Different Politics, Same Planet

Values for sustainable development beyond left and right

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Contents

Foreword

Phillip Blond, Director ResPublica

The sustainable development debate isn't sustainable: over the last twenty years orthodox left and right have reduced it to a matter for highly abstract scientific arguments and bureaucratic approaches that no longer appeal to people and their communities. Care for the environment has passed beyond ordinary people and increasingly become a matter for civil servants, pressure groups, university departments and multi-national agreements between states. All of which has created concepts and 'solutions' that – however necessary – have stretched beyond the understanding of the general population, displacing the debate from the everyday concerns of ordinary people and eroding the responsibility and agency of those who matter most.

So I am suggesting that a narrow preoccupation with technological responses and bureaucratic enforcement has alienated people – failing to see that many people care about the environment for other reasons than its economic value. This is particularly damaging given that communities can make a large difference to environmental needs – whether this be in aiding public policy delivery or through the cultivation of social responsibility. In recent years governmental focus on a national, and indeed international, approach to securing sustainable development, has, however necessary it may be, eclipsed action at a local and personal level.

This was not always the case. Only a few decades ago environmentalism was a mass 'bottom-up' movement that drew all of its strength and support from concerning itself with the localities that people lived in and the values that sustained them. For this mass movement a growing commitment to sustainability emerged from the non-statist left and bore a close affiliation to the conserving right's view of the inherent value of Britain's heritage of rolling hills, farms and pastures.

But the environmental debate has since been distorted and lost by its capture by oppositional and tribal politics. The left, in particular, seized the 'green' agenda, but made the state its sole agency. In so doing it made environmentalism an abstract issue divorced from the concerns of the general population such that what should have been a majority concern became a minority pursuit. The left has also vacated the space that previously valued the inherent beauty and intrinsic value of the natural order, prioritising instead extrinsic values such as material wealth or a utilitarian calculus of leisure and utility. From then on, for the left, environmental problems were tackled through managerialism – regulation, taxation and increased state welfare .

The right similarly appealed to extrinsic values through its adoption of market-driven strategies. The natural became a commodity that was to be addressed in a purely instrumentalist manner, with some advocating its protection not in terms of inherent worth or transcendent value, but on purely economic grounds. Now I am not against market-based solutions; indeed in many cases I support just such an approach, but the danger of arguing for an intrinsic thing on the basis of an extrinsic thing is that the end or inherent value of a thing can become decoupled from the means taken to realise it. For example much general hostility can be generated by tax-based solutions to carbon-based fuels (as currently in Australia) that themselves stem from a purely economic approach to the environment. Similarly what would one do if the economic calculations did not favour preservation or conservation – one would have already lost before the debate began.

So left and right both risk reducing nature to monetary value and bureaucratic power, distancing people's concern for the environment rather than grounding it. As a result, both positions have eroded support for the environmental shift needed in order to preserve our surroundings. A plethora of targets instead defines this essentially political, moral and aesthetic arena, appealing only to the instrumental means rather than the ethical and social end.

But a shift in values is emerging which has largely been unaddressed and which this report explores. All major UK political parties have at different times embraced the importance of intrinsic values – that is, values that embody care for the community and each other, social justice, and protection of the environment.

On the right, there is an increasing concern for the countryside and one's local farms and pastures – their natural beauty and inherent value. It has also emerged recently through David Cameron's intention to create measures of well-being that extend beyond GNP and economic growth.

On the political left the emerging strands seek to retrieve traditional 'left' values, which include the environment, and a renewed commitment to 'real' progress, rather than one narrowly defined by economic growth and income per head. Rather than handing over environmental concerns to arms-length technocrats, this emerging new left puts people and the planet first, promoting well-being and beauty above economic reductionism and the mere accumulation of manufactured rather than natural wealth.

There is also, and across all parties, a recognition of the importance of the localism agenda. By reconnecting people to place – the community to their surroundings – abstract issues can become re-grounded and re-localised, drawing to the fore a policy framework in tune with British political history. The intrinsic values that underpin a deep concern for sustainable development do not contradict some of the buried traditions of conservatism and labourism and there should be room between to reach a measure of agreement on matters of common environmental concern.

In this report we call for the reintegration of intrinsic values into environmentalism across left and right. We recognise that many problems require national and international co-ordination – targets, policies, economic incentives and penalties – but that the environmental movement will be strengthened by a renewed emphasis on intrinsic values to reduce the gap that has been created between state-driven action and public attitudes. We also argue that governments themselves have a crucial role to play in fostering the emergence of public concern and engagement with environmental and humanitarian issues by reinforcing the particular cultural values of the area or region concerned, thereby reconnecting civic responsibility with wider policy agendas.

This report encourages a policy-making approach that appeals to intrinsic values and the cultivation of virtue. Certain policy agendas can at times unwittingly appeal to extrinsic values alone – to individual concern or material achievement – which can often reap apathetic effects from those whom they target. In order to push the debate about sustainable development beyond bureaucrats' stale solutions and reductive assessments on monetary value, governments must begin once more to frame policies in accordance with our communities, our people and our values – around what is good, beautiful and desirable.

Executive Summary

Proportional policy responses to today's profound environmental and humanitarian problems will require a new level of political commitment. Doubtless, in part, this will entail the need for bolder political leadership on these issues. But it will also, inevitably, require greater electoral acceptance of – indeed, active demand for – more ambitious policy interventions.

Such public expressions of concern will be motivated by particular cultural values, which will need to come to be expressed more strongly. Drawing extensively on social psychology research, this report identifies 'intrinsic' values – including those of affiliation, self-acceptance, community feeling and universalism – as being of crucial importance in underpinning public expressions of concern about environmental and humanitarian issues.

The report examines some of the key factors that determine which values come to be of particular importance culturally, and the implications for those political leaders who see that they have a responsibility to help strengthen intrinsic values. Happily, the report identifies strong traditions of political thought on both the left and right that prioritise intrinsic values. In closing, it foresees the possibility of establishing a new centre of gravity in political debate: one that works systematically to strengthen intrinsic values.

Chapter One presents evidence for the importance of cultural values in shaping public concern about a wide range of issues. It identifies a set of intrinsic values as underpinning systemic concern about environmental and humanitarian issues.

Examination of the relationship between values and a range of attitudes and behaviours has repeatedly shown that individuals and cultures that attach greater importance to intrinsic values are found to be more concerned about global conflict and the abuse of human rights, more supportive of arguments for free movement of people, more concerned about environmental damage and are more likely to behave in environmentally friendly ways. Conversely, individuals who attach greater relative importance to extrinsic values – which include concerns for financial success, image and power – are less likely to express concern about a range of social and environmental issues and are also less likely to act in line with this concern.

An understanding of the importance of cultural values in determining public attitudes to global challenges leads to the question: What determines which values come to be held as of particular importance at a cultural level? Chapter One examines several factors that help to shape cultural values – including several over which political leaders have particular influence.

Of central importance here are citizens' 'lived experience' of public policy and social institutions. It is argued that experience of policy far removed from that directly concerned with environmental or humanitarian policy may nonetheless have a profound effect upon public attitudes towards such issues.

But language also importantly mediates the way that we shape – and are shaped by – our values. How people think about the world – and the values that motivate their behaviour – is importantly shaped by cognitive 'frames'. Political debate and rhetoric are critical determinants of dominant frames, thereby serving to engage and strengthen particular values.

In closing, Chapter One raises three key questions about political programmes, irrespective of whether these are viewed in traditional terms of being oriented towards political left or right:

•   Are the values of a political programme aligned with intrinsic values (i.e. values that, according to social psychology research, are of critical importance in building public concern about environmental and humanitarian problems)?

•   Do the ensuing policies help to create for people a 'lived experience' of these values: an experience that helps to strengthen them further?

•   Does the rhetoric deployed by politicians adhering to this programme support the further strengthening of these values – through deployment of helpful frames?

Chapters 2 and 3 look at how intrinsic values have featured in the guiding philosophies of both left and right in this country, and isolates important common ground that transcends modern party political divides.

Chapter Two looks at the history of the left in the UK over the past century or so to see why a political movement based on intrinsic values like community and equality positioned environmental issues as a middle-class sideline, irrelevant to the main task of feeding and clothing the population.

It concludes that, beyond the Club of Rome and New Labour, there are other opportunities for the mainstream left to embrace green ideas, because other aspects of the debate are shifting. It is far clearer now that development and environment are not opposed in practice. The contradiction between environmental and economic well-being no longer stands up either and there is increasing consensus about some of the economic rewards of green investment.

All these open up the following opportunities for the left based on perhaps beliefs, based on intrinsic values, which can be shared by leftists and environmentalists alike, and which now need to be articulated for the new century:

1.   **Everyone deserves a clean, green planet and future**

2.   **Everyone has equal value**

3.   **There are new models of progress**

Chapter Three seeks to highlight some key conservative principles consistent with the intrinsic and self-transcendence values that underpin a deep commitment to sustainable development. It illustrates how some conservatives both past and present have defended such values – but also how contrary trends in conservative thought have undermined them. A strong conservative tradition exists that enshrines such values in its core principles, but its articulation has been muted since the rise of the neoliberal New Right within the Conservative party.

The chapter reviews a set of interwoven conservative principles that resonate with pro-environment and pro-development values sets. Clearly, this is not a simple task: political philosophies are complex accretions of ideas, and often contain many competing and contradictory impulses. But it seems few of those values most crucial to solving 'bigger-than-self' problems – like climate change and global poverty – will derive from the ideas of the neoliberal New Right. It is a more comfortable fit with an older strain of Conservatism which recognises, values and seeks to sustain the richer complexity of relationships embedded in culture and tradition.

This tradition comprises a distinct pedigree of conservative thought – one that requires far more attention from environmentalists, development advocates, and conservatives alike. For conservatives who care about protecting the environment and combating global poverty, it is time to rediscover this tradition and champion the values it espouses.

Conclusion

The argument at the heart of this report is that today's political traditions of left and right have backed themselves into a corner. Policies and political debate serve to strengthen particular cultural values. Unfortunately, too often, the values reinforced by both political traditions have served to undermine electoral appetite for proportional action on some of today's most pressing environmental and humanitarian problems.

This is not a report about political compromise. It is about the potential to change the centre of gravity of political debate. It is intended as a call to re-think the values that infuse modern politics in the UK. It sets out a possible direction whereby politicians might shift the heart of the debate to one where the crucial importance of environmental and humanitarian issues are taken for granted, and political battles are rather fought about the practicalities of meeting the huge challenges that humanity confronts.

Chapter One: Introduction

Tom Crompton and Martin Kirk

Relying on the information provided by mass media, one could be forgiven for not realising that the UK, along with every developed and developing nation on earth, is at the beginning of a period of momentous transformation. Over the course of the next half-century, many of the staple components of modern life will change. What we eat, how – and how far – we travel, the power we use, the very things that we value, will all be rethought, and some fundamentally changed.

The reason, of course, is that our current means of production and consumption are not sustainable. We cannot continue to consume the earth's resources, or to deposit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, at the current rate. We are already witnessing the effects of climate change, and the impacts, as foreseen by mainstream scientific analysis, have barely begun. We are on what might be called a rescue and redesign trajectory; rescuing the atmosphere and each other from much of the damage already committed (some of the impact still on a considerable time delay: locked in, as it were, but not yet felt), and redesigning the fundamental forces around us – from power to food to trade – that allow us to live safe and fulfilled lives.

As current resource-intensive lifestyles draw to a close, we find ourselves faced with profound questions and challenges. In very crude terms, we can either fight each other over the dwindling reserves of oil and plots of arable land – and some surely will – or we can focus on powering, with innovation and investment, the shift onto more sustainable footing. Taking the latter approach to be the more desirable, the question, then, isn't *if* we move to a way of life based on renewable energy, but *how*? And the answer to that dictates what and how much damage will be done in the meantime.

In order to help us understand the opportunities that we have to captain this transition, it is essential that we understand the features of humanity and society that seem to govern us above all other: our values. Understanding our values can help show us who we are and what we are capable of. It can provide a fresh understanding of the traditions from which we draw our identity and purpose. And in doing all this, it can help us understand what there is in and about us to which we can look to for success.

In this chapter, we present evidence for the importance of foundational human values and their manifestation in government policy and rhetoric. In doing so, we draw on work that WWF-UK, Oxfam, and many other NGOs have begun to conduct on the importance of cultural values and the way in which these are shaped.[1]

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1.   This work was initiated by *Common Cause: The Case for Working With our Cultural Values* (Crompton, T (2010); Godalming, Surrey: COIN, CPRE, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, WWF–UK). It has been subsequently developed in Darnton, A & Kirk, M (2011) *Finding Frames for Development*, London: BOND; and Holmes, T,,Blackmore, E, Hawkins, R & Wakeford, T (2011) *The Common Cause Handbook*, Machynlleth, Powys: PIRC. These reports are all available at www.valuesandframes.org

Global challenges and public opinion

The social, political and economic transformations necessary in order to meet today's environmental and humanitarian challenges will require ambitious new policies, programmes and interventions. However, present policy responses are falling far short of the level of intervention and impetus needed in order to kick-start the necessary scale of change.

There is no doubt that, in failing to respond properly to these challenges, governments are capitulating on their leadership responsibilities. Yet, in the face of this regrettable government timidity, it is crucial that greater public pressure is brought to bear on governments. The majority of the UK public is resistant to the transformational changes that a government would need to enact, were it to respond proportionately to these challenges.

For example, a recent opinion poll found that only 13% of respondents thought that it was reasonable to expect people to "make significant and radical changes to their lifestyle in terms of the products they buy, how much they pay for things and how much they drive and fly."[2] Where there is an appetite for change to a greener and more just global society, this is usually limited to appetite for incremental changes that are unlikely to lead to fundamental transformations. Yes, there is (fragile) demand for ethically sourced and produced products, green issues are seen as politically "clean", and the British public can be remarkably generous in times of humanitarian or environmental crisis. But there is little to indicate that expressions of such inchoate concern will rapidly culminate in collective outrage at the damage humanity is visiting on the natural world or our fellow humans, or public agitation for proportional governmental responses to these challenges. Indeed, UK public concern about global poverty has been falling in recent years and has, for decades, been stuck in old and limiting paradigms of charity and self-interest; neither of which are likely starting points for demand for – or acceptance of – transformative action.[3]

Many politicians would welcome the political space and electoral pressure for more ambitious engagement on these challenges: indeed, as many NGOs will attest, governments of all colours are quick to ask for NGO help in drumming up public support for a policy initiative when this can be presented as coinciding with that NGO's core areas of concern.

