

BRANDING CLIMATE

How to Pass a \$200 Per Ton Carbon Tax by 2017

Douglas Holt

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WE'VE BEEN OUTMARKETED.

This is our last chance. The USA must pass a very aggressive carbon mitigation policy in the next three years to have any chance of halting runaway climate change. As many commentators have noted, our failure to do so over the past 25 years is due to lack of "political will." The technologies that we need already exist and they are not costly. Energy efficiency gains are there for the taking. Entrepreneurs, businesses, public institutions, and consumers will work together to rapidly de-carbonize our economy with the right price signals. We have failed because we haven't organized as a society to overcome the extraordinary marketing and lobbying power of what I will call the Carbon-Right.

A major carbon tax is far and away the most important policy for the climate movement to pursue today. There is a broad consensus that without such a tax it will be impossible to stop global warming at around 2 degrees Celsius (approximately 450 PPM). Other policies are needed, of course, but without a carbon tax, they are moot. So first things first. If we pass a major tax soon, we will not only put the USA on the required mitigation path; we'll also establish the global leadership to persuade other major countries, especially China, to do the same.

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That carbon pricing is required if we are to have any chance to halt climate change has been widely understood and accepted since Kyoto.¹ Yet today there is only one small group (The Citizens Climate Lobby) that is pushing directly for a carbon tax, and they are advocating a very modest tax and lack a viable campaign strategy and have a tiny political organization. All of the major environmental organizations and climate movement organizations abandoned direct campaigning on carbon pricing four years ago following the cap-and-trade debacle. Even 350.org, which was founded to campaign directly on major policy solutions, is absent. The organization struggled to drive engagement early on, and so shifted to tactical efforts against coal, and now fracking and the Keystone XL pipeline, which are much easier to mobilize activists and generate media attention (because they are, in part, NIMBY issues). It's hard to imagine a more perverse situation. The climate movement has abandoned campaigning for the only policy option that can possibly work because its leaders believe that such a campaign is simply not feasible.

As a result, the climate brand's political strength—measured as the popular pressure driving political will inside-the-beltway on major carbon mitigation policy—is weaker than ever. There has never been appreciable public pressure for legislation and that continues today. In fact, the counter-brand has dominated American politics since 2009: many politicians are scared that counter-branding will push them out of office, none are inspired to take action knowing that Americans favoring climate policy have their backs. Most Democrats have no interest in talking about real climate policy solutions, must less fighting for them. Two very timid carbon pricing bills have been sponsored recently; both are viewed in Washington as far too radically left-wing to have even a fighting chance.²

I've been working on climate strategy for the last six years and have reached the opposite conclusion: we've failed to drive political will on major climate policy not because it's impossible, but because we've embraced the wrong strategy. With better strategy, it's not

¹ I review the consensus argument for an aggressive carbon tax in my white paper, "Why the USA Must Pass An Aggressive Carbon Tax Now," CSG Working Paper, 5.9.14.

² The 2013 Sanders-Boxer bill proposes a \$20/Ton tax, rising about a \$1/year over ten years. So, if the bill were passed, we would end up with a tax ten years from now that is less than 20% of the tax that we need.

impossible at all. Following the Senate's embarrassing rejection of Kyoto, huge resources poured in from the major environmental organizations, foundations, wealthy environmentalists, and Hollywood to fund a wide variety of movement, campaign and cultural change efforts. These political marketing efforts have all failed despite heroic efforts and excellent execution on the organizational and creative fronts. These failures are due to poor brand strategy on our side, in the face of sophisticated strategy by the Carbon-Right to counter climate legislation.

All of the major climate marketing efforts have been informed by what I will call the "Climate Orthodoxy"—a taken-for-granted strategy paradigm, backed by a set of faulty assumptions about how political marketing on climate works. The Climate Orthodoxy has dominated all of the major efforts to influence American political will on climate for the last decade. Despite a decade-long string of failures to make progress on political will, climate's major organizations, funders and leaders continue to advocate for the conventional model—a classic instance of paradigmatic blinders. Today's most significant campaigning efforts—from 350 to NextGen Climate to 24 Hours of Reality to all of the current Big Green campaigning—all continue to replicate the failed strategies of past campaigns. Current campaign and movement efforts can't work, regardless of the money and talent expended, because of these fatal strategic flaws.

If we are to drive political will to pass a major carbon tax, we must ditch the Climate Orthodoxy and embrace better strategy. If we are to beat the Carbon-Right we need to be at least as good as them at marketing. Today we lag way behind. The purpose of this document is to garner support for a new approach to climate strategy: a brand strategy that adapts leading-edge ideas from marketing and that is grounded in nuanced and systematic research. This strategy, and the research upon which it is built, draw upon my expertise as one of the leading experts worldwide in brand strategy (a short bio can be found in the appendix). In particular, I leverage the discipline of cultural branding that I have pioneered over the past two decades, which is, in effect, a branding model for social movements and politics. I have used this model to develop brand strategies for many of the biggest brands in the world, along with some of the most influential progressive companies and not-for-profits (including Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, Zipcar, REI, Freelancers Union, and New Belgium). The carbon tax strategy that I develop in this

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document is grounded in several years of research, including a detailed historical genealogy of the development of climate branding in the USA and 137 cultural interviews with key citizen segments (overviewed in the Appendix).³

The goal is to win the battle of political will on major climate policy: specifically to drive massive popular support behind a very aggressive carbon tax (around \$200/Ton after 4 years). The strategic goal is to build a powerful political movement that makes this carbon tax a positive wedge issue in 2016—one that on-the-fence pols will embrace rather than run from and that will ensure that whoever is elected in 2016 will embrace such a bill in 2017.

³ This is a strategy document, so I have left out the detailed history and the specific critiques of the various tangents of the Climate Orthodoxy. The full analysis would double the length of an already lengthy document.

CLIMATE BRAND STRATEGY

Political Will as a Branding Goal

Effective climate policy requires that we generate massive political will—creating enough popular pressure on politicians to ensure that we pass a policy that will actually deliver on what climate science demonstrates we need. Political movements create political will, encouraging and pressuring politicians to support the policy and deflecting the influence of opponents. To create political will means making climate a winning issue for politicians, particularly those now sitting on the fence. Political will requires both carrot and stick: we want to attract votes for those who support our policy, protect would-be supporters frightened by the threat of Carbon-Right attacks, and make those who would oppose the bill perceive that they are taking a political risk in so doing. To win requires inverting the political calculus now facing members of Congress. Voting for a carbon tax must become a politically expedient decision for politicians on the fence. We want to protect moderate Democrats and Republicans who now believe that extending their political career requires them to oppose climate policy. Political will is a euphemism for shifting the forces bearing down on members of congress, as well as the president, such that we exert soft power on legislators to do the right thing.

There is a massive scholarly literature on this topic across a number of disciplines including sociology, political science and history, which allows us to map out some of the different pathways available to generate political will, such as:

- Shifting the political discourse to normalize a policy, make it a common sense taken-for-granted choice,
- Defusing threats to protect politicians who are otherwise committed to the policy,
- Single wedge issues pursued by a committed minority of voters can drive political will,
- Large shifts in the intensity and breadth of public support behind can be perceived as a general threat to opposing politicians who switch sides to get out in front of an evolving issue (e.g., Nixon on environment, a wide array of politicians recently on gay marriage).

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These are useful ideas to keep in mind. But, from a strategy lens, it is important to remember that, because each political movement faces a unique set of opportunities and barriers in a distinctive political-historical context, the political will pathways that form the basis of strategy must be developed from the ground up through careful research. Each political movement must craft its own distinctive strategy that addresses what are necessarily idiosyncratic opportunities and barriers. There is no one-size-fits-all movement model.

The strategy analysis process runs as follows: using a branding lens, I identify the most important barriers limiting political will, and the most important opportunities to drive political will. Then I build a brand strategy that “solves” these strategy requirements: that maximizes opportunities and minimizes the barriers. Effective brand strategy begins with careful strategy-centered research, examining climate as a deeply contentious identity issue in American policy, not just an issue that people may be aware of or not, believe in or not. Climate is a battle of climate brand and counter-brand that has evolved over time, with key features becoming dominant in the American political discourse. Different groups of citizens (segments) have aligned with different aspects of brand and counterbrand, so we need also to build strategy with respect to key segments required to drive political will.

PART I: BRAND STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS

Cultural Brand Analysis

I aim to keep this paper relatively short so I’ve cut out all of the research detail to focus on the strategy itself. For those who are interested, the analysis combines an historical brand “genealogy” with a more nuanced “present tense” analysis of the key climate change brand segments.

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Cultural Brand Analysis

1988.....1990s.....2000s.....2010s.....

BRAND GENEALOGY

Reconstruct Evolution of Brand via Cultural Discourse Analysis

Citizen Segment 1
Political Identity/
Climate Brand

Citizen Segment 2
Political Identity/
Climate Brand

Citizen Segment 3
Political Identity/
Climate Brand

There are four critical and distinctive aspects of the analysis, which differ from typical research on climate:

1. Analyzing climate change as a brand, divided into issue and solution components:

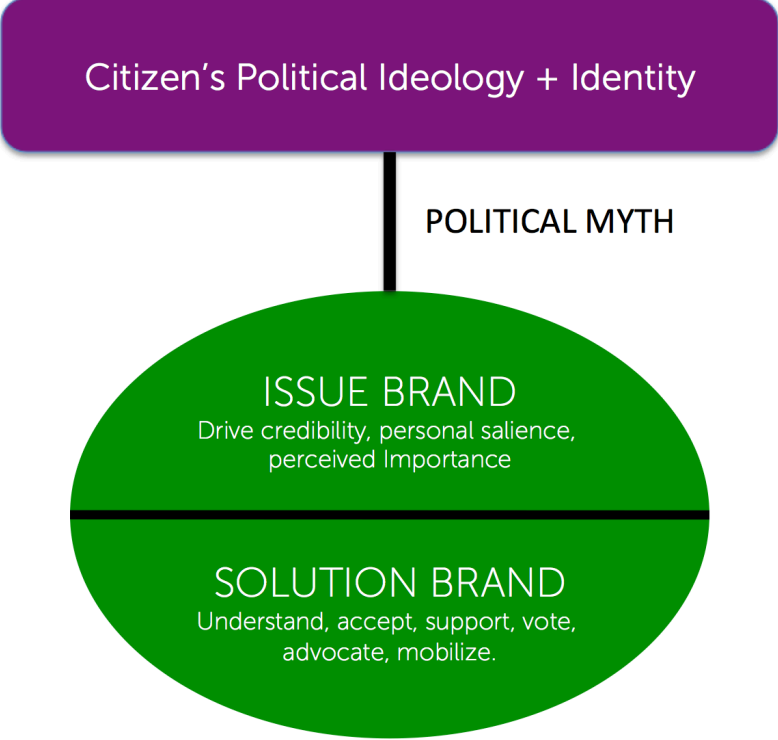
ISSUE BRAND

Drive credibility, personal salience,
perceived Importance

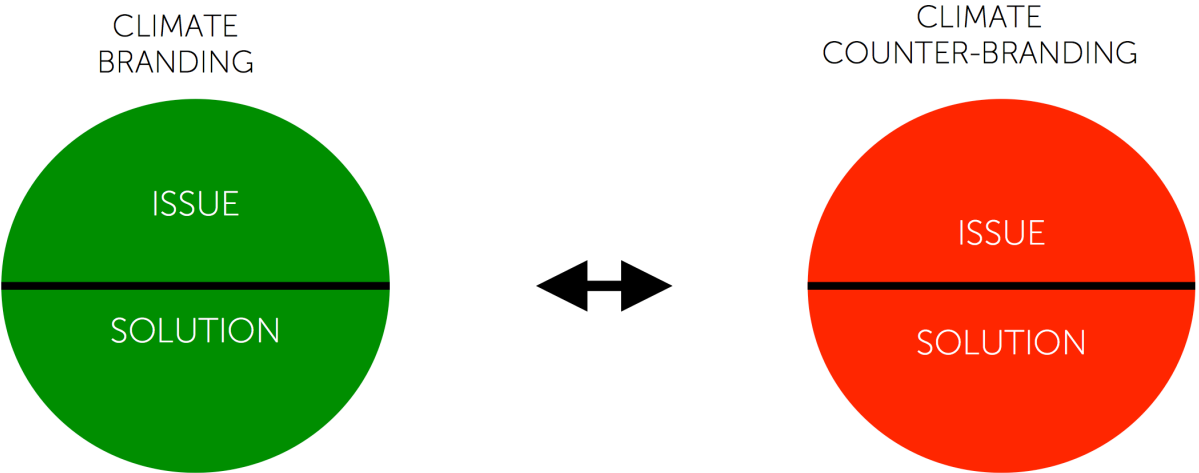
SOLUTION BRAND

Understand, accept, support, vote,
advocate, mobilize.

