

Institution: Cardiff University.
Unit of Assessment: 4
Title of case study: Cardiff research supports the creation of the UK Climate Change Committee
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research led by the Cardiff School of Psychology first revealed a 'governance trap' hindering decisive long-term action by the UK government on climate change. Nick Pidgeon co-authored a Parliamentary Research Report that identified a solution to this problem, which was the creation of an independent expert Committee to advise the government of the day on long-term climate change targets and to evaluate progress. This recommendation was enshrined in the 2008 Climate Change Act, which formalised the scope and composition of the UK Climate Change Committee. Since its inception the committee has shaped the future energy strategy of the UK and devolved administrations. The committee is also providing a blueprint for approaches in other countries.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Climate change is one of the most pressing environmental problems of the 21st century. According to the latest projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (September 2013), without substantial action to cut global emissions the world is likely to see an average global surface warming of at least 2°C by 2100. But while science continues to reveal how serious the situation is, governments and citizens still fail to take decisive action. Research led by Nick Pidgeon (Professor of Environmental Psychology, from February 1st 2006) at Cardiff University's School of Psychology has helped to explain the reasons for this inertia.</p> <p>Research working with Government, Industry and the Public</p> <p>Shortly after arriving at Cardiff, Professor Pidgeon was invited by Colin Challen MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group (APPCCG) at Westminster, to chair an inquiry into the question of whether cross-party consensus on climate change was achievable. The inquiry conducted research over a period of 5 months from March-July 2006. The subsequent parliamentary research report^{3.1} and recommendations for action were based on a synthesis and interpretation of several kinds of data: (i) formal oral evidence taken at Westminster from senior parliamentarians and climate scientists; (ii) written submissions from external stakeholders (over 80 in total, e.g. EDF Energy plc, WWF-UK, BSKyB plc, Norwich Union, Greenpeace); and (iii) quantitative and qualitative research evidence on behaviour and perceptions of climate change risks – which included key research findings from the Cardiff Climate Change Group headed by Pidgeon. Some of the survey, focus group and individual interview data underpinning this research were collected by Pidgeon and colleagues at the University of East Anglia (2002-2005). This comprised data acquired from the general public, stakeholders and policy makers. For the APPCCG inquiry report itself^{3.1} and subsequent scientific reporting all analysis, synthesis and interpretation of these data was done in Cardiff, in parallel with the inquiry process.</p> <p>The data synthesis conducted by the Cardiff group and by the parliamentary inquiry team identified a series of constraints on government action. In particular, and despite good intentions and rhetoric, the UK government was failing to act decisively because it feared punishment at the ballot box if bold but unpopular long-term climate measures were adopted.</p> <p>The Cardiff group's analysis of the data acquired from the public, meanwhile, revealed that high numbers of people in the UK were concerned about climate change and wanted action, but regarded institutional actors such as governments as being primarily responsible for delivering the necessary change.^{3.2, 3.3, 3.4} Moreover, the data highlighted how people 'pass the buck' to government because they believe that climate change is too difficult a problem for individuals to tackle alone.^{3.4}</p> <p>Analysis of these converging forms of evidence during the APPCCG inquiry process in 2006 led to an insight which had not previously been articulated in the academic or policy literature – namely</p>