In this chapter, we argue that governments themselves have a crucial role to play in fostering the emergence of public concern – and active public engagement – with environmental and humanitarian issues.

We review the extensive evidence for the influence of values upon both attitudes towards environmental and humanitarian issues and public appetite to demand more proportional government responses to these challenges.

Values represent our guiding principles, and they are important to us across a wide range of different situations. As a result, a particular value may underpin our motivation to engage in a disparate range of behaviours. By the same token, particular values may be reinforced through a

2.   IPSOS-MORI (2008) *Public attitudes to climate change, 2008: concerned but still unconvinced*, (London, UK: IPSOS-MORI, 2008), Available at: www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-environment-public-attitudes-to-climate-change-2008-concerned-but-still-unconvinced.pdf (accessed 20 July 2011). (Quote at p.6)
3.   Darton & Kirk (2011), *op.cit*. 1

wide range of different experiences. So, for example, values relevant to our concern about humanitarian and environmental issues may be strengthened through experiences – including our experience of public policy and social institutions – that seem of little direct relevance to these issues.

Values and environmental and humanitarian concerns

Values and behaviour

Research has established an association between people's values and their behaviour.[4] There are good reasons for expecting values and behaviour to be associated – people are likely to strive for consistency between the values that they hold to be particularly important and the behaviours that they adopt. They may also feel rewarded when they act in line with their more important values. As noted by one researcher who has spent many decades studying the link between values and behaviour:

> "[T]he values that people hold affect their initiation of new goal-directed activities, the degree of effort that they put into an activity, how long they persist at an activity in the face of alternative activities, the choices they make between alternative activities, the way they construe situations, and how they feel when an activity is undertaken either successfully or unsuccessfully according to the standards that are set."[5]

On one level this may seem entirely unsurprising. We would expect, simply from personal experience, that our values are particularly important guides to behaviour after a period of deliberation (for example, in reaching a decision about voting choice). There is also strong evidence, though, that values correlate with less deliberative behaviour – when people do not consciously reflect on how their behaviour fits with their values. For example, not opening the door to a stranger, or drinking even when not thirsty.

It is also of course true that particular behavioural choices need not necessarily be consistent with the values that a person holds, over time, to be the most important. Other factors often intervene and deflect a person from acting in line with their dominant values. Nonetheless, it seems that the importance of values is often underestimated as one of the primary drivers of behavioural choice.[6]

Before turning to examine the relevance of values to building public support for ambitious interventions to help tackle environmental and global poverty challenges, it is first necessary to develop a deeper understanding of value structures and the ways in which these help to shape and adopt behavioural choices.

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4.   See Crompton (2010) and Holmes *et al*. (2011), *op. cit*. 1 for overviews of this research

5.   Feather, NT (1992) Values, valences, expectations, and actions, *Journal of Social Issues*, 48, 109-124 (Quote from p.11)

6.   Kraus, S J. (1995). Attitudes and the prediction of behavior: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*, 58-75

The organisation of values

Empirical studies demonstrate that, across a very wide range of cultures, people's values are organised in remarkably consistent and meaningful relationships. These relationships can be plotted on circular maps.

Figure 1, opposite, presents such a map. Values to which individuals tend to ascribe a comparable level of importance are found adjacent to one another. Few people attach simultaneous importance to values that are on opposite sides of the circle. For example, someone who attaches importance to achievement is also likely to attach importance to power. But this individual is unlikely to attach importance to universalism. Or, conversely, an individual who holds benevolence to be important is also likely to attach importance to universalism. But he or she is likely to consider achievement unimportant.

This map reflects the results of empirical studies across many tens of thousands of participants in more than 70 countries – it is not a theoretical construct.[7]

For our present purposes, it is important to distinguish between two broad classes of values that comprise a dynamic and "universal" system: intrinsic and extrinsic values. Though social psychologists draw an important distinction between intrinsic/extrinsic goals and self-transcendence/self-enhancement values, for simplicity we combine the two concepts and will refer in this chapter to 'intrinsic values' and 'extrinsic values.'[8]Intrinsic values include universalism and benevolence in the top right quadrant of Figure 1. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, include achievement and power, in the bottom left quadrant.

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7.   See, for example, Schwartz, SH (2006) Basic human values: Theory, measurement and applications. *Revue Francaise de Sociologie*, 47(4) 249-288

8.   A circumplex, similar to that depicted in Figure 1, has been developed for individuals' goals, drawing the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goals. See Grouzet, FME, Kasser, T, Ahuvia, A, Fernandez-Dols, JM, Kim, Y, Lau, S, Ryan, RM, Saunders, S, Schmuck, P and Sheldon, KM (2005) The structure of goal contents across fifteen cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89, 800-816

Figure 1: Circumplex representation of values, with corresponding definitions.[9]
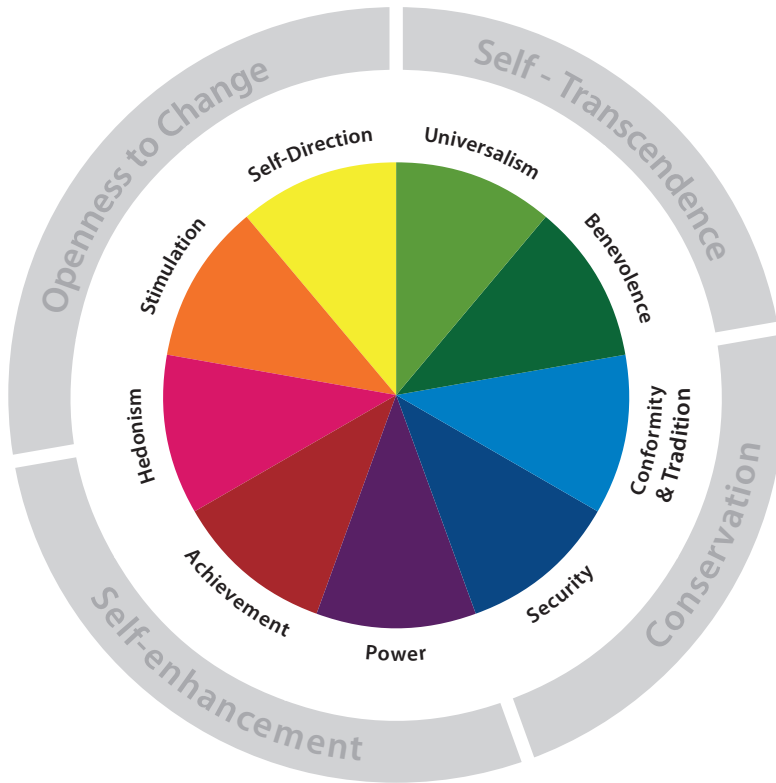
Value	Definition	Value	Definition
Power	Social Status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.	Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.	Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.	Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.	Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
Self-direction	Independent thought and action—choosing, creating, exploring.	Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.

9.   Adapted from: Schwartz, SH (1992) Universals in the content and structure of values: theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries, in Zanna, M (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. 25* (pp. 1-65). Orlando, FL: Academic Press

Values and humanitarian and environmental problems

Research has examined the relationship between values and a range of specific attitudes and behaviours, at both personal and cultural levels.[10] The left hand column in Table 1 lists some of the values found to be associated with greater concern about environmental and humanitarian problems, and greater motivation to adopt behaviours in line with such concern (for example, recycling or buying fair-trade products). The right hand column lists values that are opposed to these intrinsic values – that is, extrinsic values which, when held to be important, tend to suppress behaviour associated with the corresponding intrinsic values.

Table 1

Intrinsic values Values associated with higher levels of environmental and humanitarian concern and greater motivation to engage in corresponding behaviour. They are opposed to extrinsic values.	Extrinsic values Values associated with lower levels of environmental and humanitarian concern and lower motivation to engage in corresponding behaviour. They are opposed to intrinsic values.
Affiliation. To have satisfying relationships with family and friends. *(e.g. "People will show affection to me, and I will to them.")*	**Conformity.** To fit in with other people *(e.g. "My desires and tastes will be similar to those of other people.")*
Self-acceptance. To feel competent and autonomous *(e.g. "I will have insight into why I do the things I do.")*.	As above.
Community feeling. To improve the world through activism or socially creative projects *(e.g. "I will assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.")*.	**Image.** To look attractive in terms of body and clothing. *(e.g. "My image will be one others find appealing.")*; and **Financial success.** To be wealthy and materially successful. *(e.g. "I will have many expensive possessions.")*
Benevolence. Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group'). *(Valuing loyalty, honesty, helpfulness, responsibility, and forgiveness.)*	**Achievement.** Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. *(Valuing ambition, influence, capability and success).*
Universalism. Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. *(Valuing equality, peace, unity with nature. Wisdom, beauty of nature and the arts, social justice, broadmindedness, and environmental protection.)*	**Power.** Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources *(Valuing social power, wealth, authority, public image and the observance of social norms.)*

Values that promote pro-environmental and pro-humanitarian behaviour (first column), and opposing values (second column) that act antagonistically, and which are associated with significantly lower environmental and humanitarian concern. The items listed in italics provide corresponding indicators used in surveys to assess the importance a person attaches to each of these values. In the case of affiliation, conformity, self-acceptance, community feeling, image and financial success, one example is given in each case of statements with which respondents are asked to score their agreement. In the case of benevolence, achievement, universalism and power, respondents are asked to score the importance that they attach to a range of statements reflecting the subsidiary values listed under each. (The first three rows are drawn from research on goals. The last two rows are drawn from work on the values circumplex, depicted in Figure 1).[11]

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10.   For an overview of this very extensive body of research, see Crompton (2010) and Holmes *et al.*, (2011), *op. cit*. 1
11.   For further information on the map of goals, see Grouzet et al, 2005 (*op. cit*. 9); for further information on the Schwartz values circumplex, see Schwartz et al. (2006) (*op. cit*. 7)

Researchers have examined the relationship between values and a range of attitudes and behaviours, at both personal and cultural levels. Repeatedly, individuals and cultures that attach greater importance to extrinsic values are found to be less concerned about global conflict and the abuse of human rights, to be less supportive of arguments for free movement of people, and to be more prejudiced toward outsiders – whether on the basis of race, religion, or gender. They are also less likely to choose to buy fair-trade products, are less concerned about environmental damage, and are less likely to choose to behave in environmentally friendly ways. Finally, people for whom these values are more important are also less likely to engage politically – either with the electoral process or by engaging in demonstrations or other civic activities.[12]

On the other hand, individuals who attach greater relative importance to intrinsic values are more likely to express concern about a range of social and environmental issues and are more likely to adopt behaviour in line with this concern.

It is one thing to demonstrate a correlation between the values a person says he or she holds and that person's behaviour. But is there evidence for a causal relationship? Does activation of particular values increase the frequency of particular behaviours in the directions that would be predicted based on the correlations outlined above?

Specific values can be deliberately activated under experimental conditions. For instance, participants in experiments can be given simple tasks, such as rearranging jumbled words to make meaningful sentences that invoke particular values. Participants who are asked to sort words into sentences that activate awareness of financial success (for example, rearranging 'high a salary paying' to read 'a high-paying salary') are less likely to take subsequent opportunities to behave in socially or environmentally helpful ways than participants in control groups who unscramble neutral words. Following the activation of extrinsic values in such ways, people are less likely to decide to donate to charity, to offer unpaid help, to assist someone with a particular task, or to recycle scrap paper. Conversely, activating intrinsic values is repeatedly found to increase the frequency with which people decide to engage in socially or environmentally helpful behaviour.[13]

The dynamic nature of value-systems

We have seen that activating intrinsic values tends both to promote behaviour associated with these values and to suppress behaviour associated with opposing extrinsic values. This is an important point, and it is worth reviewing some of the experimental evidence underlying this assertion.

Experiments have shown that 'priming' particular values leads to 'bleed over'. In other words, values and behaviours adjacent, on the values map, to a value being primed will also be promoted. Simultaneously, values on the opposite side of the values map will be suppressed.[14] This leads to associations between behaviours that may appear at first to be unrelated.

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12.   For a review of this evidence, see Crompton (2010) and Holmes *et al*., (2011), *op. cit*. 1
13.   For a review of this evidence, see Crompton (2010) and Holmes *et al*., (2011), *op. cit*. 1
14.   'Priming' refers to making a value more 'salient', or 'activating' a value – for example, by asking someone to perform a task that leads them to reflect on that value. Priming has been described as "a procedure that increases the accessibility of some category or construct in memory" (see: Sherman, SJ, Mackie, DM and Driscoll, DM (1990) Priming and the differential use of dimensions in evaluation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 16, 405-418. Quote at p.405)

For example, researchers have primed the value 'achievement' (by asking participants in an experiment to sort words like 'ambitious' and 'successful' from other unrelated words), or the value benevolence (by asking participants to sort words like 'forgiving' and 'honest'). Participants were then asked to complete a word-search. Success at this task was significantly higher among individuals who had been primed for achievement as opposed to benevolence. More intriguingly, participants were then asked if they would be willing to help in future studies, without payment. Those participants primed for achievement were significantly less likely to offer to help. In the case of participants primed for benevolence values, these were more likely to offer their help for a subsequent experiment, but performed less well at the word-search. Control groups who sorted neutral words (nouns describing types of food) scored at an intermediate level both for their performance at the word-search, and in their offers to help with subsequent studies.[15]

There are two important practical consequences to findings such as these:

Firstly, concern about environmental and humanitarian problems may be heightened *either* by increasing the importance attached to values promoting that concern, *or* by *diminishing* the importance attached to values that *oppose* motivation to express this concern.

Secondly, there will be costs associated with attempts to motivate behaviour that helps to address environmental or humanitarian problems by using strategies that serve to activate extrinsic values: indeed, such attempts may even be counterproductive. This is because, in activating these extrinsic values, the opposing intrinsic values (which would need to come to underlie systemic motivation to address such problems) will be suppressed. So, for example, fashionable attempts to confer prestige or social status on environmentally friendly behaviour may be unhelpful in encouraging the emergence of more systemic concern about both environmental and humanitarian issues.[16]

Analogous arguments can be made, at a national level, about the effects of appeal to national competitiveness and prestige as an incentive for adopting pro-environmental policies – for example, further investment in the renewable industry is often urged on the grounds of establishing national competitive advantage in a new sector. Yet framing such policies in terms of intrinsic values may offer a more effective way of building public support for environmental and humanitarian intervention. There is experimental evidence in support of this suggestion.