2. Analyzing this brand from a political identity perspective, which examines how a particular climate brand serves to reinforce a particular political identity as a political myth:

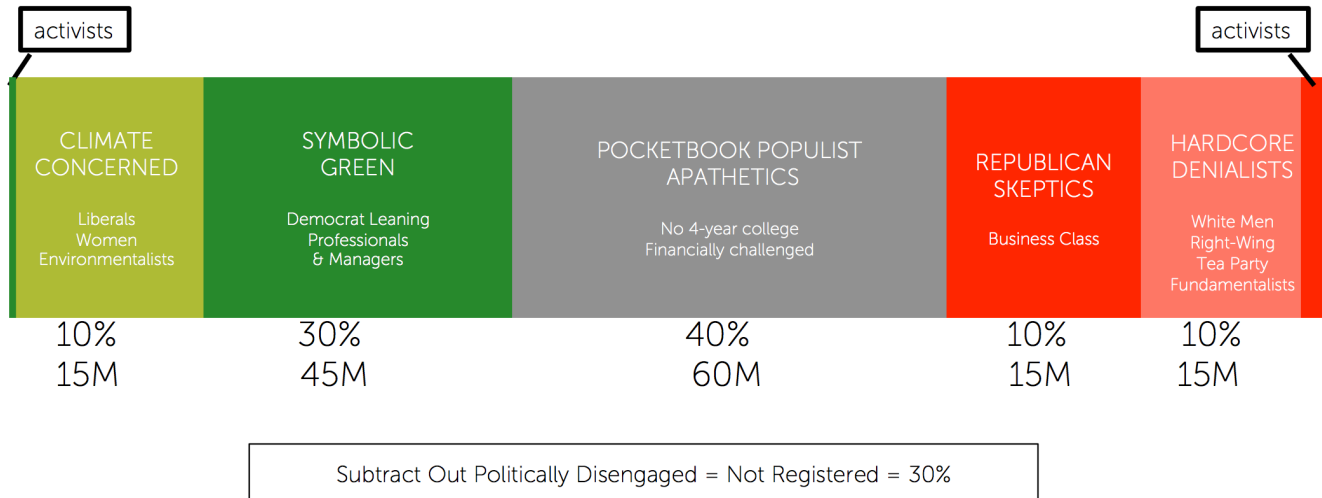


3. Cultural brand analysis as the contentious battle between climate brand and counterbrand



4. Which are detailed as brand segments:

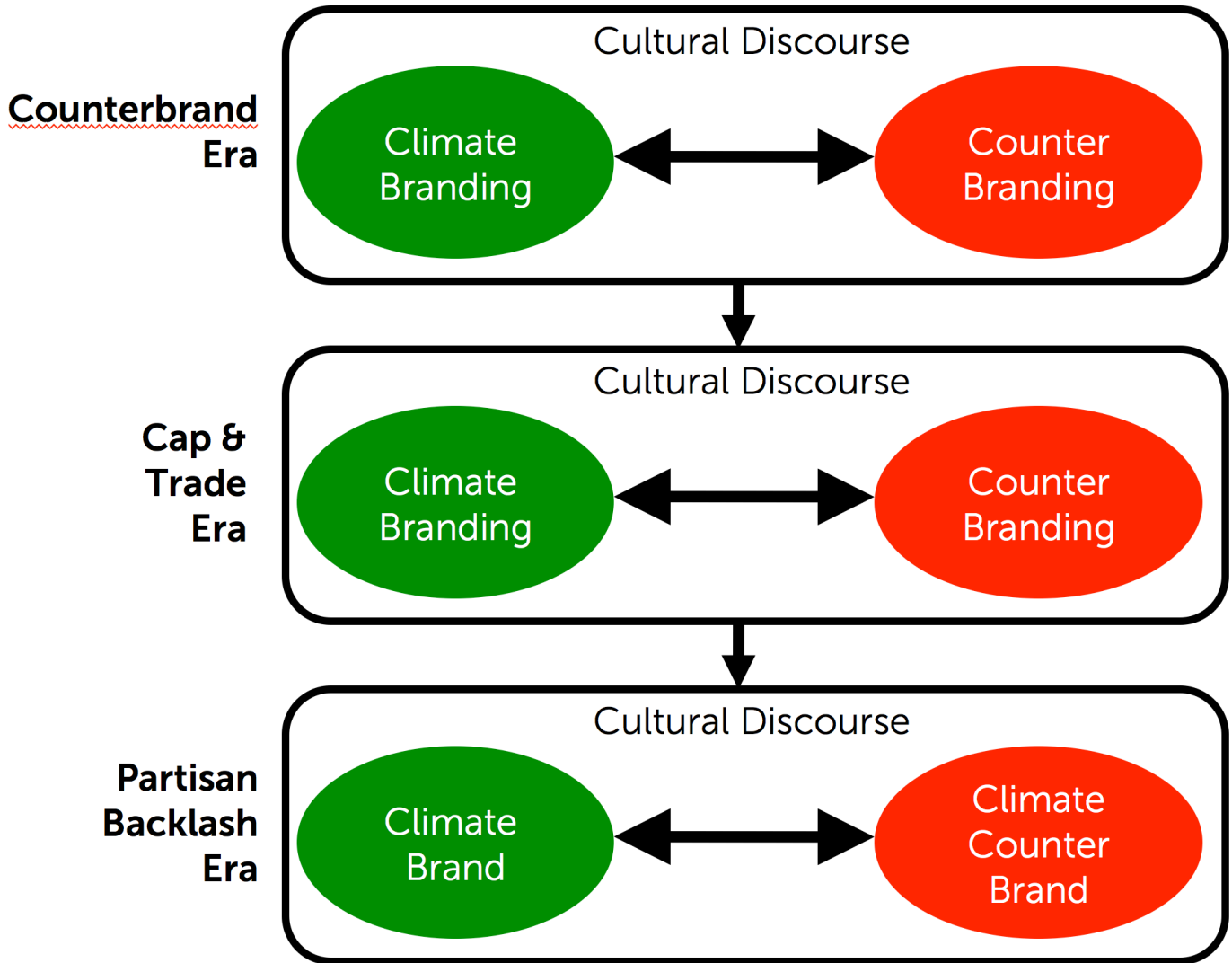
CLIMATE CHANGE SEGMENTS



Climate Brand Genealogy

First, I examine the development of the climate change discourse in the United States through a branding lens: the evolution of the “climate brand” and the “climate counterbrand” developed by the fossil fuel industry in collaboration with Right Wing political operatives—what I call the Carbon-Right. I trace the evolution of these two brands, fighting it out in American political discourse, from James Hansen’s 1988 speech, the Rio Earth Summit, through the three US political debacles on climate that have largely shaped the discourse that we have today: the BTU tax, Kyoto, and Cap-and-Trade (which extends into Climategate and Copenhagen)—as climate got pulled into extremely partisan political campaigning. I also examine *An Inconvenient Truth* and other Hollywood efforts.

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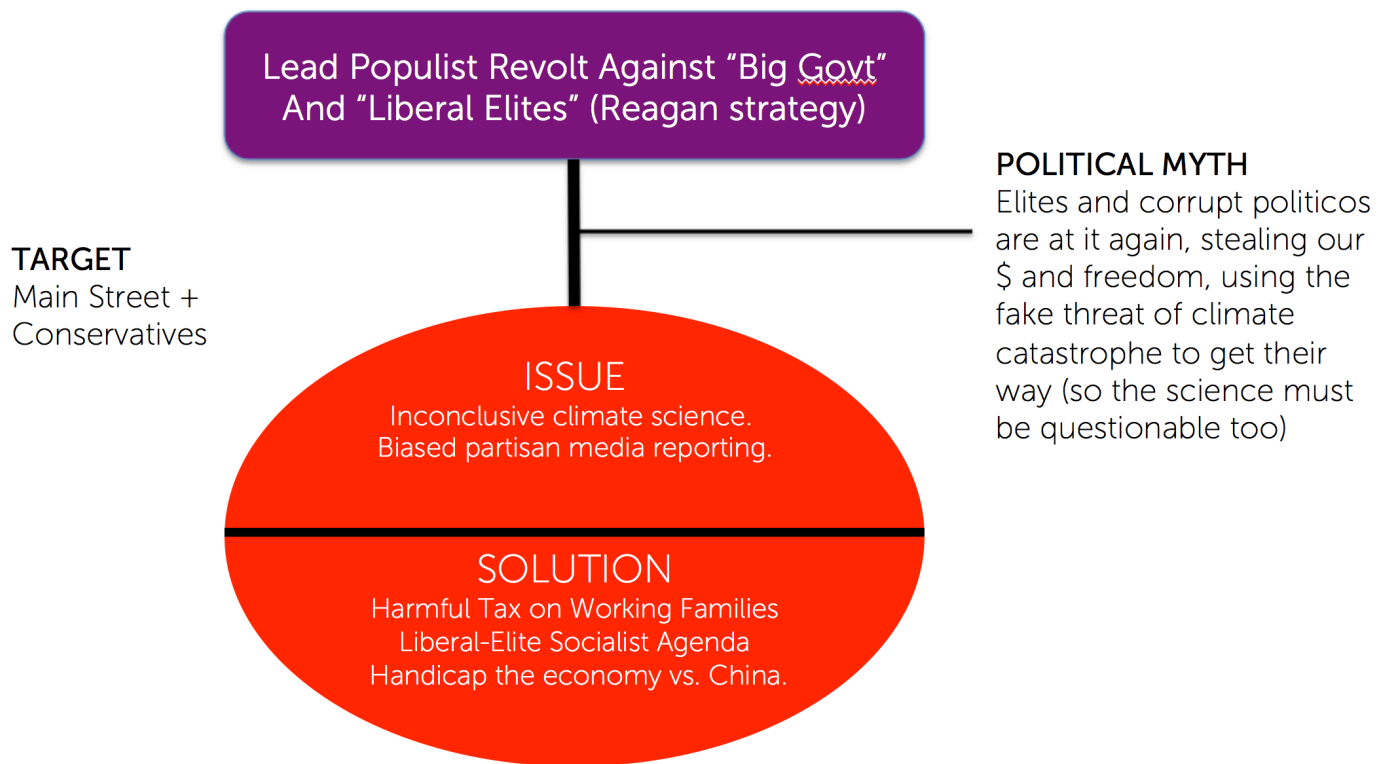


The Smoke & Mirrors Era (1992-2006)

During the first fourteen years of the climate movement (using the Rio Summit as a start date), the major environmental organizations focused their efforts largely backstage on global governance, research, policy, and lobbying rather than movement building. There was no significant effort to build a popular political movement driving climate policy. This absence from the discourse allowed the Carbon-Right to build up the climate counterbrand, virtually unimpeded, launching the substantial branding hurdles that we still face today. The three most important facets were all developed in the 1990s: the Astroturfed climate denialist media

complex, the idea that carbon pricing is necessarily a massive tax on the working class, and the claim that the branding of climate policy is a liberal elite project that will expand government encroachment in Americans' lives.

CARBON-RIGHT CLIMATE COUNTERBRAND



The Cap & Trade Era (2006-2009)

This short-lived euphoric era emerged as a confluence of events in 2004-2007 created an extraordinary political opportunity for climate policy: a) the outing of the Carbon-Right's hardcore denialist industry, which forced most multinational companies, even the big oil companies, to distance themselves from counterbranding and embrace, vaguely, some sort of carbon pricing policy, b) voter public opinion on Bush crashed, along with the Democratic mid-

terms win in 2006, brought confidence that a climate policy-friendly president would replace Bush denialism, c) the 2007 IPCC report finally offered irrefutable evidence based upon the extraordinary development of climate science and modeling since Rio, d) Hurricane Katrina (like Sandy, its intensity was interpreted by many as caused by climate change), and e) *An Inconvenient Truth*, Gore's groundbreaking slideshow documentary. Gore's film proved to be the tipping point sending climate back into the popular discourse, stimulating a mass-media frenzy.

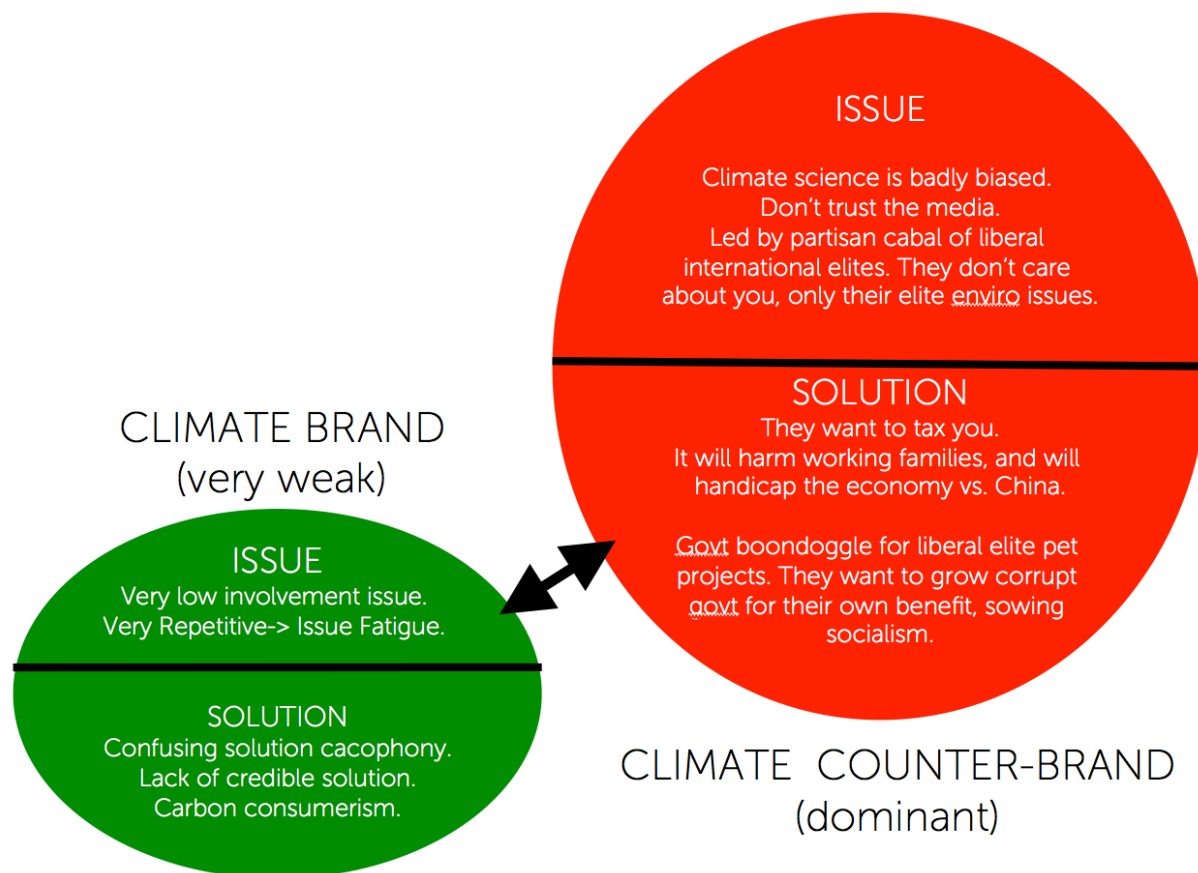
For the first and only time to date, political elites were able to orchestrate an integrated effort to jumpstart a popular climate movement in support of a cap-and-trade carbon pricing bill (which all three presidential candidates promised to support at the time). Most of the Big Green organizations, along with major new organizations (Apollo Alliance, Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection, 350, 1Sky, etc.) all signed on to build this movement. Gore raised a \$300 Million war chest to support the effort. This massive movement effort failed—there was never any significant popular political pressure on Congress or the president throughout the entire period—and it failed in large part due to poor brand strategy.⁴ Not only did the strategy fail; it set up the Carbon-Right for a reaction formation resurgence, which revitalized the climate counterbrand and helped a number of conservative/tea party Republicans gain office in 2010.

