**Research Project: Behaviour Change & Social Marketing: Climate Behaviours.**

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**Background**: Behaviours with particular significance for climate change (including household energy management, travel and transport behaviours and food consumption behaviours) are amongst the most important issues in the field of sustainable behaviours. There are also indications that climate change as a sustainability issue may have specific characteristics (particularly relating to factors such as scepticism and locus of control) meaning that generic understandings of what drives pro-environmental behaviours may not apply as neatly to pro-climate behaviour settings.

**Aims & objectives**:
- To better understand how people perceive and respond to climate change as an issue, particularly through their relationships with particular companies, products and brands through their role as consumers;
- To explore the influences of uncertainty and scepticism in acting as a barrier to the adoption of more climate orientated sustainable behaviours;

**About the research**: This research project had several district but interrelated strands including:
- Public engagement with climate change and low-carbon lifestyles: This work investigated perceived barriers to engaging with climate change; motivations for, and for not, purchasing carbon offsets; the links between different environmentally-significant behaviours, including whether pro-environmental self-identity predicts spill-over effects between behaviours (with links to A33); and attitudes to climate change (particularly focussing on uncertainty and scepticism). Methodologically this work has included data collection from UK residents via postal and online surveys, and experiments to explore how uncertain information about climate change is perceived and interpreted, and how prior attitudes and values influence this interpretation.
- Climate change and the future of brands: This work, conducted in partnership with the Future Foundation and supported by an ESRC Business Engagement grant, explored how people perceived the link between particular brands, products and companies and the problem of climate change. It involved in-depth qualitative assessments of household management and consumption practices across a range of representative household types, an online survey of climate change related attitudes and behaviours to which over 1600 members of the Experian/Future Foundation consumer panel responded, and a Delphi study of a range of experts in climate change and in branding.
- Alternative approaches to encouraging energy efficient behaviours: This included work, part funded by Defra and NUS, investigated the effectiveness of different approaches (informational, social, financial and structural) to encouraging energy-efficient behaviour change amongst students and staff within Higher Education Institutions. There was also some work undertaken on consumer perceptions and behaviour in relation to domestic energy assisted by the award of a small grant from EoN to support behaviourally related work on '*Smart Homes*'.

**Results and outputs**: Work on public engagement with climate change found that climate scepticism is currently not widespread in Britain. Although uncertainty and scepticism about the potential impacts of climate change were fairly common, both trend and attribution scepticism were far less prevalent. It further showed that the different types of scepticism are strongly interrelated. Climate scepticism appeared particularly common among older individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds who are politically conservative and hold traditional values; while it is less common among younger individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds who hold self-

transcendence and environmental values. The finding that climate scepticism is rooted in people's core values and worldviews may imply a coherent and encompassing sceptical outlook on climate change. However, attitudinal certainty appeared mainly concentrated in non-sceptical groups, suggesting that climate sceptical views are not held very firmly. This work also showed that people evaluated climate change information differently according to their existing degree of scepticism. However, this did not lead to a divergence or polarisation in attitudes since, when faced with conflicting information about climate change, both sceptics and non-sceptics tended to become more sceptical.

The Climate Change and the Future of Brands research produced a new segmentation of consumers based on issues of sustainability/climate change orientated lifestyle behaviours, attitudes and beliefs linked to responsibilities for causing, and tackling, climate change. It showed an emergent trend towards 'consumer social responsibility' as a complement to CSR and as a competing notion to usual concepts of 'consumer sovereignty in business thinking. It revealed a significant level of consumer confusion due to mixed messages over climate actions, support for more regulation and policy to tackle climate change and a surprisingly high-level of support for 'choice editing' by companies reducing the range of goods and services available to consumers by removing the most damaging choices.

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**Impacts achieved/potential for impact:** The findings of the '*Climate Change and the Future of Brands'* project were disseminated through stakeholder seminars in London and Cardiff. Individual reports for each of the project sponsors were also prepared and presented based on the implications of the results for particular sectors. The results informed a report published by NESTA and co-authored by Professor Ken Peattie (in partnership with BMRB, and businesses Ogilvy and Millward-Brown) entitled '*Selling Sustainability - Seven lessons from advertising and marketing to sell low-carbon living'*. This report is targeted at those charged with communicating effectively with the public about climate change in order to change their behaviour. It was launched at NESTA HQ in June 2008 to an audience including representatives from Government, educators, consultants and organisations working in climate change.  The findings have also formed part of a presentation made annually since *2008 to the Cambridge Programme for Industry's Masters in Sustainable Leadership* which includes leaders from some thirty or more leading UK and international businesses.