For instance, in one recent study in the US, psychologists asked participants in an experiment to reflect on different aspects of the American identity – without any mention of environmental concerns. They asked some to reflect simply upon what it meant to them to be an American, they asked others to reflect on aspects of an extrinsic American identity (America as a country of enterprise and economic success), and a third group to reflect on aspects of an intrinsic American identity (America as a country that has a long tradition of helping others). Note that there was no mention of the environment. The researchers then asked the participants to imagine that they were advising their government on the optimal ecological footprint for which to aim in five years' time. Those who had been asked to reflect upon an intrinsic American identity were found to recommend significantly lower footprints as policy goals.[17]

15.   Maio, GR, Pakizeh, A, Cheung, WY and Rees, KJ (2009) Changing, priming, and acting on values: effects via motivational relations in a circular model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97 (4), 699-715
16.   Crompton, T and Kasser, T (2009) Meeting environmental challenges: the role of human identity. Godalming, UK: WWF-UK
17.   Sheldon, KM, Nichols, CP and Kasser, T (2011) Americans recommend smaller ecological footprints when reminded of intrinsic American values of self-expression, family and generosity. Ecopsychology, 3(2) 97-104

The relative strength of intrinsic and extrinsic values

People are not binary beings: it seems that everyone holds both intrinsic and extrinsic values, although the importance that a person attaches to these values varies over time. This variation may occur in the short-term (when playing with his or her kids after work, an individual is likely to attach greater importance to benevolence values than at a point earlier in the same day when he or she was negotiating a salary rise). But other factors also seem to lead to more durable changes in people's values, over longer periods of time. Such factors include how a person was brought up, or their educational background, for example. As we will see, the political context in which a person lives is also likely to be of importance.

When attempting to determine concern about environmental and humanitarian problems, then, it seems that what is important is not whether someone holds extrinsic values *per se*, but rather the *relative* weight or importance that she attaches to them. Policy makers who feel the need to build greater public support for action on environmental or humanitarian issues might therefore seek ways of nurturing intrinsic values. But, even were it possible to do so, they should not be looking to expunge extrinsic values!

Policy and values

From the impacts of certain policies (e.g. changes to the way their health services are delivered), right down to encounters with individual politicians, people's experience is important in bringing particular values to the fore. Research on a phenomenon known as policy feedback reveals that – perhaps unsurprisingly – public policy has an impact in shaping dominant public values, which in turn impacts on public support for new policies."[P]olicies do more than satisfy or dissatisfy; they change basic features of the political landscape," write Joe Soss and Sanford Schram, who have researched policy feedback in the US. "Policies can set political agendas and shape identities and interests. They can influence beliefs about what is possible, desirable, and normal. They can alter conceptions of citizenship and status."[18]

Institutions, too, have profound effects in shaping our identities. The Berkeley sociologist Robert Bellah writes:

> "[I]nstitutions are the substantial forms through which we understand our own identity and the identity of others as we seek cooperatively to achieve a decent society… The idea that institutions are objective mechanisms that are essentially separate from the lives of the individuals that inhabit them is not only mistaken: it is an ideology which, to the extent that we believe it, exacts a high moral and political price. The classical liberal view has elevated one virtue, autonomy, as almost the only good, but it has failed to recognize that even its vaunted individual autonomy is dependent on a particular kind of institutional structure rather than an escape from institutions altogether."[19]

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18.   Soss, J and Schram, SF (2007) A public transformed? Welfare reform as policy feedback. *American Political Science Review*, 101, 111-127 (Quote at p. 113)
19.   Bellah, R N (1992) Autonomy and Responsibility: The Social Basis of Ethical Individualism, pp. 159-160 in, Oglivy, J (ed.) *Revisioning Philosophy*. New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 153-163 (Quote at pp. 159-160)

Effective political leaders intuitively understand the profound influence that public policy and social institutions exert over people's values. As Margaret Thatcher commented in 1981, for example:

> "…it isn't that I set out on economic policies; it's that I set out really to change the approach, and changing the economics is the means of changing that approach. If you change the approach you really are after the heart and soul of the nation. Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul."[20]

Of course, it is often difficult to establish whether pursuit of certain policies has led to shifts in cultural values, or whether changes in cultural values created the political space necessary for institutional reform.

German unification has presented a natural laboratory to examine the causality of policy feedback processes. Following reunification, West German policies were 'imposed' on East Germany, not as a result of a shift in public attitudes, but rather as a result of a seismic political event. Public attitudes towards government responsibilities in the former West Germany (for example, whether government should provide healthcare for the sick, provide a decent standard of living for the old, or reduce income differences between the rich and poor) were found to be stable over the period 1990-2006. However, attitudes in the former East Germany changed markedly following the external 'imposition' of West German institutions on East Germany. Attitudes in East Germany then shifted to become aligned to those in West Germany. It seems that the different systems of social protection in East and West Germany were translated into deep differences in the West and East Germans' priorities prior to reunification.[21] Stefan Svallfors concludes a study on the effect of policy feedback on German attitudes to state intervention by observing that "[n]ew institutions create new normative expectations that lead to new attitudes towards public policies." (2010: 131).

Human thought and frames

Our understanding of human thinking

A great deal of evidence, drawn from many different disciplines, points to the failure of the assumption of 'Enlightenment reason': the belief that individuals tend to work to accurately identify where their self-interest lies, and then adopt behaviour in order to act in line with this.

As applied to political behaviour, George Lakoff highlights the dangers of assuming that:

> "[i]f people are made aware of the facts and figures, they should naturally reason to the right conclusion. Voters should vote their interests; they should calculate which policies and programs are in their best interests, and vote for the candidates who advocate these policies and programs."[22]

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20.   *The Sunday Times*, 3 May 1981
21.   Svallfors, S (2010) Policy feedback, generational replacement, and attitudes to state intervention: Eastern and Western Germany, 1990-2006, *European Political Science Review*, 2, 119-135
22.   Lakoff, G (2009) *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist's Guide to your Brain and its Politics*, London: Penguin. (Quote at p.8)

But it is clear that an individual's self-interest is a poor determinant of her voting preference. The practice of many of our most effective politicians, and an understanding of cognitive science, paint a different picture:

> "[V]oters don't behave that way. They vote against their obvious self-interest; they allow bias, prejudice, and emotion to guide their decisions; they argue madly about values, priorities, and goals. Or they quietly reach conclusions independent of their interests without consciously knowing why. Enlightenment reason does not account for real political behaviour because the Enlightenment view of reason is false."[23]

Why are the facts of a situation of limited value in motivating behavioural responses? Because, often, if the facts don't support a person's values, "the facts bounce off".[24] The way that people think – including their response to factual information – tends to work to protect their current identity. For this reason, individuals are often predisposed to reject suggestions that they should change aspects of their behaviour where these are important in establishing and maintaining their social roles. This predisposition helps to minimise possible sources of dissonance and threats to people's social identity.[25] And of course, at one level, it is psychologically important and protective. But research conducted by Dan Kahan and colleagues at the Cultural Cognition Project at Yale Law School "suggests that this form of 'protective cognition' is a major cause of political conflict over the credibility of scientific data on climate change and other environmental risks".[26]

This understanding of the limited role of factual knowledge in determining attitudes and behaviours is consistent with the recent challenges to the belief that people are essentially 'rational actors' who are able to weigh the costs and benefits of particular courses of action, before reaching a calculated decision about which to follow. In fact, as we have seen, there is mounting evidence that the decisions people take are very importantly influenced by their values: something that conservative thinkers often find easier to grasp than many liberal thinkers. As the Conservative MP and writer Jesse Norman notes, we know that the rational actor model is wrong:

> "We are aware that there are routine aspects of our daily lives like volunteering or philanthropy which it cannot properly explain. We know that there are virtues such as loyalty and long-term thinking which seem to run directly counter to it. We fret about the atomisation of society, the commercialisation of human culture and the narrowing of our expectations of others. We over-invest in half-baked prescriptions for happiness. We yearn endlessly for the things money famously cannot buy: love, friendship, joy. *Yet without an alternative picture of what a human being is, we cannot free ourselves from our assumptions.*"[27]

This last point is critically important. If we are to free ourselves from the assumption of the rational actor model, this will be because we come to understand the weight of evidence for the importance of values in determining behavioural choices. According to this perspective, it is not enough, when faced with a choice, to ask simply 'Do I have the information I need to act in my best

23.   Lakoff, G (2009), *op. cit*. 22 (Quote at p.8)

24.   Lakoff, G (2004) *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate,* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing. (Quote at p.17)

25.   Sherman, DK and Cohen, GL (2006) The psychology of self-defence: self-affirmation theory, in Zanna, MP (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology Vol. 38* (pp. 183-242), CA: Elsevier

26.   Kahan, DM (2010) Fixing the communications failure *Nature*, 463, 296-297 (Quote at p.297)

27.   Norman, J (2008) *Compassionate Economics: The Social Foundations of Economic Prosperity*, London: Policy Exchange. (Quote at p.3; emphasis added)

interests?' Rather, one must ask a set of prior questions, which are not specific to the circumstances of any particular decision, such as 'How have my values been shaped by the culture in which I live?' and 'Am I happy about the way that culture exerts an influence on my behavioural preferences?', and 'What is the inescapable and inevitable influence of the government that I have helped to elect in shaping my values, and those of my fellow citizens – through the communications it produces and policies it adopts?'

Frames

The understanding of human thinking outlined in the last section draws heavily on the work of cognitive scientists. Amongst these, cognitive linguists have found that human language and human thinking are intimately interconnected. Words we use have meaning for us because they are linked both to our experience of the world, and the way in which we think about it. This experience, and our thoughts about the world, are stored in our memory as 'frames'.[28]

Frames are not static or fixed: they are dynamic and can be updated and changed through experience. As such, frames are constructs that activate and strengthen particular values, such that they become of greater cultural importance. Across a society, particular frames repeatedly show up in communication. Government communications, public policies, and institutions all play an important role in determining which frames come to dominate. Political discourse of course interacts with, and competes with, advertising and entertainment frames for supremacy but there can be little doubt that political debate, and the public policy environment that this helps to shape, are critical determinants of dominant frames.

As an illustration of the power of framing, consider an example discussed by George Lakoff. The phrase 'war on terror' was a *choice* of words; just one possible way of talking about the response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. These could, for example, have been framed as a crime. By choosing to frame its response in this way, the Bush administration invoked our knowledge of warfare as the context for its policy decisions. This frame has obvious implications: a war is a conflict in pursuit of self-defence or national interest; there are bombs, bullets and battles, victory, defeat, and so on. If one frames the event as a *crime*, and the response as a law-maintaining operation, the implications are different: criminals are detected, caught, and tried according to law. The first frame is probably linked particularly to national-interest values, and values favouring physical force and retributive justice. It activates emotions to do with patriotism and heroism. The alternative frame could have been more naturally linked to legal systems and the pursuit of criminal justice. In both cases, the words used, the values activated and the emotions stimulated define and reinforce one another. The words determine the cognitive context that in turn determines which values are activated, and this process shapes the deep psychological parameters within which policy is developed. To put it another way, words rely on frames to be understood, and frames are the context through which opinion and policy are experienced.

The frames that are used by government in introducing and discussing policy initiatives are therefore crucially important in helping to shape public values, and intuitive politicians are well aware of this.[29] Moreover, once established, a frame is very important in shaping the way we think: when presented with facts that can't be easily accommodated within a particular frame, it is often the facts – rather than the frame – that is rejected.

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28.   For an overview of the importance of frames to the environment and development debates, see Crompton (2010) and Darnton & Kirk (2011) *op. cit.* 1

29.   Lakoff, G (2009) *op. cit.* 22

Using techniques of discourse analysis and qualitative research, it is possible to identify frames in political discourse and to begin to understand how these frames serve either to strengthen or undermine the intrinsic values that social psychology studies identify as being of crucial importance in underpinning public appetite for action on humanitarian and environmental problems. Oxfam and WWF, working with other NGOs, have recently sponsored research at the Universities of Cardiff and Lancaster, to be published later this year, which begins to build this case on a rigorous empirical footing.

Questions for political programmes

We are now in a position to ask a number of key questions about political programmes – irrespective of whether these are viewed in traditional terms as being oriented toward the political left or right. Such questions include:

*   Are the values of a political programme aligned with intrinsic values that, according to social psychology research, are of critical importance in building public concern about environmental and humanitarian problems?

*   Does the rhetoric deployed by politicians adhering to this programme support the further strengthening of these values – through deployment of helpful frames?

*   Do the ensuing policies help to create for people a 'lived experience' of these values: an experience that helps to strengthen them further?

These questions are explored in the next two chapters – from both a left and right perspective. Before embarking on this analysis, however, it is important to recognize two things. Firstly, in considering political approaches to environmental and humanitarian problems, for the purposes of this report we are not primarily concerned by whether political leaders are taking steps to directly address the material aspects of these problems. Rather, we are concerned to explore the values that the communications and policies associated with a particular political programme serve to activate and strengthen. This is because it is quite possible that, for example, a particular environmental policy could be effective in addressing a specific environmental issue, while simultaneously serving to help activate and strengthen extrinsic values that will actually undermine public commitment to tackling environmental and humanitarian problems at a more systemic level.[30]

Secondly, it is very important to recognise that the *values* that underpin public support about environmental and social issues may be most importantly strengthened in other areas of policy: areas which may appear far removed from these particular concerns. For example, the values of universalism and benevolence – identified as being of such importance in underpinning expressions of concern about environmental and humanitarian issues – may be strengthened particularly by people's lived experience of the NHS (both as contributors to the NHS through taxation, and as beneficiaries of the free care that it provides). This makes the potential remit of the ensuing chapters huge, and for reasons of brevity the authors of those chapters have focused on environmental and humanitarian policy. But it should be appreciated that public policy in other domains may at times be *at least* as important in building public support for environment – and development-related interventions.

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30.   Crompton, T and Kasser, T (2010) Human identity: a missing link in environmental campaigning, *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 52, 23-33.