The Partisan Backlash Era (2009-present)

The current era is again controlled largely by the Carbon-Right's counterbrand. After the cap-and-trade debacle, all significant environmental organizations have walked away from any movement-building focused on passing major climate legislation. So we have, de facto, handed the branding back to the Carbon-Right, which has continued to reinforce the same counterbrand pillars that have worked since the early 1990s. And we are back to the status quo where environmental organizations are campaigning on issues (climate "related") where they can get some traction amongst the small pool of national environmental activists, but which are ignored by the large majority of American citizens. In the worst cases, the climate movement's

⁴ I document these strategic failures at length in a 2010 working paper called "Why Is There No American Climate Movement?" which I've presented numerous times.

efforts are actually boosting the Carbon-Right's counter brand.⁵ I end the genealogy by mapping the current status of the brand and counter-brand in the national discourse, distinguishing the issue and solution components of each brand. In summary form, the analysis looks something like this:

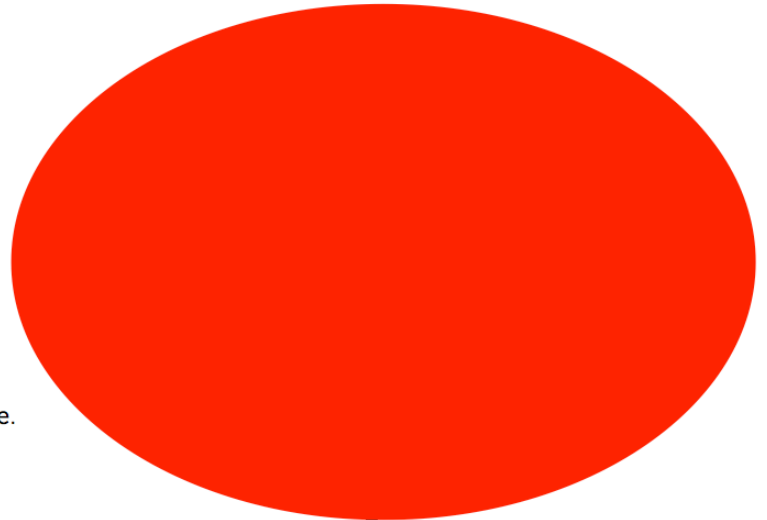
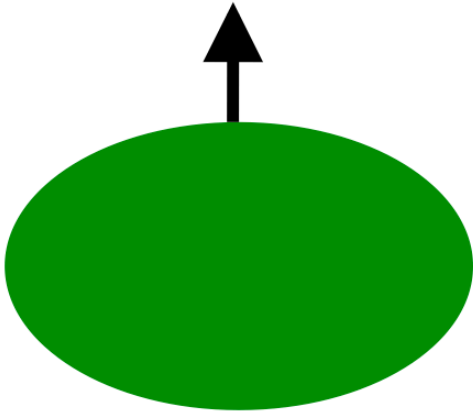


I detail this history in the University of Wisconsin seminar that you'll find on the Branding Climate site. This analysis reveals the fundamental requirements for a political movement to succeed in driving political will on a major climate policy strategy: on one side illuminating the defects of the climate brand that we have to resolve; and on the other, identifying the strengths of the climate counter-brand that we have to shut down:

⁵ In Colorado, Governor John Hickenlooper frantically cobbled together a backstage deal to abort a proposed amendment to ban fracking (funded by Jared Polis and aligned with city-level campaigns supported by the major environmental organizations including Sierra Club, 350 and Clean Water Action) because he rightly viewed such an amendment as a major threat to all Democrats up for election in 2014 as it would push Independents to vote Republican.

STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS TO BUILD THE CLIMATE BRAND

1. Abandon branding the issue.
2. Select single strongest solution as focal brand. And backstage the rest.
3. Design policy to be very simple, coherent and credible.
4. Debrand carbon consumerism.



STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS TO SHUT DOWN THE CLIMATE COUNTER-BRAND

1. Ignore denialism. Let scientists drive issue branding.
2. Invert the economic threat of tax on working families.
3. Flip right-populist framing of carbon pricing.

As you read through these requirements, please notice that none of the prior or on-going climate movement efforts recognize these requirements and so, necessarily, they fail to address them. The brand genealogy reveals the key weaknesses of the climate brand and the core strengths of the counterbrand, all of which our climate strategy must resolve if we are to win. Let me detail each of these points.

A. BUILDING THE CLIMATE BRAND: STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS

First, let's consider the key weaknesses of the climate brand—barriers to driving political will that stem from how the brand has been advanced over the past seven years by the Climate

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Orthodoxy. And, then, we draw strategic inferences from these weaknesses: what strategy requirements are needed to remove these barriers and turn weaknesses into strengths?

1. STOP BRANDING THE THREAT.

Last spring, James Cameron launched a very ambitious climate change docu-spectacle, *The Years of Living Dangerously*. One of the most successful directors of our time gathered a star-studded cast including Harrison Ford, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Matt Damon, and a big production budget to shoot an eight-part series for Showtime, another in a long line of attempts by Hollywood's best and brightest to intervene on behalf of climate action. Critics viewed the series as one of the punchiest and most engaging treatments of climate change yet. The Guardian called it "perhaps the most important climate change multimedia communication endeavor in history." Yet the programming failed to crack even the Top 100 cable shows for the weeks it ran, attracting a negligible audience of only 50,000 households, losing the battle for attention to reruns of second-rate cartoons.

Cameron's strategy was virtually identical to every other media intervention since *An Inconvenient Truth*. The vast majority of climate branding, surely over 90% of the effort, has been devoted to a dead-end strategic goal: raising the salience of climate change as the preeminent political issue of our time. Most major climate campaigning efforts—from Live Earth, to 24 Hours of Reality, to the Peoples Climate March, the list goes on and on, all working to deliver on the wrong strategy. Many campaign efforts that I've reviewed proclaim similar grand but vague strategic goals: they want to "ignite the conversation," "spark engagement", drive the "tipping point for the movement" and so on. Launching the series, Cameron told *The Guardian* that the series is "a media vehicle with the potential to ignite a decisive conversation on climate." *The Guardian* article leads with the claim that this would be "perhaps the most important climate change multimedia communication endeavor in history." One of the creators of the series, David Gelber, states the strategy clearly:

"The goal of THE YEARS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY is to galvanize a national conversation on the realities of climate change and inspire people to share their own

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stories and empower them to get involved in solutions. We're also implementing an engagement campaign that will extend this effort beyond the broadcast to encourage our global leaders in politics, business and religion, as well as concerned citizens, to state where they stand on key climate issues and take action."

This goal was simply impossible to achieve. Despite two decades of continual heavily-resourced efforts to raise awareness and concern, climate remains a very low-involvement issue. While climate activists like to repeat over and over that the majority of Americans want action on climate, this support is extremely superficial and so such claims are highly misleading.⁶ The real question is whether Americans are paying attention to climate as a public policy issue, and whether they will act politically (voting and beyond) to pursue their declared interest in climate solutions. In both cases, the answer is no. For 25 years, great filmmakers, authors and journalists have used their combined talents to bring climate change to the front stage in a significantly more powerful manner than anything that an NGO campaign can pull off. And these efforts haven't advanced the cause.⁷

We've long known, from decades of consistent research from the social and behavioral sciences, why it's so hard to get people to care about climate. Climate threats are complex and highly technical, abstractions that are imperceptible to our senses, probabilistic, in the future and often far away in places removed existentially from the daily lives. Climate change accumulates slowly over time, so it's very hard to get people to worry about it, much less act. Likewise the causes are ubiquitous and imperceptible, the causal pathways are indirect, variegated, and

⁶ It is important to point out the roll of polling in promoting these beliefs. A number of polls seem to be designed to generate positive results on climate, or are simply politically naïve. To accurately assess climate change as a political issue, the research must be comparative. If studied independently, most every social, economic and environmental issue is deemed by the public to be important. There are two key political will questions that an accurate poll should assess: 1) ranking, the importance of the issue relative to other national issues, and 2) salience, the percentage of voters who are intensive vocal backers of the policy (wedge issue). The Gallup poll is the only poll that I've found that measures climate change politics in a manner useful to inform strategy.

⁷ The one exception—Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*—was hugely effective at putting climate back into the cultural discourse. The film hit just as Bush was fading and on his way out, a euphoric moment amongst environmentalists that finally with denialists out of the presidency, we could make progress on climate. But the film was an initial call-to-arms, not a political movement strategy. The mistake was to think that we needed sequel after sequel focusing on issue awareness building when in fact we needed to pivot immediately off this tipping point moment to build a comprehensive movement strategy that addressed the clear political will barriers that we faced.

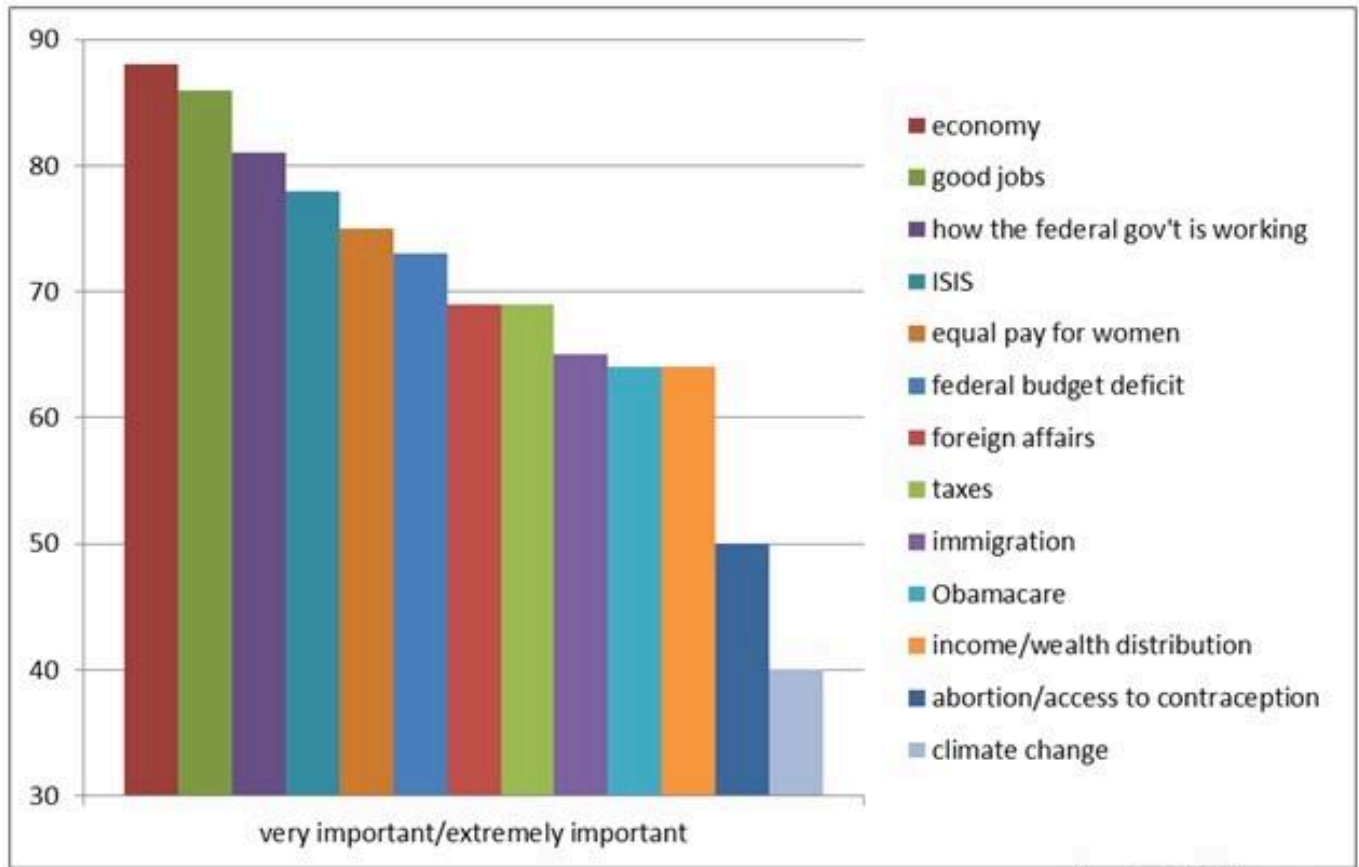
involve many interactions and feedback loops. The impacts are not evenly distributed and the most acute threats will miss North America. Carbon is embedded in everything, every aspect of our lives, and in an abstract manner, hidden in the supply chain. So how can we possibly deal with that? How can it be anybody's fault? Who do we stop from doing what? And don't we count on fossil fuels for our standard-of-living? To imagine a dematerialized world, free of carbon, yet still thriving is extremely challenging for most people. Finally, climate change is a signal example of Mancur Olson's collective action problem: given that it has only a small and unpredictable impact on individual lives now its very hard to organize collective action, while tackling climate would have a huge impact on fossil fuel companies and carbon-intensive industries and so they are very incentivized to fight it.

