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Title: From me to we: policy making in the era of collective behaviour

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Executive Summary

Objectives: We are in an environment where the relative stability and predictability of the last few decades is rapidly being eroded, ushering in an era of 'Liquid Times', where we are cast into meta-chaos and precarity. In the past we may well have better understood the way in which people would in response to change, such as new policies or marketing activities. But the unpredictable nature of the world we now live in means we can are surely less confident that the lessons (or indeed data) from the past will help us to determine the way people will respond today.

The objective of this paper is to make the case that policy makers will increasingly need to consider one of the key features of this new environment: the rediscovery of the collective as a means of understanding behaviour and facilitating positive outcomes. We make the case for the way that the current environments points to a greater focus on collective thinking, engagement and action. We challenge policy makers to understand this shift if they are to be able to develop effective policies that are considered relevant and credible to the general public.

Analytic/Methodological Approach: As HG Wells pointed out, the big questions in life are not be concluded empirically: as such this paper sets out to creatively reassess a range of academic literature, teasing out alternative explanations for human behaviours. We aim to provoke and inspire, to set out a manifesto for a closer reading of socio-cultural psychology as a fitting explanation for the way we can understand human behaviour but also find ways to engage with the general public more effectively to make change happen.

Key Findings: We consider there is a plenty of evidence to suggest that the behaviour, shaped by a range of crises (such as COVID and cost of living) can be better understood through more collective explanations of behaviour. To support this, we set out the way in which emotional and cognitive responses are increasingly understood using this collective lens. We go on to make the case of that people are also using collective action to negotiate their environment through with crowd behaviour a helpful new 'unit of analysis' beyind that of the individual.

Conclusions: We set out an agenda for policy makers and marketers that proposes tools for a more collective engagement with the public: we make the case that these are readily available and can been used to good effect.

Recommendations: The objective of this report is less to provide very specific and tangible 'how-to' guidance but instead to inspire and provoke. Our recommendation is therefore very simple: to consider how to take collective design principles and apply them to the difficult work of policy making and execution. But furthermore, to provide an antidote to

the all too often narrow, individualistic and mechanistic explanations of behaviour that are either explicitly offered (often through behavioural science) or tacitly held (unexamined but perhaps all the more powerful because of that.)

Introduction

The past few decades we could, arguably, broadly determine the way in which people behave in response to change, allowing us to build new policies or marketing strategies with reasonable confidence. The unpredictable 'Liquid Times' [1] we now live in means we are not only less confident about rely on the lessons (or indeed data) from the past to develop policies today.

This paper makes the case that policy makers and marketers will increasingly need to consider one of the key features of this new environment: the rediscovery of the collective as a means of understanding behaviour and facilitating positive outcomes. This presents a challenge to the discipline of psychology (or behavioural science, the applied psychology-based discipline that typically informs policy work) as it has historically tended to have a very individualistic focus.

We chart the way in which psychology has been changing to reflect the shifting societal context and as such presents policy makers with new challenges and opportunities in the quest to deliver positive, relevant and credible outcomes for the population.

From the rubble

Strangely, it may be one of the reported failures of psychology, the 'replication crisis,' that helps us to rethink how the discipline can be relevant to today's environment. The Many Labs replication project [2] found more than half the results published in leading psychology journals couldn't be replicated [3].

A plausible response to the replication crisis would be distrust any finding published in social psychology journals until there is evidence that a finding has been replicated. But this is not the only possible response: we could also consider how the replication issue can tell us something useful about human behaviour and the way this is both more nuanced and influenced by sociocultural factors than is typically given credit.

To explain, we can turn to leading psychologist, Lisa Feldman-Barrett, who posited that psychologists often assume that human thoughts, feelings, behaviours and other psychological outcomes are a function of one or two strong factors or causes. This is what she calls a 'mechanistic mindset'. [4] On this basis we would ignore factors such as country of the participants, their gender, cultural influences, their experiences on the day of the experiment and so on. These types of influence can be considered as 'noise' and as such their influence is often (although not always) ignored. The point here is that it is these factors that can mean a study does not provide the same findings on a repeated basis.

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[1] Zygmunt Bauman (2017) Retrotopia. Polity Press
[2] https://www.bitss.org/a-replication-example-the-many-labs-project/
[3] Open Science Collaboration. (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. Science, 349(6251), aac4716.
[4] Barrett, L. F., & Russell, J. A. (2015). An introduction to psychological construction. The psychological construction of emotion, 1-17.

