Preliminary findings from survey
- Understanding environmentalist stance to CCS
Research aim & design

Aim 1: to gain information on and understanding of perspectives and rationalities amongst environmentalist groups regarding CCS in UK and beyond

Aim 2: To assess existing communication material globally on CCS

Wider aim: Understand frames of reference of energy/climate politics in wider terms than ‘policy makers’, inside as well as outside institutionalised politics.
Background

• CCS is almost purely a climate technology
• CCS is also an ‘end of pipe’ solution
• How will environmentalists react to CCS?

• How much do they know about CCS?
• How do they evaluate climate technologies in general?
Approach

1) Attend meetings where environmentalist activists gather: surveys (quant.). Offer a workshop on CCS with a technical expert ease access and engage them in debate (qual.).

2) Run similar workshops at (Green) political party conferences.

3) Gather publicly accessible material from environmental NGOs concerning CCS, e.g., Greenpeace, Forum for the Future, WWF, FoE.

4) Conduct interviews with activists, environmental NGO representatives (qualitative).
# Climate Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Event details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Climate Camp</td>
<td>Aug 2009</td>
<td>near Ffos-y-Fran mine, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales</td>
<td>David Reiner, Hauke Riesch, Mike Stephenson (BGS)</td>
<td>20-25 activists took part in a workshop led by Reiner with expert contribution from Stephenson. 12 Questionnaires were returned. Discussion not recorded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nordic Climate Camp</td>
<td>14-20 July, 2010</td>
<td>Skaane, Southern Sweden</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, Filip Johnsson (Chalmers University of Tech)</td>
<td>20-30 activists took part in a workshop led by Corry. Johnsson provided expert’s account and a debate ensued. 13 Questionnaires were returned. Discussion could not be recorded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Climate Camp</td>
<td>22 July – 1 Aug</td>
<td>Gals, Switzerland</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, Lasse Wallquist (ETH-Zurich)</td>
<td>20-30 activists took part in a workshop led by Corry where Wallquist provided an expert’s account. 19 questionnaires were returned. Discussion recorded by climate campers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Klima camp</td>
<td>20-29 Aug</td>
<td>Erkelenz-Borschemich, Germany</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, Gabriella von Goerne (ex-Greenpeace Germany,)</td>
<td>7 activists took part in a workshop led by Olaf Corry. Gabriella von Goerne provided an expert’s account of CCS as a technology. A total of 7 questionnaires were returned. Discussion not recorded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Climate Camp</td>
<td>21-24 Aug</td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>Olaf Corry</td>
<td>Around 30 activists took part in a workshop led by Corry. No final answer from Climate Camp organization received, so Corry went alone without an expert to see whether he could get permission on site. This was granted by those present, but later the issue became the subject of a complaint from one Climate Camper who felt protocol had not been observed. 17 questionnaires were returned.</td>
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+ 4 gatherings where invitation was not forthcoming (Belgium, France, Wales 2010 and Australia)
## Party Conferences

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<tr>
<td>Conservative Party Conference</td>
<td>3-6 Oct, 2010</td>
<td>Birmingham, England</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, Mike Stephenson (British Geological Survey)</td>
<td>Workshop on CCS organised as a ‘Fringe Event’ at Conservative Party Conference. Mike Stephenson gave a talk, but due to a small number of participants, questionnaires were not filled in. Discussion with Taxpayers' Alliance representative provided interesting points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scottish Green Party Conference</td>
<td>6-7 Nov, 2010</td>
<td>Edinburgh, Scotland</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, David Reiner, Stuart Haszeldine (U Edinburgh), Patrick Harvie, MSP</td>
<td>Revised design: A ‘local’ speaker added, questionnaire process conducted before and after rather than during the event. Advertisement placed in programme, Over 80 participants attended. A total of 51 questionnaires were returned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Party of England &amp; Wales Spring Conference</td>
<td>28 Feb 2011</td>
<td>Cardiff, Wales</td>
<td>Olaf Corry, David Reiner, Green Party representative TBC, Mike Stephenson (British Geological Survey).</td>
<td>Scheduled event. Presentation on We have booked a stall from the 27th-28th</td>
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Climate Camp, RBS, Edinburgh. 2010
Photo: OC
Climate Camp, RBS, Edinburgh. 2010

Photo: OC
Climate Camp UK, 2010.
Royal Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh

Photo: OC
Outside Climate Camp UK 2010, RBS land.

Photo: OC
Demonstration against our project at Swiss climate camp workshop
Climate camp video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lSCywc1kJpo&feature=fvw
Climate camp social identity

• **Positive self:** “Change is wrought by people who are at first considered insane dreamers, but who have the courage to disobey and deviate from the norm”.
• **Negative identification:** “We reject a society that exploits people and planet in the interests of private profit and privilege”
• “RBS is currently financing the largest and most destructive industrial project on the planet [tar sands]”.
• **Legitimisation:** “There needs to be a place where we speak as though politics didn’t exist – where only the science counts”.
• **Strategy:** “The only way to prevent catastrophic climate change is to stop burning fossil fuels by leaving them in the ground and building alternatives. Not just an alternative energy supply, but an alternative society”.