From everything we know about the particulars of climate change as a political issue, we would expect that it would be virtually impossible to shift the issue from low to high involvement. In marketing, such shifts rarely happen. In the early days of the movement, it was certainly worth taking a shot at moving the public on issue involvement, despite these conceptual challenges, as one of a portfolio of strategies. But it was the only strategy and it clearly didn't work.

The Gallup poll on global warming has been fielded every year since 1990 and citizen concern measures have not budged in the subsequent 25 years. Today, Americans still rank climate change dead last in importance amongst the major political issues that they care most about. The majority believes that climate change is happening and that we should act on it, but belief doesn't lead to political pressure because it is such a minor issue for them relative to others.

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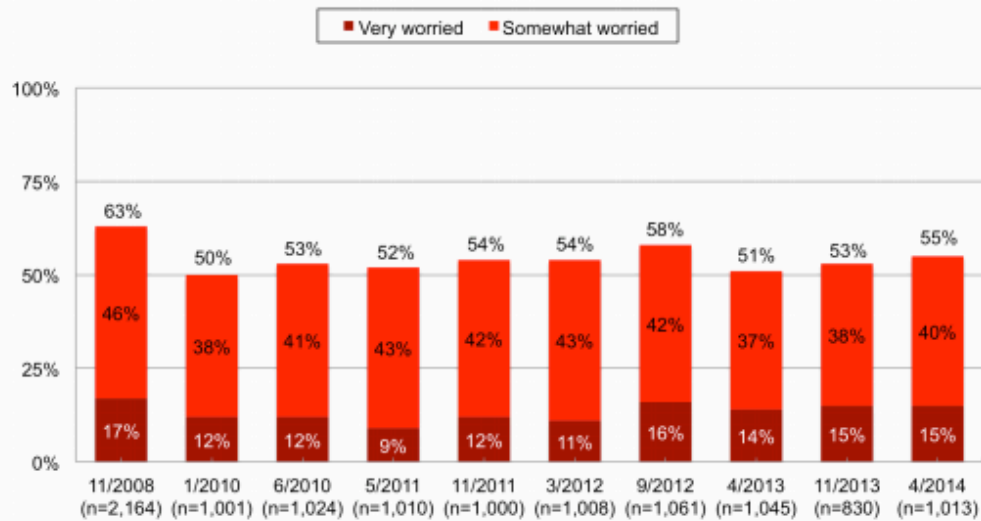
GALLUP: How important will each of the following be to your vote for Congress?



Graph: CNSNews.com

One might expect that climate change is a non-starter issue with Republicans today and this is certainly true. But the big problem for driving political will is that even for Democrats, climate only moves up to 11th place out of 13 issues. A variety of surveys indicate that only 10-15% of Americans view climate change as a critical issue and, even then, their concern only runs so deep.

Over Half of Americans Are Worried About Global Warming, But Few Are “Very” Worried



How worried are you about global warming?

Base: Americans 18+. April, 2014.



George Mason University
Center for Climate Change Communication

The most damning statistic on political will is that less than 1% view climate as the nation’s most important political issue, as an issue that they would use it as a litmus test for politicians (i.e., voting as a wedge issue). We’ve interviewed 70 local environmental activists, our best hope to mobilize into climate activists and, even for them, salience is not budging. This lack of engagement with climate change outside of a small circle of long-time activists and intelligentsia has been the norm now for decades. Climate change will remain a low-involvement low-priority issue until it’s too late (i.e., until we get to severe local climate impacts that viscerally impact daily life).

So we must avoid wasting scarce resources, media attention and citizen bandwidth on “branding the problem.” Instead of continuing to throw money and talent to fight a dead-end strategic battle, climate strategy must accept that the issue is inherently low-involvement, and treat this fact as an issue that must be solved by a different sort of strategy. As we will see, there is great opportunity to brand climate once we exit the dead-end game of branding the threat.

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2. FOCUS THE CLIMATE BRAND ON THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE AND CREDIBLE SOLUTION. AND BACK STAGE EVERYTHING ELSE.

Another of the Climate Orthodoxy's failings is simple marketing: the movement has long embraced a chaotic plethora of possible "solutions" that leave citizens who should be our best allies confused and demoralized:

How can I help fight climate change? Take the fight to Keystone and a movement will coalesce. If we just educate citizens, they'll get it, and we'll pass some good legislation. Protest fracking and it will somehow connect to climate change eventually. But we must have environmental justice. And fight for green jobs to improve energy efficiency. But we need to focus on the oceans. And the rain forest. And the soil. But for sure we need massive industrial policy to drive clean energy. If we can get universities to divest their fossil fuel holdings that will somehow reverberate to limit Big Carbon from further developing their assets. But if we all would just lower our footprints we will save the planet, so get out your calculator. If we just avoided meat, we'd be much better off, so stop eating meat on Mondays. No, wait a minute, we need an entirely new economy, let the revolution begin.

Potential allies have been presented with so many supposed solutions, none of which seem to offer a plausible pathway to achieving a 2C ceiling, that they simply have become fatalistic and have largely dropped out of serious political engagement.

In the Climate Orthodoxy, all attention is focused on communications, whether public protests or mass media "messaging." From a marketing viewpoint this approach is seriously handicapped from the start. Communicating what? Designing "the product" (in this case, climate policy) to resonate best with "consumers" (in this case potential voters and prospective activists) is a crucial part of branding. The Climate Orthodoxy has never considered the design of the solutions that the movement is promoting as a key component of strategy. As a result climate policy is a

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hundred things. And so from a branding perspective it is nothing: no one outside of the wonkiest of wonks can possibly understand, much less commit to, the cacophony of climate solutions on offer today. If we don't quickly focus on a single powerful policy—one that would have a tremendous impact in propelling the USA toward its carbon mitigation goals (40% reductions by 2030, 80%+ by 2050)—and impress the rest of the world in so doing, we are sunk.

Movement leaders point to the cap-and-trade debacle as the rationale for today's shotgun approach. 350's communication director has explicitly stated that the learning from cap-and-trade is that to "put all of our eggs in one basket" is the wrong approach. Exactly wrong. This view misunderstands the failure of cap-and-trade. It fails to examine climate branding through the eyes of the movement's prospects—the citizens we hope to convince to support climate policy and potential activists we hope will mobilize to work on the campaign. First, the shotgun solutions approach was in full swing throughout cap-and-trade and we found in our research that it was a significant cause of the lack of mobilization. From the viewpoint of American citizens, while few heard about cap-and-trade, they all had encountered myriad calls to change consumption, educate, promote clean energy, fight for green jobs etc. that were everywhere in the media at the time. Potential allies were just as confused then as now and it had nothing to do with the focus on cap-and-trade: few non-elite Americans noticed that focus.

Further, my analysis reveals that keeping policy backstage is one of the key reasons for the continued failure of all campaigning efforts today. It's impossible to rally people to the cause of an unspecified black box. Because there was no focal policy on the table, there was nothing to support from the viewpoint of potential activists and political supporters. No wonder all of the movement efforts in this period failed—there was nothing at stake, nothing to sign up for. And, as we'll see in the next section, avoiding specific policy has allowed the Carbon-Right to counter-brand the solution in a devastating manner. It's why climate became a poisonous political issue in 2009 and ever since.

Finally, without committing to a focal specific policy, the movement cannot hold the business community accountable, especially those that benefit from the carbon economy. Today, any

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business vested in the BAU economy can credibly agree in principle with the movement that we must have some policy, even put a price on carbon, without really committing to anything. No different than USCAP's role in cap-and-trade, many companies today are playing a wait-and-see game: once policy becomes inevitable, they are ready to jump in to turn on their lobbying machines to ensure that their profit streams are protected. If we allow this to happen, we can be sure that we will never get to a bill that will actually propel us toward the mitigation goal that we must hit. We must have a single specific focal solution that Americans demand from their elected officials; it's the only way to overcome the corrupting influence of lobbying on American politics.

3. DESIGN POLICY BRAND TO BE VERY SIMPLE, COHERENT AND TRANSPARENT.

The Climate Orthodoxy's lack of attention to branding climate policy leads to a related basic marketing problem: you can't generate support for a policy that people don't understand. Climate policy is inherently complex. It is absolutely crucial to design a citizen-facing concept for climate policy that the large majority of Americans can understand easily with an elevator-pitch explanation, that makes sense to them, that resonates, that seems logical and credible.

Consider cap-and-trade again: the various bills were all conceived backstage to please elites, never to win over citizens (or, in fact, to deliver the changes climate science deemed necessary). The various bills were completely unintelligible unless one had formal training in economics or finance. So, even if the movement had focused intensively on branding cap-and-trade, the policy is fundamentally flawed from a brand perspective, a mysterious and inherently corrupt black box policy. All of the bills proposed were designed in a way that virtually ensured their lack of popular support. The faulty conclusion reached by movement leaders is that you can't mobilize citizens around a climate bill. The correct conclusion is that you can't mobilize citizens around a bill crafted by lobbyists that's so convoluted that insiders can barely understand it and is so riddled with loopholes that no one can credibly stand up for it.

There is also a crucial political rationale for placing a simple logical credible policy concept at the center of the brand. It's only via a popular surge of support for a specific piece of legislation

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that we have any chance to pass a bill that will actually work. We must pass a very radical bill by comparison to any policy that has yet been proposed.⁸ If we drive popular support “to do something serious about climate” without specifics—which is strategically impossible to do anyway—we will lose. Once a bill with no popular interest in specifics gets put into play inside the beltway, you can be sure that it will be co-opted by thousands of lobbyists and the result will be no different than cap & trade: we’ll have a very incremental watered down bill full of loopholes that gets us nowhere and mostly benefits industry and Wall Street rather than the climate.

The Climate Orthodoxy’s approach on climate policy is no different now than during the cap-and-trade campaign and will fail for the same reasons: let’s stir general enthusiasm for doing something about climate (which I’ve argued above is impossible); let’s mention dozens of different solutions since one is likely to connect with any given citizen (when the opposite is true, the cacophony confuses and pushes away key voter and activist segments); and, then, we’ll sneak in a tax, pushing it through when the political landscape seems advantageous (which can never happen because the Carbon-Right will launch their counterbranding machine and tear it apart).

A political movement can only work if its aim is to drive public support for specific policy that delivers on what the science says we must. If the bill is captured by the Carbon-Right and inside-the-beltway lobbying, it will be gutted. We need to rally Americans to own the specifics of the bill, taking away this power from lobbyists. While from the Climate Orthodoxy lens, this goal is viewed as highly implausible, my analysis leads me to the opposite conclusion: the policy itself is one of the most potent assets we have for branding climate. Designed and branded properly, policy is not a handicap to hide from the public, but a powerful asset critical to passing the bill. Our climate brand strategy must lead with specific aggressive policy, not hide it backstage.

⁸ By comparison, consider what it would have taken to drive support for a single payer health care system instead of the deeply-compromised Obamacare. Single-payer never made it to the table because it was never branded: there was no political will built up for the specific policy and so lobbyists easily forced Obama and allies to ditch it early on.

4. DEBRAND CARBON CONSUMERISM.

The last impediment is the conceptual barrier keeping otherwise sympathetic citizens from embracing and getting involved with the political movement, what I call carbon consumerism. The great majority of our allied citizens today (detailed in the next section) don't think in terms of political movements. They're encouraged by consumer society to think of their political efficacy on climate solely as individual consumers. The Climate Orthodoxy has unintentionally reinforced this barrier in campaigning for the last decade.

Our potential voter bloc has widely embraced the most sticky and resonant dead-end solution in the climate solution cacophony—carbon consumerism. The call to voluntarily change consumer behavior to reduce the country's environmental footprint began in the 1970s with Jimmy Carter, and was often echoed by environmentalists over the next three decades with little reflexivity or empirical analysis. *An Inconvenient Truth* brought carbon consumerism back to the front stage again with its recommendations for that everyone can help solve climate by changing their consumption patterns. The mass media jumped on this message, as did most environmental organizations. Virtually every major magazine ran a green issue featuring dozens of neat ways in which we can all consume more ethically to save the planet. Discovery Channel launched Planet Green, which was chock full of consumer tips. All of the major enviros featured consumption shifts on their websites and in campaigning; many still do. We still have major consumer campaigns that clog up media space and lock in citizen's consumer society biases.

Because we live in consumer culture, it is intuitive to most Americans who believe in anthropogenic climate change that "we" are the culprits through our consumption. And, likewise, they view changing their personal consumption to lower our carbon footprints as the most obvious and efficacious social change model. Yet, we know well that individual citizens acting voluntarily have failed collectively to reduce the country's carbon footprint, despite decades of intensive encouragement and instruction on how to become sustainable consumers. The reasons for this failure are straightforward and predicted by various social sciences literatures (basic economics, cognitive limitations, free rider effects, efficacy concerns,

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symbolic ritualization of sustainability, and so on). Further, a high percentage of our “personal” footprints are actually structural, institutionalized in our everyday lives in ways that are difficult to impact (e.g., commute to work, choice of autos, mass transit options). The evidence that carbon consumerism doesn’t work has been with us for decades. There is no empirical evidence that such voluntary consumer actions can aggregate to have a meaningful impact on greenhouse gas reduction. None of the influential mitigation models include such voluntary lifestyle changes as an important component. Rather than serve as a path to political mobilization, I find that carbon consumerism allows people to feel that they are already doing what is necessary and so blinds them to the need for political action.

Yet most people continue to believe in carbon consumerism as a myth (avoiding empirical confrontation, wanting to believe that it will work) because it provides them with an easy salve that allows them to get on with their lives and avoid feeling anxious or responsible about climate. The most concerned view carbon consumerism as a fatalist morality play (I will live differently to stand true to my beliefs, even though its not going to matter).