that the lack of action could be characterised as one where the public leave action on climate change to government, but government in turn fails to act because they believe the necessary long-term legislation would be unpopular with the electorate. This insight was articulated and elaborated upon as a 'governance trap' in a subsequent commissioned evidence review for UK Foresight,^{3,4} in other academic outputs,^{3,5} and in a successful research funding application to the Leverhulme Trust (>£1M over 5 years).^{3,6} In the report of the APPCCG inquiry it was concluded that as a result of this neither citizens nor governments would act decisively without a significant restructuring of the UK's institutional climate governance structures.^{3,1} The report recommended setting up a new mechanism to overcome the pressures of the electoral cycle, specifically a trusted, independent science body that would hold successive governments to account.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Clayton, H., **Pidgeon, N.F.** and Whitby, M. (2006). *Is a Cross-party Consensus on Climate Change Possible – or Desirable?* First Report of the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group. London: Westminster, 13th July 2006.
http://www.gci.org.uk/Documents/Climate_Change_Consensus_Report_.pdf
2. Bickerstaff, K., Simmons, P., & **Pidgeon, N.F.** (2008). Constructing responsibility for risk(s): Negotiating citizen-state relationships. *Environment and Planning A*, 40, 1312-1330.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/a39150>
3. Lorenzoni, I., O'Riordan, T., & **Pidgeon, N. F.** (2008). Hot air and cold feet: the UK response to climate change. In H. Compston and I Bailey (Eds.), *Turning Down the Heat: The Politics of Climate Policy in Affluent Democracies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 104-124. [Available from HEI on request]
4. **Pidgeon, N. F.** (2010) *Public Understanding of and Attitudes Towards Climate Change*. International Dimensions of Climate Change Programme, Government Office of Science/Foresight Programme, www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bispartners/foresight/docs/international-dimensions/11-1021-public-understanding-of-climate-change
5. **Pidgeon, N. F.** (2012). Public understanding of, and attitudes to, climate change: UK and international perspectives and policy. *Climate Policy*, 12 (Sup01), S85-S106.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2012.702982>
6. £1,008,000 Leverhulme Trust Large Grant. *Framing Energy Futures: public Perceptions and Risks*. PI **Pidgeon**. Jan 07-December 11. (F/00 407/AG)
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/sustainableplaces/projects/related.html>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Climate Change Act 2008

The UK's Climate Change Act is the primary mechanism by which the UK government intends to meet its obligations to take action against climate change.^{5,1}

The ability of the government to pass this legislation and take decisive action is a direct impact of the recommendations published by Pidgeon and his co-authors in their analysis and report for the APPCCG inquiry into cross-party consensus on climate change legislation. Among several recommendations, Recommendation 12 called for the creation of a trusted, independent institutional mechanism through which long-term decisions about climate change could be addressed and monitored with cross-party consensus, thereby overcoming the constraint on government action identified by the Cardiff research group (see Section 2). Specifically:

“Recommendation 12. That Government establish an authoritative independent body, similar to the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee, to agree UK climate change targets and measures to meet these, and to report at least annually on progress towards meeting them, in a fully transparent manner and in the light of the best available scientific assessments” (see Section 3, ref 3.1, p.30).

Pathway to Impact

The APPCCG report and recommendations were launched and debated at a meeting in July 2006 at the Royal Society of Arts. Over 60 participants attended this meeting, drawn from the main Westminster political parties, national policy, NGO and science institutions, with commentary on the report provided at the launch by senior parliamentarians for Labour, Conservative and the Liberal Democrats. The APPCCG chair Mr Colin Challen MP was shortly afterwards granted a private meeting about the report and its contents with the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair.^{5.2}

Responding directly to Recommendation 12 of the APPCCG report – which had not been previously proposed in the Labour Government's 2005 Manifesto – the Government brought forward proposals in the 2006 Queen's Speech for what became the Climate Change Act, which at its core had the establishment of the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC), an independent Non-Departmental Public Body of climate scientists and economists mandated to recommend UK climate targets and monitor progress towards them.^{5.2, 5.3, 5.4}

Establishment of the UK Climate Change Committee

The Climate Change Act was passed into law in November 2008. The intellectual debt that the draft Bill owed to the APPCCG report was recognised by the Royal Society at the time^{5.5} and subsequently by policy commentators.^{5.6}

The work of the Committee now involves advice to HM Government and the devolved administrations on a range of issues, including the national 2050 carbon reduction target, the setting of (and annual monitoring of progress towards meeting) interim 'carbon budgets', and measures to adapt to climate change.^{5.4}

The Committee also works to maintain cross-party consensus to prevent government from falling back into the 'governance trap' identified by the Cardiff research, allowing the Government to establish decisive long-term policy and legislation with cross-party support.^{5.4}

The Institute for Government has conducted a retrospective evaluation of the evolution of the 2008 Climate Change Act, and the setting up of the Climate Change Committee, as an exemplary case study of UK policy success. The importance of the broad cross-party consensus obtained in formulating and supporting the Act, and the innovative nature of the Climate Change Committee as a governance mechanism, is discussed in the evaluation report.^{5.7}

The Act leads to change

The subsequent work of the UK's Climate Change Committee, and in particular its initial recommendation that UK carbon emissions needed to be cut by 80% by the year 2050, has had a series of profound impacts across all of UK Government and the devolved administrations with regard to energy policy.^{5.4} The Government's recent *Carbon Plan*^{5.8} describes how in order to meet the 2050 target the UK will have move away from oil, coal and gas, and invest extensively in new wind energy and nuclear capacity, electrification of transportation, and foster reduced energy demand at home, the workplace, and in the energy intensive industries.