This does not mean that the original study should be considered flawed and the findings false, rather that we can see more clearly the way that psychological outcomes are not in fact the result of a small number of strong factors but instead emerge from a much broader range of weak, interacting factors. She suggests we call this the complexity mindset**.** As she says:

"The brain and the body are complex, dynamic systems. Any single variable in the system will have a weak effect. More importantly, we can't manipulate one variable and assume that the others remain unaffected." [5]

This suggests that the myriad of weak interacting factors that are shaping behaviour will inevitably move around as the world we inhabit changes: with ideologies, public opinion, and customs are all subject to historical shifts.

The current historical shift

With this in mind, it is important therefore to note that we live at a time where a wide range of difficult challenges are occupying the minds of people around the world. [6] Perhaps this is of little surprise given the range of connected crises we are experiencing: the current crisis, is uniquely bad in British economic history. [7] We continue to suffer the effects of a global pandemic, something that (arguably) we would need to look back to the 1920's with the Spanish Flu epidemic to find anything comparable in terms of the scale of loss of life. And the existential threat faced by the climate crisis is possibly only met in recent times by the Cuban missile crisis of 1965. That the world's population is facing all these threats at the same time is summed up by the term polycrisis: interacting crises that result in harms greater than the sum that the crises would produce in isolation. [8]

Of course, the degree to which we can point to the period we now live in as being relatively more unstable, chaotic and unpredictable that others will of course always be subject to a great deal of debate. And inhabiting a crisis environment is nothing new for many marginalised people who have long lived in a state of anxiety, deprivation and precarity.

Nevertheless, we make the case that this polycrisis environment may signal a significant historic change in human behaviour, leading us to rethink the theoretical approaches and measurement approaches we adopt. The significance of this for policy makers, who rely on just such understanding for successful development and activation cannot be underestimated.

That there are points in time where this type of change happens has long been recognised: commentators such as sociologist Paolo Gerbaudo have pointed to the notion of ideological cycles, such as the long waves cited by Soviet economist Nikolai Kondratieff, each lasting for

[5] https://www.sciencefocus.com/the-human-body/replication-crisis/
[6] See https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/what-worries-world-august-2022
[7] https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-184-nostalgia-for-decline
[8] https://www.ft.com/content/498398e7-11b1-494b-9cd3-6d669dc3de33

around fifty years. [9] These waves, or historical eras are characterized by ideological hegemonies that frequently emerge in opposition to the previous dominant ideologies.

Gerbaudo suggests that oil shocks and crises of the 1970s signalled the collapse of the social-democratic era, with the ground being taken by neoliberalism, informed by thinkers such as Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper and Milton Friedman. This was rapidly implemented by politicians such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the United States, with a highly individualistic notions of people behaviour being shaped by desires.

The polycrisis we find ourselves in makes a compelling backdrop to Gerbaudo's case that people are today seeking protection from the fluctuations of global financial markets and have widespread discontent at expanding inequality. With this, we are now encountering a new 'counter movement' to the atomistic and reductive explanations of people and society that have dominated for decades. This current counter-movement, Gerbaudo proposes, is one which involves a shift to a politics primarily concerned with the collective self, heralding the possibility of a historic period of large-scale radical social change.

While political theorists such as Gerbaudo offer a great deal of political analysis and speculation of this type of movement, psychology often seems to have had little or nothing to say. In part this is due to the widespread notion that the human mind remains the same and simply the way it is engaged varies depending on context. But this presupposes a static notion of humans that we can at least question whether it is borne out by reality: psychology has reshaped itself to the prevailing ideological cycles of the past. Or to put it more directly, as our world changes, so do humans. It is not too much of a jump to then suggest that the psychology theory (and mechanisms) that we call on to examine them may need to adapt. As long-time commentator on these issues, psychologist Kenneth Gergen asks:

"…what if social life is not itself stable; what if social patterns are in a state of continuous and possibly chaotic transformation?" [10]

The somewhat radical suggestion here is that we may be in need of a Kuhn-style shift in the way we understand human behaviour: what was a useful explanation from the 1960's may not be very helpful now. The question this begs is what sort of explanations might be useful for today? It is to this we now turn.

[9] Gerbaudo, P. (2021). The great recoil: Politics after populism and pandemic. Verso Books.
[10] Gergen, K. J. (1996). Social psychology as social construction: The emerging vision. The message of social psychology: Perspectives on mind in society, 113-128.

Collective explanations of behaviour

If, as is suggested, we are in a shift towards the collective self, then what does this look like for psychology and the way we draw on it to inform policy development and implementation?