*Source: Materials from Camp for Climate Action, Edinburgh*
Highest achieved educational qualification

Education level CC
- A-levels: 22%
- GCSE: 3%
- Vocational: 2%
- Other: 0%
- Masters: 19%
- Bachelor: 38%
- Doctorate: 16%

Education level GP
- A-levels: 2%
- GCSE: 5%
- Vocational: 0%
- Other: 0%
- Masters: 44%
- Bachelor: 42%
- Doctorate: 7%

Average degree or equivalent and above
- England: 16.6%
- Scotland: 15.4%
- London: 24.7%
- Cambridge: 41%
- CC: 73%
- GP: 93%
Top environmental problems

Climate Campers

- Global warming/climate change: 42%
- Resource depletion: 19%
- Toxic waste: 13%
- Destruction of ecosystems: 16%
- Overpopulation: 4%
- Urban sprawl/Green spaces: 2%
- Air pollution: 0%
- Acid rain: 0%

Green Party

- Global warming/climate change: 40%
- Resource depletion: 26%
- Toxic waste: 15%
- Destruction of ecosystems: 13%
- Overpopulation: 1%
- Urban sprawl/Green spaces: 3%
- Air pollution: 1%
- Acid rain: 0%

- Ozone depletion: 1%
- Endangered Species: 3%
- Ozone depletion: 0%
- Endangered Species: 1%

Perceived urgency/timescale of climate change problem

**Climate Campers**
- Very urgent: 64%
- Fairly urgent - coming 20 years crucial: 25%
- Some time - 50 years: 6%
- Long time scale: 0%
- Unclear we don't know: 5%
- Climate change unlikely to be a problem: 0%

**Green Party**
- Very urgent: 70%
- Fairly urgent - coming 20 years crucial: 30%
- Some time - 50 years: 0%
- Long time scale: 0%
- Unclear we don't know: 0%
- Climate change unlikely to be a problem: 0%
What is the most likely future scenario?

**Climate campers**
- Not sure: 22%
- Neither mitigation nor adaptation will be very successful: 19%
- Technological and social change is unlikely and we will have to adapt to climate changes as best we can: 37%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by designing and adopting new technologies: 7%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by reorganising society and changing values: 15%

**Green Party**
- Not sure: 13%
- Neither mitigation nor adaptation will be very successful: 13%
- Technological and social change is unlikely and we will have to adapt to climate changes as best we can: 37%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by designing and adopting new technologies: 8%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by reorganising society and changing values: 29%

**Green Party**
- Not sure: 13%
- Neither mitigation nor adaptation will be very successful: 13%
- Technological and social change is unlikely and we will have to adapt to climate changes as best we can: 37%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by designing and adopting new technologies: 8%
- Climate change will be averted primarily by reorganising society and changing values: 29%
Self-definition on political spectrum

Climate Campers

- Left*: 37%
- Centre-Left: 15%
- Centre: 6%
- Other: 13%
- Far Right: 0%
- Centre-Right: 0%
- Right: 0%
- Far left: 29%

Green Party

- Left*: 35%
- Centre-Left: 20%
- Centre: 2%
- Centre-Right: 4%
- Right: 0%
- Far Right: 0%
- Other: 26%
- Far left: 13%
Preferred strategy: social or technological change?

We should avert climate change by developing and adopting better technologies rather than trying to change people 2%.

We should primarily avert climate change by developing and adopting better technologies but we also need to alter our social organisation and values 9%.

We primarily need to alter our behaviour and values, but solutions to climate change must also come through the development of new technology 43%.

Climate Campers

We should avert climate change by developing and adopting better technologies rather than trying to change people 0%.

Only by radically changing the way society is organised can we begin to tackle climate change 46%.

Only by radically changing the way society is organised can we begin to tackle climate change 34%.

Green Party

We primarily need to alter our behaviour and values, but solutions to climate change must also come through the development of new technology 43%.

We should primarily avert climate change by developing and adopting better technologies but we also need to alter our social organisation and values 26%.
In your opinion CCS can reduce which of the following environmental concerns...?

Pre-workshop

Post-workshop

- Can reduce
- Does not reduce
- Not sure
IF your governments had $5bn to spend on energy, what do you think should be the top two priorities?