Chapter Two:
Mind the Gap – The great green division on the left

David Boyle

"If only the sandals and the pistachio-coloured shirts could be put in a pile and burnt, and every vegetarian, teetotaller, and creeping Jesus sent home to Welwyn Garden City to do his yoga exercises quietly."[31]

That was how George Orwell described his fellow-travellers who were interested in issues that he didn't regard as mainstream. If environmentalist was not on his list, the headquarters of practical environmentalism between the wars (Welwyn) certainly was. This rant against fringe elements of the political left is fascinating in the light of what followed. It also sheds some light on why the traditional left in the UK, despite sharing a whole range of intrinsic values based on internationalism and community, should have found the environment so hard to swallow.

Orwell was probably the most influential writer on the left in the twentieth century, and *The Road to Wigan Pier* was probably one of the most influential left books. It wasn't that *Wigan Pier* was somehow blind to environmental problems. Quite the reverse: Orwell's description of the woman poking a stick up a dirty drain, with "the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen", is as evocative as any modern environmentalist writer.[32] But for Orwell, the Welwyn rant was an invocation against crankery, and those counter-cultural issues about the future of the planet that we are now so familiar with belonged in a branch of the left that clearly got up his nose.

This is important not because Orwell was influential, though he certainly was, but because he was articulating a common opinion on the left for most of the past century: that environmental issues were a middle class sideline, an irrelevance to the main task of feeding and clothing the population fairly.

This was not a universal opinion at all. Issues like international development sat much more easily on the left with intrinsic values like social justice and equality, getting into mainstream politics with Harold Wilson's Ministry of Overseas Development in 1964. There were those who felt otherwise, but development was easier to sell than environmentalism, as Orwell's rage against those he regarded as cranks implies. The result was the left's own version of the division between intrinsic and extrinsic values, between a heartfelt commitment to sustainability and what became in practice an arm's-length, technocratic approach to it that gets the job done without interfering with a central objective that lies elsewhere.

This is a conundrum, and this chapter looks at the history of the left in the UK over the past century or so to see why a political movement based on intrinsic values like community and equality should have taken Orwell's attitude to the environment and development. As shown in the social psychology literature, there is a strong correlation between concern for equality and care for the environment. The left's concern for community has certainly included the international community. In fact, for a long time the anthem of the left was the 'Internationale'.

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31.   G Orwell (1937) *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Victor Gollancz, London, p.195
32.   Orwell (1937) p.47

Either way, there are unexpected complications about values on the left in the UK – especially when it came to the environment – and, to unpack them, we have to go back to a point where the left was considerably more exercised about the environment than they were for many decades afterwards. These were the days of William Morris and John Ruskin, two of the founders of the modern left.

The first greens

Strangely enough, this division on the left in its approach to the environment was not always so apparent. The early days of mainstream socialism at the end of the nineteenth century saw a commitment at least to conservation – William Morris launched the first 'green' campaign group, the Commons Preservation Society – and there was fury at the environmental damage done by industrialisation. This was a result of the influence of Morris, and of his mentor John Ruskin.

Ruskin was not obviously from the left. He described himself variously as a Tory and as a communist. The only label he refused to accept for himself was 'Liberal'. But his influence on the emerging Labour Party was immense. The 1906 intake of Labour MPs named his book, Unto This Last, as the biggest influence on them apart from the Bible. Ruskin's rage at the destruction he could see around him was never divorced from its effect on people. He urged his audiences to think "of the myriads imprisoned by the English Minotaur of lust for wealth, and condemned to live, if it is to be called life, in the labyrinth of black walls, and loathsome passages between them, which now fills the valley of the Thames."[33]

His disciple William Morris was a Liberal, on the other hand, before his conversion to socialism. The great green gap emerged in aspects of his split from the Social Democratic Federation. But after he had forgiven the SDF leader, H. M. Hyndburn, and supported him in the Burnley by-election in 1893, Hyndburn took him to the top of the Manchester Road to see the town below, with the fog and smoke from the mills and factory chimneys. Morris swore and never forgot it.

The vision of Ruskin and Morris was not just for equality and dignity, it was for an end to the brutality and ugliness of what they fought. Ruskin dreamed of a day when ordinary working people "might have the blessing of these things, if they chose, and that vast space of London might be full of gardens, and terraced round with hawthorn walks".[34] Morris in turn could:

"... dream of *London, small,* and *white* and *clean,*
 The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green."[35]

Their medieval, slightly suburban, vision lost its power to inspire in the century that followed, but those ideas – providing a clean, fulfilling and natural environment for ordinary people – was powerful enough to break through the great divide in the left about the places we live. Whenever Orwell's contemporaries were able to put aside their irritation at Welwyn Garden City, it was usually a vision of Ruskin and Morris that lay behind it.

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33.   Quoted in Quennell, P (1949), *John Ruskin: The portrait of a prophet*, Collins, London, p.252
34.   Quennell (1949), p.252
35.   Morris, W (2002) *The Earthly Paradise,* Ed. Florence Boos, Routledge, London, p.255

This remains a core value of the left: *a clean, natural environment for the whole population, not just the wealthy*. It motivates now as it did then, and it has implications for international development too. Although neither Morris nor Ruskin could be said to be founders of the development movement, they were both key figures in an emerging international concern. Morris resigned from the Liberal Party over Gladstone's war in Turkey; Ruskin's books were a major influence on Gandhi and hence on the movement that has followed his lead. He read *Unto This Last* on his train journey from London to South Africa, and became a political campaigner as a result.

But their influence was not to be simple in the century that followed, and the confusion was partly linked to the rise of the Fabian Society and the Labour Party.

The confusions of the Fabians

Why did the mainstream left not follow the Ruskin tradition more closely? Because, by the end of the nineteenth century, radicalism was seriously fragmented in Britain. The Liberal Party split in 1886 over Irish Home Rule, and the party's radical wing under Joseph Chamberlain found itself in alliance with the Conservatives.

Orwell's 'cranks' were themselves divided over religion. The Anglo-Catholics followed an intellectual path that led, via Guild Socialism and under the influence of Belloc and Chesterton, to Distributism in the 1920s. The Theosophists – the other spiritual influence on the left at the time – tended to follow a parallel path which led them towards Social Credit in the 1930s. The Labour Party was divided over its electoral strategy and relationship with the Liberals. The weekly organ of the new Fabian Society, the *New Statesman*, slugged it out weekly with the doyens of the more mystical *New Age*.

It was a period of intellectual ferment, and the initiative lay with the Fabians, itself divided between the gradualists like George Bernard Shaw and Hubert Bland, and the prophets of sexual freedom and futurism like H. G. Wells. The Fabians represented an older utilitarian tradition of radicalism. Where Morris had been visionary, the Fabians were committed to exhaustive statistical research. Where Morris had been utopian, the Fabians favoured compromise. Above all, where Morris had looked back to a medieval ideal for inspiration, the Fabians looked forward to a technological future.

It was, and has remained, an argument about the meaning of the word 'progress', which is important in a political tradition that regards itself as progressive. It made sense for those who drew their inspiration from Shaw or Orwell that socialism was about the future. It meant embracing industrialisation, and ameliorating its environmental effects, because that was the way to higher incomes. Did not Marx predict revolution through the industrial proletariat? It made no sense to return to some medieval dream of rural craftsmanship. Yes, the cities were foul and dirty, but all that could be solved – if only people had money in their pocket and food in their mouths. Everything else was vanity.

"The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilization, the one sound spot in our social conscience," wrote Shaw:[36]

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36.   Shaw, GB (1907) *Major Barbara*, Constable, London

> "Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honour, generosity and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness."

The evidence from social psychologists, as noted in the introduction, strongly suggests that efforts to address humanitarian or environmental problems through appeals to extrinsic values are likely to be counter-productive. This may help to explain why the Fabian approach began to sideline a deep environmental concern and prioritise certain extrinsic values. If money represents honour and beauty – and beauty here is a word that is assumed to imply something about the environment in which one lives – then why should not everybody aspire to have it? Shaw's argument appears to be that pursuit of material wealth would lead inevitably to a more beautiful environment, without the need to place particular value on preserving that environment. Yet as we now know, the environmental impacts of societies tend also to increase as material wealth increases. The implication was that intrinsic values, as understood here, were a luxury that only the rich could afford.

Those on the left who came after would be suspicious of anything with the whiff of crankery that Shaw warns against in the same paragraph, or which casts doubt on the progressive cause, or downgrades the importance of income or the benefits of technology. The environmental problems would be tackled instead by regulation, while the main task of socialism carried on centre stage.

That was the background to Orwell's diatribe. So it was that allotment legislation and basic smoke control was brought in by Chamberlain's followers in the Liberal Unionists. Garden cities, an attempt to tackle urban degradation, were developed by enthusiasts who were politically Liberal. The early days of town planning, following Lloyd George's injunction to build homes 'fit for heroes', was dominated by Chamberlain's son Neville. The revelation of the environmental class divide – the stunted growth of the working classes called up to fight in the First World War – fed into the rhetoric of the left, but it was incomes that came first, not environment.

The 'class' word is another clue about why the left developed an ambivalent relationship with intrinsic values. They had their class to defend. It was their duty, as political activists, to provide for them. Part of what was being provided was certainly a clean environment, but this was regarded as simply one of a raft of goods that they were dedicated to providing.

Consequently, the left borrowed Ruskin's rhetoric about beauty, but not perhaps his convictions. This was Hugh Dalton, making his 1946 budget speech as Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer:

> "There is still wonderful, comparable beauty in Britain, in the sunshine on the hills, the mists adrift the moors, the wind in the downs, the deep peace of the woodland, the wash of the white, unconquerable cliffs which Hitler never scaled."[37]

Dalton had worshipped naked at the shrine of nature as a young man, along with Rupert Brooke and his friends. The rhetoric was effective and convincing, but it was rhetoric cajoled into use for the main battle, and that was elsewhere. The central leftist value is here underlying the rhetoric – it is *equal rights to a clean environment*, and equal rights to the British heritage which both middle and working classes had just been fighting for in the Second World War.

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37.   Sullivan, A (1985) *Greening the Tories,* Centre for Policy Studies, London, p.17

The Attlee government, which Dalton was a member of, had high ambitions about cleaning up the environment where people lived, providing them with better places to live, throwing a green belt around London to constrain its growth, nationalising the development of land. This was also a government committed to self-government for India, and were Gandhi's followers in that respect. It was a government of international vision.

But the contradictory connection between intrinsic and extrinsic values remained. The Liberal Party suffered a serious defeat in 1945, believing that an explicitly internationalist platform would trump the combination of nationalisation and welfarism of the Labour manifesto. The 'welfare state' at the heart of the 1945 Labour manifesto certainly appealed to intrinsic values like equality and community, but it also carried an appeal to extrinsic self-interest for those who would benefit from them. The Liberal appeal to internationalism was an electoral disaster.

The values of progress

Ironically, it was the links forged between the mainstream left and Orwell's cranks which led to a resurgence of interest in the environment between the wars. There was a renewed interest in public health on the left, led by people like Bermondsey Labour MP Albert Salter and inspired by projects like the Peckham Experiment. There was the revitalisation of the garden cities movement, under the pioneering campaigner Frederic Osborn, which gave us the new towns, the green belt and a widespread enthusiasm for zoning suburbs and factories separately.

But it was Dartington Hall of all places – the very centre of Orwell's pistachio-coloured shorts – which provided the impetus for an alliance between progressives and romantics, and one of the most influential institutions that the left has produced in the UK, Political and Economic Planning (PEP), the first left think-tank in the UK.

PEP had little or no track record in environmental thinking, though its successor at the Policy Studies Institute certainly has. It was important because it managed to bring together the romantics (Dartington's Leonard Elmhirst), the doyens of scientific progress (Julian Huxley and Israel Sieff), and the new generation of Labour policy-makers (Michael Young, author of Labour's 1945 manifesto). The younger generation were particularly important. PEP was inspired by Max Nicholson's *National Plan for Britain*, published in 1931 in the Weekly Review.[38] He would go on to be one of the key figures in the UK green movement. One of his successors as secretary of PEP was George McRobie, the future collaborator of E. F. Schumacher and chair of the New Economics Foundation.

Nicholson was a critical figure. As principle advisor to Herbert Morrison after the Second World War, he steered though the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, created the legislation for Sites of Social Scientific Interest, set up the national parks and launched the Nature Conservancy (proposed by Julian Huxley).

Nicholson ran the Nature Conservancy himself, the world's first statuary conservation body, in the teeth of Treasury opposition. He persuaded the broadcasters to make nature programmes, and – realising that conservation required public pressure – helped launch the World Wildlife Fund (as it was then). Nicholson lived until he was 98 and had time to criticise his own legacy, which

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represented the best the left had managed in the mid-twentieth century in this area. He regretted the damage done by industrial agriculture and forestry and he regretted his creation of an intermediary cadre of scientific managers, rather than protecting the environment through the planning system.[39]

In fact, the new environment professionals also emerged in other countries, neither quite government nor quite amateur enthusiasts. Their task was to protect the planet while the business of industrialisation went on uninterrupted. It was a way of dealing with the environment but downplaying its political importance. It was an issue that must be dealt with, but not the bread-and-butter stuff of the left. So this was a political compromise. It was how environmental protection was made politically possible, but it had important implications for the future. The new cadre of environment technicians lived in a rarefied official world. They feared irrationality, because that would mean political argument. And the whole purpose of the environmental legacy of the left in the middle of the twentieth century was to take the environment out of politics altogether, rather as New Labour tried to do more recently.[40]

So when, in the second half of the twentieth century, a new radical generation emerged who disputed this solution – and the whole idea of 'progress' as conventionally understood – it left the mainstream struggling, as in many ways they still are. Slum clearance was intended as a solution to urban squalor – and Labour Housing Minister Richard Crossman had urged the complete demolition of Oldham – but it replaced tight-knit communities with new alienating slums. The new town programme, finally abandoned by Labour's Environment Secretary Peter Shore in 1976, had failed to halt the degradation of the inner cities. Dividing traffic from pedestrians – the idea in Colin Buchanan's ground-breaking report *Traffic in Towns* – had relegated pedestrians to risky concrete passages.[41] Atoms for Peace – the polite alternative to nuclear bombs – had led to a blind alley of high-level nuclear waste.