Of course, 'social psychology' has a long pedigree, but even this tends to look at the individual in a social context rather than considering human behaviour in a more emergent, collective, manner. Whilst individualistic notions of behaviour may (arguably) have been adequate for explaining behaviour pre-pandemic the 'counter movement' we find ourselves in suggests that alternative explanations are now needed that allow us to understand our behaviour. In reality, a careful reading of a large canon of psychology literature that to exactly this: to illustrate the point we now examine two key pillars of the discipline: emotion and cognition.

Collective emotion

Emotion is an issue that sits at the heart of a great deal of human activity. It seems at times to be a key determinant of behaviour, our bodies viscerally reacting to the events we see in front of us. Brands often look to emotion as a key means by which we might engage with products and services, policy makers seek to understand emotion as a way in which people might react to new social initiatives, politicians look at emotion as something that drives affiliation, activists seek it to rally people to a cause.

Despite the seemingly central role that emotion has in shaping behaviour, it is perhaps one of the most slippery concepts in psychology. We will set out to explore some of the ways in which discussion of emotion has evolved from the early psychologists to more recent cultural theorists.

Psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Konrad Lorenz and Clarke L. Hull historically looked at emotion in terms of innate drives: as such our emotional states are related to the past history of the species itself or to the learned and past history of us as individuals. In either case, both focus on the way the past determines the emotional response that then shapes behaviour. This 'classic' view of emotions implies that our individual emotions are 'built in' templates that 'fire' off – so 'anger', for example, is a built-in defence mechanism of our animal fight/flight/freeze pathways.

Later theories of emotion take a more constructivist perspective, suggesting that humans have an active role interpreting and making sense of emotions. An example is the James-Lange theory of emotion, in which emotions are bodily sensations interpreted by the mind. [11] However, there is a growing body of research which challenges a strictly individualistic notion of emotion. On this basis, behaviour is not driven by the emotion alone, because choices can only be negotiated between the person and the situation and its structure of opportunities, constraints, and affordances.

[11] The James-Lange theory of emotions: A critical examination and an alternative theory. The American journal of psychology, 39(1/4), 106-124.

With that in mind, we can see that we do not construct our emotional concepts individually but are reliant upon our collective culture. Feldman-Barret points out that Russian has two distinct concepts for 'anger'; German has three and Mandarin has five. Feldman-Barret is challenging the traditional 'inside-out' model of emotion and suggesting that our emotions are in fact a function of both our internal states and the external facets of the world we live in. [12]

She is by no means the first to approach emotion with external factors in mind. Sociologist Emile Durkheim long ago suggested that 'great movements of feeling do not originate in any one of the particular individual consciousnesses'. On this basis, the individual is not the origin of feeling and instead emotion is what binds the social body together.[13]

From a different but related theoretical tradition, cultural theorist Sara Ahmed considers our experience of emotion should not be regarded as psychological states at all, but as social and cultural practices. She suggests they emotion is the means by which we collectively define the 'surfaces and boundaries' that allow the 'individual' and the 'social' to be defined as such. Her notion of **'**affective economies' suggests that emotions do not reside in the inner or in the outer, rather they exist in the circulation. They are the orientations we have towards objects, bodies and signs, thus separating as well as connecting us to others. [14]

We can see therefore how we have moved from a highly individualistic notion of emotion to one which is much more collective in nature, relying on our shared social and cultural context.

Collective cognition

The other core aspect of psychology where we can see a shift from individual to collective explanation is cognition: the early Behaviourists assumed that human activity could be understood with animal experiments, and that our behaviour is largely the result of stimulus and responses that we have individually been exposed to in our pasts. The evidence for this came from animal studies where experimenters observed that rewards or punishments could be used to shape certain behaviours, such as rats choosing which direction to travel in a maze.

This approach started to be contested as it become clear that the tested animals' behaviour could not always be fully explained using simple 'stimulus-response' theory. There were novel behaviours (such as rats taking shortcuts or swimming in the right direction after their maze was flooded) which suggests that animal behaviour was, in fact, more prospective and adaptive than initial stimulus-response theorists, who expected the animals to flounder in unencountered circumstances, would have believed. The animals had demonstrated some capacity to mentally engage with the task and in some level consider future possibilities differently to the manner their associations have led them. [15]

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[12] https://www.theverge.com/2017/4/10/15245690/how-emotions-are-made-neuroscience-lisa-feldman-barrett
[13] Durkheim, E. (1966). Suicide.(Ed. George Simpson. Trans. John A. Spaulding & George Simpson).
[14] Ahmed, S. (2013). The cultural politics of emotion. Routledge.
[15] Seligman MEP, Railton P, Baumeister RF, Sripada C. Navigating Into the Future or Driven by the Past. Perspectives on Psychological Science. 2013;8(2):119–41.