**Climate Campers**

- Wind: 14%
- Solar: 22%
- Energy conservation: 16%
- Buildings & appliances efficiency: 13%
- CCS: 1%
- Nuclear: 1%
- Nuclear waste disposal: 1%
- Forestry: 2%
- Hydropower: 2%
- Other: 9%

**Green Party**

- Wind: 16%
- Energy conservation: 23%
- Buildings & appliances efficiency: 16%
- CCS: 1%
- Nuclear: 1%
- Nuclear waste disposal: 0%
- Forestry: 2%
- Other: 4%
- Hydropower: 3%
- Bioenergy/biomass: 1%
- Cleaner coal: 0%
- Vehicle efficiency: 2%
- Multiple prioritisation: 10%
- Ways to reduce carbon from atmosphere: 0%
- Management of toxic waste: 0%
- Management of toxic waste: 0%
- Clean drinking water: 0%
- Energy conservation: 0%
- Vehicle efficiency: 0%
The EU has recently committed to building 10-12 demonstration plants for CCS by 2020. Do you believe this goal is:
(pre-workshop)

- Not desirable regardless of cost: 30%
- Desirable as long as no additional cost to taxpayer: 2%
- Desirable as long as only minimal extra costs: 14%
- Desirable and moderate additional cost: 18%
- Not sure/other: 21%
The EU has recently committed to building 10-12 demonstration plants for CCS by 2020. Do you believe this goal is:
(post-workshop)
To what extent do you trust the following sources of information to give you accurate information on CCS?

Climate campers' trust
To what extent do you trust the following sources of information to give you accurate information on CCS?

GP trust

- Distrust very much
- Distrust somewhat
- Neutral
- Trust somewhat
- Trust very much
- Don't know
Selected Written Comments on Questionnaire: Climate Campers

• ‘Don't assume business as usual the future will be another economic system’
• ‘CCS is a false climate solution. There isn't time for CCS to stop us reaching the CC tipping point.’
• The promise of CCS is legitimising the building of more coal fire/gas/biomass power stations and business as usual. We need to reduce demand for energy as we cannot have infinite growth on a finite planet
• I am concerned you are presenting this as a developed technology when it isn’t. Present with a longer warm-up, anarchists never run on time. No space to focus on explicit anti-capitalist, anarchist agenda. Whole process needs to be much more participatory.
Selected Written Comments on Questionnaire: Green Party

- Very interesting and educational
- Excellent workshop
- Very interesting and enjoyable
- Enjoyed the workshop, have warmed towards CCS as an interim measure for existing sites
- Very enjoyable
- Very interesting
- Excellent speakers
- My main concern is the level of disagreement among experts—there seems to be no consensus
- Questions too broad, need divided into subcategories
- Net energy issues—using more energy to continue with centralised generation
Why the general scepticism towards CCS?

• ‘CCS is typical green wash’
• Storage space is a limited resource
• We don’t need a ‘bridge’ to post-fossil fuel society as we already have the technology
• Renewables, change of lifestyle and lower energy consumption are necessary and better
• More coal fired power stations built with reference to being ‘CCS ready’
• Will it ever work? Will it take too long to roll out?
Why the general scepticism towards CCS (continued)?

- Risks of storage are big/unknown
- Continues centralised of energy production (efficiency concerns and suspicion of big corporations, democratic element)
- Focuses only on CO2 problem – mining and burning huge amounts of fossil fuel is harmful in other ways
- Will high enough percentage of the CO2 be sequestered (costly and difficult)?
- Carbon prices are too low to make it attractive on large scale. Business will always try to avoid it.
- CCS will create a new business community = a new set of special interests
Possible positives on CCS

• We can’t tell China and India not to industrialise. They have to find their own way and CCS could be something for them (focus on poverty and justice)
• CCS with biomass possibly interesting (reduces CO2 levels)
• CCS possibly OK for steel industry CO2 emissions
• May be necessary to avoid nuclear
Similes & Metaphors

“We are creating a problem for the future instead of investing in what we already know works”

“CCS is like low energy light bulbs – it is a distraction from the real issue”

“CCS is like the banks working on a bubble of borrowed money. It borrows time from the future”

“CCS is just like nuclear. It stores up problems for the future and nobody wants to have it anywhere near themselves”

“It’s like sweeping dirt under the carpet”/ “sticking your head in the sand”

“It’s shit. No it’s worse than shit”.

“It’s like having fat removal surgery. It doesn’t solve the cause of the problem, but it makes a real mess”

“[CCS] means staying in an abusive relationship just because you have to pay the rent”.

Summary of survey findings so far

- Green activists are very well educated
- Climate change is seen as the no.1 environmental problem
- CC and GP differ on urgency of climate change problem
- Focus is on “ecology” rather than “environment”, (two anomalies -- toxic waste is ranked surprisingly high and overpopulation low)
- Social change is considered more likely to solve problems than technological solutions, especially by climate campers
- Only roughly half think CCS can help combat climate change
- CCS is not seen as a solution to any other problems but creates problems
- Workshop on CCS appears to *increase* scepticism
- Trust in university scientists is very high
- CCS is seen as a false solution
Special Thanks to:

• Prof Mike Stephenson (British Geological Survey/University of Nottingham)
• Prof Stuart Haszeldine (University of Edinburgh/SCCSC)
• Prof Filip Johnsson (Chalmers U of Technology)
• Lasse Wallquist (ETH-Zurich)
• Dr Gabriela von Goerne (ex-Greenpeace)
• Peta Ashworth and Anna Carr (CSIRO)