There was also a resurgent Liberal Party under Jo Grimond ready to give political voice to this critique, and by the 1970s to oppose the nuclear energy programme. There was no mention of the environment in the Liberal manifestos under Grimond, but the critique of modernity was there when Liberal strategist and historian Roger Fulford asked the way in Harlow New Town:

> "To my embarrassment she told me, through her tears, 'I simply hate it here'. A Ruskin was needed to do justice to the contrast between the kind hearts of the planners and the true wishes of mortal man."[42]

By the 1960s, it was clear that there was an increasingly confident branch of the left which was sceptical about a merely technocratic approach to tackling environmental problems. There was a growing commitment to intrinsic values of environmental protection and promoting greater unity with nature – values held particularly by the New Left.

The development lobby was also beginning to emerge, with an absolute commitment to internationalism. These were represented in mainstream politics too, but the mainstream still regarded these issues as fringe, even occasionally threatening to the central business of 'providing'.

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39.   Daily Telegraph (2003), 1 May
40.   Hays, S (1989) Beauty, Health and Permanence: Environmental policy in the United States 1955-1985, Cambridge University Press, p.393-4
41.   See Buchanan, C (1963), *Traffic in Towns,* Penguin Books/HMSO, London
42.   Fulford, R (1959) *The Liberal Case*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, p.79

Even so, development politics were increasingly influential on the left, especially after the launch of Kennedy's Peace Corps in the USA and the launch of Voluntary Service Overseas in the UK in 1958. This was clearly, in Kennedy's words, a 'cause beyond self'. A decade before the word 'green' assumed its modern meaning, the Wilson government founded the Ministry for Overseas Development and brought development into mainstream politics.

The Club of Rome and after

The rise of the green movement is usually dated from the publication of the Club of Rome's 1972 report *Limits to Growth* and the publication by the *Ecologist* magazine in the UK the same year of *Blueprint for Survival*.[43]The case set out in *Limits* put unrestricted growth at the heart of the green argument, and that implied a direct collision with the mainstream left:

> "If the present growth trends in world population, industrialisation, pollution, food production and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity."[44]

This represented a division on the left and, this time, the scientists were on the green, intrinsic side. Julian Huxley was a member of the *Blueprint* team. This was still an argument about the idea of progress and what it means. This was significant because *progress* is an important shared principle for the left, even if – as in this case – it was a disputed one. The confusion over the environment on the left – and any divisions over development – are about competing interpretations of progress among progressives. In Orwell's day, all the buttresses of the progressive cause – scientists, evolutionists, futurists – were on the side of the mainstream left. Even the Internationale implied a belief in the inevitability of future victory. By the 1970s, none of this was clear. Scientists were migrating to a more complex understanding of human progress, even claiming that long-term human progress was threatened by a narrow idea of material progress.

This was part of a wider critique of conventional 'progress', of the kind people were told you could not stand in the way of. On one side was an increasingly confident green movement, criticising the very compromises that the mainstream left – the political descendents of Orwell and Shaw – had made. On the other side, there was the mainstream left struggling to capture the radical mood without compromising their commitment to progress, incomes, comfort and growth. Sometimes the conflict between the two sides erupted. This is how Labour's Shadow Environment Secretary Tony Crosland saw the difference:

> "To say that we must attend meticulously to the environmental case does not mean that we must go to the other extreme and wholly neglect the economic case. Here we must beware of some of our friends. For parts of the conservationist lobby would do precisely this. Their approach is hostile to growth in principle and indifferent to the needs of ordinary people. It has a manifest class bias, and reflects a set of middle and upper class value judgements. Its champions are often kindly and dedicated people. But they are affluent and fundamentally,

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43.   See Meadows, D, et al (1972), *Limits to Growth*, Universal Books, New York,; and Goldsmith, E, and Allan, R (1972), *Blueprint for Survival,* Ecosystems, London

44.   Quoted in Dobson, A (ed.) (1991), *A Green Reader*, Andre Deutsch, London, p.14

though of course not consciously, they want to kick the ladder down behind them. They are highly selective in their concern, being militant mainly about threats to rural peace and wildlife and well loved beauty spots: they are little concerned with the far more desperate problem of the urban environment in which 80% of our fellow citizens live… As I wrote many years ago, those enjoying an above average standard of living should be chary of admonishing those less fortunate on the perils of material riches. Since we have many less fortunate citizens, we cannot accept a view of the environment which is essentially elitist, protectionist and anti-growth. We must make our own value judgement based on socialist objectives: and that judgement must… be that growth is vital, and that its benefits far outweigh its costs."[45]

There is the giveaway line – "our own value judgement based on socialist objectives". It is a narrow view of the green ambitions he criticises, as if the summary by Dalton based on preserving the White Cliffs of Dover, was somehow the caricature that Crosland now believed. It also drives a wedge between green and development objectives; one has to "kick the ladder down" for the other.

Part of that struggle inside the left led to the mainstream trying more determinedly to take the environment out of mainstream politics, and hand it over to professionals to deal with – preferably outside the country. The Chernobyl accident in 1986 made it all too apparent that environmental crises refused to respect national borders. The accepted forum for the sustainability debate was increasingly international. A long list of international conferences and committees funnelled their outputs back into national debate, from the Berne Convention on Habitat Protection (1979) to the Rio Earth Summit (1992). But devolving the debate to international forums only served to divorce it further from mainstream politics.

At the same time, the compromises – especially on development – were coming under fierce criticism from the green movement. Millions of people were being made homeless by dam projects funded by the World Bank and other development bodies. The 'Green Revolution' was leading to soil erosion and dependence on chemicals and technology which also in its way led to poverty. At the 1974 World Food Conference, there was a serious debate about whether to use B52 bombers to spray 1600 square kilometres of the African savannah to eradicate the tsetse fly.[46]

There was also a growing division over economics, and over the concept of economic growth. The mainstream left was struggling to find policies that would regulate the economic system in such a way that it minimised the damage done to the environment. The emerging green campaigners were demanding a more fundamental change to the way economics worked. Schumacher, himself a refugee from the mainstream left, described the "devastating error" made by Karl Marx to limit the number of different kinds of capital to just three.[47] What about environmental capital, the way that the living systems of the earth underpin the economy?

When the new Liberal Ecology Group persuaded the Liberal Party to pass a conference motion in 1979 – declaring that "economic growth, as conventionally measured, is neither achievable nor desirable" – it was a rare instance of extrinsic values of wealth accumulation being questioned in mainstream Westminster politics. It has barely been since, at least in this way.

45.   Crosland, A (1971) 'Class hypocrisy of the conservationists', *The Times,* 8 Jan, p.10
46.   Allaby, M and Bunyard, A (1980) *The Politics of Self-Sufficiency*, Oxford University Press, p.34
47.   Schumacher, EF (1973) *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if people mattered*, Harper & Row, New York, p.17

But the gap remained largely unleapable for the mainstream left, either for Liberals or socialists, and the past three decades has been spent trying to finesse it. The phrase of 'green growth', coined by the SDP in 1985, implied that there might be a way that the economy would benefit from green technology.[48] This was influential. The 1983 Labour manifesto carried nothing about the environment. Militant in Liverpool ridiculed the whole idea. But two years later, Labour's 1985 *Charter for the Environment* developed the concept of green jobs. David Clark was appointed as Environment Spokesman in 1987 to develop it further, but he was upstaged by the Shadow Environment Secretary John Cunningham – chair of the Labour Friends of Sellafield – and most of the green commitments were dropped. Like Hugh Dalton before him, Neil Kinnock relied on Ruskinian rhetoric to give a broad impression of commitment:

> "I go down to the river at the bottom of my garden on a nice winter's day and it is like listening to your favourite piece of music; it's bloody beautiful."[49]

Kinnock's version of the White Cliffs simply obscured the fact that Shaw's fudge was back. Using extrinsic values to promote intrinsic values risks undermining them. It is a mixed and confusing message and that seems to have been the result of 'green growth'. It is one thing to argue that green politics will not compromise other objectives, but it is confusing to pretend that the objectives are somehow one and the same. Especially as what it actually revealed was the relative emphasis given to one set of values over the other. Kinnock's commitment gave every appearance of being surface level.

The governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown a decade later found themselves in a similar dilemma. The green rhetoric was there but, in practice, the mainstream left still regarded such issues as a sideline to the main task. Technocratic institutions would take the environment outside political debate, and there were successes – the government was able to claim the cleanest rivers, beaches, drinking water and air since before the Industrial Revolution.

But in practice, progress was constrained by a version of the same division that has bedevilled environmental policy on the left for a century: the idea that green policies are deeply unpopular among ordinary people if it compromises their pockets or their leisure time. The fuel levy escalator, a bold attempt to raise the price of petrol to constrain traffic growth, was abandoned in 2000 after the blockade of petrol depots by owner-drivers. After the following election, Blair split up the powerful Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and handed green affairs to a new junior ministry, Defra.

New Labour did try to leap the gap rhetorically, borrowing from the 'green growth' idea, by coining a more ambiguous concept 'sustainable growth', which began appearing in Tony Blair's speeches in the mid-1990s. But 'sustainable growth' was a slippery term – perhaps deliberately so. Sometimes it meant 'green growth' but sometimes it just meant that growth would go on and on – the precise opposite of sustainability. The word 'sustainable' appeared in the government's 2007 Sub-national Review document 44 times, but 40 of those referred only to the ability to grow bigger.[50] When Blair signalled his disillusion with the Kyoto Treaty it was because it had to allow for 'sustainable growth'.[51]

48.   Social Democratic Party (1985), *Conservation and Change*, London
49.   *Daily Mirror* (1985), 17 July
50.   See HM Treasury (2007), Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, HMSO, London
51.   Blair, T (2005) 'Getting real on climate change', The Observer, 30 October

The idea that there is a trade-off between the environment and the economy, and what the mainstream left since Shaw has regarded as the justified demands of ordinary people, remained a problem for mainstream politicians on the left. David Miliband spelled it out as Climate Change Secretary:

> "If we are to gain a consensus here and abroad that climate change is soluble, it has to be an ally of aspiration, progress and economic growth. Zero growth is impractical and immoral. That is why climate change must enter mainstream political parties rather than remain within a separate green culture."[52]

It was significant that this was a speech to the Fabian Society. It was more polite than Orwell or Shaw, but the message was the same.

Conclusions

The green movement has always laid claim to reflect the concerns of the real progressives and, by implication, the heirs of Charles Darwin. The founding green texts from 1972 make explicit claims about science, and therefore about progress.

This link with evolution has rarely been studied.[53] But it was Darwin's friend Thomas Henry Huxley, grandfather of Julian, who represented Darwin in the famous Oxford debate with Samuel Wilberforce in 1860, who first talked about 'man's place in nature'.[54] This is the central green idea that humanity is part of the natural environment and depends on it. That understanding did not work its way into political debate until the 1970s, but it has always been part of the evolution debate. It may have been possible two generations ago to be a progressive without understanding the implications of this, but now it is quite impossible for progressives and evolutionists to be on opposite sides. This provides a chance, in the long-term, to heal the rift which Orwell articulated in such a waspish way in *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

These ideas take decades to filter through, but there are other opportunities for the mainstream left to embrace green ideas, because other aspects of the debate are shifting. It is far clearer now that development and environment are not opposed in practice. This has been increasingly clear since the *Brundtland Report* in 1987 defined sustainability in terms of people's ability to meet their needs.[55] Since 2003, the Up in Smoke Coalition of leading green and development campaign groups have argued that environmental change is frustrating the Millennium Development Goals.[56] This is an opportunity, at least, for the mainstream left to treat the two together at last.

The contradiction between environmental and economic well-being no longer stands up either. The Stern Report, commissioned by Gordon Brown, set out the costs of not tackling climate change.[57] There is increasing consensus also about some of the economic rewards of green investment, and we know this has been influential because of the way politicians on both sides of the Atlantic have been borrowing the phrase 'Green New Deal'.[58]

52.   Miliband, D (2007) 'Red-Green Renewal: The Future of New Labour', Social Europe, Vol 2, Issue 3
53.   But not never. See Chambers, N (2009) 'Did Darwin invent environmentalism?', Treehugger.com, 14 January
54.   Huxley, TH (1901) Man's Place in Nature and other anthropological essays, Macmillan, London
55.   World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), *Our Common Future: The report of the Brundtland Commission*, Oxford University Press
56.   Simms, A, et al (2008) *Up in Smoke: A summary,* New Economics Foundation, London
57.   Stern, N (2006) *The Economics of Climate Change*, HM Treasury, London
58.   See Simms, A, et al (2008), *The Green New Deal*, New Economics Foundation, London

All these open up the following opportunities for the left based on perhaps beliefs, based on intrinsic values, which can be shared by leftists and environmentalists alike, and which now need to be articulated for the new century:

1. Everyone deserves a clean, green planet and future

There is no reason any more why this needs to be in conflict with development objectives – quite the reverse – so this is one of the traditional values of the left which needs to be revisited. It means re-discovering the rage of Morris and Ruskin about dirt, waste and the degraded environments the poor have to live in. It carries no conviction to divorce the emotion and the vision from the policy, and the predecessors of today's politicians of the left managed to knit them both together. They can still teach us something now, if the left can bring these intrinsic values back into the mainstream, rather than handing them over to arms-length technocrats.

2. Everyone has equal value

This is a fundamental tenet on the left, but it became compromised in the embrace of mercantile values, and in the identification of economic growth as a means to an end. The future may be for the left to campaign more whole-heartedly against reductionism and fundamentalism in economics, where everything human and natural is reduced to its market value, especially in the light of the collapse of the global financial system and its increasing fragility. The emergence of an economics based on well-being makes it possible for new Orwells and Shaws to frame their approach to progress a little differently. It means uniting around the idea of sharing the economic benefits of green investment, as well as sharing the costs of green regulation. This requires a new kind of economics for the left, where the benefits of investment are spread more directly – and a more fundamental reform of the way economics works. It means an end to the Fabian acceptance of the economic system as it stands, relying on taxation to spread the rewards, and a new approach to economics that more obviously puts people and planet first.