A 'teleological' alternative to the 'past oriented' tradition started to emerge, meaning the explanation of our behaviour can be understood through the outcomes that we are *seeking* rather than purely being determined by our *past experience*. If we move to this more active seeking stance, rather than a passive reactive one, then as philosopher Neil Levy sets out, we can see how humans live in a 'cumulative culture' in which our collective, shared knowledge has a type of a 'ratchet effect'. [16]

This means we are not all having to learn anew each time, instead our collective knowledge becomes a shared platform on which others can build. For example, we do not need to individually learn about vaccines each time, we have a collective understanding of what they are and how they work. This means that when a vaccine becomes available for a new condition, then we can consider this particular application rather than having to be educated about vaccines from scratch.

It is this shared mechanism that means humans are able to achieve far more than any individual or indeed any generation can achieve. Levy sets out the way that the evolution of cultural knowledge means that we are able to detect signal in noise when the degree of noise is greater than the capability of our individual cognition to analyse.

An example of how we go about making decisions together is in risk perception. Much research is now suggesting that the way we evaluate risk is not simply the result of the way an individual processes information, however well or poorly. We are now starting to recognise that social, institutional and cultural processes significantly influence the way we perceive risk and as a result shape our behaviour. In other words, risk is not just about the way we individually evaluate the characteristics of the issue but is also socially constructed.

One theory that explores this is the 'Social Amplification of Risk Framework'. [17] This framework, again developed by Paul Slovic and others, suggests that information about risk does not get communicated in a straightforward manner. Rather, it is interpreted and understood based on social processes. When we see an event, we will pay more attention to certain features than others. The features that are given more attention depends on a wide range of socially informed pre-existing motivations, knowledge, emotional associations.

An additional important difference to individual level explanations of behaviour is that we then re-form this information into messages that we communicate to others who then in turn are collecting information in the same way. If they have similar preconceptions, motivations, knowledge, emotional responses and so on then they will reflect onwards to others the same messages, but maybe with a slight twist.

In other words, risk perceptions do not form in a social vacuum. Not only do people prefer to socialise with others who share their opinions, they often prefer to consume media that confirm

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[16] Levy, N. (2021). Bad beliefs: Why they happen to good people.
[17] Kasperson, R. E., Renn, O., Slovic, P., Brown, H. S., Emel, J., Goble, R., ... & Ratick, S. (1988). The social amplification of risk: A conceptual framework. Risk analysis, 8(2), 177-187.

their own beliefs. The point is that we do not individually evaluate risk, we are social creatures and we collectively respond and amplify different features of the risk.

On the basis of a close reading of the emotion and cognition literature, can see therefore how the breadth and depth of psychology research is making an ever more convincing case for understanding human behaviour using collective explanations, away from strictly individualist interpretations.

A new unit of analysis

If we are in a position where we can better understand the way people behave using collective explanations, then the 'unit of analysis' we use to decode behaviour and introduce policies to change behaviour are necessarily also perhaps moving away from the individual. One more emergent 'unit' is that of the 'crowd': Gustave Le Bon is the name most commonly associated with the origins of crowd psychology that supported the view of crowds as irrational and out of control. His book, published in 1895, 'The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind' was a huge success at the time but also continues to shape the way we think about this topic today. He wrote that the "unconscious action of crowds substituting itself for the conscious activity of individuals is one of the principal characteristics of the present age." [18]

More recently however it has become clear that Le Bon's views were shaped by the turbulent times he lived in, that of class conflict and popular militancy following the 1871 Paris revolution. It was all too easy to draw a parallel between the presence of crowds and the apparent collapse of social order. Critiques of crowds themselves were often just as much about the fear of the rise of socialism and distrust of democratic politics. [19]

Within this political environment, Le Bon's particular flavour of crowd psychology positioned rational action as the sole property of the individual, and the crowd as that of collective irrationality. It is not hard to see how this could be seen as a means to delegitimise popular struggle, undermining both the motivation and legitimacy of collectivist movements. If crowds are pathologized as irrational then de facto this decontextualizes them, with no attention given to the reasons that led people to assemble. Crowds have been seen by some commentators, less as threatening and irrational, and more as a means to navigate the world, to share our thoughts and feeling, finding ways to make change happen and create a better future. Sociologist Emile Durkheim proffered a positive view of crowds, describing that they offer a way for members of a society come together and synchronize their thoughts and behaviours using shared slogans, signs, and movements. [20]