The strategic problem we face is that carbon consumerism crowds out organizing citizens who are actually engaged with climate change to participate in collective political effort. If you believe in carbon consumerism, and you juxtapose this belief with the political dysfunctions in Washington, you’re very unlikely to participate in a political movement fighting for climate policy. If we are to drive political will on climate, we must get citizens who want to fight climate change to reject carbon consumerism and, instead, to embrace the fact that a political solution is our only path. This will require a focused debranding effort: exploding the carbon consumerism myth.

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B. SHUTTING DOWN THE CLIMATE COUNTERBRAND: STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS

The Carbon-Right has been hammering on the same counter-brand strategy since 1992, a very clever and diabolical cultural strategy intended to manipulate the overall climate discourse and especially the crucial swing voter segment (which I call Populist Pocketbook Apathetics, discussed in the next section) that we must win over if we are to succeed. Politicians on the fence will always stand against us until convinced that they are well protected from the inevitable Carbon-Right backlash. Unless we can keep politicians from getting hung out to dry for supporting a climate bill, as happened in 1994 and again in 2010, then we will lose. The Carbon-Right will attack on both the issue and solution fronts.

The Carbon-Right counter-branding has succeeded wildly, in large part, because the Climate Orthodoxy has never designed strategy to shut down what are now very predictable moves. The one area where the climate movement has focused intensively on battling the counterbrand—the denialist attacks on the consensus climate science—turns out to be the wrong move. While the Climate Orthodoxy focused intensively on countering denialism, it failed to appreciate that counterbranding was at least as effective in destroying political will around the proposed solution. Climate change is now a right-populist wedge issue that works as short-hand for political identity. Like Obamacare, if you support climate policy, you're an out-of-touch rich liberal elite who likes big government, even socialism, and surely you don't care about average working people.

Here I discuss two general strategy requirements that stem from shutting down the counterbrand. The most important counterbrand strategy is to invert the perception that climate policy is a massive tax on the working class. I pick up this third entailment in the segment strategy for Populist-Pocketbook Apathetics below.

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1. CLIMATE SCIENCE DENIALISM IS A TRAP. IGNORE IT.

Clinton's BTU tax proposal, followed by the threat of the first IPCC report in 1996, spurred the Carbon-Right to rev up its now infamous denialist machine, funding a small group of outlier scientists, fringe think tanks and fringe media, gradually pushing their views into conventional media to get "balanced" coverage. This strategy has been very well documented by sociologists, historians and journalists since the late 1990s, with a wide range of books (Naomi Oreskes, Jeremy Leggett, Mark Dowie, Ross Gelbspan, Chris Mooney, Michael Mann, James Hoggan) and dozens of academic articles (e.g., by sociologist Riley Dunlap and his colleagues) carefully documenting the strategy. As well, a number of excellent digital media sites emerged that cover denialism extensively (realclimate, desmogblog, grist etc.). So I will not recount the story here.

Stephen Schneider and Naomi Oreskes have emphasized the parallel between the climate denialist strategy and the strategy that cigarette marketers used to stall the science on the health risks of tobacco. But the analogy is weak: it holds up well for the early days of climate science but doesn't usefully explain the counter-brand's success over the last seven years or so. The difference: tens of millions of Americans had a direct and massive interest in the health risks of cigarettes—their lives were on the line. So, once the scientists and their public health allies fought back effectively to teach the public about what the science really showed, the cigarette companies were forced to fold their hand. For climate that hasn't happened at all, because climate risks are perceived very differently than personal health threats from smoking a cigarette. Because climate is much lower involvement, even though the Carbon-Right's denialist game has been trumped several times over, it doesn't matter because most citizens aren't interested in paying attention.

Climate science was just ramping up in the 1990s and climate models were still relatively primitive and, so, it was possible then for denialists to attack the science with barely credible jabs to conjure up doubts and alternatives. But that's not the case today. The mountains of increasingly powerful research, summarized (conservatively) in the last two IPCC reports, combined with a hard-to-miss pattern of extreme weather around the globe has easily trumped

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the denialists for those who want to pay attention. The problem is that climate is an issue that only hard-core environmentalists and hard-core right-wingers really pay attention to. For the high majority of Americans, perhaps 80% or more, their climate views are formed through articulation to their political and environmental ideologies. The science has only a weak direct impact. If citizens identify with the ideology behind climate policy, they're on board. If not, they align with skepticism even though they are not particularly skeptical. In other words, their views on the threat of climate are derivative of the intertwined calculus combining their perceived economic interests and their political identity.

As a result, the climate movement misinterprets the strength of denialism and, thus, also the best way to combat it. Only the hardcore right-wing really believes in denialism. All things equal, most Americans would prefer to get rid of the risk of climate change. This is why polls show upwards of 70% saying that they would like this to happen, all things equal. But all things aren't perceived as equal at all, due to effective counterbranding. For people in the muddy middle, the denialist discourse offers a convenient rationale—a myth—to reject policy that the Carbon-Right has convinced them is an attack on their economic interests and political identity.

The Climate Orthodoxy has obsessed over directly responding to the denialist critiques of climate science. This is the wrong approach. The citizen segment that we must convince to become less skeptical (the Populist-Pocketbook Apathetics) isn't really convinced that the science is wrong. They have no interest in paying attention to such fact-based arguments; they never have. As long as the climate movement is distracted to fight on the facts of the issue rather than the details of the solution, the Carbon-Right has won. The Carbon-Right is surely elated that the climate campaigners feel the need to swamp the public discourse with a wonky debate on facts. They are no doubt particularly thrilled that the science debate is led by highly partisan figures such as Gore, McKibben, and Klein, giving a valued rhetorical boost to their right-populist attacks that I describe next.

On climate science, we need to take a strategy lesson from Michel Foucault, who would tell us that the more we talk about denialist science, the more we give it cultural oxygen—the more we

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establish their position as not only credible but containing some grains of truth. Debating the problem means that solutions are not even on the map. The more the Climate Movement tries to teach Americans about climate science and the climate problem from its partisan-activist voice, the more we play into the Carbon-Right's strategy of sowing confusion. The only way to deal with denialism is to let the scientists have the debate to themselves: continue to send the most credible (and least stereotypically liberal elite) scientists on the road around the country to tell the truth about the science in simple layman's terms (a role that many climate scientists have been intensively schooled on of late to carry out). Once the partisan players who are easily counterbranded as liberal-elite environmentalists drop out of the science discussion, and we shift the discourse to focus on attractive solutions, citizens who now find it advantageous to be (apathetic) skeptics will shift sides.

2. FRONTSTAGE DIVERSE AMERICANS WHO VIOLATE THE COUNTER-BRAND GROUP STEREOTYPE. BACKSTAGE "LIBERAL ELITE ENVIROS."

Brands consist of all public-facing elements that citizens pay attention to and find meaningful, positive or negative. This includes, importantly, the organizations and spokespersons who are promoting the policy, whom citizens use as proxies for the political ideology that the policy represents. The Carbon-Right counterbranding has made the brand spokesperson/group a particularly acute issue. They have attacked Al Gore effectively because he was the preeminent front-stage spokesperson on climate, using their right-populist narrative.

Today the Climate Orthodoxy relies heavily upon three leaders who act as the dominant spokespeople: Al Gore, Bill McKibben and recently Naomi Klein. Bill McKibben has been everywhere on the media over the past few years. These three leaders are extremely effective amongst activists (each with somewhat different constituencies) and should continue to act backstage leading the troops. However, they are very problematic for climate branding because they offer such easy targets for the Carbon-Right to revive the "liberal-elite enviro" narrative used so effectively against Al Gore. As a Harvard graduate, Vermonter, literate cultural critic, and long-time hardcore environmental activist, Bill McKibben is a huge favorite of liberal

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environmentalists, which makes him easy pickings for Carbon-Right attacks. As a Canadian socialist calling for the overthrow of capitalism to solve climate, Naomi Klein is much worse for our national climate brand. Hugely influential amongst radical activists, she will be used as a powerful piece of evidence to attack the climate movement as “radical socialist elite cabal” if she continues to serve such a visible front-stage role. All three leaders should retreat backstage to work directly on activism, and allow the “face” of the movement to shift toward Americans who are decidedly not “liberal elite enviros” and who will inspire the broader non-activist segments that we need to attract. We need Main Streeters who used to be right-populist skeptics on climate to talk to the media. We need everyday folks from states dominated by the Carbon Right to be featured.

This recommendation will be hard for activists to swallow because all three leaders have been so inspiring and influential (for myself included). However, activists must allow hard-edged branding to guide our strategy if we are to win. The Carbon-Right would never allow the Koch brothers to be media spokespeople out in front of the counter-brand for good reason: it would sink their credibility amongst all but the most rabid right-wingers. We need to be just as smart in our marketing.

PART II: DEVELOP CLIMATE SEGMENT STRATEGIES

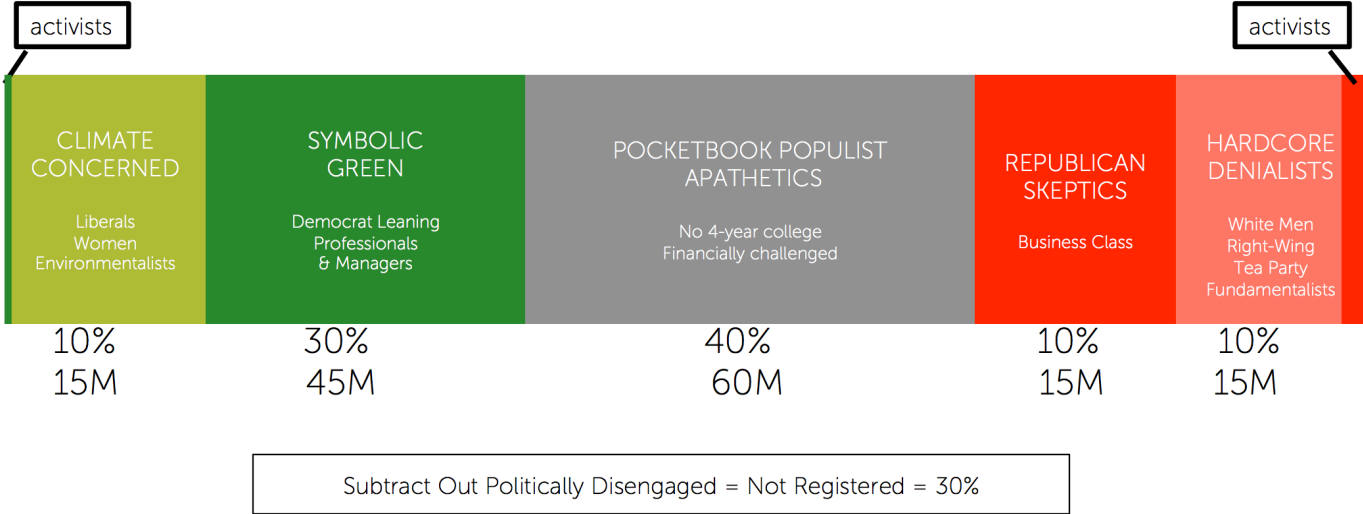
The climate brand genealogy plots the key contours of the American climate change discourse in the media and public discussion: the brand and counter-brand as they battle to shape how Americans understand and engage with the issue and potential solutions. This discourse is the cultural raw material that all citizens draw upon to construct their own understandings, viewpoints and political stances. This analysis allows us to pinpoint a comprehensive list of strategy requirements that our strategy must meet if it is to be successful.

In this second stage of the analysis, we want to drill down to a more granular description of the brand as it exists amongst American citizens (voters in particular). Different groups with

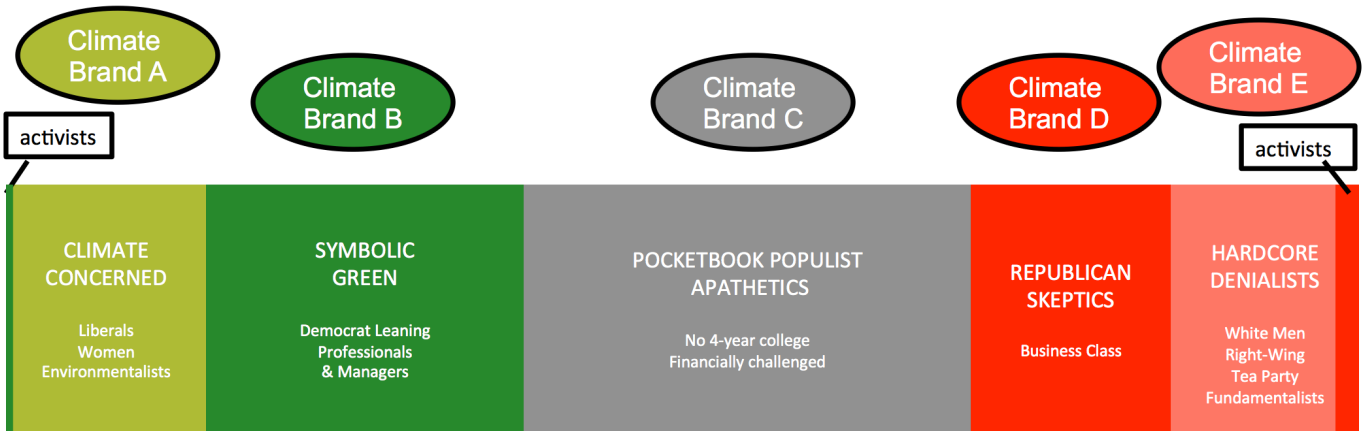
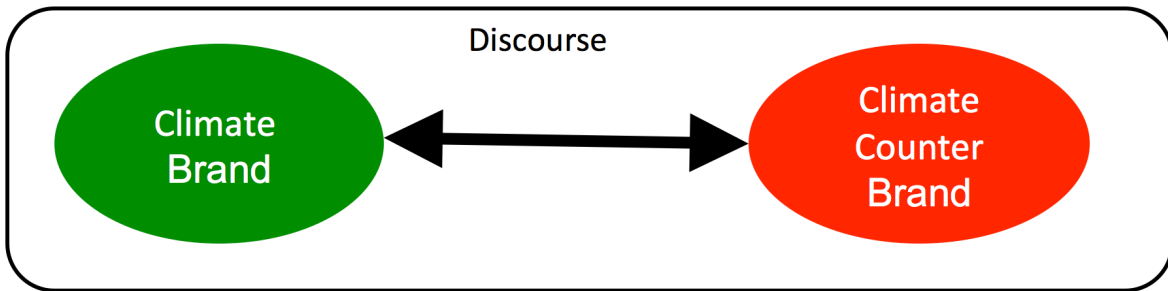
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distinctive political and environmental ideologies resonate with, or ignore, or are put off by different parts of the discourse, resulting in distinct climate brands. Driving political will requires segmenting citizens according to their political engagement and stance on the issue, and therefore potential role in passing legislation—that is by differences with respect to the climate change brand. The segments that fall out of the analysis look like this (with rough approximate distributions in the population based upon inferences from other research):