3. There are new models of progress

As I argued above, the vital role of Marx and Darwin in the creation of the left meant an identification with progress – and the inevitability of that progress. In the early years of the green and development movements, campaigners seemed to be challenging that inevitability, pointing out the disastrous consequences of the wrong kind of progress. But there is now an opportunity to reclaim a more enlightened kind of progress for the left, inevitable because it leads to human survival, unanswerable because it derives from the latest science. Without their traditional sense that they were on the side of progress, the left has become defensive – using its energy to cling to the remains of the social achievements of the past. It could be that by championing intrinsic values of protecting the environment and promoting well-being above material wealth, a new vision of progress can be laid out.

Chapter Three: The Environment and Conservative Values

Guy Shrubsole

"Some seem to think that the green agenda is a departure from our 'core values'. They obviously don't understand…" – Peter Ainsworth MP, Conservative Party Conference, October 2007[59]

What are the core values of conservatism? Many conservatives would deny they cleave to a political ideology – claiming instead they simply respond pragmatically to changing circumstances. As Lord Hailsham's pithy aphorism would have it: "An ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory."[60] Yet plainly this is not the whole story. Whilst conservatism's ability to change with the times has been variously "lauded as flexibility or condemned as cynicism"[61], this ignores a number of core principles that have served to inspire it time and again.

Conservative political philosopher Anthony Quinton, for example, defines conservatism as having a set of four key principles. The first is the concept of *intellectual imperfection* – that human rationality is often inadequate to the task of understanding a complex world – from which flows a second, *political scepticism*, a suspicion of grand, state-imposed solutions. A third is *traditionalism*, and a fourth, *organicism* – a belief that society is an organic whole, not a machine made up of separate parts.[62]

This is not the same as saying, however, that all conservatives agree. Indeed, the history of conservatism has been one of vigorous debate between different factions and philosophies, both within the parliamentary Conservative party and outside it. To Jesse Norman, "this tension between principles is intrinsic to conservatism itself."[63]These differing schools of thought have comprised rival systems of ideas, beliefs, principles – and values.

This chapter seeks to highlight some key conservative principles – drawn from Quinton's list and beyond – consistent with the intrinsic and self-transcendence values that underpin a deep commitment to sustainable development. It illustrates how some conservatives both past and present have defended such values – but also how contrary trends in conservative thought have undermined them. A strong conservative tradition exists that enshrines such values in its core principles, but its articulation has been muted since the rise of the neoliberal New Right within the Conservative party. For conservatives who care about the environment and international development, it is time to rediscover this tradition and champion the values it espouses.

Intellectual imperfection: Wisdom, gradualism and the precautionary principle

"Ever since the Age of Enlightenment, we have had an almost boundless faith in our own intelligence and in the benign consequences of our actions… We now know that this is no longer true."[64] So opens *This Common Inheritance*, the UK's first white paper on the environment, written

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59.   Peter Ainsworth MP, address to Conservative Party Conference 2007, quoted in Will Woodward, 'Leading Tories cite Thatcher in defending green policies'. The Guardian, 4 October 2007

60.   Lord Hailsham (Quintin Hogg), *The Conservative Case*, 1959, chapter 1

61.   Norman, J and Ganesh, J, *Compassionate conservatism: what it is, why we need it,* Policy Exchange, 2006, p.29

62.   Quinton, A, *The Politics of Imperfection*, 1978; summarised in Green, EHH, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 2002, p.281

63.   Norman et al., ibid, p.29

64.   HM Government, *This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy*, 1990

in the last days of Margaret Thatcher's administration. The principle that there are limits to human knowledge, and that recourse to novelty should be tempered by the wisdom of tradition, is held deeply by many conservatives. This has clear implications for environmental preservation, and resonates with certain values that underpin it.

Wisdom, in Schwartz's values model, is a clear universalism value, and sits closely next to concern for protecting the environment.[65] It is also prized by many conservatives. In the words of Angus Maude, the former Conservative MP and father of Francis Maude: "Man… is very young. Like a child, he is making new discoveries every day and creating fresh problems for himself… To know this is the beginning of wisdom, and the humility it engenders is the very essence of Conservatism."[66] To conservatives with Christian beliefs, this is scripture. John Gummer, former environment secretary and a committed Christian, has spoken of climate change as "the biggest threat that human beings have had. This is the stuff of the Genesis myth. This is about how human beings handle knowledge."[67]

To conservatives of this disposition, change should be accepted with caution: novel technologies, for instance, may have unintended consequences for the environment. As philosopher John Gray writes: "Many of the central conceptions of traditional conservatism have a natural congruence with Green concerns… [for instance] Tory scepticism about progress, and awareness of its ironies and illusions; conservative resistance to untried novelty and large-scale social experiments…"[68] Environmentalists sometimes characterise climate change as 'the biggest experiment humans have ever enacted on the planet'; small wonder, then, that there is an affinity between greens and conservatives over the precautionary principle. Zac Goldsmith, Conservative MP and former editor of the Ecologist, has said: "I consider myself and have always considered myself a conservative as opposed to a radical… I believe in the precautionary principle. I don't think in terms of left or right politics."[69]

But whilst this principle clearly engages universalism values of protecting the environment, and benevolence values of encouraging responsibility, it is also resonant with various tradition values and a resistance to change. Where conservatives seek simply to preserve the status quo for its own sake, or for reasons of protecting entrenched interests, this clearly sits uneasily with achieving a rapid transition away from fossil fuels, or securing social justice for the developing world. Indeed, a number of studies suggest tradition values are associated with more anthropocentric – and less ecocentric – attitudes.[70]

A cautious approach to change also seems linked to a conservative distrust of state intervention, wherein 'big government' is critiqued for having imperfect knowledge and a tendency to reinvent the wheel. This can undermine conservatives' support for using the state to correct market externalities, and provide aid to developing countries. But true conservatives will also cast a wary eye at neoliberal market fundamentalists – knowing markets, too, to be imperfect human constructs – and should be willing to question unfair trade rules or the unwise pricing of natural resources.

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65.   Schwartz, S, 'Universals in the content and structure of values: theoretical advances and empirical test in 20 countries', *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology,* Vol.25, 1992, p.39. For Schwartz, "The joint emergence of nature, universal welfare, and understanding (broad-minded, wisdom) values in a single region" in his studies suggests a "realization that failure to protect the natural environment or to understand people who are different, and to treat them justly, will lead to strife and to destruction of the resources on which life depends."

66.   Maude, A, 'The Consuming Society', Conservative Political Centre pamphlet, 1967, p.8-9; based on an address delivered to a Party Conference fringe event, October 1967

67.   John Gummer, quoted in Andy McSmith, 'Climate change should be the top priority for governments of the industrialised world', Monday Interview, The Independent, 3 April 2006

68.   Gray, J, 'An agenda for Green conservatism', in *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment*, 1994, p.124

69.   Zac Goldsmith, quoted in Stuart Jeffries, 'True-blue green', *The Guardian,* 3 December 2005

70.   Schultz & Zelezny (1999), 'Values as predictors of environmental attitudes: Evidence for consistency across 14 countries', *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 19, p.255-265; and Schultz et al (2005), 'Values and their relationship to environmental concern and conservation behavior', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, p.36, 457-475

'The conservation of the best our country has to offer'

It may be in conservatives' nature to conserve, but in times of change, what guides their decisions in choosing what should be kept intact? To David Cameron, "Conservatism is partly about the conservation of the best our country has to offer: institutions such as parliamentary democracy and common law for example… [and] our collective environment."[71] In this respect, conservatism enshrines a strong principle of traditionalism. Seen through a values lens, this speaks most obviously to Schwartz's set of conservation values, notably respect for tradition – which, as just mentioned, have been shown to be somewhat problematic in terms of encouraging environmental attitudes.[72]

But conservatives have also been known to single out natural beauty as being of inherent and enduring worth, suggesting an attachment that goes beyond traditionalism. Mrs Thatcher once spoke of "preserving life with all its mystery and all its wonder."[73] Stanley Baldwin, interwar Conservative prime minister, once penned a famous elegy to Britain's natural beauty, seeing it as key to our national identity: "To me, England *is* the country, and the country is England". For Baldwin, "the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning… [and] the wild anemones in the woods in April" are the things that "strike down into the very depths of our nature… The love of these things is innate and inherent in our people."[74] These examples clearly owe much to the speakers' religious beliefs and sense of nostalgia, but they also suggest universalism values: in Schwartz's typology, *unity with nature* and *a world of beauty*.

That many conservatives have, resultantly, been driven to value *protecting the environment* is attested to as much by their actions as by their words. The organic agriculture movement, for example, originated on the political right[75]; the Soil Association was founded by Lady Balfour, granddaughter of the Conservative prime minister, whilst pioneering soil scientist Sir George Stapledon cited Disraeli's philosophy as lying behind his deep love of the land[76]. The present-day Conservative Environment Network has its roots in the Conservative Ecology Group of the 1970s.[77] And successive Conservative governments have been responsible for a raft of pioneering environmental legislation: passing the Clean Air Acts of the 1950s, setting up the first Ministry of the Environment under Ted Heath, and signing the UK up to the UN climate process in the 1990s.

But plainly other priorities – and other values – have often overridden such concerns. As green thinker Ian Christie has noted, Margaret Thatcher's famous speeches on the environment at the end of her time in office were useful in outlining "the need not only for action, but for a new set of values to inform it" – yet "her government and its successor did little to act on the analysis".[78] John Major's administration proceeded to embark on "the biggest road-building programme

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71.   Cameron, D, 'Improving our environment: a social responsibility', in *A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment*, Green Alliance, 2007, pp.9-15

72.   Schultz et al., ibid

73.   Margaret Thatcher, speech to the United Nations on the global environment, 8 November 1989, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107817

74.   Stanley Baldwin, 'England is the country', 1924; quoted in O'Gorman, F, *British Conservatism*, 1986, p.181-2

75.   For more on the conservative roots of the organic movement, see Conford, P, *The Origins of the Organic Movement*, 2001

76.   Stapledon, Sir G, *Disraeli and the New Age*, 1943

77.   See NGOs in Britain project, online timeline, www.ngo.bham.ac.uk/appendix/timeline_green.htm. Lord Houghton of Sowerby once remarked of the Conservative Ecology Group: "There is hope for the nation if there is an ecology group in the Conservative Party. Long may it last and the greater may it flourish!" See www.yourdemocracy.newstatesman.com/parliament/address-in-reply-to-her-majestys-most-gracious-speech/HAN9609766

78.   Christie, I, 'How to confuse friends and alienate people: mixed messages and climate change communication in UK politics', in Green Alliance, *From Hot Air to Happy Endings*, 2010, p.16-20

since the Romans"[79] at the same time as signing Britain up to the Rio Conventions. Values are of course implicit in policies as much as in rhetoric. It is perhaps still too early to say whether David Cameron's professed desire to lead "the greenest government ever" is underpinned by a deep set of values or political expedience.

Perhaps a more insidious challenge is the tendency of many conservatives – particularly since the rise of the neoliberal New Right – to speak of the environment in instrumentalist terms, and advocate its protection not in terms of inherent worth or heritage value, but on economistic grounds. When Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman spoke at the Nagoya summit on biodiversity about ecosystem valuation, for example, her framing was purely monetary: "We need to bring about a real change in the way we value natural capital… Bees, for example, are worth about £440m to the UK economy."[80] Ecosystem valuation may have its place, of course, but framing the issue in such terms clearly plays to an extrinsic set of values (concern for wealth, materialism) that are diametrically opposed to the intrinsic values underpinning a deeper commitment to the environment.

'A contract between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn'[81]

The Burkean social contract is a famous conservative principle that exhorts citizens to take good care of a nation's heritage and pass it on to successive generations as a common inheritance. Burke stated that we are "temporary possessors or life renters" of this world, with a moral obligation not to squander our natural inheritance, lest we leave "to those who come after… a ruin instead of a habitation."[82] It has had a significant influence on conservative concepts of social responsibility and, more recently, environmental stewardship.

In values terms, the Burkean social contract would appear to engage with a variety of different values: *universalism* (social justice, protecting the environment), *benevolence* (responsibility) *tradition* (respect for tradition), and *conformity* (honouring parents and elders). It has the potential, therefore, to activate both helpful and less helpful values sets from the point of view of sustainable development. But a strong conservative tradition exists of it being deployed to encourage greener behaviours.

In her party conference speech of 1988, Margaret Thatcher declared: "It's we Conservatives who are not merely friends of the Earth – we are its guardians and trustees for generations to come… No generation has a freehold on this earth. All we have is a life tenancy—with a full repairing lease. This Government intends to meet the terms of that lease in full."[83] The sentiment has been echoed by Cameron more recently, who has asserted that an "important part of our inheritance is our collective environment. Right now, in an affront to our ancestors and to the neglect of our descendants, we are threatening that legacy."[84]

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79.   The quote is from Paul Channon, Margaret Thatcher's Transport Secretary 1987-89
80.   Caroline Spelman, reported on BBC news, 28 October 2010, www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11642538
81.   Burke, E, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790
82.   Burke, Ibid
83.   Margaret Thatcher, speech to Conservative Party Conference, 14 October 1988. Available online at www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/display-document.asp?docid=107352
84.   Cameron, D, 'Improving our environment: a social responsibility', in *A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment*, Green Alliance, 2007, p.9-15

In the US, a 'crunchy conservative' movement has grown up that rejects Republican neglect for the environment and embraces organic food, anti-consumerism and nature conservation. Its founder, Rod Dreher, writes: "A conservatism that does not practice restraint, humility, and good stewardship – especially of the natural world – is not fundamentally conservative"[85]. Conservative philosopher Roger Scruton phrases it slightly differently: "The living may have an interest in consuming the Earth's resources, but it was not for this that the dead laboured. And the unborn depend upon our restraint."[86] Honouring the memory of the dead, in Scruton's eyes, includes greening our behaviours. But it is worth noting that in the psychology of values, 'honouring of parents and elders' is a *conformity* value; that is to say, on the opposite side of the circumplex to values that promote an openness to change. Invoking such values may prove problematic if one wishes to win support for a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy.

Burke's principle is evident, too, in the framing of *This Common Inheritance*, the Conservatives' 1990 white paper on the environment, which asserts: "We have a moral duty to look after our planet and to hand it on in good order to future generations."[87] Yet critics of the white paper were right to point out that "…nowhere does the report address questions of international equity. When the report speaks of leaving a decent environment to our descendents, that 'our' is already structured by class, race and gender in ways which define the inheritance in terms of… passing to our direct kith and kin an environment which would support a lifestyle similar to our own".[88] Thus Burke's social contract has its limitations: appealing more to benevolence values of in-group solidarity, and wedded to concepts of the nation, rather than an ecumenical vision of humanity underpinned by universalism values.