To develop this further and more directly to crowds, we turn to Stephen Reicher who sets out some of the key social psychological mechanisms that help to understand crowd behaviour. [21] First, he argues that identity is not lost within the crowd, but rather there is a *cognitive*

[18] Le Bon, G. (1895) The crowd: A study of the popular mind.
[19] Neville, F. G. (2012). The experience of participating in crowds: Shared identity, relatedness and emotionality (Doctoral dissertation, University of St Andrews).
[20] Durkheim, E., & Swain, J. W. (2008). The elementary forms of the religious life. Courier Corporation
[21] Acar, Y. G., & Reicher, S. 13 How crowds transform identities. In the Shadow of Transitional Justice, 183.

transformation from personal to social level identification. It is through this that crowd members act meaningfully, reflecting the norms of their salient shared (social) identity.

In addition to the cognitive shift, other work focusses on the relational and emotional transformations within crowds. Crowds result in a *relational transformation* so that social relations improve as we become part of the collective self. There is a wide range of evidence to suggest that ingroup membership facilitates trust, cooperation, a decrease in stress, comfort in close physical proximity, and helping behaviours. This also in turn leads to an *emotional transformation* with crowd members feeling empowered to shape their world realising shared goals creating intense positive affect.

When participants see others in a crowd as sharing their social identity (e.g. communicated through ingroup symbols, behaviours, or emotions), then social between-crowd members have a sense of connectedness and a feeling of being valued by others. In contrast to 'everyday' life, which may be characterised with doubt and insecurity, the crowd participants can find relief from personal uncertainty as their perspective is reflected by fellow group members.

We have seen huge protests relating to climate change and social justice movements of Me Too and Black Lives Matter: surely we can point to some tangible shifts in public consciousness on these issues and a shift in the willingness of public bodies, in some cases at least, to take more steps to better align with the movements' aims.

If we can rethink the notion of crowds and see them as constructive places, then bringing people together has an entirely different feeling to it. There is a huge array of challenges that many brands and public bodies are hoping to achieve, such as around climate change, wellbeing and social justice so perhaps policy makers can think creatively about the way to harness the positive aspects of crowds we have been discussing.

Conclusion: A new populism

To consider how to navigate change at a more collective level, we will now turn to the work of activists who have sought to deliver widespread social change. We consider this focus to be helpful as it shows how change can be navigated in a more collective manner rather than relying on individualistic solutions. Indeed, we can see the way in which people are self-organising to do just this, without the support of policy makers:

- There is a huge and growing 'prepper' community worldwide, who take steps to prepare for the worst-case scenario with things such as medical supplies, food stocks and sometimes even a chemically-insulated, well-stocked isolated bunker. Some estimates suggest that there are up to 20 million people taking these steps in the US alone: a brief web search will take you to a wide collection of sites dedicated to connecting preppers and offering advice and guidance. [22]

- In response to concerns over increasing pollution of UK rivers, there has been a call by Angling clubs for their members to be by 'citizen scientists', testing their stretches of river for pollution using kits supplied by the Angling Trust. These will be used to challenge official estimates and campaign for better pollution controls. [23]

- A group called the North Atlantic Fellas Organization, a collective of social media users — has co-opted the "doge" meme as a way to humorously undermine Russian misinformation concerning the war in Ukraine alongside raising money for frontline Ukrainian troops. This is in contrast to the way it is claimed that institutions in the West frequent response to Russian disinformation is as boring reports or bland public statements.[24]

Political parties and government institutions are increasingly recognising the opportunities for engagement of people in this more collective manner. Examples of this include:

- The Obama For America campaign trained 10,000 organizers who then worked on the 2014 and 2016 campaigns, gathered an email list of 30-million, had 3 million donors, and claimed 2 million active participants. It was the first time that a 'bottom-up', grassroots campaign, involving a dedicated group of interacting directly with people, was built at such a huge scale in such a short period of time. [25]

- Another example is the state of Taiwan which has put online collaboration at the centre of their democratic processes. The core premise is that government place their trust in people with the ability to set agenda. Anyone can begin an e-petition on the platform.