In its 2012 progress report the UKCCC calculates that 0.8% of the fall in UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2011 can be linked directly to implementation of proactive carbon lowering measures but that much more still needs to be done.^{5.9} In the longer term (circa 2020-2050) the provisions of the Act will drive major technology and lifestyle changes across all sectors of society.^{5.4, 5.8}

Leading international legislation

The Act also had significant impacts internationally because the UK demonstrated, through the Act and adoption of subsequent Climate Change Committee recommendations, the very first legally binding national climate targets anywhere in the world. Other countries have followed this lead by setting up similar institutional mechanisms to ensure cross-party consensus on climate change,^{5.4} and paving the way for effective legislation to drive the necessary 'top down' action on climate change that will change behaviour and the attitude of businesses and citizens elsewhere in the world.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-the-uk-s-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-80-by-2050>. The official statement of UK government policy on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This confirms that the 2008 Climate Change Act set the world's first legally binding climate change target, which is to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the year 2050. It confirms that the Committee on Climate Change is a statutory body of independent experts created by the Act to monitor and advise on meeting this target.
2. Statement from Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group, 2005-2010. Testimonial on the influence of the 2006 APPCCG report recommendations. The testimonial describes the process of the APCCG inquiry in 2006, and the importance for the report of the analysis and research findings from Cardiff. It further states that the report was critical in moving forward the debate in Westminster at the time, while also pointing the way to the Act and the institutional structure of a UK Climate Change Committee. It confirms the meeting with the Prime Minister about the report's contents, his encouragement for pursuing this approach, and the subsequent change in government policy that led to the Draft Climate Bill.
3. See www.theccc.org.uk. This is the website of the Committee on Climate Change and describes its remit, role and current activities.
4. Statement made by the former Conservative Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal, and current Chair of the UK Climate Change Committee. Testimonial on the importance of the cross-party consensus forged in 2006 for the passing of the Climate Change Act, and the important role of the analysis contained in the APCCG report to this consensus building process. This also states that the work of the UK Climate Change Committee has profoundly shaped the energy strategy of the UK and devolved administrations, while also commenting that "the UKCCC and Climate Change Act have since been seen as models for action elsewhere" with several countries around the world adopting this institutional model. The Chair concludes that "There is no doubt that Professor Pidgeon's work has had and is still having, a direct impact".
5. In its formal response to the government's proposals for a monitoring body in the Draft Climate Change Act in June 2007, the Royal Society stated that "We agree with the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group's recommendation that the role of the Committee should be to monitor, review and propose binding targets, to recommend measures to achieve year on year reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions, and to publish an annual progress report. We agree that the Committee could have a similar role (and similar powers) to that of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee in terms of having an advisory role for proposing a long-term path for the price of carbon. This will be an important element for reaching the targets" see p 5 of: http://royalsociety.org/uploadedFiles/Royal_Society_Content/policy/publications/2007/8024.pdf
6. Giddens, A. (2009) *The Politics of Climate Change*. Polity Press, pp. 114-117. In his influential book Lord Giddens, an academic with very close links to the Blair administration, describes the intellectual case made in the APPCCG report, and in particular its main recommendation 12, for an independent climate science and monitoring body, and how this was subsequently followed by the setting up of the UK Climate Change Act and Committee in 2008.
7. Institute for Government, *The Climate Change Act*, Case Study 6 (see in particular pp.121-122). An evaluation of the evolution of the 2008 Climate Change Act, and the setting up of the Climate Change Committee, as an exemplary case study of UK policy success. <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/our-work/better-policy-making/policy-successes>
8. HM Government, Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) *The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future. Presented to Parliament pursuant to Sections 12 and 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008*. p3-4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-carbon-plan-reducing-greenhouse-gas-emissions--2>
9. UK Climate Change Committee, *2012 Annual Progress Report*. <http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/2012-progress-report>. This (see web-page summary text and report p51 first 'Key Message') report calculates that 0.8% of the UK's greenhouse gas reductions in 2011 can be linked directly to implementation of proactive carbon lowering measures, but that far more needs to be done given that this rate of underlying progress so far is only one-quarter of what is needed to meet future carbon budgets.