Society as an organic whole: shared responsibilities, common wealth

To Anthony Quinton, a key principle of conservatism is the way in which it regards society as "a unitary, natural growth, an organised living whole not a mechanical aggregate". The idea of an 'organic society' is quite a complex concept, and best explained by breaking it down into some of its implications: that we only flourish as members of a community; that common problems can only be dealt with through shared responsibility; that we owe it to society to advance prosperity for all; and that we are interdependent.

Such 'organicism' has had a crucial influence on the way conservatives traditionally have viewed individuals' social obligations, as well as informing an understanding of ecological holism. It also has a deep resonance in values terms. Viewing society as an organic whole in which we all play a part chimes with a wide set of intrinsic values: in Grouzet's model, *community feeling, improving the world through activism or generativity*, and *helping the world become a better place*. Under Schwartz's typology, it would seem that the principle engages with benevolence values of *responsibility, helpfulness,* and *true friendship*, and to some extent, the universalism value of *social justice*. Many of these values have a direct bearing on encouraging action against global poverty, and an indirect effect through promoting civic activism and social responsibility in general.

85.   Dreher, R, *Crunchy Cons,* 2006
86.   Scruton, R, *A Political Philosophy: Arguments for Conservatism*, 2006, p.35
87.   HM Government, *This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy*, 1990, p.10
88.   Kearns, G, 'This Common Inheritance: Green Idealism Versus Tory Pragmatism', *Journal of Biogeography*, Vol.18, No.4, July 1991, p.363-370

A belief that we only flourish as members of a community, rather than as individuals, has a long pedigree in conservative thought. Disraeli's Young England movement of the 1840s spoke out against Benthamite utilitarianism for its perceived atomising, amoral effects. Macmillan lauded "that organic conception of society" which stood against "individualism and laissez-faire"[89]. Philosopher John Gray, in his essay *An agenda for Green conservatism,* championed "the primacy of the common life", arguing that "both conservative and Green thinkers repudiate the shibboleth of liberal individualism… the good life for human beings… necessarily presupposes embeddedness in communities".[90]

Yet the rise of the New Right – self-professed "nineteenth century Liberals"[91]– has posed a grave challenge to such principles. Thatcher's infamous declaration that "There is no such thing as society", and her administration's championing of individualism, "stretched organicism to breaking-point".[92] Recent years have seen conservatives attempt to revive such ideas. Jesse Norman's 'compassionate conservatism', for example, "does not regard individuals as mere economic agents… it is not the desiccated atomism of the 'Chicago school' of economists… it insists that not merely all of us are in this together, but that *all of* all of us is."[93] David Cameron has insisted that "there *is* such a thing as society – it's just not the same thing as the state"[94], but his Big Society programme has yet to convince the public that it is more than a cover for cuts to state provision of services.[95]

Bigger-than-self problems, like climate change and global poverty, by their nature require a sense of collective responsibility to be properly addressed. Conservatives have sometimes invoked just such a frame. Despite her commitment to individualism in other spheres of life, Mrs Thatcher appealed for collectivism in the face of climate change: "We know more clearly than ever before that we carry common burdens, face common problems, and must respond with common action."[96] To David Cameron, "Conservatives have a vital role to play in the environment agenda because we have the right solution: social responsibility."[97]

A third facet of the 'organic society' principle is an obligation towards society to advance prosperity for all – a common wealth. Cognitive linguist Joe Brewer terms this the 'shared prosperity' frame.[98] It has strong implications for conservative approaches to poverty alleviation and international development. Disraeli initiated this tradition within the Conservative party with his novel *Sybil, or Two Nations* (1845) in which he attacked the gap between rich and poor for corroding a sense of social unity. Disraeli's concern for poverty led to his administration championing social reform and introducing pioneering laws to improve living conditions.

89.   Harold Macmillan, quoted in Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980,* 1981, p.109
90.   Gray, J, 'An agenda for Green conservatism', in *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment*, 1994, p.136-7
91.   Quote from John Nott, former Conservative Secretary of State for Defence; cited in Jesse Norman, *Compassionate Conservatism*, 2006, p.28. The full quote reads: "I am a nineteenth century Liberal. So is Mrs Thatcher. That's what this government is all about."
92.   Green, EHH, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 2002, p.290
93.   Norman et al, *Compassionate conservatism: what it is, why we need it,* Policy Exchange, 2006
94.   David Cameron, speech after winning the Conservative Party leadership contest, 6 December 2005
95.   A Populus poll conducted for the Times, 4-6 February 2011, found 65% of voters think that "the Big Society is just an attempt by government to put a positive spin on the damage that spending cuts are doing to local communities". See www.populuslimited.com/february-2011-perspective.html#article275
96.   Margaret Thatcher, speech to the United Nations on the global environment, 8 November 1989, www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107817
97.   Cameron, D, 'Improving our environment: a social responsibility', in *A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment*, Green Alliance, 2007, p.9-15
98.   Brewer, J, frames analysis for Darnton, A & Kirk, M, *Finding Frames: New ways to engage the UK public in global poverty,* BOND, 2011, p.84

Conservatives who have since regarded themselves as adhering to 'One Nation Conservatism' include Macmillan, Heath, and the Tory Reform Group, which describes it as "a modern, progressive Conservatism that strives for economic efficiency and social justice; a Conservatism that supports equality, diversity and civil liberties."[99]

Applying these principles to international development, Cameron's Conservative party asserts that "Today we are One World Conservatives, continuing that great tradition of social concern and social action and applying it on a global scale."[100] The Coalition government has pledged, despite making huge cuts in public spending, to ring fence the aid budget and commit to meeting the 0.7% target, "because it is morally right to do so."[101] For Chris Patten, Overseas Development Minister in the 1980s, "We can promote development and even sustain it in the most unpromising conditions if we have the will, if we see the light, if we embrace and abide by a value system both as simple as the words of Isaiah and as richly complex as the inter-connections of our ecological system."[102]

But there appear to be limits to how far conservative principles align with strongly pro-development values. As Roger Scruton puts it: "While socialism and liberalism are inherently global in their aims, conservatism is inherently local"[103] – with the implication that charity begins, and ends, at home. Disraeli's aim in combating poverty was to re-unite the British nation and restore its 'organic' unity: a patriotic, rather than universalist, project. And recent Conservative policy often addresses global poverty alleviation through a frame of national self-interest: for example, "tackling poverty and deprivation is not just a moral duty, it is also in our very best national interest."[104] Seen from a values perspective, this appears to be appealing to, at best, benevolence values, which whilst not unhelpful for motivating action against poverty, tend to promote support for in-groups (family, locale, nation) rather than "all people".[105] As development analyst Andrew Darnton writes, "the psychological evidence shows that the benevolence values appear to correlate with engagement with development issues more weakly than do universalism values."[106]

However, references to 'national self-interest' can also be construed as appeals to self-enhancement and extrinsic values – values sets entirely antagonistic to those which are most associated with pro-development attitudes. As George Lakoff has written about framing a debate in terms of national self-interest: "A state is conceptualized as a person, engaging in social relations within a world community… Since it is in the interest of every person to be as strong and healthy as possible, a rational state seeks to maximize wealth and military might."[107] A clear example of international aid being framed in very economistic, extrinsic terms is Andrew Mitchell's recent announcement of a "major shakeup of Britain's aid programme" designed to deliver "value for taxpayers' money", including "secure schooling for 11 million children – more than we educate in the UK but at 2.5% of the cost". Such framing appears to be espousing the importance of money almost above the worth of the activity it is being spent on. Alongside such neo-liberalisation of aid is a parallel trend

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99.   Tory Reform Group website frontpage, www.trg.org.uk

100.   Conservative Party, *One World Conservatism: A Conservative Agenda for International Development*, Policy Green Paper No.11, 2009, p.8

101.   Conservative Party, *One World Conservatism: A Conservative Agenda for International Development*, Policy Green Paper No.11, 2009, p.5

102.   Chris Patten, *Reith Lectures 2000: Respect for the Earth*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/events/reith_2000/lecture1.stm

103.   Scruton, R, A Political Philosophy: Arguments for Conservatism, 2006, p. ix

104.   Conservative Party, One World Conservatism: A Conservative Agenda for International Development, Policy Green Paper No.11, 2009, p.9

105.   Schwartz, S, 1992, pp.11-12

106.   Darnton, A & Kirk, M, *Finding Frames: New ways to engage the UK public in global poverty,* BOND, 2011, p.54

107.   Lakoff, G, *Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf,* 1990

towards 'securitisation': tying and subordinating development work to the demands of British defence policy.[108] Concern for such security values sit a long way from prioritising values of *social justice* and *equality.*

The potential for a stronger conservative internationalism is illustrated by such past examples as Churchill's pivotal role in the creation of the United Nations; Heath's enthusiasm for taking Britain into the EU; and Macmillan's policy of 'interdependence' following the end of Empire. In the realm of environmental policy, John Gummer has proven a strong advocate for international cooperation, arguing that "selfish, xenophobic individualism won't solve environmental problems that do not respect national boundaries".[109] For many years, the president of GLOBE International – a forum for legislators seeking shared approaches to urgent environmental problems across countries –was the Tory MEP Tom Spencer.[110] Yet such instances appear rather anomalous for a party that has in recent decades become much more Eurosceptic and inward-looking. Conservatives who care about international development might do better in looking towards modern centre-right continental parties, such as the Swedish Alliance, which have blended conservative policies with a more internationalist outlook, and a strong commitment to development aid.[111]

Lastly, whilst many conservatives are concerned by absolute poverty, they are generally much less exercised by values of equality. Former Conservative cabinet minister and author Ian Gilmour, for instance, defended the relief of poverty and protecting the environment, but opposed equality vehemently: "men are manifestly not equal"; equality before the law is one thing, "economic equality… a very different thing."[112] There is not space here to discuss the intricacies of conservatives' opinions on equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome, but suffice to say that of those values which motivate conservatives to care for international development, equality is unlikely to be at the top of the list.

Wellbeing over wealth and the costs of economic growth

Conservatives have often stood foursquare in defence of commerce and the right to amass wealth. But another conservative tradition also exists that has questioned the easy equation of prosperity with wealth, and critiqued capitalist materialism. Flowing from conservatives' scepticism of progress and modernity, it is an approach that seeks to refute the gloomy prognosis of Oscar Wilde: that "nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing".[113]

Questioning the utility of wealth accumulation and economic growth itself clearly seeks to diminish the importance people ascribe to extrinsic and self-enhancing values of financial achievement and social status – whilst playing to an opposing set of intrinsic and self-

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108.   See, for example, Guardian editorial, 'International aid: a developing argument', 2 March 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/02/internationl-aid-developing-argument-editorial

109.   Gummer, J, 'Paying the price', in *A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment*, Green Alliance, 2007, p.16-18

110.   GLOBE International stands for 'Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment'. For an example of Spencer's internationalism – and Burkean conservatism – see his 'Declaration of Interdependence', 2006: www.tomspencer.info/speeches/Interdependence.pdf

111.   Sweden has met the 0.7% target for aid since 1973, and continues to do so under the centre-right Alliance, which has governed since 2006

112.   Gilmour, I, *Inside Right: Conservatism, Policies and the People*, 1977, p.175-6

113.   Wilde, O, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890

transcendence values, such as *meaning in life, a world of beauty,* and *spirituality*.[114] It can also lead one to give greater consideration to causes neglected or damaged by economic growth, such as global inequality and ecological protection. Empirical evidence, meanwhile, suggests intrinsic values are correlated with higher levels of personal wellbeing, and extrinsic values the opposite.[115]

Conservative concerns that capitalism reduces everything to a cash nexus date back to the beginnings of industrialisation and the foundation of the 'dismal science' of economics itself. The Tory radical William Cobbett raged against the despoliation of rural England and cast London as the 'Great Wen', whilst Disraeli's Young England movement of the 1840s opposed the perceived soullessness of Benthamite philosophy and was inspired by the Romantics. Historian Martin Wiener has suggested that traditional Toryism helped check the excesses of industrial capitalism in Britain. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, he argues, "a counterrevolution of values" was mounted by conservatives who "tended to look askance at a number of central characteristics of industrial capitalism – its ugliness, […] its 'materialism', and its instability."[116]

The Britain that emerged from World War Two saw a renewed quest for optimistic, meaningful social goals. Tory shadow chancellor R.A. Butler's *Industrial Charter* (1947) stated that "Man cannot live by economics alone", and that besides monetary remuneration for labour, "every firm must seek to make work a soul-satisfying activity".[117] *The Right Road for Britain*, the party's official statement for the 1950 election, stated boldly: "Conservatism proclaims the inability of purely materialist philosophies to read the riddle of life… Man is a spiritual creature… and science, politics and economics are good or bad so far as they help or hinder the individual soul on its eternal journey."[118]

During the late 1960s, Conservatives were at the forefront of the burgeoning environmental debate about limits to growth. Angus Maude, in his pamphlet *The Consuming Society*, spoke of being "cynical about the fetish of 'economic growth'", asking, "What civilisation… was ever remembered with admiration and respect for the amount it managed to consume?".[119] Developing his arguments in a later book, *The Common Problem*, Maude argued that "a great age is surely one which leaves to posterity a lasting heritage of beautiful and useful things, of significant creative ideas… [and] a physical environment improved rather than damaged." The politics that would deliver this outcome required "a vision which goes well beyond the material things of the present."[120]

Similarly, it fell to a conservative economist, E.J. Mishan, to write one of the first tracts to question the real costs of economic growth.[121] Historians of conservatism, Philip Norton and Arthur Aughey, write: "In the opinion of Mishan, modern Conservatives appeared to be caught on a treadmill upon which one must press ever harder if one is 'to keep up in the race' or even to survive. Certainly this