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[22] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55249590
[23] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/14/we-are-not-going-away-the-volunteers-fighting-back-against-englands-polluted-rivers
[24] https://www.politico.eu/article/nafo-doge-shiba-russia-putin-ukraine-twitter-trolling-social-media-meme/
[25] https://www.politico.com/story/2013/04/organizing-for-action-obama-089693

Once a case has 5,000 signatures, the relevant ministries must respond in public. In addition to lowering the barriers to democracy, it is considered that this approach is facilitates a process of mutual understanding leading to more participation. [26]

- In the UK, Citizens Assemblies allow policy makers to directly engage with a range of different citizens to hear what difficulties and challenges they are facing when presented with making sense of a particular issue. This helps policy makers to get more closely connected to peoples very real concerns and understandings, to shape the development of policy around these with the aim of creating a more engaged population. [27]

Steps for policy makers

So, what steps can policy makers take to develop these sorts of mechanisms. Activists Mark Engler and Paul Engler have set out some principles to garner collective action to make change happen. [28] Drawing on their book 'This is an Uprising', we have set out a number of key principles below:

- **Mental availability:** Symbols are key, helping to keep a movement front of peoples' minds. One example of this is from the Egyptian graffiti images were created in Cairo, depicting an event in which a veiled female protestor was beaten and stripped, revealing her blue bra. Graffiti artists represented the event in different ways, over time resulting in a simplified image of a blue bra which was then widely used to symbolize solidarity to the values of the revolution and resistance to oppression.

- **Humour:** Otpor, the Serbian resistance organisation protesting against the Milosevic regime, deployed its members to carry out hundreds of small, often humorous actions as an act of protest. For example, in one small Serbian town, activists held a birthday celebration for Milosevic, offering the president gifts such as handcuffs and a one-way ticket to the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague. This had the effect of conveying a sense that change was possible, but also generating attention, drawing people into the conversations about the possibility of change.

- **Distributed empowerment**: Successful change often involves a distributed membership base, with people empowered to act independently. The Birmingham Campaign of 1963, led by Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference involved non-violent tactics of sit-ins, boycotts and marches to bring national attention of the efforts of local black leaders to desegregate public facilities in Birmingham, Alabama. The movement was subsequently able to use this as a blueprint for their own local activities resulting in an explosion of premeditated disruption and nonviolent escalation across the South of the United States. Thus, equipping people

[26] https://www.economist.com/open-future/2019/03/12/inside-taiwans-new-digital-democracy
[27] https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/committees/climate-assembly-uk/about-citizens-assemblies/
[28] Engler, M., & Engler, P. (2016). This is an uprising: How nonviolent revolt is shaping the twenty-first century. Bold Type Books.

with ways in which they can make change happen on their own terms, in their own localities, while feeling part of a bigger movement seems important.

- **Appeal to broaden audience:** Transformation change is often driven by an appeal that is as much cultural as political. TV shows, films, and music concerts are an effective way to connect with people. Consider the successful Netflix series 'Don't look up' [29] as a case in point not least given the huge investment of time we spend engaged in entertainment. But it is also important to go beyond a narrow predominantly youth base and find cultural events that appeal to a broader base of society. People sometimes need to be brought into the conversation through entertainment and other cultural activities – the lesson here is to find what people enjoy, and then explore how to integrate behaviour change programmes into these activities.

- **Consider the key pillars in society:** Decisions about when and how we act are mediated through our various social and professional roles. Understanding what the different institutional and societal pillars are that are obstructing the desired outcomes mean that it is possible to think about strategies for engaging with people who may otherwise be resisting change (and influencing others to do so too).

- **Active supporters**: One of the key researchers on social movements, Erica Chenoweth, found that the number of supporters who were actively engaged in successful movements often only needed to be quite a small percentage of the total population. She suggested that no campaign failed once they had achieved the active and sustained participation of just 3.5 percent of the population.[30]

Whilst these types of activities may at first glance seem alien to policy makers, work needs to happen to establish ways in which these can be 'translated' into the policy environment. The scope of this paper is not to spell out the detail of how this is done – but offer a broad framework of thinking and approach that challenges some of the conventional ways of thinking that are rapidly looking no longer fit for purpose.

This is an exciting time for policy makers that are able to grasp the social, connected nature of the world we live in as this seems, more than ever, to offer a means by which much needed transformation change can actually take place.

[29] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/dec/30/it-parodies-our-inaction-dont-look-up-an-allegory-of-the-climate-crisis-lauded-by-activists
[30] http://cup.columbia.edu/book/why-civil-resistance-works/9780231156820