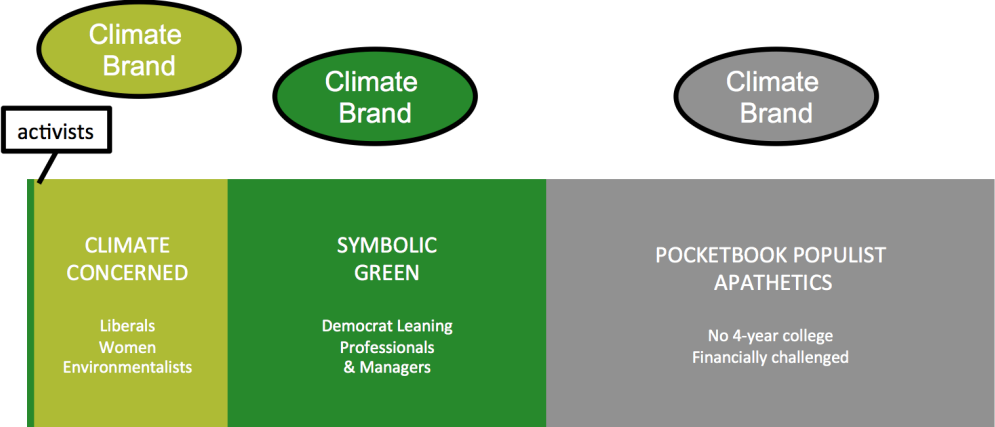
CLIMATE CHANGE SEGMENTS



Each segment holds a particular point-of-view and level of engagement with respect to climate—that is, each has a distinctive climate brand:

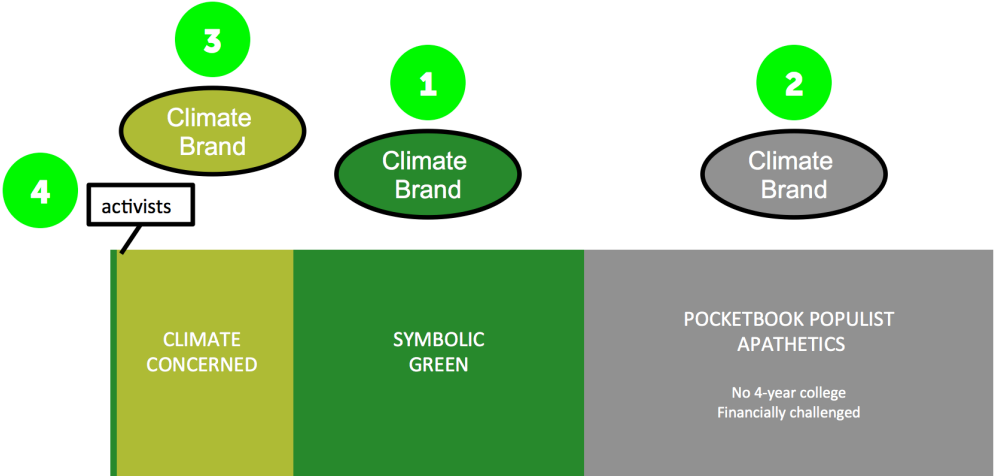


To drive political will, we need to focus intensively on the most critical segments that we need to impact to win—our target segments in marketing language. The segments that I call Republican Skeptics and Hardcore Denialists are not easily flipped and we don't need them to win. So we want to ignore them and focus on the remaining four segments.



Finally, as before, we want to evaluate these segments strategically: what are the key opportunities to enhance the role of citizens in the segment to drive political will? And, conversely, what are the most acute counterbrand threats to these segments that we must defend against? This analysis gives us four additional segment strategies that complement the broader strategic direction above.

Four Segment Strategies



SEGMENT STRATEGY 1: CLIMATE CONCERNED

GOAL: UNLEASH AS PASSIONATE WEDGE ISSUE VOTERS

STRATEGY: DRAMATIZE HOW AN AGGRESSIVE CARBON TAX IS THE LINCHPIN FOR ACHIEVING CARBON GOALS AND THAT THE MOVEMENT CAN PASS THE TAX IF ENOUGH PEOPLE JOIN.

Citizens in the climate-concerned segment constitute about 10% of registered voters and index toward educated liberal women. Most have volunteered for other environmental issues, usually local. These are people who, by all rights, should be deeply involved in passing major climate policy. But very few are. The climate movement suffers from a general lack of intensity: the majority is vaguely and weakly in favor of climate policy but there is no significant group of passionate vocal voters who are forcing politicians to focus on the issue. We know from the academic literature that wedge issue voters can be an extremely powerful force in American politics if they act in sufficient numbers, even a million or two, much less than 10%. We have 10% of voters whom we should be able to convert to wedge voters if only we embrace the right strategy. Throughout efforts to grow a climate movement since 2007, they've hardly participated because the Climate Orthodoxy has not provided a credible and coherent path to pass a policy that will have a major impact. This segment is the low-hanging fruit for the climate movement.

For Climate Concerned, the climate brand is plenty strong enough from an issue perspective. They are the lone exception to the low-involvement rule: these are people who've paid enough attention, believe in the science and models and, so, worry deeply about climate. They've been convinced for some time, at least since *An Inconvenient Truth* and IPCC 4. We have interviewed 70 Climate Concerned citizens over the past five years (see methods appendix). They feel like they should be involved with climate change but they don't know where to start. They are burned out on the issue: they don't want to hear the same message over and over. Like others, they have problems tracking the technical details. But they get the general point that we are facing a crisis and, unlike others, they are desperate to do something about it. The Climate Concerned have not been swayed at all by the Carbon-Right—they are apt to despise the Koch

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brothers, and are wary of Carbon-Right lobbying and media manipulation. Rather, the climate change brand is weak amongst Climate Concerned for two straightforward reasons having to do with the solution, not the issue:

1. They are very confused about solutions, which paralyzes them. Like everyone else, they suffer from the climate solution cacophony—they can't make sense of the jumble of irreconcilable solutions proposed and end up walking away as a result of the lack of focus. This is a problem shared by everyone, and so we address it in the prior climate brand strategy requirements section. But it's important to note that Climate Concerned are actively looking for a viable avenue to participate and the choose-what-works-for-you smorgasbord of possible solutions demoralizes them. This isn't how they think about social change, and neither should we!

2. In addition, the credibility of the solution is a huge barrier. These are people who are committed to fighting for a real solution to climate, and most are already working on other local environmental issues. They are the only segment that understands and embraces the specific goals that we need to hit (450->350 PPM, 2 degrees etc.). They look at the supposed solutions advocated by various groups and readily conclude that none of them is really serious in attacking the problem, none of these proposals would actually get us anywhere close to the goals we need to hit if enacted. This leaves them fatalistic, wondering if there is no real solution, pushing them back to the environmental work that does make a difference. They are desperate to support a solution that seems really credible.

The Climate Orthodoxy has invested tremendous campaigning resources trying to motivate allied citizens with metaphorical calls-to-arms (it's our WWII, our Apollo, our civil rights, etc.) and appeals to abstract values (it's the American way, we care about the next generation, we care about the land etc.) all of which go in one ear and out the other. Climate Concerned don't need abstract motivation or pep talks; they need specific policy that they can believe in. They need to be convinced that there is a really powerful policy that will actually work that's worth fighting for. We've never told them about what a carbon tax is, how it works, and—for this

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segment especially—prove to them that it will get us a long way toward our carbon emissions goals.

The key to converting Climate Concerned into passionate wedge issue voters is to dramatize for them precisely what a major carbon tax would do. We need to brand the results: don't just show them the wonky % reductions in greenhouse gas forcing emissions. Instead, we must bring to life how a \$200/T carbon tax would transform energy, transport, agriculture, housing, urban planning, the oceans, and so on. They need to believe that if they fight for this policy and we win, we will get the decarbonized sustainable society that they yearn for. If they know that this is our last chance and that finally there is a credible policy on the table that will drive the tectonic societal shift they know we need, they will happily join the cause.

SEGMENT STRATEGY 2: CLIMATE ACTIVISTS

GOAL: TRANSFORM CLIMATE CONCERNED INTO MOVEMENT ACTIVISTS

STRATEGY 1: BUILD TRUE GRASS ROOTS POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WITH RESPONSIBILITIES, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOLIDARITY.

Political movements must be “popular.” Successful movements require a critical mass of truly committed citizens who are willing to devote significant volunteer time to organizing for the cause over an extended period, often for years. So one fundamental strategic problem for movements is how to catalyze those most concerned about the issue—movement prospects—to join up and do the hard work that movements require. Most proto-movements never materialize due to a failure to mobilize the most opportune prospects who are attitudinally favorable but politically passive. The failure to convert Climate Concerned into movement activists has been a central problem for the Climate Orthodoxy since the major movement efforts began in 2007 (Apollo, AfCP, 1SKY, 350 etc.). Figuring out why they didn't join up was the initial impetus of this research project back in 2007. The primary reason for this failure stems from the Climate Orthodoxy's willingness to believe that new digital campaign platforms (erroneously called “movements”) can take the place of real movement-building.

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About 10% of the adult population are people who have volunteered on the front lines of various environmental causes and, so, are far more likely to sign up to work as climate activists than others (per robust findings in the social movements literature). The majority of these environmental activists are from the Climate Concerned segment (a fraction are more conservative conservationists who work on habitat and wilderness conservation but have less interest in climate change). Let's estimate that 7% of the adult population fit both categories and, so, are prime prospects to become activists. As a key component of a comprehensive political movement strategy, we need to grow the base of true climate activists from today's very modest numbers—perhaps 10-20,000 people who are actually devoting hours on a weekly basis to organizing on climate (not just those who show up at an occasional march or sign a petition)—to a volunteer army of organizers that should eventually exceed one million people. Our research suggests that this seemingly utopian goal is achievable with the right strategy; a million activists is about 10% of our prime prospects.

I've already covered the foundational barriers that Climate Concerned run into—giving them a very specific focal credible policy to work on. Once we do this, most Climate Concerned will become much more active, turning into wedge voters. But what will encourage them to take the final step: from active voter to activist? The barriers we discovered for activist conversion have to do with the structure of the movement itself, and so the strategy direction points to a very different movement organization that is required if we are to attract volunteers (rather than form a "paid movement," consisting almost entirely of professional organizers which is typical today and which we can never afford in large enough numbers to work.) Ironically, the movement work that we desperately need to succeed—hardcore local political organizing—is also the kind of work that prospects yearn for but that no climate movement organization has yet offered them!

Having worked on a number of environmental campaigns before, activist prospects carefully evaluate where their efforts will have the most impact before joining up. Climate campaigning doesn't register because, in their view, there is no legitimate movement to join. They have no faith that today's digital "simulated movement" models can possibly have significant impact on

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political will and so they take a pass. For the last eight years, they've been bombarded by requests to "join a movement" from digital campaign platforms that are modeled after MoveOn. The cap-and-trade era movement efforts (Gore, 1Sky) embraced these platforms. As did 350, except in the few cities where local chapters are strong. These efforts all failed, despite many millions spent on organizing. Yet, today, the digital movement model is, if anything, even more dominant. Pure-play organizations like Avaaz and Purpose make bombastic and unsupported claims that they are pioneering 21st century movement-building, leaving behind antiquated 20th century models that require that activists actually work together on specific local organizing goals in the same physical space.

My research reveals that these digital models are anything but "new-and-improved." These platforms excel at a very narrow band of social change action: driving awareness on under-the-radar social issues, sometimes putting such issues on the political agenda. They also can work as effective crowdfunders on issues, just as MoveOn did back in the day. This is not the kind of organizing that we need for climate. Americans have been aware of the problem for 25 years. While certainly a digital platform is a crucial part of any movement infrastructure, it is no substitute for an actual movement. Aside from awareness building and signature aggregation, digital pure play models have huge shortcomings: they cannot build actual political movements! Political movements require social interaction, real social networks (not just digital) and a wide range of actions that cannot transpire on the internet.

The unintended impact of this plethora of digital campaign models? They have socialized potential activists to perceive that anything called a "movement" is probably a trivial effort and likely should be ignored! Prospective activists don't see a role for themselves in these organizations. Climate change is not at the top of their list of environmental problems to devote time to is because the activist role is so superficial and hollowed out that they don't perceive it as "activism." Especially compared to other issues that they work on (usually locally), climate work doesn't stack up. Activists won't get involved unless they can make a meaningful contribution, get recognized for it, and forge group solidarity within the movement around their efforts (which is consonant with a great deal of research in the social movements literature). We

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know from social movement research that movements become a magnet when they allow people to work together in common cause, generating solidarity and identity. Today, climate doesn't offer any of this for volunteers. In fact, apart from a few industrious city chapters here and there, the national enviros don't have any real organizing work for volunteers to do.⁹ To attract prospects we first must design a real movement organization, which is organized on the ground in every city and congressional district. And then we need to devise roles for prospective activists that will allow them to make a truly significant contribution to the movement's local goals.