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114. In Schwartz's model, 'meaning in life' is a benevolence value; in Grouzet et al's typology, 'spirituality' is an intrinsic value, midway between community and conformity
115. See for example.Karabati, S & Cemalcilar, Z, 'Values, materialism and well-being: a study with Turkish university students', *Journal of Economic Psychology* 31 (2010) p.624–633
116. Wiener, M, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*, 1981, p.98. Tellingly, Wiener's thesis was instantly championed by Sir Keith Joseph, using it to attack the Tory 'wets' who expressed concerns about the free-market turn taken by the New Right
117. R A Butler, *The Industrial Charter*, May 1947. Quoted in O'Gorman, F, *British Conservatism*, 1986, p.201-2
118. Conservative Party, *The Right Road for Britain*, 1949. Quoted in Frank O'Gorman, *British Conservatism*, 1986, pp.111.
119. Maude, A, 'The Consuming Society', Conservative Political Centre pamphlet, 1967, p.19
120. Maude, A, *The Common Problem: a policy for the future*, 1969, p.112-113
121.   Mishan, EJ, *The Costs of Economic Growth*, 1967. See also the account of Mishan in Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest 1945-80*, 1994, p.252-8

is not a traditional Conservative dream."[122] Meanwhile, sociologist Fred Hirsch, in his classic work *The Social Limits to Growth* (1977), argued that "the consumption ethic of modern capitalism is undermining the social order and harmonious stability that was the traditional imperative of Conservatism."[123]

More recent generations of Conservative politicians, too, appear to embrace a critique of unfettered materialism. The Conservative Quality of Life Policy Group, chaired by John Gummer and Zac Goldsmith, reported in 2007: "Beyond a certain point – a point which the UK reached some time ago – ever-increasing material gain can become not a gift, but a burden. As people it makes us less happy, and the environment upon which all of us and our economy depend is increasingly degraded by it."[124] Oliver Letwin has argued persuasively that "beauty is… a significant component of general well-being", and argued that its preservation is a concern for both rich and poor, as well as for government.[125] And in the words of former Conservative environment secretary, Chris Patten: "I am a Christian, I believe in the social market and I think we do tend to forget the difference between value and price, not just in the Conservative party but across the spectrum in this country."[126]

This feeling appears to be shared by David Cameron. A shadow minister and Cameron ally is on the record as saying: "Core to what David Cameron feels, is that a Toryism that is all about the price of everything and the value of nothing, is arid and inadequate, and not him. He wants to find an account of the world that is rightwing and Tory, but which also explains why he doesn't want village post offices to shut."[127]

Less than a year after becoming party leader, Cameron called for a new measure of General Well Being, or 'GWB', to go alongside GDP. "Well-being can't be measured by money or traded in markets," he stated. "It's about the beauty of our surroundings, the quality of our culture, and above all the strength of our relationships… We have always known that money can't buy happiness. But politics in Britain has too often sounded as though it was just about economic growth." Those lines were followed by an inevitable caveat: "Of course economic growth is vital."[128] But Cameron has also made good on his pledge after entering office by tasking the Office of National Statistics with developing a happiness index for the UK.[129]

Yet plainly not all conservatives feel the same way. Harold Macmillan's quip "you've never had it so good" has come to epitomise the modern consumer society – something Conservative governments of the post-war period did much to foster. Margaret Thatcher tried vainly to rebut accusations of selfish materialism – that "all we care about is 'Loadsamoney'"[130] – but this was

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122.   Norton, P and Aughey, A, *Conservatives and Conservatism*, 1981, p.71
123.   Norton, P and Aughey, A, *Conservatives and Conservatism*, 1981, p.72; see also Hirsch, F, *The Social Limits to Growth*, 1977
124.   Conservative Quality of Life Policy Group report, 2007
125.   Letwin, O, 'Why beauty matters', in A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment, Green Alliance, 2007, p.44-8
126.   Chris Patten, quoted in David Sharrock, 'Tory Everyman back at the top', The Observer, 20 February 2011
127.   Quote in John Harris, 'The man who wrote Cameron's mood music', The Guardian, 8 August 2009. Intriguingly, Ed Miliband used strikingly similar language in his leadership acceptance speech ("We must never again give the impression that we know the price of everything and the value of nothing")
128.   David Cameron, 'General Well-Being speech', 6 August 2006. See also Cameron's speech to Google Zeitgeist Europe, 22 August
129.   Allegra Stratton, 'David Cameron aims to make happiness the new GDP', The Guardian, 14 November 2010
130.   Margaret Thatcher, speech to Conservative Party Conference, 14 October 1988. Available online at www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=107352

surely a case of the Lady protesting too much. Actions often speak louder than words. Thatcher's monetarist policies clearly prioritised Britain's creditworthiness at the expense of the unemployed, whilst the effects of her deregulation of the City have lately come home to roost. More recent Conservative declarations that there is more to life than money, meanwhile, sit uneasily with the current Coalition Government's apparent determination to cut the deficit regardless of the social consequences. The challenge remains for all who hold these concerns – whether of right or left – to outline an alternative vision of prosperity without growth.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to review a set of interwoven conservative principles that resonate with pro-environment and pro-development values sets. Clearly, this is not a simple task: political philosophies are complex accretions of ideas, and often contain many competing and contradictory impulses. In recent years, the rise of David Cameron has prompted a fresh re-examination of conservative principles and values, and breathed new life into traditional conservative concerns for poverty and green issues.

It seems few of those values most crucial to solving 'bigger-than-self' problems – like climate change and global poverty – will derive from the principles of the neoliberal New Right. For environmental thinker Tom Burke, "Dealing with a shared environment requires collective action above all… meeting this challenge sits oddly with a political philosophy that asserts the imperial authority of individual choice. It is a more comfortable fit with an older strain of Conservatism which recognises, values and seeks to sustain the richer complexity of relationships embedded in culture and tradition."[131]

Conservatives who are concerned with protecting the environment and combating global poverty should work to reclaim this older strain of conservatism and uphold the values it espouses. The conservative principles evaluated in this chapter are not unproblematic: some appear to be open to interpretation in different ways, or engage with values sets that are at best neutral towards these causes. Yet many of them show clear resonance with the intrinsic and self-transcendence values that underpin deep and effective action for sustainable development. Together they comprise a distinct pedigree of conservative thought – one that requires far more attention from environmentalists, development advocates, and conservatives alike. The tantalising opportunity of a conservatism that defends and promotes a set of values deeply wedded to sustainable development is waiting to be seized.

131.   Burke, T, 'Accidents and achievements: the Conservative environmental record', in A Greener Shade of Blue? Reflections on new Conservative approaches to the environment, Green Alliance, 2007, p.38-43

Chapter Four: Conclusions

David Boyle and Guy Shrubsole

The argument at the heart of this report is that today's political traditions of left and right have backed themselves into a corner by the way they frame and express their ideas.

It suggests that they have become trapped in a way of thinking that is divorced from the needs of the environment and the developing world and undermines efforts they may propose to remedy climate change and increasing poverty.

By failing to articulate the *intrinsic* values that underpin a deep commitment to sustainable development – putting them at the heart of the language they use, and the policies they create – the modern left and right traditions have narrowed their options. Moreover, they have allowed the political debate to be captured by those promoting a narrow set of *extrinsic* values, aimed overwhelmingly at promoting the acquisition of wealth and reach of markets – and sorely limiting the effectiveness of any measures to address the crises that are gathering around the environment and global poverty.

Language matters, and if politicians use extrinsic values of selfishness or an obsessive commitment to the narrowest bottom line to sell their solutions to global warming or development, for example, they should not be surprised when this reinforces the values that have contributed to the problem in the first place. Framing of policy is vital, too – and can have unexpected consequences in areas of life far removed from the policy area in question. A policy that promotes the universal welfare state, for example, can have knock-on effects in fostering the public's appreciation of a 'common good' more generally – which, in turn, may strengthen a popular desire to protect environmental common goods.

Some on both left and right are beginning to understand this. As we saw in Chapter 1, conservative thinker Jesse Norman puts it thus: "We fret about the atomisation of society, the commercialisation of human culture and the narrowing of our expectations of others. We over-invest in half-baked prescriptions for happiness. We yearn endlessly for the things money famously cannot buy: love, friendship, joy. Yet without an alternative picture of what a human being is, we cannot free ourselves from our assumptions (emphasis added).[132] That is the implication of the current situation – politicians who have circumscribed their room for manoeuvre by the language they use and the policies they propose, trapped in a set of assumptions about what people most value and the values that will lead to effective action.

The alternative available

This is the bind that British politics is enmeshed in today. But there is an alternative. As this report has argued, all the major political traditions in the UK have at different times embraced intrinsic values – whether through the political thought of Edmund Burke or John Ruskin, William Cobbett or William Morris, or the many other examples cited in the previous two chapters.

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132.   Norman, J (2008) *Compassionate Economics: The Social Foundations of Economic Prosperity*, London@ Policy Exchange, p.3

We have traced some of those strands inside modern conservatism, labourism and liberalism, showing how they became confused and subsumed during the twentieth century but remain potentially as powerful as ever. These strands include the conservative commitment to conserving Britain's heritage, to shared responsibility and precaution over ideology. On the political left, they include the idea that everyone has the right to a clean environment, to share the support systems of the planet, and a commitment to 'real' progress, rather than one narrowly defined by economic growth at all costs.

These principles, and the intrinsic values they enshrine, are more important than ever to all political traditions –now that it is increasingly clear how far a transition to a sustainable economy needs to rest on a shift in social values, re-emphasising many that have been suppressed over the past thirty years of neoliberal ascendancy.

None of this suggests that we are entering a period of unprecedented political peace, where lions lie down with lambs and espouse eternal values of green equality. We are not making a naïve Panglossian appeal to a set of solutions that are suddenly common to the projects of both the right and left. But we argue that there is at least the possibility of political programmes which are more thorough-going in their appeal to intrinsic values – without prior assumptions about whether these imply 'left' or 'right' perspectives.

There is quite enough room for political argument inside the framework of intrinsic values that have been outlined here. It is hard to imagine, under present circumstances, that conservatives could embrace 'equality' as a core value, or that socialists and Tories would come to agree on whether the state, market or society is best placed to effect change. What we are arguing for is a shift in the political centre of gravity – to entrench intrinsic values at the heart of modern British politics – not a cessation of debate about political means.

We do not suggest, either, that every politician has it within them to fully embrace the values outlined here. There are many that will be unable to do so however they are expressed. There is undoubtedly a tension between intrinsic values and the inevitable and understandable ambition of people in public life, and it requires a particular kind of self-awareness and understanding to balance them.

What we do suggest is that the intrinsic values that underpin a deep concern for sustainable development do not contradict some of the buried traditions of conservatism and labourism – including their traditional shared concern for the common good. Both left and right have clear reasons to understand interdependence, care for the environment, and justice, and the central values we have become so used to in UK politics over the past thirty years – values promoted by the rise of neoliberalism – can shift once again to ones which have a greater chance of dealing with the emerging global crises.

The implications of this are profound, particularly for politicians who believe their creed has implications for environment and development, or who have ambitions for radical change to tackle our looming crises in these and other areas. It implies that there is an alternative set of values and assumptions to the prevailing creed of narrow economism and corporate and social selfishness.

There is, in short, an alternative to the narrow cage which confines mainstream political discourse where everything is commodified and valued according to the narrowest bottom line. There is also a potential relief from the yawning gap between the values that politicians frequently assume in public, and the more life-enhancing values by which many of them doubtless strive to bring up their own children.

Will the shift happen?

Will this shift happen? Both the preceding chapters provide some evidence of this. The Labour Party is in the middle of a once-in-a-generation upheaval, intellectually and politically, and there is a ferment of new thinking permeating their internal debate. The Conservative Party, as we show above, is now engaged in a tussle between those who are keen to distance themselves from the narrow mercantile values of a generation before – and those who are more than happy to continue it. The Liberal Democrats have traditionally been able to express intrinsic values more openly, even if there remains a sense within the party that falling back on the same old language and values as the others is necessary to portray their seriousness.

The rise of the Red Tory and Blue Labour strands of debate in the UK are both, in their different ways, examples of how the mainstream political traditions can shift towards a rejection of neoliberal and technocratic economism, and embrace the values of community and human interdependence. As yet, however, both these strands have failed to fully engage with the sustainable development debate, and shape a different, values-driven approach to the challenges of climate change and global poverty.

Conclusion

This is not a report about potential compromise. It is about a potential change to the centre of gravity of political debate.

It is intended as a call to rethink the language and values that infuse modern politics in the UK. It sets out a possible direction whereby politicians might shift the heart of debate to one where the crucial importance of environment and development are taken for granted, and the political battle rages instead about the practicalities of solving the huge challenges that lie ahead for humanity.

It is a proposal for a shift in the way that politicians express themselves, to bring their language and the values they need to hold – and sometimes already hold – more into alignment; and by doing so, making the necessary action politically possible.

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Martin Kirk is Head of UK Campaigns at Oxfam. He leads Oxfam's campaigning across England, Scotland and Wales, on issues ranging from reform of the global food system to the Robin Hood Tax. He is the co-author of *Finding Frames: New Ways to Engage the UK Public on Global Poverty* (BOND, 2011) and has been leading Oxfam's work on understanding why the UK public feel and act as they do around issues of global social justice. Before working at Oxfam, he was Head of Global Advocacy for Save the Children UK.

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WWF-UK and Oxfam's commitment to this work

WWF-UK and Oxfam* are members of a growing group of NGOs who are recognising – and responding to – the importance of cultural values in determining responses to today's profound social, humanitarian and environmental challenges. For more information on this work, or to become involved, please visit *www.valuesandframes.org*

*Oxfam supports and contributes to reports to share research results, to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. They do not necessarily reflect Oxfam policy positions. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Oxfam.

Proportional policy responses to today's profound environmental and humanitarian problems will require a new level of political commitment. Doubtless, in part, this will entail the need for bolder political leadership on these issues. But it will also, inevitably, require greater electoral acceptance of – indeed, active demand for – more ambitious policy interventions.

Such public expressions of concern will be motivated by particular cultural values, which will need to come to be expressed more strongly. Drawing extensively on social psychology research, this report identifies 'intrinsic' values – including those of affiliation, self-acceptance, community feeling and universalism – as being of crucial importance in underpinning public expressions of concern about environmental and humanitarian issues.

The report examines some of the key factors that determine which values come to be of particular importance culturally, and the implications for those political leaders who see that they have a responsibility to help strengthen intrinsic values. Happily, the report identifies strong traditions of political thought on both the left and right that prioritise intrinsic values. In closing, it foresees the possibility of establishing a new centre of gravity in political debate: one that works systematically to strengthen intrinsic values.

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