STRATEGY 2: RECRUIT NEW ACTIVISTS BY TEMPORARILY REPURPOSING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Our research indicates that if we launch a serious grassroots campaign for a very aggressive and progressive carbon tax, with a sophisticated brand strategy and campaign platform, we will attract droves of "dormant" activists who are hungry to work on exactly such a campaign. In addition, we believe that we can quickly mobilize this army of dormant climate activists by tapping into local environmental organizations. Rather than treat climate as a de novo issue to recruit to, we need to recognize that climate is competing with other local environmental activism. We know from social movement research that new movements are built upon the shoulders of existing activist networks, not created from scratch. Proto-activists rely primarily on existing environmental networks to learn about new issues and forge new alliances. Since their volunteer time is limited and they are embedded in networks working on other issues, shifting issues is a significant hurdle. This is the key strategic question, then: How to get prospects to shift?

⁹ In 2009, I somehow became one of the Alliance for Climate Protection's top leadership activists—invited to participate in podcasts with Al Gore—simply by signing some lists and petitions. I live in Colorado, one of the most important "purple" states for climate organizing and have signed up to many environmental lists and memberships. And yet I've never been contacted to volunteer in any significant on-going way for climate organizing. Climate change in Colorado is "run" by professional organizers for the Big Green enviros (Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, EDF etc) that "control" the space. They are happy to get signatures, email addresses and money, but have no interest in popular political organizing. I'm bombarded with requests to sign petitions and give money, always packaged with rhetoric that tries to convince me that I'm participating in a movement. But actual organizing in Colorado is tiny and ineffective. 350's focal political action this year was an effort to pressure Democratic Senator Michael Bennet to vote against Keystone, which consisted of an action involving 200 protestors at his Denver headquarters. There was no statewide mobilization to shift political will across the state on Keystone—the only metric that Bennet cares about. He voted for Keystone.

We need to pitch leaders of local environmental organizations: Focus your organization on passing the carbon tax, and you'll do more for your focal issue than anything that you can accomplish directly. We build out the argument for what a \$200/T carbon tax will do for advancing the causes of environmentalists working on the oceans, agriculture, cities, fracking, green jobs and so on.

SEGMENT STRATEGY 3: SYMBOLIC GREENS

GOAL: TRANSFORM INTO ACTIVE CARBON TAX VOTERS

STRATEGY: TRANSFORM CARBON TAX INTO NEW ECO STATUS SYMBOL, KNOCKING OUT CONSUMER ECO-SYMBOLS

The segment I term Symbolic Greens is a hugely important potential voting bloc for a carbon tax since, attitudinally, they are on our side. The problem is that climate is a low involvement issue and they prefer to engage it through (empty) consumer rituals. They don't engage climate as a political issue; they don't understand that climate will need a concerted political movement to get to a solution.

Symbolic Greens are citizens whose identity project includes caring about the environment, and have embraced a conventional set of symbols and rituals to enact this status. This segment consists of about 30% of voters, including the majority of the professional-managerial class (about 2/3 of the 30%, so 20% of voters) and a much smaller percentage of Main Street (about 1/5th of 50%, or 10% of voters). So Symbolic Greens index strongly toward college-educated managers and professionals who lean toward Democratic Party politics.

Their political ideology encourages them to accept the science and embrace what the most prominent voices on climate say we should do. They suffer from issue fatigue and long ago, after the Gore film bubble, they stopped paying close attention. Like others, they are confused by the plethora of potential solutions and so largely ignore them (other than consumption). They are not attuned to social movements and don't think of politics this way. Politics is an

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electoral affair. Symbolic Greens are active voters and culturally influential. But, like the high majority of Americans, when forced to compare, Symbolic Greens rank climate change well down the list of issues that they really care about.

The most committed and intensive practitioners of eco-symbolism tend to be people high in what Pierre Bourdieu calls cultural capital. These are people for whom David Brooks' mocking term "Bourgeois Bohemians" is reasonably accurate: people who ardently pursue cultural capital for identity and status, of which being a cosmopolitan environmentalist is a key component. To be respected in this milieu, one needs to be engaged in the social and political issues that have the most cultural traction amongst ones peers. Environmentalism, of various stripes, has long been core status-affirming political territory. While Symbolic Greens aren't deeply engaged in climate, they do embrace the iconic symbols of environmental concern connected to climate as celebrated in the progressive media and popular discourse: recycling, organic food, CFLs or LEDs, hybrid or electric autos. And they often favor companies that take an explicit environmental stance (Whole Foods, Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia etc).

Unlike Climate Concerned, Symbolic Greens happily embrace this sort of ritualized green consumption as their preferred mode of engagement and evince little interest in interrogating their belief for clues of efficacy. In a classic expression of historic American ideology meets modern consumerism, Symbolic Greens believe that the solution to climate change must be built from the ground up, with each of us working individually toward the solution. Each of us must become reflexive about our impact on the earth, learn how we must change our lives in order to avoid climate catastrophe, and then bite the bullet and get it done. One by one, we will change the world. This is hard and frustrating work and change is slow but most people in this segment cannot imagine any other path.

We must help them imagine another path, or we are sunk. Rather than serve as a path to political engagement, these eco-symbols and rituals allow people in this segment to feel that they are already doing all that they can do, and so blinds them to the need for political action.

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The opportunity to enhance Symbolic Greens' contribution to political will is clear: we must explode the myth that eco-consumption can impact climate change, and, then offer up a carbon tax as the much more credible new eco-status symbol for in-the-know Symbolic Greens. Once we change the media discourse to poke holes in the effectiveness of green consumption (the broader carbon consumerism strategy earlier), Symbolic Greens will be very open to adopting new eco-symbols to express their environmental identities. A carbon tax, properly branded, can be the new eco-badge for them.

SEGMENT STRATEGY 4: POPULIST-POCKETBOOK APATHETICS

GOAL: SHIFT WEAK EMBRACE OF COUNTER-BRAND TOWARD FAVORING CARBON TAX

STRATEGY: PUTS MONEY IN YOUR POCKET, EXPRESSES POPULIST-RIGHT IDEOLOGY

The only way that major climate legislation can pass is to win over a very large segment that I call Populist-Pocketbook Apathetics: politically apathetic mostly independent voters who have been swayed by right-populist ideology and who could care less about climate. They constitute a huge voting bloc, approximately 40% of registered voters, and are often the key voting bloc in swing states and districts that politicians most fear will dump them if they support climate legislation. This is a group that has been ignored by the Climate Orthodoxy, which is why past strategies have badly backfired, leaving the segment wide open to manipulative counterbranding by the Carbon-Right. Rethinking climate strategy to win over populist-pocketbook apathetics is paramount if we are to succeed.

Populist-Pocketbook Apathetics come primarily from a social class for which I will use the colloquial term "Main Street," combining social class groupings often separated into class fractions such as middle-class, lower-middle class, working class, and working poor. I rely upon recent socio-economic portraits of class in the USA to forge this single meta-class grouping. Political and economic shifts over the past thirty years have organized society into two increasingly divergent classes: the professional-managerial class above and everyone else. The

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economic lives of people within this otherwise heterogeneous spectrum are increasingly alike, a tectonic shift that Paul Krugman calls “the great divergence.” Main Street consists of households in which adults work in jobs other than the professions and management. The large majority of Main Street adults do not have a four-year college degree. Main Street work includes services, clerical, retail, and various types of manual labor. Main Street also includes adults working in the public sector, skilled trades, and union jobs that have historically been secure, with better pay better and benefits. These economic remnants of the post-war economy are quickly disappearing, today representing a minority of the Main Street economy.

Since the late seventies, a series of political-economic shifts (including the demise of unions, regressive tax policies, and the liberalization of labor and capital markets) have had a devastating impact on Americans who are not part of the professional-managerial class. Economic life in Main Street America has fallen apart: well-paid and secure jobs have disappeared at a rapid rate and replaced with jobs that pay much less with skimpy benefits. Retirement benefits have been retracted, medical costs have skyrocketed, and college education costs have risen dramatically. Main Street pay has been pushed downward toward a “\$10/hour economy.” Economic conditions have further deteriorated since 2008: real incomes have declined 10% and are now at a lower level than the early seventies. While unemployment for the professional-managerial class hovers around 3-4%, real unemployment (including Americans who’ve given up looking for full-time employment or are severely under-employed) on Main Street exceeds 15%. Nearly two-thirds of Main Street workers have suffered a job loss, pay cut, or reduction in hours since 2008. Perhaps most damning for a country that has long been willing to trade off economic inequality for mobility, class mobility in the United States is now lower than in all countries in continental Europe, including all of the Scandinavian countries that have always served for neoliberal proponents as case studies for lack of personal initiative and industry. On Main Street, acute anxiety around economic insecurity dominates everyday life. Avoiding threats to their precarious financial existence is tantamount.

Many academics and journalists have written about what is easily the most impressive feat of political branding in contemporary American history: how Right-Wing marketeers used a

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cultural-political onslaught across electoral and issue politics, think tanks and mass media (talk radio, FOX) to shift the American political spectrum strongly to the right over the past forty years, with particular success in capturing older and white working class voters (once solidly Democratic). The key to their success has been to establish a deeply cynical libertarian-populist brand amongst Main Street voters. The Right instituted neo-liberal policies that benefited big business and the rich, while gutting the labor market and public services for the majority of Americans. At the same time, they purposely made the federal government dysfunctional (as Tom Frank recounts in *The Wrecking Crew*). Then they used their sophisticated cultural-political machine to brand this diffuse economic discontent and government dysfunction as a libertarian-populist movement against the government and “liberal elites.” Over the past forty years—roughly since Nixon called out to the “silent majority” and used forced busing as a wedge issue—the Right Wing has seduced Main Street into embracing a populist-right political ideology to explain their economic struggles and to vent their anger. As conservative economic elites have destroyed the economic foundations of the American Dream for Main Street, they have branded these tribulations as the work of liberal elites and big government. Hatred toward the federal government and any program that seems indicative of this narrative (Obamacare at present) is at an all-time high.

CLIMATE BRAND: LIBERAL-ELITE’S LUXURY STATUS GOOD

Living on Main Street, climate change is entirely irrelevant, especially since the Great Recession. It’s an issue that only people who don’t have to worry about making ends meet get to worry about—an ethical luxury. They are the lowest segment on a very low involvement issue, with very fuzzy knowledge and no interest in pushing it further. No amount of awareness-building will have an appreciable impact on this segment. Likewise Apathetics have no interest in climate policy. They simply can’t be concerned; they’ve got far too much to worry about already. Unless of course, it impacts them personally. And this is what the Carbon-Right attacked: they harnessed the generalized hatred toward distant government policy, the distrust of liberal elites, and generalized fear in any policy that would impact their pocketbooks, to brand climate solutions as the work of a cabal of liberal elites to further grow the big (socialist) government by taxing working people.

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A key insight here is that this segment is only vaguely and weakly aligned with climate skeptics. They hold this position only to sustain consistency with their pocketbook fears and their populist political identity. If we replace the black box policy with a policy that actually benefits Main Street, and brand it aggressively as a populist solution to climate, we have a very good chance of winning them over. Such a policy has to be absolutely credible and simple to communicate in order to break through to a group that has no interest in paying attention. We need to pursue two key strategic pillars to win over this segment:

A. DESIGN POLICY SO THAT IT DOES NOT ECONOMICALLY HARM MAIN STREET AMERICANS.

As established in the last section, to build the climate brand amongst allied citizens we must focus the brand on a specific solution that is simple, coherent and credible. But when we shift the lens to tearing down the counterbrand's hold on Main Street, we land on additional parameters that are crucial for branding the solution. We have to knock out the devastating Carbon-Right counterbrand, which articulates economic interests to political ideology. Lets consider the economics first. A carbon tax is by far the single most effective policy that we could pass today. Yet, if the carbon tax design imposes direct economic harm on Main Street Americans, we will lose. The Carbon-Right will unfurl the same aggressive attack focusing on Americans in the middle social class tiers. They will claim that liberal elite environmentalists are imposing a tax that will hit them hardest, that they are selfishly pursuing their own elite causes on the backs of hard-working Americans. On and on. And it will work. It's a potent part of the counterbrand today and if the policy does indeed harm average Americans, the critique will stick. Not only will the movement die, but climate will once again be a powerful partisan weapon allowing Republicans to forge an alliance with the working class using tried-and-true Reaganite ideological attacks. It is imperative, then, that the design does not harm Americans in the middle social classes. It would be hugely useful for branding, in fact, if the policy benefited them, even if modestly. Fortunately, the most favored carbon tax designs today do exactly this.

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The Carbon Right also attacks on macro economic issues, claiming that the policy would hurt the economy and handicap the USA vs. China. In my research these issues don't register nearly as much as the direct economic threats to families. And, so, I believe that if the direct economic impact on Main Street is neutral or positive, these issues will go away. This is an empirical question to monitor closely: an additional campaign pillar may be required to deal with macro economic consequences.

B. DESIGN AND FRAME CLIMATE POLICY AS A RIGHT-POPULIST SOLUTION.

The battle for a major climate policy will be won or lost based upon whether people want to believe in a solution to climate because it aligns with their identity and interests. That's the game. It has little to do with the "facts" of the science. The Carbon-Right has very effectively articulated the household financial fears I describe above with the right-populist political ideology that today dominates American politics (beyond the 20% self-identified liberals). Since 1992, the Carbon-Right has effectively branded climate change mitigation efforts as the push toward more big government, even socialism; the effort of a liberal elite environmentalist cabal to push their ideology on the rest of us. Another attempt, like the United Nations, by liberal Democrats to give away American freedom to a global socialist government. The key symbol has been Al Gore, more recently Bill McKibben, and much lower down in the discourse, the IPCC. We must invert this ideological linkage if we are to succeed: we must debrand our policy away from alignment with liberal elite environmentalists.

BRAND STRATEGY SUMMARY

These general strategy requirements and segment-specific strategies together serve as the climate brand strategy: together they serve as our guide in building the climate brand and designing every aspect of the campaign and movement. Our goal is to use these strategic guidelines to design a climate brand, along with communication and movement components. We need a single focal “master brand” centered on specific climate policy and then the various components that I’ve discussed. The brand concept and proof-of-concept creative that follow are guided directly by this strategy. I also briefly review the direction for the movement organization and strategy, though leave this open to future collaboration with movement partners. The strategy architecture looks like this:

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CLIMATE BRAND STRATEGY

ADDRESS KEY BRAND OPPORTUNITIES

Brand the solution, not the problem
Solve carbon tax confusion
Counter fatigue + pessimism

SHUT DOWN COUNTERBRANDING

Right-Populist identity politics wedge issue
Policy by and for liberal-socialist elites
Another big government boondoggle
Manipulate Main Street fear of taxes

SEGMENT PILLAR STRATEGIES

Pocketbook-
Populist
Apathetics

Understand and
resonate with
policy

Symbolic
Greens

Delete
carbon
consumerism

Climate
Concerned

Understand and
believe in policy
sufficient to
mobilize

Activists

Commit to
credible focal
solution

BRANDING FEE-AND-DIVIDEND

A carbon tax is not only, technically, far and away the most important policy that we must fight for. It is also the easiest policy to drive political will, as long as the policy is designed correctly. The Climate Orthodoxy views climate strategy in terms of “messaging” and building a movement. This is a myopic view. Branding the policy itself is crucial to victory. Branding involves “product” as much as communication. With the wrong policy design, we won’t win. While there are many variations of a carbon tax on the table, we must filter these proposals through a branding lens: what carbon tax design would be most helpful in achieving the six political will opportunities outlined above? Fortunately, the best technical policy according to recent analyses is also the best policy from a branding lens. Let me build the branding case for this policy. (I review the policy argument in my white paper on the carbon tax.) Then we can embellish the policy design, guided by our strategy.

1. CARBON FEE-AND-DIVIDEND DESIGN

The guts of the policy is a specific type of carbon tax that is today usually termed “fee-and-dividend.”¹⁰ The “fee” is a significant carbon tax, collected upstream on coal, oil and gas, and the “dividend” rebates all of this fee to citizens. This policy has become increasingly popular amongst policy and political insiders since the collapse of cap-and-trade, especially influenced by James Hansen’s advocacy. This type of policy is far better for branding than any type of cap-and-trade policy, regardless how progressive. Cap & trade is far too complex to explain to the public and so it’s impossible to sell its benefits and push away fears of big bureaucratic policy benefiting elites. Cap & trade will be (rightly) counterbranded as a boondoggle benefiting incumbents and Wall Street more than working families. A political campaign would not protect such a policy from lobbyists driving extensive loopholes, earmarks, and escape clauses because it is necessarily an extremely complex and technical policy that lends itself easily to cooptation.

¹⁰ A carbon tax has been advocated by many experts throughout the past twenty-five years, popularized initially in Al Gore’s *Earth in Balance*. Several thought-leaders have previously investigated the key strategy question that I pose with respect to Populist-Pocketbook Apathetics: how to design a tax or cap that distributes funds in a progressive manner so that it doesn’t harm Main Street. Peter Barnes’ Sky Trust and Jim Boyce’s version of cap-and-dividend were two early and influential ideas.

A 100% per-capita dividend is very effective for branding because it allows us to address the major brand weaknesses of other proposals: 1) according to recent econometric analyses, Main Street Americans come out ahead, 2) there are no government interventions in the economy and no growth of government programs and regulations, 3) such a policy actually grows the economy, and creates Main St jobs (according to REMI studies), and, crucially, 4) it allows us to tell the story in a very simple easy-to-understand way. We must design the tax to be extremely simple, easy to understand, and explain to others. Without a clean simple policy, unencumbered by contingencies and complicated math, it is impossible to do effective branding.

I won't go into policy details here, as there are numerous ways such a policy could play out. In addition to the carbon released from coal, oil, and gas, the tax should include a carbon-equivalent tax for the "fugitive" methane that escapes in natural gas production (since its impact approaches 100 times that of carbon over the next few decades). What is most important is that the tax is set at a very high rate, something like \$200/Ton achieved through \$50 increments across four years, which is necessary both to be credible (i.e., to put us well down the path to mitigation goals with a transformative impact on all key markets) and also to set the rebates at an impressive amount. A \$200/T tax will generate about \$1.2Trillion/year—a great sum of money to be rebating in a progressive manner. The tax needs to be rebated to citizens on a per capita basis. The current fee-and-dividend bill proposal proposed by the Citizen's Climate Lobby (available on their website) is a great start, except that the tax is set way too low (starting at \$15/T and increasing by \$10/T/year).

We may need to add several small contingency elements, but we need to minimize these contingencies to keep the policy super simple and transparent. For instance we may well want to compensate workers displaced (especially fossil fuel industries) by the tax since that is equitable and also will no doubt be a key point of counterbrand attack. We may want to make small adjustments in the rebate based upon heating requirements and intensity of fossil fuel in local utilities. But we shouldn't go beyond such small and reasonable exceptions to the general

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“keep it simple” rule. For instance, we should not provide rebates to residents without citizenship, despite that this would be an equitable policy because such a policy would generate massive and no-doubt effective counter-branding by the Carbon Right. Environmental justice groups will need to fill in the gaps that this progressive policy will necessarily create.

Likewise, we can't include industrial policy for clean energy, education, funding for energy efficiency programs, or any of the other climate policy favorites of the climate movement in past years. If we do so, we gut the net benefit to Main Street and we open up the door for Carbon-Right attacks that will sink the campaign.

2. BRAND CONCEPT: CARBON BANK

We need a concept that makes fee-and-dividend very easy to understand for the average American. We want to make the dividend extremely visceral and trustworthy. We want the idea to convey that the program will be run in a very efficient and transparent manner, the opposite of government program stereotypes. We want to convey that the program has nothing at all to do with “liberal elites” or the environmental movement. It should come off as centrist program for all Americans, not a fringe effort.

We need a concept for the program that provides a simple and memorable analogy to help Americans to easily understand what is otherwise a complex idea. We need to give the program a name that Americans will actually remember and use—which helps us achieve our strategy goals. We should not have a long-winded bill name “American Climate Progress Act” or some variation that pundits rebrand with something shorter and pithier (Obamacare). Likewise, we should not leave it with the current wonky names that Americans don't understand: carbon tax, fee-and-dividend, etc. We need a simple explanatory device—an analogy—that takes back the policy from the counter-brand.

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I use a "bank" as the core of the master brand concept to accomplish these multiple feats. The policy will work similarly to a bank: money is deposited from a pollution tax into my bank account. And then I get money out of the account on a regular basis. Let's call it Carbon Bank. We will set up the policy to look and feel very much like an internet bank that most Americans are now very familiar with. We should have a logo and other design codes that look like a modern internet bank, not a government program:



Every American citizen will have an account, which they can access at any time through the internet, logging in with their social security number and a password. The planet bank interface should present the tax transfer as simply and transparently as possible, always using the language of banking not taxes and government programs.

Each citizen receives a monthly payment that they can track on their account. (Children's payments would be deposited into parent/guardian accounts.) The rebate arrives monthly in your bank account or credit card account, with an email confirmation.

I have built out a prototype brand campaign, built around the carbon bank concept, which I review in the carbonbank video on this site.

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APPENDIX: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The theory and method of cultural branding are described in my two books, particularly in *Cultural Strategy*. It's not possible to overview the model in a page or two; the books are the best place to find a conceptual overview. Applying cultural branding to political issues is straightforward since the model is deeply influenced by how branding works in social movements and cultural politics. To apply the model to politics required three key adaptations:

- 1) conceiving the brand goal in terms of political will
- 2) examining the brand as consisting of both issue and solution, and
- 3) analysis based upon brand vs counterbrand rather than brand vs competitors

The research for branding climate consisted of three key components, which I iterated between over several years to build out the strategy:

1) Macro-historical research on the climate brand, climate counterbrand, and the key movement efforts to drive political will. I relied on the secondary research on the first era (1992-2006) and then conducted primary research tracing the cap-and-trade movement efforts, and the reaction formation that followed.

2) Cultural Interviews on climate brand and counterbrand across the four key segments. These are long (90 minutes+) unstructured interviews that follow a protocol and mode of cultural analysis that I developed with colleagues in consumer culture theory in the 1990s.

Climate Activists (post college)	12 interviews in 2013
Climate Concerned	70 interviews in 2009 and 2011
Symbolic Greens	25 interviews in 2009 and 2011
Pocketbook Populist Apathetics	30 interviews 2011

Total: 137 Interviews

3) Climate Orthodoxy

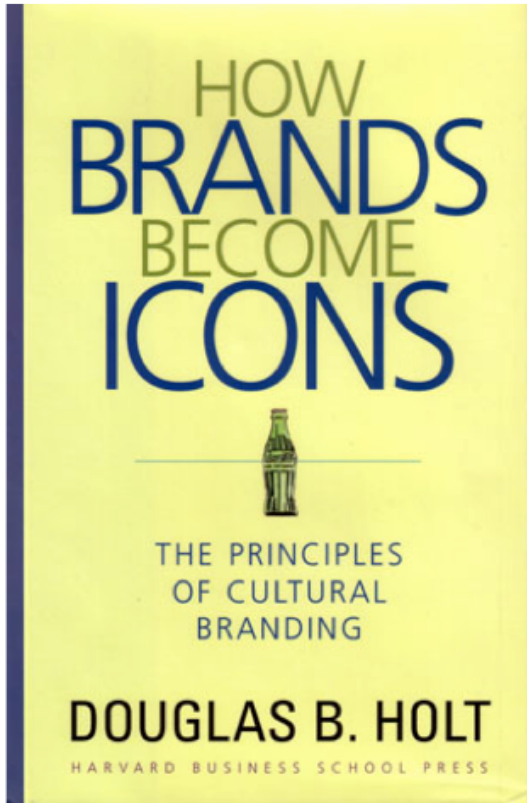
I studied the often-implicit brand strategy adopted by various NGOs, movement organizations and Hollywood from 2006 onward, identifying the common paradigmatic assumption across all efforts.

cultural strategy group

Douglas Holt founded the Cultural Strategy Group as a strategy consulting firm that specializes in cultural branding. Holt applies his pioneering cultural branding framework to tackle “big picture” branding challenges around the world: from major corporate brands to social enterprises to social innovations and environmental movements. Cultural branding is a proprietary brand strategy and innovation model—a research-based six-stage framework that we use to identify powerful cultural opportunities that are created by historical changes in society, and then to build (or restage) brands to take advantage.

Douglas Holt pioneered cultural strategy as an academically grounded strategy discipline across two decades of academic research and consulting assignments. He first developed cultural branding at the Harvard Business School and then extended this work as L’Oreal Chair Professor of Marketing at Oxford. He began taking consulting assignments in 1998 and quickly became a leading brand consultant after the publication of his first book in 2004. Through many dozens of major projects, he has refined and extended this discipline. We also work extensively with social enterprises and social movement organizations, often through our pro bono subsidiary Planet Strategy.





CSG's intellectual foundations are explained in Holt's two management books on branding and innovation. In 2004, Holt published his international best-selling book *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding* and supporting articles in the *Harvard Business Review*. The book has influenced many companies, ad agencies, design firms and consultancies around the world, which have adopted his cultural approach to branding.



Holt's *Cultural Strategy: Using Innovative Ideologies to Build Breakthrough Brands* was published by Oxford University Press in 2010 (with co-author Doug Cameron). Holt does for innovation what *How Brands Become Icons* did for branding. He develops a systematic cultural approach to identifying new market opportunities and building businesses to leverage these opportunities.

Holt resigned his chair at Oxford in the fall of 2010 to launch CSG and devote his full attention to consulting and to pro bono work devising new brand strategies for major social and environmental problems. CSG has built a network of world-class cultural researchers, creatives, designers, and social media talent from which we draw to assemble a bespoke team for each project. Our work product ranges widely: research-centered projects, comprehensive brand strategies with specific touchpoint recommendations, brand innovations, long-term

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collaborations with client and creative partners to help execute cultural strategies, development and execution of turnkey 360-degree branding solutions. We take on empirically rigorous and comprehensive projects for ambitious clients.

Over the past decade, Holt has completed major strategy projects for a number of blue-chip brands, including Coca-Cola, Microsoft Windows, Converse, Sprite, Jack Daniel's, BMW Mini, MasterCard, Huawei, Mountain Dew, Friskies, and Cadillac. He crafted cultural strategies that have helped many smaller brands and start-ups to break through, including SONOS, Clear Blue, Cazadores, MSG, and Qdoba. Holt's particular focus is social enterprise companies. He has completed major strategy projects for Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's, Zipcar, REI and New Belgium.

Holt studied at Stanford (BA in economics and political science), the University of Chicago (MBA in marketing), and Northwestern (PhD in Marketing, specialization in cultural anthropology and sociology). Prior to his academic career, Holt was a brand manager at The Clorox Company and Dole Packaged Foods. In addition to Harvard and Oxford, he has also held professorships at the University of Illinois and Penn State. He is the author of a number of influential articles in top marketing journals, focusing on consumer culture, the sociology of consumption and branding. He has been the editor of the Journal of Consumer Culture, Associate Editor of the Journal of Consumer Research, and is co-editor of The Consumer Society Reader. He has presented over 100 management and university seminars worldwide, including at the Global Economic Forum and the Skoll World Forum.